



## How-To Guide

# Job and Salary Negotiation

### Tips for Evaluating and Accepting Job Offers

In order to evaluate your options, you should clearly identify what you want and what you need (and know the difference between the two). You will also need to determine what your skills are worth in today's marketplace.

#### **First Response to an Offer:**

Offers are generally first given over the phone, with a follow-up letter explaining it in more detail. Always thank the company for the offer and show enthusiasm that they want you. Be sure to ask when you can expect to receive the written offer and how much time you have before making a final commitment. After evaluating the offer, call the contact and tell them you would like to discuss this opportunity.

Here are some aspects of the job to weigh:

- **Position:** Make sure that you are aware of the position being offered, including the job duties, work environment, advancement opportunities, and the location of the position.
- **Start Date:** Though the company may want you to begin working right away, be sure that you have enough time to mentally and physically begin.
- **Salary:** Research the appropriate salary range for someone with your major, degree and experience in your chosen field. Salary surveys contain good salary data and averages while salary calculators give you information on how geographic location changes the cost of living and affects your salary. Recommended sites include [Salary.com](#), [SalaryExpert.com](#), [NACE Salary Calculator](#), and [Glassdoor.com](#).
- **Moving:** Don't be afraid to ask if the organization reimburses for moving expenses. To help you prepare for the move and new residence, refer to our [Relocation Information](#), [Homefair.com](#), and the [United States Postal Service](#).
- **Bonus:** Depending on the industry you are in, a signing bonus may be negotiable. Ask and have a monetary value in mind. Be aware that you can ask the question, but do not want to appear too aggressive.
- **Benefits:** Benefits packages vary widely in terms of what is offered and how much is covered. Determine what your needs are, and if the offer does not match up, it's time to negotiate, though not all benefits are negotiable. Recognize that if you are financially responsible for some of your benefits, your salary monies will be committed to health coverage.

#### **Negotiating the Offer:**

Successful and realistic salary negotiations embrace five principles based on the knowledge that the salary you begin a job with reflects your value to an organization and typically determines future salary increases.

Incorporating these principles will help you negotiate both professionally and effectively:

## **1. Research**

You will need to spend some time researching your market value in order to justify your request. Also, know who in the company negotiates salary.

## **2. Self-Confidence**

It is crucial to display self-confidence in negotiations. Know what you want in terms of salary, including the least amount that you will accept. Be confident that the amount you are requesting is what you are worth.

## **3. Recognition of Mutual Needs**

Recognizing both your needs and your employer's needs helps you gain empathy, realism and negotiating power. Put yourself in the position of the employer to better understand his or her interests, needs, and perception of you. It is up to you to prove that your value equals or exceeds the value the employer places on the position. Thoughtful probing during the interview can help you determine the employer's value of the job, such as asking what his or her goals are for the position.

## **4. Calculated Timing**

Timing is everything. As a rule, salary should never be discussed before the offer is extended. If asked about salary requirement during the interview process, kindly avoid the discussion with a sincere response such as "I am certain that you will offer the best possible salary based upon my value to your organization." Be aware of what the employer can and cannot negotiate. Try not to finalize your discussion on salary until you know that they want you.

## **5. Evaluation and Communication**

In most cases, the salary discussion should be initiated by the employer. Once the employer opens the discussion, it's time for you to professionally address the issue based upon your research. One way to address the issue is by saying something like: "Well, from my research over the past few months, I've figured that a person with my qualifications in a position similar to this is paid anywhere from \$33-38,000 a year." In addition to the salary make sure that you evaluate the total compensation package, including benefits and perks. Sometimes the perks can outweigh a salary increase.

When considering an offer, do not feel that you have to come to a decision quickly or on the spot. Most employers will allow you time to think about the offer. During the thinking process, reaffirm your interest in the position to the employer. For instance, you could say, "I'm very excited about this opportunity. I would like to take a little time to think about everything we've discussed and would like to get back to you as soon as possible. Would tomorrow be a good time to talk again?"

Throughout the entire negotiation process, stay confident and poised, but also enthusiastic about the offer.

### **Accepting or Declining the Offer**

Once you and the employer have reached an agreement on a job offer, it is time to formally accept the position. You may do this in whatever format you discuss with the employer, whether it be by phone, email, or formal letter. In the acceptance, specify the job you are accepting and review starting salary, basic job responsibilities, and the date you will start work.

If you decide that a position or job offer is not for you, you should formally decline the offer, tactfully stating your reasons for not accepting the job. It is beneficial to convey your appreciation for the interview and the employer's time because you may want to work for him/her in the future.

For help with your job search or any other career-related issue, come see us in the Career Center!

SUB 3100  
Monday-Friday 8am-5pm  
660.785.4353  
[careers@truman.edu](mailto:careers@truman.edu)