



# Salary negotiation basics

In today's job search process, the ability to successfully negotiate is a necessity, and one that can take your earning power to a new level. When you take the action to negotiate in a manner that makes you confident as well as those around you comfortable, you increase your chances of success. With these thoughts in mind, you need to be ready to present your case. This column explores three salary negotiation guidelines that are basic to the overall process.

1. *Do your homework.* Keys to successful salary negotiation are researching information, understanding your strengths, recognizing the fair market value of your position, knowing your competition and planning your approach to be able to respond to the needs of the employer. Going into a negotiation setting with the necessary knowledge will certainly place you in a better bargaining position.

Two of the best websites I've experienced to gather information, in addition to the company's website, are [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) and [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com). These sites can assist you in identifying your worth by conducting research on current salaries for your specific profession, job title and geographical location. These sites also use various tools for calculating a salary to meet your criteria to avoid either under or overselling yourself and also provide numerous other points of interest. Another resource to consider that actually offers a salary negotiation tutorial is [\[reers.com\]\(http://reers.com\). In addition, three books I suggest are "Get Paid What You're Worth: The Expert Negotiator's Guide to Salary and Compensation" by Robin L. Pinkley and Gregory B. Northcraft, "101 Negotiating Salary Secrets: How to Negotiate Like a Pro," and a book written especially for women by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, "Women Don't Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation — and Positive Strategies for Change."](http://www.quintca-</a></p>
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2. *Negotiate a win-win.* In her book, "Job Offer! A How-to Negotiation Guide," author Maryanne L. Wegerbauer suggests, "The negotiation process is not about strong-arm tactics, or win/lose. It is a two-way process where you and your prospective employer are each trying to get something you each need. In a negotiation, you're both designing the terms of a transaction so each of you will receive the maximum benefit from the final agreement."

Wegerbauer also recommends you bear in mind counteroffers are an expected part of many negotiations, so remain flexible. Many large companies can give negotiations more or less latitude, smaller companies may have more leeway and unionized companies usually have very little room for individual negotiations. So, be prepared with a rationale for every situation in order to strengthen your position.

3. *Money isn't everything.* A job is not always about the money. While salary is certainly a significant ele-

ment of a job offer, it is by no means the only point of consideration. The total compensation package includes all of the benefits and other "perks" provided to you as an employee of the company. There are many benefits that may be negotiated in addition to salary. Consider flexibility in job working hours, extra vacation time, tuition reimbursement, a signing bonus, profit sharing, cell phone, laptop, company car and the list goes on. And, a point to always keep in

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mind, simply enjoying the job, being confident of the job fit and the new possibilities it provides are keys to achieving job satisfaction.

Bottom line — these three guidelines are designed to get you started in mastering the art of negotiation. A key point of which you should be ever mindful, the company apparently wants you, or they would not be offering you the job. Proceed into your next negotiation with a strategic approach, positive attitude, passion and interest, as well as confidence in stressing your value.

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