

YOU NEED TO HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN NEGOTIATING SALARY



Summary: *Having the right attitude when you negotiate your salary with an employer is not only critical to landing the job, but also can make a big difference in your quality of life.*

You've been through the job-search process, done your research on **prospective employers** and undertaken the daunting task of attending a **series of interviews**. Now comes the really hard part – **negotiating your salary package**. Many individuals do not realize that there is often latitude for negotiation in a job offer, in both the financial and nonfinancial components of a package.

If you've done your research, you should have a good idea of what your value is in the marketplace and what your needs are. Unfortunately, this may not always match what a prospective employer is prepared to offer. Now it is up to you to use your powers of negotiation to make sure you get what you want, as well as what you need.

When you sense that a company is seriously interested in you, the window of time during which you can negotiate is very narrow. Look for signals that tell you that an offer may be forthcoming. For instance, if the interview takes more time than originally planned, or if the interviewer asks you to attend a second or third interview and invites you to meet other members of the team, or if you are asked to undertake the company's testing program, then you may consider these positive signs. At this point, you need to be prepared to respond should an offer be made. Be ready to recognize and take advantage of the opportunity – to shift from selling yourself to asking for what you want. It is important not to accept a job immediately, but to get as much information as you can about the role and the offer and then ask for the time you need to consider it.

Whether your negotiations are short and straightforward or long and complex, you have a one-time opportunity to reach for what you want. The amount of room for negotiation will depend on your uniqueness in the eyes of the buyer, as well as his or her degree of flexibility and authority. While every situation is different, there are some basic do's and don'ts to keep in mind when you begin to develop your **negotiating strategy**:

Your points of negotiation must be realistic. Provide a rationale for any alternatives you suggest. If you are discussing the salary component of the package, for example, illustrate in business terms why you feel that you deserve more than the firm is offering.

Ensure that any negotiable items are linked to the job itself. Identify how granting your request will enhance your performance and results. For example, if you are required to relocate, providing you with a hiring-in bonus will not set relocation policy precedents for the company, but it will allow you to relocate your family to the area quickly and to immediately devote all your energies to the job.

Lay all points for negotiation on the table from the outset. If you keep pulling out "one more thing," you may create suspicion that there will always be one more item about to be disclosed and the other party may be less willing to negotiate on any issue.

The person who sets the agenda will control the discussion. By establishing an agenda for discussion at the outset, you will ensure that all of your points of negotiation are covered.

When negotiating salary, know the going rate for comparable positions in similar companies in the industry and location. Try to get the original offer increased before you disclose your figure. For example, the company offers \$120,000; you put forward your figure of \$130,000. Two reasonable people will often end up agreeing on a figure of about \$125,000 – the midpoint between the two figures. On the other hand, if the company offers \$120,000 and you get them to raise that offer to \$124,000 before you disclose your figure of \$130,000, you will probably end up agreeing on something around \$127,000.

In addition, avoid bringing perks up until major issues such as salary and bonuses have been agreed upon, or at least discussed. And never make an impromptu decision during any negotiation. You must decide the limits of your flexibility before you begin to negotiate.

The single most important ingredient for **negotiating effectively** is the right attitude. A positive attitude and a win-win negotiating strategy can greatly increase your odds for success, both immediate and long-term. Ultimately, your success will rest on your willingness to patiently and sensitively negotiate while considering the needs of both parties. Clearly identifying your own personal needs, as well as establishing what the company can offer, will ensure that you are in a position to make the right decision.