NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

Planning for Salary Negotiation (with templates!)

Preparing your Salary Expectations

Preparing for salary negotiation is often left until an offer is in hand, but in reality, negotiation starts with your first interactions with a company.

You should expect to be asked in your screening call: **"What are your salary expectations?"**

If you immediately give out a number without doing any research or gathering more information from the recruiter, you might end up selling yourself short and leaving money on the table:

- **Interviewer:** "How much are you looking to make in this role?"
- **Interviewee:** "85K"
- **Your interviewer might be thinking:** "Great :) We have a budget up to 100k, but that works too."

Practicing how you will answer questions around your salary expectations is key to starting off on the right foot in your negotiation plan.

While it is ideal to delay the conversation or turn the question around to the recruiter (both strategies are outlined in detail below), it is also very helpful to know what your bottom line is when it comes to your salary so you can assess whether the company you're interviewing with will be able to meet your needs.

Doing some research on the current market rate for employees with similar titles and backgrounds to you will help you understand not only what your salary expectations are, but also if the recruiter's budget is inline with the going Market Rate for the position.



Conducting Market Rate Research

Step 1

Gather Information

Use the resources below to gather information on salary range for your job title, location, company, and experience level:

- glassdoor.com
- salary.com
- linkedin.com
- builtin.com
- elpha.com
- visa.1point3acres.com
- leetcode.com
- teamblind.com



Step 2

Compare Levels and Standards

Use the tools below to compare various leveling systems across companies to see where you fall in the range.

- levels.fyi
- jobsearchintelligence.com

Step 3

Personal Evaluation

- What salary do I need to make to accept this job?
- What did I make in my last role?
- What other benefits or compensation might I consider in the offer that are important to me (e.g. paid time off, job title, bonuses, equity, insurance benefits, healthcare benefits, etc.)?
- How might this role support my overall career growth? What value will that bring long term?

Screening Calls with Recruiters or Hiring Managers

Once you have conducted your research, it's time to prepare your answer to the big question in your screening call. In your screening call it is likely that the interviewer will ask you about your salary expectations. Here are some recommendations on how to navigate this conversation:

Q: What are your salary expectations?

Strategy #1

Delay the conversation

For [Company], I've been more focused on the impact I can make with this opportunity and don't have an exact range in mind. I'm sure we'll be able to reach an agreement on the salary, as I'm willing to be flexible. I'd love to learn more about the role and responsibilities first and discuss how I can contribute.

You know, I haven't fully considered that yet, but I would hope the salary could be justified based on my performance and value.

Strategy #2

Side step by turning the question around

If I'm the candidate you'd prefer for the position, I'm sure we'll be able to reach an agreement on the salary, as I'm willing to be flexible. What is the budgeted salary range?

Strategy #3

State a range

Based on my discussions with my peers who are in similar positions in <LOCATION> they are receiving XK to YK. <OPTIONAL: Is that also your budgeted salary range?>

Based on my research on positions with similar levels of responsibility and scope in <LOCATION>, I'm seeking a salary range of XK - YK.

Based on my research of leveling guides and resources such as levels.fyi, the salary range that best matches my experience would be XK - YK. <OPTIONAL: Does that align with your budgeted salary range?>

Strategy #4

Ask the recruiter to provide salary expectations

Ask the recruiter to provide salary expectations

Optionally, if you're completely unprepared to give a range, you can mention:

"Can you provide me the budgeted salary range for this position and I will tell you if it corresponds to my expectations?"

You could also ask this after you provide a range to get some signal if you're in the right ballpark of compensation.

Note: Sometimes asking this before stating your salary range expectations could lead to anchoring on a lower number, especially if there is more demand than supply for the particular position.

Interviews with Hiring Managers & Team

Compensation is not typically discussed again until the offer stage of the interview process. However, it is important to continue gauging the needs of the company and the value you can bring to alleviate these pain-points.

This way, when you are offered the position, you have the data you need to back-up your number and make your negotiated offer a no-brainer. Here are some questions to ask during the middle interview stages to help you understand their needs and then bridge the gap of how you can be their best solution for those needs!

- What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?
- What are the team's strengths and biggest challenges?
- What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?
- What attributes does someone need to have in order to be really successful in this position?
- What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face?
- What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support hitting those goals?



They Made an Offer - Now What?

Example #1

They call and offer you the position over the phone.

If you find yourself in this scenario:

1. Do not accept an offer over the phone - the goal is to understand what they are offering so that you can review it with the help of your career/industry mentors, family, and friends before making a decision. It can be helpful to write down all aspects of the offer or have the recruiter follow up with an email detailing the offer.
2. Express appreciation and excitement for the role and the company
3. Don't react to the number or package that they mention
4. State that you need to weigh the decision and discuss with your family and let them know you will get back to them within a few days
5. If you have any other active interview processes, it can be beneficial to share that with the recruiter. Be sure to discuss these situations with your Career Mentor.

Example of what to say:

Wow this is incredible - I've really enjoyed the process of meeting with everyone. Thank you! I plan to make a decision by _____. Can you send me the offer details via email?

If they come back with: "We actually need a decision by ___." And their date is earlier than the date you offered, then say:

I definitely understand you need to fill the role as soon as possible, and while I would love to be that person to bring my skills and passion to [company]; this is a big decision. I do need the time to discuss this with my family, and I can give you a decision by ___.

In this scenario, you are leading the deadline and the conversation so you can give yourself adequate time to cultivate a negotiation strategy back to them. When deciding the medium for your negotiation, we almost always recommend email. There are some pros to phone calls, like you can interpret tone more easily and develop a repartee, but the cons outweigh. That is because it is much easier to make mistakes and panic on the phone. If you negotiate over email, you can take your time in your responses to make sure you are thoughtful and deliberate.

After the phone call:

If you asked the recruiter to send you details about the offer, wait for them to follow up and begin drafting a counter offer template (see Scenario 2). Once they send the details over, update your counter offer template and send it to your career mentor along with the offer details for feedback.

If the recruiter doesn't get back to you with offer details within the timeframe you had agreed upon send an email to check in:

> Hi [name],
>
> Thank you so much for all of your help during my interview and offer process. I am very excited about this opportunity and can't wait to share the news with my family! I'm wondering if you've had a chance to get the offer details together yet so I can look them over? I want to make sure that I get a chance to discuss everything in depth with my family to make the best decision I can.
>
> Please let me know if there's anything else you need from me. I look forward to hearing from you.
>
> Take care,

They Made an Offer - Now What?

Example #2

They email you an offer

The formula for a solid counteroffer is:

Empathy

Start here and offer connection to the company and the people (specificity and positive emotion-focused language is great here)

Rationale

Move into your qualifications and reasonings as to why you're wanting to negotiate

Ask

Make the ask



They Made an Offer - Now What?

Here is a sample negotiation email template that you can use to make sure you hit the right points. There are also added annotations with explanations on why each part is important:

Here, you are starting off your email positively and with gratitude. Your recruiter/hiring manager will be put off if you start by immediately making demands without even showing excitement.

Hi [name],

Thank you so much for your time and effort during my interview and offer process. I really appreciate all of the work you've done for me throughout the process and I'm excited about the opportunity to work at [Company]. The conversations I had with X and Y affirmed that [Company] is a place I could be challenged and reach my career goals and passions.

You want to make sure you are on the same page as the company when you negotiate. If you have any concerns or situations that may showcase your ability or need to negotiate, it's best to set them out first.

With this in mind, I would like to quickly lay out my situation and hopefully we can collaborate to find a fair deal that works for me and for [Company]. If at any point you feel I've been unfair, please let me know, and we can go back, address it, and fix it!

[insert situation here]

Examples of situations include (but are not limited to):

- I have another offer from [big company] that pays [include amount IF higher - if not, still let them know you have another offer]
- I just finished an onsite at [another company] and have a couple more in the pipeline
- My current position pays more
- I have [x] years of experience and I know I can bring a lot to the table
- I currently live in [city], so would need to relocate to [job's city]

They Made an Offer - Now What?

- Re-emphasize excitement frequently throughout your email, but now that you've laid the groundwork you can introduce your ask.

With this said, though, [Company] is still my top choice. The only thing holding me back is [introduce your ask, for example, the offered salary of $X].

- Here you want to add detail to your ask, usually split it into 2 phases. The first is where you introduce the ask and clearly define it. The other is where you provide research, justification, or anecdotes to showcase why you made that ask. To do this, you can look at sources like Glassdoor, Paysa, Indeed, Angellist, and other pay collection sites, as well as valid competing offers/conversations you've had with other companies.

[Make your ask here, for example:] Due to other final round interviews and my research of software engineering positions in the Seattle area, I would like to ask for my base to be increased from 125K to something close to 135K with the potential for a signing bonus.

- Optionally, it's strong to conclude with reminding them just why you're so valuable. Remember, the point of negotiation is not to hassle, but rather to convince them it's a good idea for both of you to increase your salary or provide the other ask, bonus, or benefit you're making a claim to.

I understand it's no small ask, but [describe and re-emphasize how you can bring value to the company, like referring the alignment of your existing technical skills]

They Made an Offer - Now What?

Example #3

They email you a counteroffer that is far below asking and/or state they cannot negotiate any higher:

Reach out to your career mentor. We can create a script together of what to say!

If your career mentor is not available, and you need urgent negotiation support, send the offer details and any other helpful information to negotiation@pathrise.com and CC your career mentor.

