

Salary Negotiation

The How To's

The idea of salary negotiation can cause a great deal of anxiety. To negotiate effectively, you'll have to do a little homework prior to any conversation with an employer about your requirements for the position you're seeking. There are three rules to salary negotiation:

1. Determine your worth before launching in to the negotiation discussion.

Conducting salary research:

- Visit websites like: Salary.com, Payscale.com, and Glassdoor.com
- Visit the Career Center to review the NACE Salary Survey that is published several times per year.
- Use the NACE Salary Calculator: <http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE/salary-calculator-intro/>
- Take the geographic area into consideration to make sure that you are comparing the salary information to the local market value in the area where you plan to work.
- When reviewing what others are paid, compare your level of experience to others who are doing the same type of work in the same sector (private, not-for-profit, government, etc.).
- Networking with other professionals who are working in careers similar to the one you are seeking.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals who are working in your field to get their feedback on what they would consider to be a fair starting salary range for a new professional entering the field with your level of experience.

After gathering your salary data, give careful consideration to the skills, education, certifications, relevant experience, and special talents you bring to the organization in order to have an intelligent and informed discussion with potential employers. During the negotiation phase, be prepared to discuss how your experience adds value to the organization. Self-knowledge and researching the appropriate salary data will arm you with the tools you need to have an effective conversation with potential employers.

2. Never initiate the salary discussion. Wait until you *receive* the offer before discussing the salary requirements. A wise negotiator once said that “the first one to speak is the one who loses.” Don't give the employer the impression that the salary is the only thing that interests you about the position.

Tips for the salary discussion:

- If an employer brings up the salary early during the interview, let him or her know that you are interested in learning more about the opportunity to determine if there's a mutual fit for you and the organization.
- When asked about salary requirements on a job application, use buzz words like, “competitive,” “negotiable,” “flexible,” or “market value.”
- Prepare to offer a range instead of a specific number, within \$3000-\$5000, beginning with the *minimum* salary you are willing to accept.

If the organization's salary doesn't match your minimum salary expectations, or if it falls well below the market value of your salary research, you may have to be prepared to decline the offer. Or, you can try to negotiate other benefits, such as a signing bonus, additional vacation time, telecommuting days, frequency and timing of performance and salary reviews, etc.

3. Don't accept the offer as soon as it's extended. Thank the employer and ask if you can have some time to consider the offer. Allow yourself ample time to review the entire salary and benefits package thoroughly before you accept or decline the offer. Take this opportunity to ask the employer any additional questions you may have about the compensation package and opportunities to advance within the organization. Be sure to discuss and agree on a deadline for delivering your final decision.

Don't be afraid to ask. Just make sure you do your research in advance so that you can approach the salary discussion with the employer in a fair and reasonable way, exhibiting your knowledge of the market value of the position, your enthusiasm for the opportunity, and your skills and experience that demonstrate that you are the most qualified candidate for the position.