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How To Negotiate A Better Salary – The Inside Story

By Laura Adams

Congratulations! The hard work you have put into your job search has paid off. You now have a job offer on the table and are excited about the opportunities that this position presents. There is just one thing that is troubling you: the offered salary.

It is not unusual for the final part of the job search process to involve salary negotiation, but this conversation can cause even the most seasoned professionals to break into a sweat. A basic understanding of the negotiation process and methods to make salary negotiations go smoothly, though, will serve to both alleviate your anxiety and improve your negotiating effectiveness.

The key is to evaluate your qualifications and determine what your skills are worth in the current employment market. Ideally, you should begin research salary ranges before you even begin the job search process. To determine your approximate market worth, you can contact any one of the following sources:

- Professional associations or journals in your field
- Your state labor office
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Career Centers

You may also conduct a search of salary ranges on the internet to determine what companies are paying professionals with your background. Keep in mind that salaries range depending on a number of factors including years of professional experience, education, industry, geographic location, number of employees, and benefits. In order to get your estimated worth as accurate as possible, you will need to consider these factors.

Once you have done your research, you can now enter the salary negotiation process with a firm understanding of the value of your skills in the marketplace

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It's important to approach the negotiation in a professional manner and for both you and the employer to maintain the mutual respect and trust that you have enjoyed throughout the hiring process. After all, if the negotiation works out, you will be working for the company, so don't burn any bridges before you start orientation.

A couple of key tips:

--Do not personalize conflict. It is important to remember that you and the employer have different interests and that negotiation is a give-and-take process.

--Always be tactful and diplomatic.

--Persuade rather than coerce.

--Establish a common ground for agreement.

--Remain objective and focused on your priorities.

--Clearly describe the benefits of your proposal.

--Be persistent, but know when to let go and when to walk away.

Finally, be flexible in your negotiations. If you sense that an employer is making you the best possible offer based on available financial resources, considering negotiating for a better benefits package as an alternative.

In conclusion, by taking a close look at your unique skills and understanding their value in the current market, you are better prepared to approaching salary negotiation as a mutually beneficial discussion between you and the employer. Such an attitude will not only allow you to maintain your professionalism, but will greatly increase the likelihood that your negotiations will be a success.

Laura Adams is a qualified careers advisor with 11 years experience.

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Increase Your Value, Increase Your Salary

By Jill Frank

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Although money shouldn't be the most important factor in career decisions, it has a big impact on our lives. How much money we earn will dictate where we live, where we vacation, the lifestyle we enjoy, and how and when we will retire.

When you work for someone else, you have a limited amount of control over your salary. You negotiate your starting salary and then you are given increases at management's discretion for annual reviews and promotions. Do you want more control over your salary? By understanding and increasing the value you provide to your organization, you have the ability to increase the amount of money you can earn.

Here are five ways to start increasing the value you provide to the organization and ultimately, the salary that you earn.

1. Specialize in a new area. Research upcoming trends in your industry or find an area of weakness in your organization and establish yourself as the expert. It may require additional education, training or certifications, but if you are the go-to person for all related matters, you become an indispensable asset.
2. Make a direct impact on the bottom line. The sole purpose of every company is to generate a profit. Suggest a new way to service your existing customer base to create a new income stream. If you do not work directly in a revenue producing area of business, implement new practices that will save the company money. Calculate the impact you have on the bottom line and your value will be evident.
3. Be professional at all times. Although it sounds like a no-brainer, it can be easy to get caught up in office politics. Rise above the pettiness that can occur when a group of coworkers spend more time with each other than they do with their own families. Negative attitudes can significantly lower the production of a group. Participating in trivial activities can impact your annual raises and limits your opportunities for advancement.
4. Do something different. The danger of having a routine is that you rarely leave your comfort zone. Playing it safe doesn't produce the "WOW" effect. Expand your focus and start taking calculated risks to drastically increase your results. Don't be afraid to speak up in meetings with new and different ideas that will bring a fresh approach to achieving organizational goals.
5. Know your market value. It's important to keep abreast of changes in the market. Become familiar with tools and websites that provide updated salary data, know what the competition is paying, and understand your company's compensation policies. Armed with this information, you will be better equipped to negotiate annual and promotional salary adjustments.

Salary is a complicated subject. Getting paid more money isn't something that can be accomplished overnight. Most organizations have a budget for salary increases that is divided among eligible employees. Put yourself in management's shoes for a minute. Is the value you provide to the company worth more or less than your colleagues? Once you take the emotional piece out of the salary equation, you can objectively create a plan to start getting paid what you are truly worth.

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Jill Frank is "The Promotion Coach." Get her FREE report, "7 Unintentional Actions That Will Slow Your Climb Up the Corporate Ladder" and FREE advice on corporate advancement at

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