



Negotiating a starter salary can be a daunting prospect for many new starters, but is a vital part of establishing your worth within your new company.

Negotiating the starting salary can be more nerve racking than attending the initial interview. Perhaps you're someone who feels reluctant to ask for more money for a variety of reasons ranging from self-esteem to a lack of confidence. Being grateful for the job offer and anxious about receiving a "no", or not being bothered to even ask are not good approaches to negotiating a salary which truly reflects your full worth.

During the salary negotiation process, most employers will ask themselves "does this candidate have most or all of the skills needed to perform this role?". Candidates who tick all the boxes can expect to be offered higher salaries than those who just scrape through. Other factors for hiring managers to consider include a candidate's previous salary and the benchmarked rate for that particular role. Generally, candidates who are seeking a new job will desire the same or a slightly higher salary so it's important to negotiate wisely at this point. Although some employers will indicate a starting salary prior to interview, there are many others that don't. In these cases it is wise to take extra care in negotiating your starting salary.

When you are offered a job, you have a unique opportunity to position yourself as a valuable asset in the organisation and to set your level of remuneration accordingly. To achieve this, you need to establish an appropriate level of salary – and it is wise to think about this early in case it should come up during your interview.

On the one hand you don't want to oversell yourself and price yourself out of the market; on the other hand you need to avoid selling yourself short. It can be extremely difficult to change your position significantly once you're in a pay structure. Some people have spent the first few years in a new job trying to make up the gap between their salary and colleagues' in the same role. Here are some tips for you to follow to ensure you get the right package you deserve.



Research your market before negotiating your salary. Familiarise yourself with the company that has offered you a position. Look at the range of packages offered for similar positions in the adverts online or in the jobs. If you are a member of a union, they will have information on acceptable salary ranges for your profession.

Don't bluff in your negotiation and try to play off fictitious job offers against the real one you're hoping to get. Employers generally don't respond well to this kind of pressure, and instead of receiving a speedy offer, you're likely to be left with nothing. However, if you do genuinely have another offer, be candid about what you are being offered (without giving away the other organisation's name).

If you are forced to answer a question about your salary hopes at the beginning of the recruitment process, have a figure ready that is at the higher end of the scale. You can always supplement this with a request for a particular benefits package. If the salary offered is less than you had hoped for, you can discuss the benefits package and make provision for an early salary review. If you have a job already, don't assume you'll be offered more than your former salary – especially if you're competing with someone who is equally qualified but willing to work for less.

Make sure you check out the salary package, not just the number of zeroes on your pay slip. The extra things an employer offers may be worth more than their weight in gold, but they might just be thrown in to make the company seem more appealing. Some employers have fixed-scale salaries in which case there is little room for negotiation. However, you may find that the total package of pay and benefits raises the worth of the salary to an acceptable level. For instance, you may be offered private health cover, a non-contributory pension, a fully financed car and/or significant bonus potential.



When bonuses are mentioned, you may want to discuss the basis on which the bonus is paid, so that you are absolutely clear about the terms and conditions attached to it. Some bonus schemes spread the payments over several years as an incentive to stay with the business. Such complexities can be off-putting.

Remember the tax implications. All the benefits included in a package are taxed as benefits in kind, for example company cars.

When negotiating, be persuasive and consistent in your arguments but be prepared to compromise. If you are successful in your negotiations, ask for the agreed terms and conditions to be confirmed in writing ASAP.

Appearing too eager can ruin your negotiating position. Being too laid back or diffident can portray a lack of professionalism or overconfidence. Either approach can damage your case and the impression that you create with your employer.

Increasingly as the jobs market improves candidates are beginning to politely decline job offers if the salary or the package isn't quite what they had expected. So, whilst you don't want to price yourself out of the market be bold when negotiating your package and be prepared to accept a lower salary if necessary. You can always negotiate down, but never back up.

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