

SALARY NEGOTIATION

value. Don't be the first one to mention money. You need to learn more about the position so you don't run the risk of "lowballing" yourself. Also, don't talk salary in the first interview unless the employer brings it up.

Do your homework!

The NACE Salary Survey publication and Salary.com are places to locate information on salaries. Have a salary range in mind.

Questions you need to ask yourself BEFORE the interview

- Based on my research, what is the salary range for this position?
- What is the lowest salary I would consider?
- What makes me worth a higher salary?

Check out the cost of living in the area you will be working. If it is significantly higher than where you live now, your salary and benefits should reflect this. A wonderful website to compare the cost of living is www.homefair.com.

Salary questions DURING the negotiation process

- What is the promotion potential?
- What are the benefits?
- When will I be reviewed and therefore considered for raises?

*Remember, salary is one small piece of the whole pie. Don't miss out on a wonderful opportunity because of a \$50-a-month-after-taxes pay difference. The amount you will be making in the new position does not all appear on your paycheck. Consider the following benefits before accepting the position:

- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- Maternity/paternity leave
- 401K's
- Vacation and sick leave (when does it start?)
- Tuition reimbursement
- Childcare
- Flextime
- Telecommuting
- Bonuses

STEP 1 – Preparation

- Before you can assess a job offer, you must make sure you have information about the market. Important information includes: salary averages for your field and in your geographic area of interest, average salaries that your peers received, norms in your field such as where you can push in negotiation, and which things are non-negotiable such as benefits or stock options. You can find this information in the Occupational Outlook Handbook, the Career Services Center website, or through your professional network.
- Identify and rank your values. This will help you remember an offer is not just about salary, but about what you value in a position. The values may include:

Location	Responsibility	Flexibility
Stability	Benefits	Prestige
Independence	Supervisory	Salary
Mental Stimulation	Teamwork	Making Decisions
Personal Growth	Recognition	Helping Others
Low Stress Level	Variety	Physical Work Environment
Challenge	Competition	

- Decide on the minimum amount of compensation that will make you satisfied (make it realistic with the type of job offered). Establish a budget, and remember to account for taxes taken out of your pay. There is no point in accepting an offer if you think you'll be dissatisfied and want to look for another job in the near future. If an employer refuses to meet or exceed this amount, it may be in your best interest to keep looking.

STEP 2 – Know the Employer's Compensation Guidelines

How does a job offer process develop? Although there are many ways to deliver an offer, they are typically presented from one of three different approaches:

- Fixed Offer: You can negotiate all you want, but it won't do you any good. They operate on a take it or leave it basis so you may not want to waste your time negotiating.
- Pay-Grade System: This is a system in which a salary range has been set and you will be paid within this range based on your experience and the duties associated with the job. You may be able to negotiate within the salary range. The pay grade system is the most common compensation system encountered.
- The Negotiator: This type of approach is rare because most organizations work within a structure. In this framework, the employer will have the authority to raise or lower your salary without going through bureaucratic red tape.

STEP 3 – Salary and Benefit Negotiation (Not typical for entry level positions)

If an employer makes an offer that is below your expectation, clarify what the job benefits are. If the offer still isn't competitive, try one of these approaches:

Approach 1: "I'm very interested in the role, but I would like to discuss the salary you're offering."

Approach 2: "I really want this position, but I was a little disappointed that the offer was lower than I expected."

When using either approach, be certain to support your case by stating your skills, and looking for the average salary range for your level of experience in your field. Let the employer respond and then continue the discussion from their lead. Based on an employer's compensation guidelines, you may not be able to negotiate a higher salary. However, you may be able to increase your compensation via benefits. Negotiable areas often include: vacation time (it's often increased for more senior employees), educational reimbursement, flex time, and salary review (you might negotiate a salary review after three months, rather than six months or a year). Remember, you may be negotiating with the person who will be your supervisor. Stay polite. Try to make it a win-win situation.

Resource: The Georgia State University Career Center Guide 2011.

STEP 4 – Assessing the job offer

Consider the pros and the cons of the offer. It may help to create a chart. A sample is provided below:

FACTOR	Offer A	Offer B	Offer C
Job Responsibilities			
Company Reputation			
Salary			
Health Insurance			
Paid Vacation			
Pension/Retirement			
Tuition Reimbursement			
Training Professional Development			
Location			
Supervisor			
Co-workers			
Travel			
Overtime			
Signing Bonus			
Stock Options			

STEP 5 - Get it in Writing!

It would be nice if everything discussed in the negotiation occurred, but unfortunately it doesn't always happen that way. To avoid future problems, ask for a letter of employment which states all the employment conditions agreed upon (e.g. salary and benefits, as well as a thorough job description). This way, if there is confusion at a later date, you will have a written document, stating the conditions under which you were hired. This document is especially important if the conditions of your employment differ from normal company policies.

A FINAL WORD

Keep in mind that if you decide to negotiate, your job offer will not automatically be rescinded by the employer, even if he/she decides not to negotiate. Also, if a position is acceptable to you as it is offered, do not feel as though you must negotiate.

INTERNET RESOURCES

- Career Services Center - <https://careerctr.kennesaw.edu/>
- Job Web (Relocation resources) - jobweb.org/catapult/cities.htm
- Occupational Outlook Handbook - provides career and salary information for a variety of occupations: stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm
- Salaries and Profiles - includes an industry-by-industry look at salaries from the National Business Employment Weekly - register and search for the page of your choice public.wsj.com/
- Quintessential Careers - provides many resources and links for job seekers including resources on the web about salary negotiation www.quintcareers.com/salary_negotiation.html
- Other sites for this information include www.indeed.com and www.glassdoor.com

Resource: *The Georgia State University Career Center Guide 2011.*

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

statement is not only more professional, it is also a matter of courtesy. These are contacts you never want to lose.

JOB ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Even if you have accepted a job over the phone, it's a good idea to write a job acceptance letter to confirm the details of employment and to formally accept the job offer.

Your letter can be brief, but should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the opportunity
- Written acceptance of the job offer
- The terms and conditions of employment (salary, benefits, etc.)
- Starting date of employment

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information and phone number, even though it is on file with the employer. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you already have been offered the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

Sample acceptance letter:

April 17, 20__

Ms. Jane Smith
ABC Company
1001 Walla Walla Way
Portland, OR 92002

Dear Ms. Smith:

After making one of the most important decisions in my life, I am happy to accept your offer of Widgets Manager in your Widgets department, at the salary of \$32,000. I recognize that this is contingent upon my passing a routine drug screening, and I anticipate no difficulty.

I wish to report as soon as possible after graduation and moving. Please let me know if May 21, 20XX is an acceptable starting date for you. Also, if you could recommend a real estate agent, I would be most appreciative.

Please advise me if there is any further information you need or if any other details need to be worked out. I can be reached any day after 4:00 p.m. E.S.T. I am eagerly anticipating starting my career with ABC Company.

Sincerely,

Kilgore Smudge

JOB REJECTION LETTER

DECLINING AN OFFER

When you decide to reject a job offer, you will want to let the employer know in writing that you are declining the offer. Your letter should be polite, brief, and to the point. You don't want to burn bridges as this employer may have a better offer for you down the road. It's important to not go into any specifics; even if the hours are awful, the work environment is terrible, or the pay isn't enough to make ends meet, don't mention it.

Your letter should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the offer
- Written rejection of the job offer
- Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information and phone number, even though it is on file with the employer.

Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you are declining the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

Sample Letter

April 17, 20__

Ms. Jane Smith
ABC Company
1001 Walla Walla Way
Portland, OR 92002

Dear Ms. Smith:

After making one of the most difficult decisions in my life, I must respectfully and regretfully decline your offer of Widgets Manager in the Widgets department of ABC Company. This decision was definitely not an easy one to make. I consulted with family and faculty to help me decide.

I am very impressed with ABC Company and do hope that there may be an opportunity there for me in the future. I have also mentioned your opportunities to many of my classmates and they have expressed a desire to speak with you soon.

I wish you much success in your recruitment efforts and I sincerely appreciate your kindness towards me.

Sincerely,

Pat Jones