

EVALUATING & NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS

JOB SEARCH STRATEGY > RESOURCES

So you have a job offer—congratulations! You're probably pretty excited, but don't let your excitement get in the way of evaluating the offer objectively and making sure that you fully understand the terms being offered to you before you accept it. Whether this is your first job offer or one of many, it is important to understand how to evaluate the offer, and if you are fortunate enough, compare multiple offers. Consider if your values align with the company's values, what kind of work you will be doing, salary and benefits package, geographic location, along with other factors before you accept or decline the offer.

Schedule an appointment with a Career Coach if you are having trouble making a decision and would like to discuss the offers.

SALARY

It sounds obvious, but do not let your excitement to have an offer get in the way of rigorously thinking about the salary you're offered. Ideally, you have a salary range in mind and not make up an arbitrary number. Make sure you base any negotiation on your research about geographic market rates for this type of job using the [Salary.com](https://www.salary.com) Salary Wizard, as well as someone with your skill set and experience. If the offer is below this range, now is the time to negotiate a higher salary.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What is the base salary?
- How soon and frequently can you expect raises?
- How are raises determined (individual merit vs. departmental profitability vs. seniority)?
- What is the average increase in recent years?
- What is your earning potential within this company?
- Is compensation in-line with increases in responsibility?
- What is the bonus potential?
- What opportunities exist for equity or profit-sharing?

Cost of Living: How far will your salary go in your geographic location? While being offered salary of \$125k in New York City may entice you, it is equal to about \$80k in Washington, DC. Use [cost of living calculators](#) to make decisions regarding your salary, especially if deciding between multiple offers in different locations.

BENEFITS

It is just as important to evaluate your benefits package as it is to evaluate your salary. There is no standard list of benefits and perks that you can measure, so you need to evaluate each offer on its merits and determine what benefits you.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- Will you receive medical insurance? Dental insurance? Vision insurance?
- How much vacation and sick time do you receive? Do they accumulate each month or do you get a set amount each fiscal year?
- What is the company policy regarding maternity or paternity leave?
- Are there pension/retirement provisions?
- Can employees determine their own work schedule with flex time or are there set office hours?
- Is telecommuting an option? If not everyday, once a week?
- What is the dress code? Are there casual days?
- Is there on-site child care or gym?
- Is there a corporate perks program with exclusive discounts and offers?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Moving Expenses: Are they provided? How are they paid (i.e. reimbursement with receipts or lump sum beforehand)? Does the company provide assistance in finding housing, schools, daycare?

International Assignments: Consider such other issues as: tax equalization policies, currency bands to protect against wide FX swings, whether pension benefits are maintained according to home or assignment country policies, home leave policies, cost-of-living allowances, etc.

NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

- **Be clear about what you want.** If requested, provide a tight salary range that represents what you are prepared to accept, nothing lower.
- **Negotiate all requests upfront.** Be sure to explain what you want and why you feel you deserve it at the beginning of the negotiation process. Employers do not want to be surprised with new requests at a later time as they might question your motivation.
- **Be professional and respectful.** Negotiating compensation can be a sensitive topic. The hiring manager is still evaluating you and your character. They will respect honest and fair negotiation strategies but not gamesmanship and entitlement.

Resources:

Alison Green (2014) How to Evaluate a Job Offer. U.S.

News. Riley Guide: Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers