

DISCUSSING SALARIES

IT PAYS TO BE PROFESSIONAL

Discussing and negotiating salaries is a sensitive issue. The keys to success are a professional approach, timing and knowledge. We've put together some basic but important guidelines to help you achieve the right conclusion to your salary negotiations.

Mention salary too early and you risk looking more interested in money than the job. Conversely, leave it until after you have received a written offer and there may be no room left for negotiation. Timing is everything. Deciding WHEN to broach the subject of salary largely depends upon the type of interview.

1. SCREENING INTERVIEWS

It is more prudent to ask for information about the salary range at the end of the interview – do not start negotiating!

2. MAIN INTERVIEWS

If they give you the salary range up front, this knowledge puts you in a stronger position. If salary is not mentioned, ask for basic information, find out what the next stage is and only start negotiating if and when they start the ball rolling.

3. IF THEY WANT YOU – GO FOR IT!

When you are sure that you are their first choice – it's time to negotiate! Remember, you are in your strongest position when they want you, but before they've got you. If they say they will put their offer in writing, don't wait! Tackle the subject there and then and start negotiating.

4. KNOWLEDGE IS EVERYTHING

Know your financial needs and your value. Avoid over or under-pricing yourself and be ready to back up your salary claim with relevant facts. Be sure to work out the total value of the package, before and after tax, so you have figures for comparison with your current salary. Don't forget to include benefits such as pension, bonus, car, shares and health cover. Check how often salaries are reviewed. Are increases based on performance? If so, how is performance measured? Weigh up the package against factors such as job satisfaction, prospects and location.

Research the market so you know what the going rate is for someone with your skills and responsibilities. Equally important, ascertain what the employer can afford and whether or not they are restricted by rigid salary structures and pay scales. Universities for example, often have a defined scale of grades – whereas smaller private companies may have a more flexible approach depending on the person.