



Evaluating & Negotiating Job Offers

CBU Career Services

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STEP ONE: PREPARATION

- Before you can assess a job offer, you must make sure you have information about the market. Important information includes:
 - Identify salary averages for your field and in your geographic area of interest.
 - Know what average salaries your peers received (i.e. those CBU graduates with similar experiences).
 - Identify norms in your field as far as where you can push in negotiation, and which things are non-negotiable such as benefits or stock options. Where can you find this information: Occupational Outlook Handbook, Web sites, Career Services, network (faculty, internship supervisors, mentors, etc...)
- Identify and rank your value issues. This will help you remember an offer is not just about salary, but about what you value in a position. The issues may include:

Location

Stability

Independence

Mental Stimulation

Personal Growth

Low Stress Level

Challenge

Responsibility

Benefits

Supervisory Style

Teamwork

Recognition

Variety

Competition

Flexibility

Prestige

Public Contact

Salary

Making Decisions

Helping Others

Physical Work Environment

- Decide on the minimum amount of compensation (make it realistic with the type of job offered) that will make you satisfied. Establish a budget, and don't neglect to account for taxes taken out of your pay. There is no point in accepting an offer if you think you'll be unsatisfied and want to look for another job in the near future. If an employer refuses to meet or exceed this amount, it is to your advantage to keep looking.

STEP TWO: KNOW THE EMPLOYER'S COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

- How does a job offer process develop? Although there are many ways to deliver an offer, they are typically presented from one of three different viewpoints. Companies fall into one of these three categories depending upon their attitude about salary and negotiation. Here are those various philosophies and what the difference might mean to you:
 - Fixed Offer: You can negotiate all you want, but it won't do you any good. They operate on a take it or leave it basis so you may not want to waste your time negotiating.
 - Pay-Grade System: This is a system in which a salary range has been set and you will be paid within this range based on your experience and the duties associated with the job. You may be able to negotiate within the salary range. The pay-grade system is the most common compensation system encountered.
 - The Negotiator: This type of system is rare because most organizations work within a structure. In this framework, the employer will have the authority to raise or lower your salary without going through bureaucratic red tape.

STEP THREE: SALARY AND BENEFIT NEGOTIATION

- If an employer makes an offer that is below your expectation, you don't want to offend them, so you might start the conversation by asking what the benefits include. To proceed, you might want to use one of the following approaches to begin the negotiation process:
 - Approach 1: I am very interested in the position, but I would like to discuss the salary you are offering.
 - Approach 2: I really want this position, but I was a little disappointed that the offer was lower than I expected.
- When using either approach, be certain to support your case by stating your skills, the average salary range for your level of experience in your field and the average salaries for CBU graduates in your field. It is best to let the employer respond and then continue the discussion from their lead.

- Based on an employer's compensation guidelines, you may not be able to negotiate a higher salary. However, you may be able to increase your compensation in benefits. Negotiable areas often include: vacation time (it's often increased for more senior employees), educational reimbursement, flex time, and salary review (you might negotiate a salary review after three months rather than six months or a year). Remember, you may be negotiating with the person who will be your supervisor. Stay polite. Try to make it a win-win situation.

STEP FOUR: ASSESSING THE JOB OFFER

- Consider the pros and the cons of the offer. It may help to create a chart. A chart may also be helpful if you have had more than one offer and you want to compare and contrast the merits of each offer.

Here is a sample:

FACTOR	OFFER A	OFFER B	OFFER C
Job Responsibilities			
Company Reputation/Stability			
Salary			
Health Insurance			
Paid Vacation			
Pension/Retirement			
Tuition Reimbursement			
Training/Professional Development			
Location			
Supervisor			
Co-Workers			
Travel			
Overtime			
Signing Bonus			
Stock Options			

STEP FIVE: GET IT IN WRITING!

- It would be nice if everything discussed would actually occur, but unfortunately it doesn't always happen that way. To avoid problems in the future, ask for a letter of employment which states all the employment conditions agreed upon, (i.e. salary and benefits as well as a thorough job description). This way, if there is confusion at a later date, you will have a written document to refer to stating the conditions under which you were hired. This document is especially important if the conditions of your employment differ from normal company policies.

A FINAL WORD

- Keep in mind that if you decide to negotiate, your job offer will not be rescinded by the employer - even if he/she decides not to negotiate. Also, if a position is acceptable to you as it is offered, you should not feel like you must negotiate.

INTERNET RESOURCES

- **Career Services** – www.cbu.edu/career (Salary Calculator via CareerLinX)
- **Job Web - Relocation Resources** – <https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Tips/relocate.aspx>
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook** – Provides career/salary information <https://www.bls.gov/bls/employment.htm>
- **Salaries and Profiles** – Includes an industry-by-industry look at salaries from the National Business Employment Weekly - register and search for the page of your choice. <http://public.wsj.com/>
- **Quintessential Careers** – Provides a variety of resources and links for job seekers including resources on the web about salary negotiation http://www.quintcareers.com/salary_negotiation.html
- **JobStar Central** – Provides links to over 300 salary surveys and tips on salary negotiation. <http://jobstar.org>
- **PayScale** – Salary information for specific positions. http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Country=United_States/Salary