

## Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Job/Internship Offer

There are many factors you will need to consider including (but not limited to): benefit packages, promotion potential, work load, work values, family considerations, position-related responsibilities, relocation, professional development, managerial/collegial support, organizational fiscal stability, salary, commute, employee evaluation criteria, etc. **Ask yourself: “Will accepting this position with this organization be a fulfilling next step for me? Will it be worth my investment of time, money, and energy?”**

### Smart Negotiation

Usually negotiations are done with the Human Resources representative you have been working with when the offer is made, but occasionally they are done directly with the hiring manager. If you are unsure, you can ask. State that you have some questions or concerns about the offer and would like to know with whom it would be appropriate to discuss them.

- **Salary** - Salary negotiation is the process of reaching an agreement about what an organization will pay for your skills, knowledge, and experience. This need not be an adversarial process. It is in both the organizations' and your best interest to come to a mutually beneficial agreement.
- **Benefits** - Compensation isn't just about the cash, it's also the benefits. Benefits may be worth at least one third of your compensation. As early as possible in the interviewing process, seek out information about organizational benefits so you know what to expect and what not to expect.
- **Prior to going into an interview** - Know what you are worth and what the market typically pays for similar positions in that state/metro region; do your research on typical compensation packages
- **Experience** - Remember to consider your level of experience when setting your expectations. You should also consider the size and budget of the organization making the offer. If possible, find out what the salary range is for the specific job you are interviewing for.
- **Where to find salary information** – If the pay range is not listed in the job announcement, utilize internet resources to get an approximation.
- **When to negotiate salary** – After you receive a formal offer, preferably in writing, and you have evaluated the entire job offer package and researched what the market will pay for your services in this field/location. You also need to know what you will not accept and where you are willing to compromise. Remember, salary is only one part of a total compensation package.
- **Determining when you are worth more** - Recent college grads do not always have the experience or expertise to warrant a higher salary. However, there are exceptions. Below are some “positions of strength” you can negotiate from:
  - You have gained relevant experience through internships, jobs, or organizational involvement which positively impacts your ability to do the job
  - You have technical expertise which is in high demand (STATA, R, etc...)
  - You have significant training in a specific and sought-after area of expertise
  - You have a written offer from another company that states a higher salary
- **Typical entry level benefits packages consist of** - Health, dental, & disability insurance; paid vacation, sick leave, & holidays; and some kind of retirement plan. Some organizations may also offer extras like: Company cell phone, laptop, car; public transit pass; education and training programs; professional membership dues; telecommuting; unpaid leave time; flex time, and more.
- **What are your deal-breakers?** Before you begin discussions, be clear about areas where you won't budge and recognize areas you could possibly make trade-offs to increase the total value of your compensation package. It is also important to stay cool, calm, and collected. When the discussion isn't going your way, don't become frustrated. If you push too hard, you risk losing the deal altogether.
- **Get it in writing** - To avoid any problems, ask for a letter of employment which states all the salary and benefit conditions agreed upon. This way you will have an official document to reference.

### When You Receive an Offer

Never accept a job offer right on the spot. Take time to consider the details carefully and to make sure there are no unanswered questions. You want to get information on the complete package.

- **In the moment the offer is made:**
  - Express appreciation for receiving the offer
  - Get as many details on the entire package as possible (salary, benefits, start date, title, etc.)
  - Ask for time to consider the offer (between a few days and one week are usually acceptable)
  - Ask if you can continue to call them before the decision deadline if you have any questions
  - Thank them again for the offer and *end the call*

- **Consider if the position is right for you in a variety of aspects:**
  - Is your interest in the organization still strong?
  - Will you gain new skills at this job or bolster old ones?
  - Is the position consistent with your long-term goals?
  - How will this position affect your personal relationships?
  - Is the salary acceptable?
  - Are you satisfied with other elements of the package?
- **Should I negotiate?** If you are satisfied with the package as offered, and you want to accept the position, you do not have to negotiate. However, the first offer is not always the best possible offer and most employers expect you to negotiate. It is well documented that women negotiate far less than men, and this can have serious detrimental effects on their earning potential for a lifetime.
- You should negotiate in good faith only. If you are considering other organizations, contact those employers, inform them of your offer and inquire about the status of your application. If they are interested in you and have flexibility, they may speed up their decision-making process. Be aware, however, that you may have to decide before you have complete information on all possible offers. You should only accept an offer if you intend to stick with it. It need not be forever, but at least a year is commonly accepted practice.

## How to Negotiate an Offer: Stage 1

If you want to negotiate the offer, you must be clear what it is that you want improved. Negotiate from the standpoint of what you bring to the organization and continue to express enthusiasm.

- **Before the deadline to decide, call the employer and say:** "I'm still very interested in the position, and I believe I can bring \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ to the organization. I'm wondering, is it possible to enhance the offer in terms of salary (vacation, benefits, opportunities for review, etc.)?"
  - **Don't say anything else!**
  - Do not fill in the silence! Let them speak first. (Utilizing this "silence" strategy, oftentimes employers will fill in the silence with a number).
- **If the employer says "Yes"**- Thank them and tell them you'll get back to them by the deadline.
- **If the employer says "Maybe"**
  - Ask when you should be hearing from them or when you should call them back
  - If they ask, "what did you have in mind?"
    - Ask "what do you think is possible?"; or
    - Give them a range of what you are looking for • If the employer says "No"- "Okay, thanks, I'll still get back to you by \_\_\_\_\_."

## How to Negotiate an Offer: Stage 2

After the first try, but before the date you must give your decision, here is what you can do:

- **If the package was enhanced, you can say:** "I really appreciate that! It is certainly helpful. Would you also be willing to consider \_\_\_\_\_?" or "Is this the very best that you can offer regarding \_\_\_\_\_?"
- **If the initial response was "maybe," ask:** "Have you given any further thought to whether the offer can be enhanced in any way?"
- **If the initial response was "no," try:** "What if instead of \_\_\_\_\_, would you consider \_\_\_\_\_?"
- **If nothing more is offered, you have a decision to make:** "I see. I will call you as promised by \_\_\_\_\_."

## Formally Accepting an Offer

- Even if you are jumping up and down with joy, you should always ask for a couple of days to thoroughly evaluate the offer and discuss it with family members or significant others.
- If you are waiting for another offer to come through, ask the employer when they need to know your answer and ask for an extension if you need one. Employers know you are interviewing with other organizations and will appreciate you being honest and careful about your decision.
- **Remember:** Once the negotiations are finished, it is appropriate (and wise) for you to ask the employer to put the offer in writing

## Guidelines for Accepting an Offer

Accepting the job offer in a professional manner requires certain strategies:

- Follow up the offer with an acceptance letter/email to the employer that expresses your appreciation for the offer and spells out any specifics that were discussed (if a contract is not provided). The specifics could include: an agreed upon start date, flexible schedule of hours, starting salary, evaluation at six instead of twelve months, sign-on bonus, relocation expenses, etc.
- Follow up via the phone in a few days with the employer to ensure that the acceptance letter/email was received, and the specifics are agreeable to all parties
- Establish a start time with your supervisor and expectations during the first week. Try to gain as much information as possible about what will be expected during the first days on the job

## Turning Down Other Job Offers

When you want to officially turn down an offer, it is recommended that you put it in writing. Rejecting an employment offer should be done thoughtfully and carefully. This could be a future employer one day. Indicate in the letter/email that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. Also, be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for consideration of you as a candidate.

- Once you have accepted an offer, it is professional, and ethical to inform all other employers (to which you have applied) of your decision and to withdraw your application from consideration
- Your withdrawal letter should express appreciation for the employer's consideration and courtesy. It may be appropriate to state that your decision to go with another offer was based upon having a better fit with your professional goals at this stage in your career.
- DO NOT say that you obtained a better job.
- DO NOT continue to interview after you have formally accepted an offer. People talk and you don't want to burn any bridges or waste anyone's time.

## Sample Job Offer Rejection Email

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your employment offer to be a Policy Specialist with XYZ. Unfortunately, I am writing to inform you that I am unable to accept the offer. After evaluating all opportunities available to me for the best fit at this point in my career, I have decided to accept another position.

I truly enjoyed meeting and speaking with you and other representatives from XYZ and learning firsthand about your experiences. Best wishes for the continued success of XYZ. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roberta La Follette