



# Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers

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During the interview process you will be evaluating the company just as the company is evaluating whether you are the best candidate for the position.

## **Things to consider before accepting a job offer:**

- Company's location, standing in its industry, its financial standing
- Work environment, including both the physical workspace and resources available, as well as the company's culture
- Fit with your supervisor as well the people you'd work with
- Opportunities for career growth and professional development
- Typical work hours, travel requirements, work-life balance
- Compensation package (salary and all benefits). For benefits, consider what percentage of health and dental insurance is paid by the employer; how much and how soon the employer will contribute to your 401K/retirement plan, opportunities for bonuses and raises (timing of performance reviews); opportunities for flexible work hours; tuition remission, travel/parking/commuting allowance, etc.

## **Prior to negotiating and deciding on an offer, you need to:**

- Know what you are worth. Research salaries in your geographic area for the types of positions you're applying to. (If you are moving to a new area, you will also want to research cost of living, [www.homefair.com](http://www.homefair.com) is a good site for this). Salary research sites include: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/> (type a job title into the search box to get useful info about it – including salary info); [NACE Salary Calculator](#); [www.jobstar.org](http://www.jobstar.org); [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com); [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com); as well as professional organizations in your field. If possible speak to contacts in the field to get additional information about starting salaries.
  - Based on the information gathered from your research, come up with a potential salary range, rather than a single number.
  - If asked in the very early stages of the job application/interview process about your salary requirements, it is generally best to say “negotiable” until you know more about what the job entails. Another alternative is to ask what the typical range for the position is. Don't be too evasive; if after deflecting the question, you are asked to give your salary expectations/requirements, you must be prepared to give a range that is based on your research.
  - **Once an offer is made, realize that you should have time to consider the offer, rather than answering on the spot.** If you are genuinely interested in the position first graciously express your appreciation for the offer.
  - Because this is an important decision, ask for time to carefully consider the offer. You and the employer will need to agree on a reasonable time frame to give them an answer.
  - Keep in mind that the basis for negotiating a higher salary or any aspect of the compensation package could be based on your research (i.e., the offer is below the market standard) or because you have skills, training, or experience that directly relates to the position and is above and beyond the job description, or allows you to make an immediate impact in your position. Note that neither of these situations in any way guarantees you will be able to negotiate for a higher salary, but at least gives you some leverage to initiate the conversation.
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- Prepare and practice your counteroffer before contacting the employer. Know what you will ask for, the supporting information you will give to justify the counteroffer, and also be prepared for what you will say if they say there is no room for negotiating the salary. You may want to consider negotiating other aspects of the compensation package. For example, you may be able to negotiate having a performance review with possible salary increase after 6 months, rather than after a year.
  - On or before the agreed upon time, you should contact the employer, let them know that you have carefully considered their offer and reiterate your strong interest in both the company and the position. You will need to ask if there is room for negotiation on the offer. One example could be to say something like: “I want to thank you again for the offer. I am very excited about the prospect of working for XYZ Company. Based on my industry research, the typical range for this position seems to be \$32,000-\$36,000. Is there a possibility that you could match that?” Or, “Is there room for negotiation on the salary you offered?”
  - Once an agreement has been reached on the salary, benefits and start date, you should receive the offer in writing. After receiving the written offer, you will also formally accept the offer in writing.

### **Saying no gracefully**

If you decide not to accept a job offer, it is important to use tact when letting the employer know that you have decided not to take the offer. Thank them for the offer and their time during the interview process. Let the employer know you have given careful consideration to the offer but have decided not to accept it. People move around within their industry and are often well-connected, so it is important to leave a positive impression and not burn any bridges.

### **Other resources for information on evaluating and negotiating job offers:**

- CashCourse, <http://www.cashcourse.org/indicottcollege>, go to the World of Work section for job offer info
- Women for Hire, [http://womenforhire.com/advice/negotiating\\_salary\\_benefits\\_tips/](http://womenforhire.com/advice/negotiating_salary_benefits_tips/)
- Wetfeet, <http://www.wetfeet.com/advice-tools/salary-benefits>
- **Always feel free to contact the Career Center for advice and assistance on any aspect of your job search, including salary negotiations!**