

Ask the Headhunter:

Ensure Successful Employment Negotiations

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Question: How do I sharpen my employee negotiation skills?

Answer: A negotiation is a series of give-and-take agreements that benefit both parties. It must remain win-win to be an energizing experience and create the best deal for all involved. These tips will help you get prepared, anticipate demands, and act firmly:

- Put all compensation options on the table to maximize the pie. Include salary, incentives, benefits, prerequisites, and opportunities for career advancement.
- Keep your ears and mind open. Listen and recognize what the candidate values.
- Think outside of the paycheck. Be prepared to offer incentives such as flextime, childcare, or telecommuting.
- Speak First. A positive opening statement from you builds trust and goodwill with the potential new hire.
- Sit on it. Avoid being perceived as a pushover by working a concession into the deal at a later point, not the moment that you recognize you can compromise.

Question: How do I negotiate the smartest deal with a prospective employer?

Answer: Chances are, you've already been through screening, interviewing, assessment testing, and referencing by the time a negotiation begins. Know what you want out of the deal before sitting down at the table and stick to your values and requirements:

- Prepare and rehearse how "high" you are willing to go and what compromises you are willing to make to determine your "walk-away" point.
- Consider taking incentives such as flextime, childcare, or telecommuting to sweeten the overall offer.
- Ask the employer to put agreements in writing to avoid backtracking later in the process.
- Be leery of a recruiter who gets emotional and starts to play hardball. If negotiations take a negative turn, irreparable damage to your morale may occur before the job begins.
- After you've reached an acceptable agreement, allow time to reflect and review all the terms of the deal. There may still be ways to improve the final agreement for both parties.

About Patrick B. Ropella

Patrick B. Ropella is president & CEO of Ropella & Associates, an international executive search and consulting firm based in Milton that specializes in working with the world's largest corporations. Ropella & Associates focuses on mid-level management and executive level retained search in sales, marketing, manufacturing and R&D. For more information on taking charge of your career, visit www.ropella.com or call Patrick Ropella at (850) 983-4777.