

HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY IN A JOB INTERVIEW



Summary: *Negotiation is an extension of your interviewing skills. You've already managed the screening interview and, perhaps, a second and even a third interview where the objective was to assess whether there was a match to the job.*

If both parties are satisfied, each will work to make the agreement and the relationship succeed. Different people have different needs and place different weight or value on things. There are always reasons to negotiate and advantages to be gained by both parties.

Approaching the Negotiation

Assess the audience – the person or people you'll be negotiating with – and adopt an appropriate communication style. Organize a main theme and identify key points. Concentrate on how your uniqueness will add value to the business, while contributing to controlling costs. Demonstrate your potential effect on new initiatives and/or productivity. Make the decision ahead of time whether to begin with a minor issue that will be easy to resolve or to present an issue of major importance to you. Take and present a long-term view.

The Exploration Stage

Initiate the discussion with a positive statement, then wait for feedback. Frame the negotiation with a general statement of your mutual goals. Keep the interaction low-key. In the exploration period, confirm or adjust your perceptions of the employer's needs. Demonstrate that you understand the other party's position, perhaps by using comparison or analogy.

Build trust, and gain agreement on aligned issues. Stress your commitment and credibility, as well as your expertise, competence and ability to get things done. Maintaining an air of reasonableness can positively affect the climate of the negotiation process. In win-win negotiations, the goal is to work together to look for a mutually agreeable outcome. Keep the focus on what both parties want.

The Relationship

Valuing the relationship you have established with the employer is paramount. Remember that you will be working with the person with whom you are negotiating. Pushing too hard, taking a hard line or an adversarial posture or letting the discussion deteriorate into a contest are counterproductive in the long run.

When an issue surfaces, avoid attempts to personalize it. Appreciate that you and the employer have different needs to be met, rather than thinking in win-lose terms. Use tact and diplomacy. Make it your personal creed when engaged in negotiation to "save face" on behalf of the other party.

Language

Persuasion is the ability to change or influence a belief. Persuade rather than coerce. Use inclusive phrases and "if" statements; establish a common ground for agreement; for example, "If we accept that it will be necessary for me to work every other Saturday, would you agree that some additional vacation time might be arranged?" Practice phrasing a compromise opening, such as "What if," "How about" or "Would you feel" to the listener. Restate, or echo, frequently. Create, and be comfortable with, conversational and reflective silence.

Conflict

Conflict can be constructive and positive. Some level of conflict is inevitable; disagreement and conflict are a natural part of the negotiation process. The give and take of different points of view serve a purpose, helping determine what is important to each party. Institute a reasonable challenge. Working through conflict clarifies thinking and the needs, not just the wants or interests, of the other party.

Remain objective and focused on your priorities. In most negotiations, patterns can be distinguished relative to the terms of "give and get," such as both giving, giving if getting and so forth. Remember, conflict is only disagreement, and it's a necessary part of the negotiation process. Refusal to meet your requirements is not rejection of you as an individual or as a future employee.

Beware of making evaluative or absolute statements in your negotiations. Describe the benefits of your proposals to the employer. In a stalemate, neither side is willing to move and the negotiation fails. Approach a difficult issue by asking yourself, "How can I resolve this?" "How could the employer resolve this?" What adjustments or conditions would facilitate resolution, and what could be expected in return?

Continue to identify and assess options and possible approaches to settling issues throughout the negotiation process. Remember that nothing is free. A good agreement requires both participants to give and receive concessions; what is to be determined is only how much and when.

Let's Stay in Touch

When you meet resistance, be persistent, but know when to let go. If negotiations cannot be concluded on the spot, ask the following questions:

"Are there any reservations or reasons that my proposals wouldn't be considered?"

"What are our next steps and what is the timing?"

When you get stuck, take a break, make a small concession or offer to meet halfway. Suggest integrative solutions, which are more likely to facilitate moving forward. Never be adversarial, but rather explore possibilities and continue to extend the same flexibility and understanding you are hoping to receive.

Closing

Know when to conclude. And when you do conclude, hold your ground pleasantly. Be patient. Don't press too quickly for closure. Allow some quiet reflection, time to consider what is on the table.

Once a satisfactory agreement is arrived at, summarize it. A written follow-up will underscore the legitimacy of the process and help avoid the possibility of any misunderstanding. An informal review, in writing, of a verbal agreement often works well. Introduce your follow-up by mentioning your pleasure with the process and the relationship, then say, "Following is a summary of my understanding of our agreement" or "This is my understanding of what we agreed to." Conclude with a positive statement about the agreement and an expression of your appreciation. Verbal agreements should always be tactfully confirmed in writing.

If, after careful consideration, you determine that you and the employer have been unable to reach a mutually satisfactory understanding, be sure to call to let him or her know of your decision. Then send a letter of declination, expressing your appreciation for the offer and keeping the door open for future opportunities to work together.

