



EVALUATING A JOB OFFER

There are times when things are so bad that any paycheck will do, but for most of us this isn't one of those times. You are not obligated to accept the first job offer you get. Most companies will give you a day or two to consider their offer, and you should take advantage of that time to consider the particulars of the offer as well as the company itself. Of course the first thing you're going to look at is what's contained in the offer. Is the salary appropriate for the job and sufficient for your needs? If not, is there room to negotiate? Before turning down an offer because it's too small, give the company the opportunity to sweeten the pot. Is the job the same or similar to the one you interviewed for? Is it something you can envision yourself doing every day for the foreseeable future? Is the job local, and if not are you prepared to relocate? Does the company provide relocation assistance? By and large, this type of evaluation is self evident and happens nearly automatically in a very short period of time. There's a second type of evaluation that you want to do as well. You should have prepped for your interview by researching the company, but now it's time to go back and take a second look. Now you're looking for signs that the company is healthy and that you'll fit in well there. For the first part, take a look at the annual report or other publicly available documents. You can find a lot of good information in publications like Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations or in Dunn & Bradstreet's directory. Look to see if there have been major shakeups in the company recently and if so, find out why. In short, treat this as though you were considering investing in the company, because in a very real sense you are. The last step is to look at life inside the company. Talk to some current and former employees if you can. Take a look at the goals and vision of the company and be sure that it's something you can be happy working towards. Most of us invest a good deal of ourselves into our work and our company. It's a normal part of self identification. Before you take that job offer, take the time to make sure that this is a company you feel comfortable belonging to.

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