

## SALARY NEGOTIATION TIPS



You've made it through the interview and have the job offer in hand. Now comes the toughest question: what are your salary expectations?

Negotiating a salary can be uncomfortable but not if you've done some homework. The key to negotiating a salary is like playing cards, you want to try and make the other side show their hand first. Typically, your prospective employer already has a number in mind. This number, probably a range, is most likely derived from what they are currently paying similar jobs and from the current market for the job. You'll want to do some research to see what the market is paying for similar positions. Salary surveys published by professional groups such as The Society for Human Resources can have invaluable information. Often, occupation specific professional groups have conducted their own salary surveys as well with information targeted toward those jobs. Another factor to consider when negotiating a salary is fringe benefits. Some organizations, particularly in the public sector, pay salaries below the market. However, the benefits packages are typically substantial and can boost a salary level when you factor them into the package.

So, let's say you've done your homework and have the appropriate numbers. How do you answer the question: What are your salary requirements? The key here is to make the other side disclose their range so you have a framework within which to start working. You could answer with a counter question: "What would be the salary range for someone with my experience and skills?" Of course, if they give you a range, you want to counter with your range overlapping the top. You can always negotiate down, but rarely can you negotiate up. If the interviewer won't disclose a range and asks you "What kind of salary are you worth," here is where you can demonstrate your knowledge of industry norms and cite salary surveys. You could answer with "Having researched the current market for xyz positions that require the same knowledge and skill I possess, I feel I am worth a salary between Y and Z." Although you've had to disclose your numbers first, your requirements are based on current salaries with which the employer is familiar and probably expecting.

The offer negotiation time is the best time to negotiate what you want. An employer can pose the salary question a number of ways and this article only provides a brief guideline. Many job hunting books provide more information and various placement professionals can help you with the process as well.

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