

How to negotiate a job offer

No matter how badly you want a job, they are rarely offered to us completely on our ideal terms. Following a successful interview, a job offer may be up your prospective employer's sleeve, so what do you do when the package is not exactly what you expected?

Your choices are: accept the position on their terms, negotiate the offer with the aim of accepting or decline. We've got some job offer negotiation tips to help you get the most out of your next big role.

- **It starts with the salary talk.** Essentially, negotiating a job offer begins during the interview process when the discussion of salary expectation takes place. At this beginning stage, you are already letting your prospective employer know what you think you're worth, so always go into an interview having researched current industry salaries. That way, when you hopefully receive a job offer, you'll know whether it's realistic and reasonable.

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- **What to do when you receive the job offer.** When considering a job offer, it's easy to get caught up in the excitement and just accept on the spot, however it's important to let your prospective employer know that you need some time before giving an answer. This will let you evaluate the job offer to be absolutely certain that it is right for you and your lifestyle.
- **Evaluating the job offer.** Even if you want the job, make sure you take into account the entire compensation package, not just the salary. While remuneration is important, you may feel that certain benefits and perks outweigh a lower salary. Before you make the decision to accept the position, consider how the position will affect your daily life including travel time, work hours and company culture.
- **When you decide to negotiate.** So after a thorough evaluation, you've decided that you'd like to negotiate a better offer. Before asking for higher pay

or more benefits, be sure to politely thank your prospective employer for the offer and express your excitement about the position. When making a counter-offer, be aware that your expectations may not be fulfilled. Remember, negotiations are two-way. Showing that you're willing to compromise will stand you in better stead for a future working with the company. If you're stubborn, the employer might just offer it to someone else.

- **When you decide to accept.** Even if you've accepted a job over the phone, it's a good idea to write a job acceptance email or letter to confirm the details of employment and to formally accept it! Your email or letter should be addressed to the person who offered you the position and include:
 - An expression of appreciation for the opportunity
 - Your written acceptance of the job offer
 - Basic terms of employment, based on your phone discussion (salary, benefits)
 - The starting date of employment
- **When you decide to decline.** Similarly, when declining a job offer, you should write a polite email or letter that is brief and to the point, and which avoids giving any specific reasons for your decline. You may feel the pay was not enough to make ends meet, or the hours would have driven you into the ground, but for the sake of parting on good terms, don't mention it.