

Helpful Salary Negotiation Phrases



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Let's face it: talking about money and salary is difficult, no matter the circumstances. This is a delicate matter and the conversation should always be had with tact and understanding, but you don't have to let the employer have the upper hand!

Due to the pandemic and tight economy, some might assume that it is inappropriate to negotiate a salary. That isn't necessarily true - many hiring managers will still expect to negotiate, though they may not have as much wiggle room as before. Others may not have the flexibility, and will let you know that they are putting their best offer forward. That's when it's especially important to evaluate the offer and other benefits thoroughly - a lower salary may not necessarily mean lower compensation, overall.

Some Responses if You're Asked: "What are your salary expectations" before an offer is made:

- I'm sure when the time comes, we will be able to work out a fair compensation package. For now, if you don't mind, I prefer to focus on the interview and learning more about your organization.
- To be honest, I feel uncomfortable discussing money right now because I don't want to box myself in or screen myself out prematurely. First, I'd like to know more about the position and its responsibilities.
- I imagine that the company has already established a salary range for the position. What is this range?
- Can you tell me what range you've budgeted for the position? How you arrived at that number? (Listen for their needs and priorities!)
- It would be easier for me to discuss my salary needs if I understood more about the job and how my qualifications might be applicable. Could we discuss the position more in detail?
- Focusing on numbers is not always helpful; could we look at the responsibilities a little more closely? (Indicate flexibility, desire to learn more; later, revisit compensation when your negotiating position is stronger).

Responses to "What was your salary in your previous position?"

- I can tell you how much I was earning, but until I know more about the responsibilities of this particular job, I can't really tell you how much I'm looking for here. (Separate past earnings from future income; useful when looking for higher earnings).
- Last year my position was worth... (go broader than salary: consider bonuses and benefits, consider whether you were being fairly compensated in a previous position).

Once Negotiation has Begun:

- Based on my understanding of the market value for the position, I would expect my compensation to be in the range of _____.
- Why do you feel my offer won't work for you? (Use if your offer is denied. Listen and respond to their concerns.)
- I understand that you are offering the best salary you can. It does fall short of what I would expect based on industry standards and what I can contribute to the position. Let's talk about other ways we may be able to come to an agreement... (This would be a time to negotiate benefits, such as more paid time off, flexible work hours, and other perks).