

How to negotiate a pay offer

The prospect of negotiating the right remuneration package can be a daunting one – unless you opt to work towards your goal in the company of a competent sales recruitment company. They can clear the path for you and offer their counsel up to and including that knock on the door and your entry into the interview room itself – at which point you are on your own.

GETTING the right offer need not be intimidating if you are well prepared beforehand. Research and preparation are vital when it comes to assessing your worth as a potential employee and this can be arrived at by an understanding and evaluation of your talents in the market place. There is no set mathematical formula to be applied – rather this will be determined by your particular experience and skills (and their scarcity or otherwise in the marketplace) as well as your perceived value to the employer when measured against your potential to contribute to the success of their organization.

If you are working with a professional sales recruitment company, they can give you salary comparisons for candidates with backgrounds similar to your own. A good sales recruitment business will also have examples of employers in the same market or allied industries where your skill sets are wanted and this will help in

setting a benchmark. If you are job-hunting without a sales recruitment company, then you can look at the 'situations vacant' section of any newspaper to get a general sense of market conditions and activity. You can also use your own network of contacts. Talk to friends and family or former colleagues: perhaps even cold-call a competitor and speak to one of the sales people to get an idea of what they might earn. But remember, conditions vary from business to business and salary levels are influenced accordingly.

At final interview stage it is likely that you will be asked what you earn currently and what you are next looking for as a salary package. It's preferable that the employer should raise these issues and they usually do if they feel they've reached the appropriate moment in the interview, either to clarify a situation or to close off proceedings. If you are asked to tell them what you are earning, answer the question, but never

try to ask them what they will pay until the right moment. You should avoid the temptation of bringing up the question of salary until you're sure that you have completely understood the requirements of the job, explained your own skills and experience in such a way that you have demonstrated how you can add value to the organization and why you are the natural choice for the position. If this has been done competently, you will be in a position to 'close' proceedings by asking for the job.

Remember that your salary package will be made up of different elements; obviously the basic salary but there may also be a commission or bonus, share options, profit-related pay, allowances, car or salary payment to cover travel. Aside from the financial element, benefits such as flexible working hours, gym membership, health care insurance and staff discounts might form part of an offer and it's best to have discovered before the interview just exactly which of these are available and whether there is any flexibility in how the package is made up. If there is, decide in advance which you favour.