



## Taking the Fear out of Salary Negotiations

Marcia Robinson, Director  
Center for Career & Professional Development  
Cheyney University

The salary negotiation phase of the job search, although necessary is probably the most frightening aspect for young professionals. It can be truly uncomfortable and intimidating to negotiate with your potential employer, especially when you know that saying the wrong thing could jeopardize the offer of employment. For that reason, most candidates will quickly agree to whatever is offered without a counter offer. The following guidelines can help you put compensation negotiations into perspective.

### ***Relax & Breathe!***

The fact that the company is discussing a salary with you is a great thing! It means that you have successfully navigated your job search to get to this point. You have already created an effective resume, expressed yourself well in the interview and have now captured the attention of the employer. This is good news and creates the foundation for your negotiations! Be proud of your accomplishments to this point and know

that you have at least already convinced the employer that you are a viable candidate who is potentially a strong fit for the company.

### ***Stay positive and work towards a win-win situation!***

Continue to be as courteous, enthusiastic and confident as you have been to get to this point. You do not want your salary negotiations to become adversarial. Instead, you want to keep negotiations as an open, friendly dialogue allowing you to show your genuine interest in arriving at a mutually satisfactory solution.

### ***Research - Know what you are worth!***

Remember that the employer is not offering you a salary based on your personal financial needs. Often candidates, especially new grads, will use their personal financial responsibilities, such as high credit card debt as the basis for the negotiations. It is important to remember that the employer's offer is going to be based on

( CONTINUED ON PAGE 99 )

(SALARY NEGOTIATIONS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 77)

what the labor market can bear. Most companies already have established salary benchmarks based on past practices and regional or national surveys. In most cases, candidates have access to the same information through a variety of on-line resources.

***It's not just about salary!***

Many new professionals make the mistake of thinking that negotiations are only about salaries. Think about benefits that might meet your needs in the areas of work/life balance, equipment support and professional advancement opportunities. For example, does the company allow employees to telecommute, will you have access to a lap top, PDA or will the company pick up your phone bill. In terms of professional development - what kind of training programs are available and will there be opportunities to build a network that will support your career growth.

***Learn from this experience!***

As much as you hate this process, it is one you might repeat several times throughout your career. As the workplace and workforce continue to evolve, employers and employees have become more comfortable with shifting paradigms. Negotiations about responsibilities and duties will continue and so will negotiations about compensation. This is definitely not the last time that you might find yourself on a different side of an issue from an employer. How you handle this first negotiation, will probably be a good indicator of your future career with the company.