

MAKING THE MOST OF AN EARLY JOB OFFER

Summary: Find out how to make the most of an offer made to you long before your graduation day.



Question: I recently received an offer from a big consulting company. I graduate in May, so they're giving me this offer well ahead of time. They haven't come back with a dollar amount yet for the offer. How much negotiating power do I have? Are the offers usually set in stone, or because the offer is so early, would I have more power in negotiations?

Answer: As long as you keep the door open in your conversation, you always have some negotiating power. Any case that you make for higher salary or increased benefits should be couched in terms of your enthusiasm for the position and your potential contributions to the organization.

At this early stage of the game, the stakes are lower for both you and the employer. While scrambling for talent, firms are investing in early acceptances but not feeling the immediate pressure of getting you to sign on the dotted line and walk in the door within the next month. By the same token, you also will have a full year to shop around and may not feel the need to jump at the first offer to come along.

Second Question: Is it fair to bolt for a better offer?

Answer: Investigate the going pay rates, build in a year's worth of inflation, and come up with the range that's desirable for you and realistic in terms of the market. Consider benefits that may also sweeten the package. More and more organizations are willing to entertain out-of-the-box proposals. Make sure there's money and opportunity for training/continuous learning while on the job. If possible, try to talk with others from your school who have been through this process and can share their perspectives looking back on the negotiations.

- See [How to Decide Whether or Not to Accept a Job: Accept the Job Offer or Walk Away?](#) for more information.