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# Points to ponder when accepting a job offer

## Part 1

Whether you've been interviewing for a while or recently completed a couple of interviews, you will generally breathe a sigh of relief when you finally receive that seemingly elusive job offer. Are you ready to say "yes," sign the offer, ask when you start and then jump on board? Probably. Yet, is that the best decision you could make? Probably not. Or, do you need to take a few steps and ask a few questions to be certain you're making a well-informed decision? Probably so. In this two-part article, I'll share points to consider before you say "yea" or "nay" to that job offer.

Let's begin by taking a few steps back to before the interview. When most of us received that call for a job interview, many folks we know told us to be sure to do our homework: Research the company, job and any other areas of importance. It was suggested we should prepare for "generally asked questions" and ask questions of the interviewer, such as:

- What would you consider to be exceptional performance from someone in this position during the first 90 days?
- How would you characterize successful employees in the department in which this position exists?
- What are some of the typical career paths followed by others in this position? What would be a realistic time frame for advancement?
- Will I be accountable to just one person, or will I have more than one supervisor?

- What are the opportunities for personal and professional development?

- How would you describe your organization's culture?

- How do you perceive most employees would describe this organization?

- Given the current economic climate, what would you say is the No. 1 challenge your organization is experiencing?

- What are some performance benchmarks a new hire needs to be aware of during the first year of employment?

- What do you consider the most important day-to-day responsibilities of this job?

- What skills and values do you consider critical to success in this job?

- May I ask what you enjoy most about working for this company?

- Can you please tell me about the team I'll be working with?

- How does this department communicate, and how do the others in the company communicate across department lines?

These questions are just a few you can ask during an interview, and the responses can give you a good understanding of what it might be like to work for that company. Remember, an interview is a two-way street; the interviewer is trying to determine if you're a good fit for the position. You, on the other hand, should be looking to determine if the job and company are a good fit for you, your values and lifestyle.

Now, on to the job offer itself! Most job offers today are in a formal written document format, including salary, start date, working hours, job description, a one or two-page summary of benefits and eligibility, and a deadline for signing the offer along with other documents that need to be signed. If there is no signing deadline, it is certainly appropriate to ask for a few days to consider the offer. When your offer is simply verbal, research suggests you thank the company for the offer and then politely ask for a formal offer letter. Should that be a problem, perhaps you should rethink the offer.

Before you seal the deal, be sure to evaluate the offer. Process the pros and cons. Is the position truly a good fit for you? Consider how the job fits into both your short- and long-term career goals. The last event you want to happen is you say "yes" to the job offer and then three months down the road you're back in the job search.

Next month, I'll discuss the many other points/questions to consider before signing on the dotted line.

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