

Negotiating an Offer

Always remember, this is the start of the relationship with your employer. Negotiations will set the tone of that relationship. Ask for too little and you will be disadvantaged throughout your time with that employer; ask for too much or be too pushy, and you can set a negative tone to the relationship before it truly develops. Everyone involved wants to walk away from the negotiations feeling good about the deal. Keep patience, tone of voice, and your bottom line in check. Most companies aim to treat you fairly with their offer and want you to be happy and accept the position. Make sure to not come across as greedy or unreasonable, as you may cause the deal to fall through.

Be prepared. Make sure to do your research in advance. Know as much as possible about your market value and the employer before starting the discussion.

Examine your priorities. What do you really want? Salary? Equity? Other benefits? Besides allowing you to clearly define your terms in the negotiation process, examining your priorities will help you determine the type of company for which you want to work.

Know your skills. Be able to clearly demonstrate the skills you will bring to the job. Be able to demonstrate the value you will add for the employer. Assess the situation and know if your skills are in high demand – is it better to stress those abilities or should you focus elsewhere?

Honesty is essential. There is no advantage to lying in employment negotiations. You risk

more by lying than you are likely to gain. At the same time, though, there is no need to reveal too much information. This applies to information about yourself as well as your salary history and requirements. Read the situation and determine what you need/want to say and when it should be said.

Fairness matters. Fairness is a basic principle of negotiations. Employers make offers and keep negotiations within a certain range based on budget and organizational structure, and they aim to be reasonable. Every request you make needs to be made with this fairness in mind. The employer wants you to accept the offer and for you to feel as though you've been treated fairly.

Consider the value of the total package. Remember to consider other ways to achieve your negotiation objectives. Be open to making tradeoffs to increase the overall value of the deal. Find creative options that allow you to get what you are looking for and allow the company to remain flexible and fair in their offerings. Don't let the act of "winning" become more important than achieving your goals.