

NEGOTIATING A STARTING SALARY CAN BE TRICKY



Summary: *The discussion of your starting salary can be difficult since you don't have experience at the company to rely on as proof of your value to the company yet.*

Raise your hand if **want to make more money!** Now raise your hand if you want to **negotiate that raise!** I'm betting that not many want to negotiate a higher pay but how else will you get it? If you feel that you deserve more money then you have to be the one to show and fight for it. No employer is going to randomly give you a raise just because you work hard. They will give you an annual raise but that is about it. The rest is up to you to bring up and get the discussion rolling.

In order to start discussing your salary with an employer, you have to do your research first. If you are negotiating your starting salary, determine your bottom line number. Consider what you need to pay bills based on the cost of living for that city. Look at what benefits are included when looking at the numbers. A weak health insurance plan will leave you having to dish out more from your own pocket. Now determine what the average pay for your title is in the area using a site like Glassdoor or salary.com. Ask around your network to see what they get paid if they have a title similar to yours. You don't want to ask way over the average salary without something to back up your numbers nor do you want to offer way less and end up getting the short end of the stick.

Never discuss salary during an interview. Deter the question if they do ask and say **you will discuss that with them after deciding** the position is a good fit.

Always get the final offer in writing so that you can take it home and read over it to make your decision. Never say something in the moment because you might regret it later. Your starting salary does not have to be everything you hoped and dreamed for. Once you work for the company for a while and can prove your value, revisit the discussion.

If you find that the company just doesn't budge, go back to the first point and decide if the pay is worth it for you. You might have your expectations set too high for a starting salary and you may learn later that the company offers the same salary for all recent graduates.

The art of negotiating your salary takes planning and research.

Photo: money.cnn.com