



Negotiating your Salary

The final stage in finding a new job or career is negotiating your new remuneration package. Many roles offer the chance to negotiate the final terms and conditions of employment.

Not every position gives you the ability to discuss the terms and conditions of your employment. Most part time and entry level positions have fixed pay rates or packages. However, many recruiters are now reporting that package negotiation is extending into many junior roles.

The first thing you should do is research the company and industry the position is with. Is the company known to look after it's employees? Has recent staff turnover been higher than usual? What is the going rate for someone of your skills and qualifications in that industry? What do you bring to the role over and above the 'normal' skills which might given you leverage in negotiations?

Remember, final salary isn't everything – does your prospective employer offer other services like corporate discounts, gym memberships, childcare, laundry or meals. In a crowded recruitment industry employers are competing for appropriately qualified and experienced staff with new incentives.

Look at similar positions within the industry and try to compare your level of experience with that sought by other companies. This is difficult to gauge, but with the help of a recruitment consultant or career advisor you should gain some valuable insights into your worth. You can also familiarise yourself with your chosen industry and career by reading all or many of the recruitment ads for that industry. This will provide you with insight into the types of jobs available, the career progression within the industry, average salaries and also how jobs are recruited in the industry (for example, are do companies predominately use the services of recruitment firms or do they recruit internally).

Don't be afraid to negotiate

For many senior positions negotiation will form part of the required job skills and your future employer will expect you to show your abilities. Negotiation is always two sided, although many people forget this, particularly when it comes to salary negotiation. Remember, you have something they want (you, along with your skills and experience) and they have something you want (as large a pay packet as you can get).

As in all negotiations timing is crucial. Neither you nor your prospective employer want to give ground first. If you can at all avoid it, you don't want to be the one to mention a dollar figure first.

A clever interviewer understands this and will try and push you into making a statement. One of the easiest ways for an interviewer to do this is to ask about your current salary. A simple enough question but it locks you into a range for the interviewer to work with.

If you do have to answer this type of question it is best to be truthful but you should also let the interviewer know that this is your current salary. What's the point of changing jobs if your salary doesn't also change for the better. As an aside, this is assuming that the position's salary is the most important thing. If you are interested in other incentives on offer then these also need to be factored into your negotiations. To use some previous examples, laundry or childcare can add up over time and it may be worthwhile taking a cut in base salary to gain these perks.

If you do have to give a figure first the best alternative is to give a range. To do this however you need to have a fairly accurate idea on what the industry pays. Research really is important for this stage. If you state that you think the position is worth \$55,000 to \$65,000 you have made a number of subtle statements. You have outlined the absolute minimum salary (in this example \$55,000) you would find acceptable along with what you think your skills and abilities are worth to your prospective employer.

Remember in salary negotiations it is your aim to get the final offer as close to \$65,000 and it is the interviewers to get it as low as possible.

Good luck with your negotiations and happy job hunting!