

# Salary Negotiation

Salary negotiation can be a scary task, especially if you are thrilled about the job being offered to you. Negotiation is expected in almost all jobs though, so don't feel like you have to take the first offer, especially if it's well under what you know you deserve. Even when an employer suggests that they are offering you the top of what's available, it may not be the truth. So, come prepared to bargain! Here are some tips to help your cause.

## Negotiating Works!

### **Know what the market salary is in your area for the job you're being offered.**

There are multiple resources on the Internet that can help you learn what the going rate is for your job. For an overview, visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>). You can also try the salary section of [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com), or do an Internet search for "salary surveys." If you know someone in the industry, they may be able give you some idea of what you should expect.

### **Think about the salary you need, as well as the one you want.**

Keeping in mind the salary range you think is typical for the job, think about what amount of money you absolutely need to comfortably pay your bills—this is your lowest possibility. Then decide what amount of money would make you happy—this is your ideal number. Choose a number in between these two as your middle number. Have all three decided in your mind before you discuss salary, so you are prepared to barter.

### **Think about what else you would like aside from salary.**

If an employer can't move much on the salary, consider other benefits that would make the lower pay worth your while. For instance, maybe a flexible schedule, telecommuting opportunities, or tuition reimbursement are available. These added perks can make a huge difference in your work-life balance, and they may be an acceptable substitute for higher pay.

### **Don't accept an offer immediately.**

It's perfectly acceptable to say you'd like to think about any offer made to you. An employer will typically give you a deadline, so make sure you respond within the timeframe given. If the number is lower than what you want, come back with a counter offer. Use common sense though—if your ideal number is significantly higher than what they offered, this may not be the job for you. If the number is closer to your middle number though, come back with your ideal number—you have nothing to lose, and if you've done your homework on the going salary rates, you have evidence to back up your argument.

### **Be prepared to turn the offer down.**

Sometimes an acceptable deal can't be reached. In cases like those, walking away may be the best option, because taking a job that won't pay you enough to pay your bills is never a good plan.

### **Just ask!**

According to a study quoted in *Advancing Philanthropy Magazine*, women workers who consistently negotiate salary increases earn at least \$1 million more during their careers than women who do not. Don't lose out on your earning potential! Take the plunge and ask for more.



## Negotiating Works! (cont.)

### Be confident.

If you walk into a negotiation feeling like you don't actually deserve the higher salary, your body language and your attitude will be apparent to the employer, and they will know you aren't going to argue. Aside from having research about typical salaries, make yourself more confident by deciding what you want before you begin. What terms are acceptable to you? What are the deal breakers? What benefits or perks will make a lower salary worthwhile to you? Knowing these things before you enter a conversation will help you represent yourself effectively, and increase your chances of getting what you want.

## For More Information

*The Big Sister's Guide to the World of Work*  
by Marcelle DiFalco and Jocelyn Greenky Herz

*Salary Negotiation: The Art of the Ask*  
by Jacklyn P. Boice, *Advancing Philanthropy Magazine*  
March/April 2006

Check out the **Women Work! Career Center** at [www.womenwork.org](http://www.womenwork.org) for more information about salary negotiation and many other aspects of a woman's work life.



**Start Here. Go Anywhere!**

## The Art of the Ask

From *Advancing Philanthropy Magazine*

### Women Do Not Like To Negotiate

In surveys, 2.5 times more women said they feel "a great deal of apprehension" about negotiating. Men initiate negotiations about four times as often as women.

When asked to pick metaphors for the process of negotiating, men chose "winning a ballgame" and "a wrestling match," while women chose "going to the dentist."

Women are pessimistic about how much is available when they do negotiate, and so they typically ask for and get less—on average, 30 percent less than men; 20 percent of adult women say they never negotiate at all, even though they often recognize negotiation as appropriate and even necessary.

### Women Suffer When They Do Not Negotiate

By not negotiating a first salary when starting off in the workplace, an individual stands to lose more than \$500,000 by age 60.

In one study, eight times as many men as women graduating with master's degrees from Carnegie Mellon negotiated their salaries. The men who negotiated were able to increase their starting salaries by an average of 7.4 percent, or about \$4,000. In the same study, men's starting salaries were about \$4,000 higher than the women's on average, suggesting that the gender gap between men and women might have been closed if more of the women had negotiated their starting salaries.

Another study calculated that women who consistently negotiate their salary increases earn at least \$1 million more during their careers than women who do not.

### Women Have Lower Expectations and Lack Knowledge of Their Worth

Many women are so grateful to be offered a job that they accept what they are offered and do not negotiate their salaries.

Women often do not know the market value of their work: Women report salary expectations between 3 and 32 percent lower than those of men for the same jobs; men expect to earn 13 percent more than women during their first year of full-time work and 32 percent more at their career peaks.