

Salary Negotiation How To

The goal of this page is to understand how to research and prepare for a salary negotiation with an employer after a job offer, and to provide some tools to aid with your negotiation strategy. If you would like to view a recording of our Salary Negotiation Workshop event, click [here](#). (NOTE: when you click the link, it opens a short preview of the recording. Download the file to view the recording in its entirety). Additionally, you may click [here](#) to view a worksheet that will guide you through practicing the tips presented in this document.

What is a negotiation?

First, it is important to understand what a negotiation is. A negotiation is a discussion between two or more parties, aimed at reaching an agreement. It is not atypical for two parties to go into a negotiation with different outcomes in mind. Although they may not explicitly state that the offer is flexible, about 70% of hiring managers expect a salary and benefits negotiation when they make a job offer.

When to negotiate

Negotiating a salary is a choice and is not something that you have to do to get the job. There are a few things to consider when deciding to negotiate or not. First, only negotiate with an employer whose offer you would plan to accept if the negotiation goes well. However, if you have multiple offers in front of you at the same time that you are seriously interested in, you can use the salary of one job offer to negotiate the salary of another. Starting a negotiation conversation is often a message to the hiring manager that you are very close to accepting their offer. Therefore, negotiating a salary you have no intentions to accept will not leave you on good terms with that employer.

The negotiation process

Salary negotiation is a two step that involves doing your research, then negotiating with your potential employer. Doing your research will help you develop your argument for

why you are deserving of a higher offer, and why the range you are proposing makes more sense than their offer.



STEP 1: Research

When doing your research on salary, there are 5 key things to consider:

1. **Industry standard** - What range of salaries are typically offered in this field? Using tools like salary.com or BLS.gov/OOH can help you with this step. However, be mindful that some of these sites give you national averages, so if you're applying to a job in a big city, for example, assume the typical pay is higher! For other sites like BLS you can filter by location. (Click [here](#) for a guide on how to navigate labor market data)
2. **Company and position standard** - Consider company size, location, age, and brand recognition.
3. **What other benefits are they offering** - Consider healthcare, retirement contributions, tuition benefits, stock options, signing bonuses. (NOTE: if the salary is non-negotiable, these benefits definitely are!)
4. **What do you bring** - What skills, experiences, and qualities uniquely qualify you for the role.
5. **How much do you want it** - What opportunities could this role lead to

Using the information you have found through your research, you can determine a salary range you will use in your negotiation. The bottom line of your range will be the lowest amount that you are willing to accept. Your desired, reasonable salary will be

what you expect to receive based on your research and conversations with people in the field. This number will serve as the lower end of the range you give them, since they are likely to negotiate down. Your aspirational salary, or the number you would be thrilled to get, will serve as the higher end of the range you present to the hiring manager. In general, your range should not go so far outside of what was offered to you that it becomes unreasonable.



STEP 2: Negotiating your offer

Set up a time to chat! This isn't a conversation you'd want to have via email since there will likely be a lot of back and forth, so setting up a time to talk will be beneficial. Here is an example of what an email to arrange a time for a discussion might look like:

Dear Alex,

Thank you for sharing the offer information with me. I was happy to receive it. I have a few questions I was hoping to discuss with you via phone as I consider this opportunity. Would you have a few minutes to speak today or tomorrow? Below are some times I am free to connect, however do let me know if these don't work for you and I can send along others.

- Monday, any time from 1 – 3pm
- Tuesday, any time from 11am – 2pm.

Best,
Jaime

During the actual negotiation, make your case by outlining what you bring to the role – experience, knowledge, skills, and any other qualities the team needs that you have. Your argument is about why you are a superb fit for their needs; it is not about your needs (e.g., money for student loans, rent). Open the discussion by expressing gratitude for their time and then present your research findings. You might do this by saying something like:

“First of all, thank you very much for this offer. I’m excited about the opportunity to join your team. Thank you as well for taking the time to speak with me today. I’d like to discuss salary. Based on my research into the industry and role, I was hoping for something in the range of xyz. I strongly feel that my project management and leadership skills as well as academic credentials would allow me to add immediate value to the team. Is salary negotiable?”

During this conversation, avoid qualifiers and boasting. Be aware of your audience; adjust your tone and argument if necessary. Qualifiers undermine your argument (“I just want to ask if…” or “I think I might be worth…”). If you are not feeling confident, talk to advisors, friends, or a CCE career counselor to practice what to say and how to highlight the value you bring. Remind yourself that they want to hire you and have agreed to discuss the offer. Boasting can be a turn off. When explaining why you are a superior candidate do not put down the average candidate – focus on what you bring, not what others lack.

Request what is important to you – salary, title, flex time, telecommuting, training, work space in an office/cubicle, opportunities to work on projects to develop specific skills – but don’t ask for everything. Focus on the 1-3 that really matter. Include all of them in an organized negotiation pitch.

Additionally, keep your tone positive, pleasant and straightforward:

“My research in the industry shows that people in this type of role with my abc (experience, skills etc.) generally make from \$x to \$y”

“I understand your starting salary is usually z for an entry level hire, given my abc I would expect from \$x to \$y”

After presenting your case, it is suggested that you stop talking, listen, and respond. After making the case of why you are highly qualified and proposing a salary, stop. If you say more, you are likely to weaken your argument. Listen to any counter-arguments that they may present, and respond by acknowledging the company’s constraints and reiterating your worth. Depending on the conversation, you may agree to a lower number or propose something in between, or move onto another item. If they cannot meet your salary request, you might ask what else they can offer as far as benefits, time off etc. You can present this by saying something like “If salary is not negotiable, are any other benefits negotiable such as xyz?”

Once the negotiation conversation is over, you may respond in the moment with your final decision on whether you would like to accept the job offer or not. However, you may also take some additional time to weigh your options, if needed. It is perfectly acceptable to take a little bit of time afterwards to consider the final terms of the offer. If the employer has set a particular deadline for when they would like your decision, you can tell them that you will get back to them by the requested date. If they have not set a deadline, it is recommended to respond with your decision within a week’s time. You can close the conversation by saying something like “Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I really appreciate it. I’ll need a little time to think everything over and will be in touch by the requested deadline.”

Let’s talk!

For more info don’t hesitate to [schedule a career advising session](#) to dive into your specific negotiation plan and to practice.