



The Job Offer

 **Advanced Resources**
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NAVIGATING THE JOB OFFER PROCESS

Congratulations! After sending out resumes, applying online, networking at every chance, and painstakingly preparing yourself, you've made it through the interview process and you're feeling confident about getting a job offer.

This is your ultimate guide to navigating the job offer: everything from how to know you might be receiving one to providing your official acceptance.

A background image of a map with orange lines representing roads. A green pushpin is stuck into the map on the left side. Overlaid on the map is a semi-transparent grey box containing a checklist. The word 'NEW' is written in large, bold, black letters across the middle of the map. In the background, there are highway shields for 67 and 123, and a larger shield for 32. The word 'CAREER' is faintly visible in the background.

Inside This Guide

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The background of the entire image is a bright blue sky filled with soft, white, fluffy clouds. Scattered throughout the sky are several pieces of white paper, some of which appear to be flying or falling. These papers are of various sizes and orientations, some showing faint, illegible text. One large piece of paper is prominent in the upper right, and another is in the lower left, both appearing to be in motion. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and a sense of reaching for something high or achieving a goal.

Getting an Offer

COMMON SIGNS YOU'LL RECEIVE AN OFFER

You're confident about getting a job offer. How do you know you might be receiving one? Here are some common signs:

The hiring manager is “selling” you on the company	The employer has started to discuss or negotiate compensation
The people you're interviewing with talk in phrases like “you will” rather than “you would”	Your interviewers are starting to mention start dates
You're being introduced to other managers and peers, and getting a tour of the office	The employer asks for references or tells you they'll be conducting a background check
You find out the company has actually checked your references	The employer's managers, executives, or employees add you as a connection on LinkedIn

GETTING AN OFFER

And then it happens...the hiring manager calls or emails you and informs you that the company wants to extend you an offer of employment. You did it!

Companies often extend offers verbally and when that happens, you want to do three things:

1

Thank Them & Express Your Appreciation


2

Ask for the Offer in Writing

3

Tell Them You'd Like Time to Review Everything



A woman with dark hair in braids, wearing a black blazer over a light blue shirt, is seated at a desk. She is looking at a laptop screen with a thoughtful expression, her hand resting on her chin. The background is blurred, showing a modern office environment. A decorative bokeh effect of yellow and orange circles is visible at the top of the image.

Reviewing the Offer

THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT

Before you take that offer and quickly sign your name on the dotted line, think the offer through. Remember, with a job offer, the ball is in your court. They want you. You want to be excited about starting off with a new organization, and reviewing the job offer is the first step.

When you get your offer, don't feel that you need to accept or start the negotiation process right away. Give yourself time to think things over. Respond to the employer and tell them you are excited about the offer. Find out their timeline expectations for hearing back on your answer. If they want the position filled immediately, you will want to evaluate the offer and respond back more quickly. A reasonable amount of time to think about the offer is anywhere from a day to a week.

Don't worry about losing the job offer after asking for time to decide. An employer that really wants you will give you enough time - within reason - as is necessary for you to decide.



Once you've thanked the employer for the offer and you've clarified the expected response timeframe, make sure you think through the following:

PROPOSED COMPENSATION

Your base salary is pretty straightforward but you'll want to know how often you're paid. You'll also want to know when you are eligible for raises, and how salary increases are determined. If incentive compensation (i.e. a commission structure) is offered, be sure you're 100% clear on how the incentive compensation works. Finally, explore whether or not you are eligible for bonuses and if so, understand how the bonus potential and payout is structured.



PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

Get clarity on how many vacation, personal, and sick days you are eligible for. You also want to find out if these allowances increase over time. Some employers' PTO increases after a certain period of employment, or PTO might increase with promotions. Does the employer use an accrual system? Is there a maximum number of days that can be carried over from year-to-year? Do personal days have different conditions than vacation days?



BENEFITS

Benefits can vary widely from company to company and as a major component of your total employment package, you should understand how benefits work when you are made an offer. Some employers have a sliding scale of insurance options (PPO, HMO, etc.) and all will cost different amounts and have varying degrees of coverage. Ask about other kinds of insurance, such as vision, dental, life insurance, and long/short-term disability. Make sure you understand any additional benefits that the employer offers and factor those benefits into your overall offer consideration.



PARKING

Parking can be a big deal in some cities. Some companies have parking set aside for employees. If your potential employer does not, is the parking offered close to the building, or is it quite a walk? If you have to find your own parking, things can start getting costly. Does the company cover employee parking costs, and if so, how much do they cover? Does the company have a discount plan on public transportation?



WORKING HOURS

Ask for realistic working conditions. If you are going to be stuck in the office nights and weekends, you may want to negotiate your base pay, or ask for additional vacation and personal days. Be informed. You do not want to find out you just quit a \$50,000 job working 40 hours per week for a \$60,000 job working 60 hours per week.



START DATE

This seems obvious, but make sure you know exactly when the employer wants you to start. You do not want to realize too late that the start date is too far away financially, too soon for relocation, or too soon to respectfully finish up your work with your current employer. Although most employers will give you two weeks, it is possible you may need more time than that. On the other hand, it may be that the position needs to be filled immediately, and your contract with your current employer demands two weeks' notice. Whatever the conditions, you need to know the start date. You do not want to find this out after you have resigned from your current position.



Compromising

Negotiating the Offer

WHEN - AND HOW - TO NEGOTIATE

Sometimes a job seeker gets an employment offer that fits perfectly with their expectations. More often than not, however, job seekers want to negotiate part of the offer, most likely the salary. This is a common cause of job offer stress for many, and understandably so. You've worked hard to get an offer and the idea of potentially jeopardizing that offer because you want more money is daunting. In reality, the chances of an offer being revoked are low, as long as you navigate negotiations reasonably and professionally. Salary negotiation is totally normal for employers and not only are they accustomed to it, they probably even expect it!

Before you start negotiating, realize when you're in a position to negotiate, and when you are not:

DO negotiate if:

You have the offer letter in hand. You don't have a true offer until you have an offer letter. Still waiting? Don't start to negotiate.

You can clearly spell out the value you're bringing to the organization.

Your gut is telling you that you might regret joining the organization unless you get more of what you were hoping for.

You're going to decline unless the salary is higher.

DO NOT negotiate if:

You already accepted the offer. Coming back after the fact is poor form.

The employer tells you this is their best offer.

You cannot justify a higher salary.

If you have decided to negotiate, the first step is to respond to the employer's offer with enthusiasm and grace. Say something like: *"I'd like to accept your offer. The job is what I want, and the company and the people are where I want to work. I'd like to work on the terms of the offer with you, if you're open to it."*

You can then take one of several approaches to negotiating:

#1

ASK FOR MORE MONEY WITHOUT ACTUALLY STIPULATING A NUMBER

If you place the burden of renegotiating your salary back on the employer - and they know their initial offer was too low - they'll think long and hard about offering you a number that doesn't lowball you twice in a row.

Here's how you might bring it up: *"I'm excited about the opportunity to start, and I feel like our partnership is going to be beneficial for both parties. Is there any way we can increase the starting salary?"*

#2

PRESENT A BETTER OFFER IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE WORTH MORE

As long as you're being realistic, staying firm about a high number could help you close the gap between your minimum salary and your target salary. Keep your offer high if you think you have leverage. Do you have another offer from a competitor? Are you highly sought-after talent? Don't be overly confident, but make your case for why you should get the job at or near the salary you're asking for.

In either case, when you negotiate you need to be ready to walk away. When putting together a better offer, remember that the employer may not be able to meet your requirements.

#3

WEAVE BENEFITS OR OTHER PERKS INTO THE NEGOTIATION

If the salary discussion grows stagnant, consider trying to make your case for added perks or benefits. Ask for things like a matching contribution to your retirement savings or additional paid time off. Although these things seem small, they can have a huge financial impact over the course of months or even years.

#4

GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING

After you've negotiated your best salary and benefits, get the offer in writing.

Remember to be gracious and responsive throughout your negotiations. The tone you use in negotiating is important in conveying that you are professional, pleasant to work with, and collaborative. Be courteous and never burn bridges. Even if the negotiation stalls and you end up taking a different job, circumstances can change; you might find yourself looking for a reference, a job, or a referral later on. It's a small world and you never know whom you will end up encountering throughout your career.



Accepting the Offer



ACCEPTING THE OFFER

When you're through negotiating and ready to accept, reiterate all of the details in a written acceptance. If negotiations took longer than expected, share your appreciation for their patience. Negotiation is stressful for both sides and expressing gratitude shows that you're ready to move forward.

Finally, ask about the next steps. For example, is there any onboarding paperwork you should get started on? Will there be an orientation? And how can you prepare for your first day? This shows that you're proactive and enthusiastic to start.



OFFER ACCEPTANCE EMAIL SAMPLE

Subject: Susan Perfection - Job Offer Acceptance

Dear Perry,

Thank you for speaking with me on the phone yesterday and for sending me the offer letter for the Staff Accountant Position at Awesome Company, Inc. I'm pleased to formally accept this job offer. I look forward to working with you and the rest of the accounting team at Awesome Company as your organization continues its rapid growth.

As we discussed, my start date will be April 1, 2017, with an annual salary of \$82,000, plus three weeks of paid time off. Your health insurance will become effective on my start date.

I'm looking forward to seeing you on April 1st. Please let me know if there is any paperwork or additional information you need from me beforehand, or if there is any documentation I should bring along on my first day.

Again, thank you for this opportunity.

Best,
Susan

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