

# Assessing Job Offers and Negotiating Salary

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## Assessing a Job Offer

Congratulations on your offer of employment! You are most likely very excited and tempted to immediately accept the job offered. But even though you are anxious to start earning a living, you should not blindly accept a job without having all the information you need in order to make a sound decision.

Some important things to consider include:

- Start date
  - Is the date flexible?
- Job title and responsibilities
- Work schedule and overtime
  - Are there flexible hours?
  - Are you compensated for overtime?
  - How often can you expect to work evenings and week-ends?
- Duration of position (permanent, temporary contract, on call)
  - Is there a probation period?
- Opportunities for promotion and/or transfers
  - How will you be evaluated? How often? By whom?
- Stability of position/Job security
- Access to supervisors
- Salary, compensation, bonus structure and earning potential
  - What is the base salary offered?
  - How often are employees paid?
  - Are commissions or bonuses involved? How are they calculated and paid?
  - When are salaries reviewed? By whom?
- Benefits package (vacation, sick days, life/medical/dental insurance coverage, pension, special leaves)
  - A Human Resources Policy Manual outlining all benefits should be available. If not, each point should be discussed with the employer)
- Training and professional development
  - Is there on-the-job training? How long will it last?
  - Does the company pay for continuing education?
- Location/travel required/access to parking/relocation
  - How much travelling will be required?
  - Are travel expenses covered?
  - Does the company provide parking?
  - Will the employer pay for relocation (movers, temporary housing and/or living allowance)?
- Working conditions and culture of the company (loyalty to employees, appreciation of work done, social atmosphere)
- History and reputation of the company
- Potential to learn new skills and long term value on resume

Don't just assume that these areas will be to your satisfaction. It is not unreasonable to request a meeting with your potential employer to discuss the above mentioned items and negotiate if necessary.

## **Negotiating Salary and Other Position Details**

Numerous job seekers accept job offers that do not meet their expectations because they are anxious about discussing the details of the position. Here are a few suggestions to help you negotiate a job offer that will be mutually acceptable to both you and your future employer.

1. Do your research. Find out about the salary range for similar positions within your industry. Make sure that you are looking at similar geographic locations and economic areas. Also take into account company specific factors that might affect the proposed salary.
2. If the salary is not negotiable, consider discussing performance bonuses, early reviews for increases and/or non-monetary benefits such as shorter work week, additional vacation time, free parking, paid continuing education, car allowances, etc.
3. Keep reminding the employer of the contribution that you will make to the team and/or company. Always be polite and appreciative of the initial offer.
4. Get the final offer in writing. All items discussed and agreed upon should be included in your written offer/contract to avoid future misunderstanding. Once all negotiations have taken place, you may ask for 24 to 48 hours to consider the final employment offer.

## **Declining a Job Offer**

When declining an offer, inform the employer immediately. You may do so verbally or in writing. Make sure to thank them for the offer and provide them with an explanation for your refusing the position. Always be very professional, you never know when you may be interacting with that particular employer in the future.

## **Accepting a Job Offer**

Accepting an offer, which you ideally received in writing, may be done verbally, by telephone, in writing, by email or some employers may request that you sign a letter of offer or employment contract. Always thank your employer and express your enthusiasm for your new position.

## **Helpful Links on Salary and Offer Negotiations**

[www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step5\\_1.asp](http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/step5_1.asp)  
[www.quintcareers.com/salary\\_negotiation.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/salary_negotiation.html)  
[content.salary.monster.ca/](http://content.salary.monster.ca/)  
[static.monstertrak.com/careerguide/inside\\_decisions.html](http://static.monstertrak.com/careerguide/inside_decisions.html)  
[www.rileyguide.com/offers.html](http://www.rileyguide.com/offers.html)