

# Negotiating a Salary Package

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Why are there so many consultants making a living by advising clients on how to negotiate a salary package? The answer is simple; the process is complicated and most job seekers need further coaching when it comes to closing the deal. Instead of saying "OK" to an offer, it may be beneficial to pause and say "HMMM."

According to Jack Chapman, the well-known career consultant, telecoach, and author of *Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1,000 a Minute*, this single technique enables more people to negotiate a better salary than any other. In other words, don't jump at the first offer. This single technique along with the following information will assist you in obtaining the most favorable compensation package.

Salary negotiation techniques can be divided into several categories:

**Techniques to use when the employer first broaches the subject of salary** Your first response should be to repeat the amount of the offer and then remain silent as if you are thinking about it. This lets the employer know you heard the offered amount and you are considering how to respond. Mr. Chapman calls this hesitation the "flinch." Once you are ready to begin discussion, talk about your past experiences and have ready a list of what you have to offer. Be sure to address any doubt that may have been raised about your suitability for the position by maximizing your skills, abilities and experiences.

**Be prepared and informed** This includes knowing just how badly the employer needs to fill the position for which you are being considered. This information lets you know how hard you can press for a better salary offer. Most importantly though, you must have conducted comparative salary research. At the end of this article you will find a list of excellent resources where salary research can be obtained. This information will allow you to determine your market value in the profession and geographic area in which you are applying. Armed with this information, along with your own salary history, you can determine at what salary level the market values your experience.

**Behaviors** There are several behaviors that you should demonstrate when meeting with a prospective employer. These include a demonstration of

excitement for the job – show your enthusiasm! The employer needs to know you are serious about joining the organization. Be careful to not bring personal needs to the discussion; make it a discussion of why the employer needs you. Make it a friendly experience because if you decide to accept the offer, this individual will very likely be your new boss. Therefore, during the salary negotiation, demonstrate through your words and actions that you already consider yourself a part of the team. Remain calm and poised but be creative, flexible and, most importantly, professional.

**Discussing the salary offer** Finally, there are several things to consider when discussing the salary offer. First, you should be prepared with options. Most employers are willing to negotiate, but they need to know you are also willing. Be sure to have established your absolute bottom acceptable figure and be prepared to walk away if necessary. You may have to explain your salary history or use it to justify the desired salary. Be prepared with facts and figures. Anticipate any objections the employer might be able to raise and be prepared to justify your cost effectiveness. Negotiating a salary package reconfirms to the employer that the decision to hire you over other applicants was the right choice. Make intelligent, well-informed salary statements and be sure your requested salary range is within the market value for your profession in the geographic area.

- Present a salary range that demonstrates your knowledge of the local market value.
- When requesting a salary range be sure to include a record of your contributions that defend the amount of compensation you are requesting.
- In salary negotiations demonstrate the benefit to the organization in paying you more.
- Be realistic in the amount requested.
- Be sure to include other types of compensation that would be valuable.
- Address the interests of the boss, therefore, know the interests of the boss.
- Proposal should be grounded on objective criteria.

The above techniques are valuable in a salary negotiation anywhere in the world. It is important that spouses of Foreign Service employees remember to focus on a couple of additional issues. Inevitably the short period of your availability will be a concern, but you can turn this into a positive by demonstrating how much your experience will bring to the position or organization. Additionally, the lower cost of employing you can usually be a positive influence because you would not require the same benefits package that a local hire would. The lack of any relocation

costs and concerns with labor laws guaranteeing long-term employment should weigh in your favor and be used in your negotiations. Finally, remember that in more than one hundred thirty-seven countries you have the legal right to work and can obtain the necessary working papers with few or no problems.

If the organization, professional field or specific position you are pursuing will benefit by your U.S. training, education, and/or experience, be sure to emphasize these assets when negotiating. This is particularly true for teachers. Many international schools offer different salary packages, depending on whether the teacher is hired locally or in the United States. Learn what salary options are available by the school before accepting a salary offer. You can negotiate, but you must begin by responding to that first offer with "HMMM"!

Salary negotiation is an integral part of a successful job search. By applying the techniques and behaviors described here, you too, can negotiate a more attractive job offer.

### **Resources for Comparative Salary Studies**

- **Abbott, Langer & Associates, Inc** provides salary and benefits survey reports for information technology, marketing, accounting, engineering, human resources, manufacturing, legal work, nonprofit work, consulting and a few other fields – <http://www.abbott-langer.com>
- **CareerBuilder.com** – <http://www.cbsalary.com>
- **CareerJournal.com** (Wall Street Journal) – **Salary Tables**
- **Comparative Salaries** – [http://www.ne.ch/promeco/pages/e/eco\\_data\\_sal\\_e.asp](http://www.ne.ch/promeco/pages/e/eco_data_sal_e.asp)
- **Economic Research Institute** offers almost 100 international salary surveys – <http://www.erieri.com>
- **Jack Chapman's web site** – <http://www.salarynegotiations.com>
- **JobSmart: Profession-Specific Salary Surveys** – <http://jobstar.org/tools/salary/sal-prof.cfm>
- **Move.com** – The International Salary Calculator <http://www1.move.com/Move/Tools/SalaryCalcInt.asp?poe=move>
- **The Office of Personnel Management** lists the pay scales and wage systems of the federal government – <http://www.opm.gov/oca/payrates/index.htm>
- **The Riley Guide** hosts a compilation for all sites that review salary information – <http://www.rileyguide.com/salary.html#colls>
- **Salary.com** – <http://Salary.com>
- **SalaryExpert.com** – <http://www.salaryexpert.com>
- **Teacher salaries** – <http://www.aft.org/salary/index.htm>

- **Vault Company** – <http://www.vault.com/salaries.jsp>  
**Books**

Chapman, Jack, (2001) *Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1,000 a Minute*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Krannich, R. (1990) *Salary Success: Know What You're Worth and Get It!*, Woodbridge, VA: Impact Books.

Medly, H.A. (1984) *Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of being Interviewed*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Studner, P. (1990) *Super JOB Search*, Los Angeles, CA: Jamenair Ltd.

Yate, M. (1990) *Knock 'Em Dead With Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions*, Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams, Inc

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