

SALARY NEGOTIATION TIPS*

This handout is designed to provide you basic information about negotiating salaries and benefits.

What do I need to know in order to negotiate a salary?

- Determine the market rate salary range for the type of position in the particular industry.
- Prepare a budget to determine your financial needs.
- **BEFORE YOU GO INTO AN INTERVIEW**, decide what salary you want to earn, what you need to live on, and what is the lowest salary you will accept.
- Be realistic: entry-level salaries are less negotiable than salaries for mid-level or executive positions.
- Document your skills and accomplishments, and be prepared to talk about them.
- Don't be the first to mention salary during the interview, and use the negotiating tips listed below when the topic does come up.
- Never say "I need at least _____ dollars."
- Never lie about your salary history.
- Consider the cost of living if you are moving to a new area.
- Relax, it is natural to feel uncomfortable discussing salary.
- Once you have accepted a job offer and salary level, be sure to get it in writing.

How can I find out the market rate salary range?

- Use job listings that indicate salaries for related positions.
- Ask your friends and networking contacts.
- Check out the on-line salary surveys through Jobsmart.com.

Are salaries really negotiable?

Yes and no. The degree to which a salary is negotiable depends on the position, the manager, the organization, and your perceived value. Most entry-level positions have set salaries that are subject to very little negotiation - perhaps a few hundred dollars of negotiating room. Mid-level positions typically have salary ranges of between 10 and 20 percent (i.e., a job paying \$30,000 a year may have a salary range between \$27,000 and \$33,000).

Employers will negotiate within the range, but will rarely exceed it unless you are an exceptional candidate. Most state and federal government jobs have set ranges and scales based on education and experience. There are exceptions so you should always ask if there is room to negotiate. In general, the higher level management and executive positions offer the greatest opportunities for negotiation.

How can I handle questions about salary during an interview?

Most books about how to find a job contain entire chapters on negotiating salaries. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- If asked: "What are your salary requirements?" Summarize the responsibilities of the position as you understand them, and then ask the interviewer for the normal salary range in his/her company for that type of position.
- If asked: "How much did you earn on your last job?" Tell the interviewer that you would prefer learning more about the current position before you discuss compensation, and you are confident about reaching a mutual agreement about salary.

- If told: "The salary range for this position is \$22,000-\$27,000, is that what you were expecting?" Tell the interviewer that it is lower than the amount you were expecting (unless your research dictates otherwise), and then offer a range which places the top of the employer's range into the bottom of your range (i.e., I was thinking in terms of \$27,000-\$32,000). Remember: be sure that the range you were thinking about is consistent with what you learned about the market rate for that position.
- If the employer gives you an exact amount. \$32,000 per year, try to keep a straight face, no emotion, positive or negative. Then, ask if there is any room to negotiate because based upon your research you had thought the range would be between \$32,000-\$37,000, again giving a range that takes you above what that person had said.

Remember, you are asking questions, discussing the situation. This should not be confrontational!

The Offer

- If you receive an offer and you are interested, say that you are very interested and excited about the opportunity and will get back to them in 24 hours. Generally, 24 hours is the minimum amount of time needed to consider an offer and learn about all the variables you need to know in order to effectively negotiate. You might also need to ask for more time to make your decision, especially if you are in the process of interviewing for multiple positions. If you need more time, once you receive the offer, ask how much time you have to make your decision.
- Once the base salary has been discussed, but before accepting the job, ask the employer about the benefits package. In particular, confirm the following benefits which are standard to most companies:

* Health insurance	* Retirement Savings Plans
* Vacation Time	* Bonus Plans (private sector usually)
* Sick Leave	* College Tuition Reimbursement Plans
* Annual Salary Review	* Stock Options
- Analyze all benefit packages with a family member, friend, or a Career Advisor. They will provide you with an invaluable second opinion and may look at the offer more objectively.
- Avoid telephone negotiations unless you are calling to accept an offer. And, be sure to always request a salary offer in writing.

Other Things to Remember

Never put only one number on any employment application. If they require an amount, then respond with a salary range. Otherwise, always answer with "negotiable".

Previous salary: **DO NOT LIE**. But, avoid answering this question when possible. One way to avoid answering is to say that you would prefer not to provide a response until you have a fuller understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the job for which you are applying. If you are making a career change or coming from a non-related position, you can say that it is not possible to make an equal salary comparison and therefore your previous salary is not relevant.

Websites

www.salary.com

www.salaryexpert.com

www.wageweb.com

www.jobsmart.org/tools/salary

www.datamasters.com

www.wetfeet.com

www.vault.com

www.hoovers.com