Salary negotiation

A lot of people have anxiety when it comes time to accept a job offer and/or negotiate a salary.

With some preparation, this process *should* be painless. Here are some steps:

1. You get the job offer. While you may be thinking “Oh, thank goodness I don’t have to live on my parent’s old couch next year!,” you want to play it cool. You should always ask for some time to think about your decision, just to make sure it’s indeed the right thing for you. This is also the time to ask about benefits and salary, if they haven’t told you already.

2. If the salary and benefits are what you’re looking for and you have taken a day or so to think about your decision, then you can call back to accept the offer. Congrats!

3. Sometimes the salary and benefits are not exactly what you had hoped for. This happens more often than not. It’s okay - now you enter the dance of the salary negotiation (called a dance because it is a back and forth between you and the employer; sometimes you’re leading, sometimes they are).

   How to negotiate a salary / benefits:

1. You have to do some research before you can start. This means doing research before you even get the job offer. What is the cost of living for the area you’re planning to move to? After formulating a budget, what is the amount you minimally have to have in order to survive and what’s the amount you need to be comfortable? You can use a cost of living calculator to help you: [http://www.bestplaces.net/col/](http://www.bestplaces.net/col/)

2. Once you have this amount, when you get the offer you have a better sense of how close they are to reaching your ‘comfortable’ level. If you want to ask for more money, you obviously can’t demand it. Here are some ways you can start the process:

   “Thank you so much for your offer. I am excited at the prospect of working at ______, but after doing some research on cost of living and considering my experience in _____ (be specific), I’ve realized that with my experience I would like a salary of _____.” (Be specific).

   The foundation of negotiating salary is building your case with specifics. You won’t get too far if you just ask for “more money.” You need to let them know why you warrant more money. You can build your case by highlighting your experience in nursing or previous somewhat relevant work experience in another field.

   **Please note:** Salary negotiation for entry level RN positions usually isn’t too successful. Many hospitals have a standard pay rate and won’t be able to budge on that.

   However, for NP positions, especially outside of a hospital, you might have more wiggle room.

   It can’t hurt to try!

   Contact the CON’s Career Advisor for help practicing this process or assistance with any other career related issues.

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