

## NEGOTIATING BASICS

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So here you are; you wrote a great resume and cover letter, you presented yourself confidently to the company, and you interviewed like a seasoned veteran. Now you wait; this is the hardest part of the entire job search process. Don't ever attempt to negotiate before you have the offer. Until the offer is made the employer is holding all the power in the relationship. The call comes. Congratulations! You just received a job offer and you are thinking about accepting it, but before you do, there are a few things for you to consider.

- As soon as the offer is made, the power shifts to you. After you receive a job offer is when you have the most negotiating leverage!
- Always thank the employer for the offer. It is acceptable to ask for some time to review the offer. Employers should give a minimum of one to two days, but a week is an acceptable request.
- Create a budget so you know exactly how much it is going to take to support yourself and your family.
- List pros and cons of accepting the offer as it stands.
- Step back and ask if you've been offered a fair salary? Is it reasonable for the years of experience, geographic location, and expertise? Research the cost of living for the region and regional wages. The salary calculator at [www.homefair.com](http://www.homefair.com) will help you take into account the city and cost of living. The Bureau of Labor Statistics [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov) has national information and is an excellent resource. Your local Employment Security Commission will have county and state figures and information. Do your research!
- Determine what would make the offer better, within reason.
- Keep in mind you can negotiate more than just the salary. Other items to consider negotiating are vacation or personal leave, benefit package, moving expenses, or a signing bonus.

### COUNTEROFFERS

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- If the salary offer is low, make a counteroffer. You will know the offer is low by comparing the offer to industry standards, or to other offers you may have.
- When you make a counteroffer, be able to support the salary you are requesting. In other words, do your homework. Investigate the salaries of similar positions (within the same company if possible) in the geographical area with experience similar to yours. An excellent resource is [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com).
- If the employer won't raise the offer and you still want the job, negotiate a contingency that your contract will be evaluated in 3 to 6 months and if your work meets certain standards you will receive an amount you both agreed upon. Make certain you have this in writing so you have a record of the agreement in case the individual who hires you leaves the company.

### ACCEPTING THE OFFER

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- When accepting an offer be gracious and make sure you get everything in writing.
- After you have verbally accepted the offer, you need to send a written letter of acceptance. Send this on the same high quality paper matching your cover letter and resume.
- Your letter needs to contain the date you accepted the offer, the salary you accepted, any special provisions of your contract and your start date. Be sure to sign your letter. Be prompt at getting this in the mail.
- You may receive a contract from the employer to sign and return.