

# Job Offers

## Evaluating And Negotiating Job Offers

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With job offer in hand, you have clearly executed a successful job search! However, how can you be sure this offer is the right one for you to accept? Here are some things To Consider:

Before making an important decision such as accepting a job offer, individuals should look at a job offer as it relates to their individual, family, and career goals.

**INDIVIDUAL NEEDS/GOALS** - Does this job match your interests, values, skills, personality, and beliefs? Does it provide you with the lifestyle, prestige, independence, creativity, security, altruism, and economic returns you are looking for in a job?

**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES** - Does this job accommodate your needs and lifestyle preference with regard to your family? Is the geographical location conducive to you and your family's hobbies, community activities, and social support groups?

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# *“Are the company’s goals and ideals in line with your own?”*

## **A Few Factors to Consider:**

1. **The Job Content** – Is the nature of the work something you will find interesting and challenging? Will it fit into your long-range career goals? Job title is not as important as what skills and abilities you will actually be using.
2. **Your boss** – Can you get along with and work with this person? Will this boss serve as a mentor to you? You will want to work for a supervisor who is capable and who will be committed to helping you learn and succeed.
3. **Salary and Benefits** – Is the pay at market level? How are salary reviews and promotions determined? Potential salary growth is more important than starting salary. Salary is not the only compensation; consider the entire benefits package when considering the offer.

6. **Your Lifestyle** – Will it fit in with your lifestyle? Will overtime or on-call be required? Will it interfere with commitments to family, friends, and outside activities?

## **Career Goals -**

Are the nature of the employer, the job’s pay and benefits, and the work activities what you are looking for in a job? What is the employer’s reputation? Is the training program attractive and comprehensive? Does the organization provide advancement and mentoring opportunities? Will you be given significant responsibility? Are the surroundings and people pleasant? Is there job security? Does it offer room for professional, personal, and educational growth? Is the salary adequate for your needs? How does the benefit package compare to those of other employers?

## **Take The Time You Need To Decide**

Occasionally employers will make the offer at their final interview, though most frequently it will come later, sometimes via telephone. There is no reason to accept any offer immediately and most employers will not expect you to accept on the spot. Be prepared to tell them that you need a day or so to consider it, and pre-arrange a time to reconvene.

Though it is very exciting to get a job offer, be prepared by making sure you remember to ask for all the details, such as salary, benefits, etc. To avoid any misunderstandings, write down the following information during your conversation with the employer:

4. **Corporate Culture** – Are the company’s goals and ideals in line with your own? Is the team of coworkers you will have capable? Will they help you succeed?
5. **Location** – Will you need to relocate to accept this job? Will you have a long commute?

1. Position title
2. Salary
3. Supervisor’s name
4. Detailed commission plan (if in sales)
5. Location (where you will work on a daily basis)
6. Reporting date
7. Expectations of travel
8. Relocation expenses offered
9. Signing bonus (if any)
10. Deadline to give an answer





### Ask For A “Formal” Offer Letter

It is standard procedure for most organizations to give you a verbal offer over the telephone and then send you a formal letter, detailing the offer. This formal offer letter will usually include a place for you to sign and accept the offer and send it back. Some smaller companies may not follow this procedure, but as there is no way to document a telephone conversation, you should insist on receiving this letter before you give them a final answer. Be careful to compare what was offered over the phone and what is on the letter and ask about any discrepancies.



### Negotiable Items

Once you have received your offer, you now know that the company wants you to come aboard. Employers are often willing to negotiate certain points, including salary, in order to get you to accept the offer. As long as your requests are not unreasonable or demanding, you can often negotiate an even better package than what is originally offered.

If you do try to negotiate, be careful to stay modest, professional and mindful of the company's needs. If they feel they are being strong-armed, they will likely rescind the offer, fearful that you may be difficult to work with.

Keep in mind that salaries may or may not be negotiable. In order to make an educated decision on what is an acceptable and fair salary for the position,

you should research salaries offered in your field by geographical location, experience, and degree level.

If the position is in a new state, town, or even country, take the time to research the area and visit. Find out if the community offers the lifestyle you want, and if you would be happy living there. Remember that the cost of living is different in different areas, and this must be taken into account when you are considering the offer. A good resource to use for this research can be found at [www.homefair.com](http://www.homefair.com) (check the research and reports sections).

Once you have accepted the position, show your appreciation for the offer. It is best to write a letter accepting the offer even if you have accepted verbally.

At this point, you should decline other offers for interviews from other employers. Do respond to contacts, as you may run into the same professionals again in your career.

**Work Hours (Flextime):** Flextime is the most popular work option available and usually the easiest negotiable item to get approved. It would allow you a flexible starting and quitting time within management-set limits. For example, if your normal work hours are from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, a flextime schedule might allow you to work from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, or whatever start/stop time that works best for you and is workable for your employer. Unlike other flexible work arrangements – such as telecommuting, job sharing, compressed workweek or part-time – flextime often does not require a written proposal.

**Compressed Workweek:** A compressed workweek is a full-time work option with 40 hours worked in fewer than five days. For example, you may work Monday through Thursday, 10 hours a day, and have Fridays off. You also can work 9-hour days and have every other Friday off. This is very common in government organizations and companies that have a dedication to ensuring that employees have ample personal time and do not get burned out.

**Relocation Expenses / Signing Bonuses:** Often employers have trouble finding the right candidate for the position in their vicinity. This is why they often go outside the area to recruit candidates. The offer for relocation expenses is often noted in the job ad. Relocation expenses may include reimbursement for

travel to the community to look for a home or apartment, mortgage assistance, cost of moving, and/or lodging expenses until you are settled. Your relocation expenses may also be in the form of a signing bonus. If the employer has not expressly made you this offer, this is a great item to negotiate in order to get a better overall package.

**Performance Reviews and Bonuses:** Depending on the position, some employers give bonus incentives for job performance. These salary increases or bonuses are often tied to your appraisal reviews – though this may not always be the case. An offer to do a performance review every twelve months does not equate to a salary review every twelve months. You may be able to negotiate the timing of your salary review every six months instead of every twelve. Also be careful to note that salary increases are very different than bonuses. Salary increases are permanent, whereas, bonuses are a one-time occurrence. If it is a salary increase, all future raises are based on the new salary, thereby making a salary increase exponentially higher each year. Keep these things in mind when using this as a negotiating point.

**Reporting Date:** Your proposed start date is usually discussed prior to an offer being made. In most cases, the start date may be flexible by two or three weeks at the most. In many instances, employers will not be conducting a candidate search unless they need someone in a relatively short period of time. But if you need more time before starting the job, this can become a major point of negotiation. However, be aware of training timelines with companies that hire and train in groups.

### How To Negotiate Your Offer

Once you have decided which offer you want to accept, you will need to take the following steps to ensure an effective negotiation:

**Maintain Your Professionalism:** Too many candidates make the mistake of becoming either too laid back or demanding after they have received an offer. Remember, the person you are negotiating with may be your supervisor or co-worker.

**Decide Your Terms and Limitation:** It is important to determine what you want, but it is also important to know the minimum you will accept for the job. Create a plan that will allow flexibility.

**Negotiate With One Organization At A Time:** Do not spend time and energy negotiating with the organization that is your second or third choice until it is clear that your first choice is no longer an option.

**Make A Final Decision:** Be prepared to make a decision once the organization has stated their final offer. It is not appropriate to try to hold out for more time or another offer.

**Once You Have Accepted, Commit Fully:** Whether it was a hard decision or not, let your employer know that you are with them 100 percent. No one wants someone to work for them who feels as though they “settled” and would rather be elsewhere.

**Declination/Acceptance Letters:** This is the final step in the negotiation and evaluation of your offer. Whether you have decided to accept or decline an offer, you must send formal notification of this decision.

- Declination Letter: Declining an offer should be done in writing and as soon as you accept another position. This is an important step, as you may need this contact later.
- Acceptance Letters: Acceptance letters are extremely important in restating your understanding of the offer. Remember to include the following:
  1. Salary
  2. Starting date and time
  3. Location
  4. Any perks, signing bonuses, etc. that were previously negotiated
  5. Any other factors that you feel were vague or were not in writing



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