

Evaluating Job Offers & Salary Negotiation

You've been offered a job. Your first reaction was probably somewhere in the range of intense euphoria. Your second reaction, however, should be one of serious consideration. Getting a job offer does not mean you have to say yes right away. Many graduates accept jobs quickly and on the basis of salary alone, and later regret their choice after finding that the job is too demanding, or too boring, or not developmental.

Evaluating a job offer carefully requires as much effort as writing a resume or preparing for an interview. Be prepared to discuss salary as well, and don't hesitate to contact your program coordinator at the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services if you're feeling stuck.

Evaluating Job Offers

Carefully weigh all the important factors listed below in considering the offer:

- Job content or nature of the work
- Your future boss
- Salary and benefits
- Co-workers and corporate culture
- Typical work week
- Location

Most employers do not expect an immediate answer, but you should be timely. Acknowledge receipt of all job offers right away and promptly inform the employer of your plans, which are outlined below.

Job Offer Options

- *Stall* – Not Ready to Make a Decision: Express appreciation for the offer. Tell them that because this is an important decision you would like some time to carefully think about it. Agree on a reasonable time frame to get back to the company. You should not need to accept any offer on the spot. If you are waiting to hear back from other companies with whom you have interviewed, contact those companies and find out when they will be making a decision, informing candidates, and, if you can, find out whether you are being considered for the position.
- *Accept* – You Really Want This Job: Show your appreciation for the offer. Ask the employer to confirm the offer in writing. *Do not* interview for any other positions. Reject all other offers immediately by telephone or e-mail. Report your job to the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services.
- *Reject* – Thanks, But No Thanks: Express appreciation for the offer. Say something positive about the organization and be diplomatic. Let them know that the position is not a good fit at this time.

Ethics of Accepting or Rejecting an Offer

Once you accept a job offer, even verbally, you *must not* back out, or renege on the job, to work for another employer. If you have any questions/concerns about this, discuss them with your program coordinator *before* taking action!

Good employer relations are vital to RIT's relationship with employers, and you, the student, are a critical link in this relationship. In addition, renegeing on an offer could damage your chances of future employment with that company. Therefore, consider carefully before accepting a position.

- Discuss offers thoroughly with employers so you understand the terms and reach a mutually acceptable date to respond to their offer.
- Request extensions from employers if you need more time to consider other offers. Do not ignore deadline dates you have agreed upon.
- Notify employers that you are accepting or rejecting an offer as soon as you make your decision — never later than the arranged date.
- Once you accept a job offer, immediately inform other employers who have offers pending. Honor your acceptance of an offer as a contractual agreement with the employer.
- Cancel any other scheduled interviews or on-site visits.

Salary Negotiation

Preparation and Research

Many factors determine salary offers; the type of work you perform (based on your skills, education, and experience level), the industry, company size and the geographical area. Keep in mind that there is more room for negotiation when discussing full-time offers versus co-op or short-term employment.

Start by learning what the typical salary range is for the job and what your skills are worth. Salary range information is available from a variety of sources including trade magazines, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Internet. The Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services Web site has salary information, for specific programs, collected from both co-op and graduating students.

Next, determine your salary requirement. Work out a monthly budget incorporating all of your real and anticipated expenses, savings, "fun" money, and a cushion for emergencies. Remember that taxes come off the top of each paycheck, approximately 28% of your gross income.

Salary Discussions

Early in the process the employer may try to find out if the company can afford you. You can choose to do one of the following:

- Ignore the request, which is obviously risky.
- Inquire if there is a set salary range for the position.
- Acknowledge the request and say that you are open and flexible about starting salary, but that you expect to receive competitive compensation.
- Provide your salary requirements, but only after you have done your research. You should provide the employer with a broad range and make sure you are comfortable with the bottom range figure!

Generally, you should wait for the employer to bring up the salary issue. Ideally, this happens near the end of the interview process when you know more about the position. However, if the employer does not mention salary, and you are at the point of seriously considering a position with the company, it is appropriate for you to bring up the salary issue.

Factors beyond Salary

Keep in mind the benefits the company is offering, as well as other perks such as: 401K, relocation expenses, company car, bonus, vacation, holidays, life and medical insurance, tuition assistance, and stock purchase or savings plan. These benefits can add as much as 30-40% to your actual salary.

Sample Negotiation Scripts

Avoid being confrontational; be reasonable in your approach. Reiterate that you are very interested in working for the employer and you want to find a way to work this out.

“At the present time my salary requirements are negotiable within the range of high thirties to low forties.”

“Given the responsibilities of this job, I would expect this position to pay in the range of ___ to ___.”

“Thank you for the offer. I am very excited about working for you because ABC Company is my first choice. However, knowing the going rate is _____, I was really looking for something in the range of ___ to _____. Is there any possibility of that?”

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