Evaluating an Offer

Once you have been given an offer by an employer you may have many questions that will make the decision to accept or decline a difficult one. You may be asking "Is this the right job for me?" "Will I be happy working there?" "What will my career look like if I stay there for five years?" "Is the salary enough?"

Evaluating the Job Offer

Begin with an assessment of yourself, your needs, and desires. Ask yourself a few questions:

- What are my career goals? Does this job offer meet my aspirations and goals?
- What are my priorities and obligations, and will this job offer allow me to fulfill these needs?
- Does this organization meet my standards, morals, and values?
- Will this position offer me enough challenge to grow, learn, and develop new skills?
- Are the salary opportunities, benefits, working environments, etc., what I am looking for?

Begin by researching the position and learning everything you can about it. Evaluate the company’s current position in the industry and learn all about the organization. There are many things to consider when doing this research:

**The Company**
- History
- Financial standing
- Growth and development potential
- Large vs. small company
- International exposure
- Reputation
- Priorities
- Work schedule options
- Community involvement
- Professional development opportunities
- Corporate culture
- Relocation opportunities
- Education benefits
- Stock option benefits

**The Position**
- Promotion potential
- Personality of your potential boss
- Organization’s management style
- Pace of work
- Training provided
- Co-workers
- Working conditions
- Travel/relocation requirements
- Intellectual stimulation
- Social significance of the job
- Overtime required
- Management opportunities
The Location

- Cost of living
- Familiarity of the location
- Entertainment
- People in this location
- Commuting time and cost
- Rural vs. metropolitan setting
- Safety
- Relocation assistance

Benefits Package

Look for dental, vision, 401K, healthcare, and vacation/sick time options. Take into account that sometimes benefits can be so great that they outweigh a lower salary offer. Make sure that your benefits package has full coverage for the items you need and not just partial coverage. Consider your future plans: How will the benefits measure up for your family additions?

Salary and Bonus

It is important not to accept or decline an offer based only on the salary. Take into account the benefits package and the salary growth potential within a company. Bonuses should not entice you into accepting an offer if you are not sure about working there. If the salary is lower than you expected then there may be room to negotiate.

Negotiating a Job Offer

Be sure to research the going rate for the job offer you have received and try to have your salary offer match or beat the going rate. Career counselors at the Career Center will help you answer some of the confusing questions you may have about salary negotiations. The internet is a great resource for finding what you are worth. The NACE Salary Survey, is available at the Career Center and provides national salary averages. Websites like www.salary.com and www.glassdoor.com can also provide salary and employee satisfaction data.

Before you decide to go for the gold, consider how realistic your negotiating is. Ask people in your industry whether it is appropriate for you to negotiate the offered salary based on your skills. Some of the things you may be able to negotiate include, but are not limited to the following: one-time bonuses, tuition assistance, stock options, relocation assistance, flex-time, and extra vacation.

Take an assertive approach but don’t be rude. Be persuasive in conveying your worth to your potential employer. Don’t take it personally. Sometimes the representative that you are negotiating with can’t make decisions on the spot.

Avoid making these mistakes:

1. Don’t be overly aggressive.
2. Don’t be concerned with what others will think if you do negotiate.
3. Don’t be too concerned about losing an offer if you negotiate.
4. Don’t accept on the spot.
5. Don’t begin negotiating before an offer has been made.
6. Don’t negotiate unless you are seriously considering accepting the offer.

The Final Decision

Once you have made a final decision, it is time to notify the employer. First, call to verbally accept or decline the offer. Make sure you have a letter in writing from the employer outlining the offer before you accept it. Now is the time to send a letter of rejection or acceptance to your potential employers. If you decline the offer, you are not required to provide any details about any other offer you decide to accept.

Congratulations, your interviewing journey is over for now. Celebrate and prepare for the first day of work.