

LET'S TALK SALARY

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The number one rule for job seekers regarding salary — don't be the first to mention it. Let the employer take the lead when it comes to discussing salary and benefits. Never bring it up in the first interview. It may be tempting when the employer asks "Do you have any questions?" at the end of the interview, however this isn't the time. Bringing up pay too early could cost you the job.

Employers desire a candidate who is most interested in the job duties and responsibilities, not just the paycheck. Hiring managers are disappointed when the first or only question from a candidate is about salary, vacation and/or benefits. Offering up your salary requirement too early can also hinder your ability to negotiate and may actually lower the amount the employer offers you.

WHAT SALARY DO YOU EXPECT?

Even before the first interview you should be prepared by conducting some market research to understand your value in that particular field based on your level of education and experience. Talk to recent graduates in the same type of position; visit the career services office at your college; and do internet research for starting wages and salary surveys.

What's a candidate to do if the employer asks you the following question in an interview: "What salary do you expect?"

It is a difficult question for new graduates as well as experienced

offered by the employer, or that it is negotiable.

Donna Flaman-Johnson, Director, Talent Supply at **Farm Credit Canada**, said that you don't need to answer right away. "Ask for



professionals. Most experts suggest that job seekers should not be the first to bring up a dollar figure. You might try answering with a question, such as "What is the salary range for this position?" You could also mention that your required salary would be dependent on other benefits

more information about the job responsibilities, organizational culture, opportunities to learn and grow and what the salary range is for the position," shares Flaman-Johnson. "State that you will need time to think about it after you know more about the requirements of the position," adds Flaman-Johnson.

Some organizations ask for salary information in the initial screening process. The application may ask what you are currently making and your expected salary range. **Cate Sprout**, Staffing Manager, **CHS**, said, "If the applicant's salary requirements on the application are out of our range; but, the person meets all the job requirements, I'll pick up the phone and ask them to help me understand their range. Does it include base pay and bonus? What are they really willing to accept? And I explain our total compensation package."

New graduates cannot expect to earn as much as experienced

ACCEPT JOB OFFERS IN GOOD FAITH

You expect fair treatment and honesty from employers and they expect the same in return:

- Only accept an offer for a job that you intend to honor.
- Stop looking once you've accepted an offer.
- Remove your resume from online databases and collegiate career centers when you've accepted a position.
- Inform other employers that may be considering you that you've accepted another job.

Be courteous when you decline any offer. You want to leave a positive impression because you may end up working for that company, or with that person one day!

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professionals. Some training programs have set salaries and there is little or no negotiation. Generally there is more latitude for negotiation in executive, upper management and experienced roles.

Develop a range that you would require by considering your expenses such as school loans, car payments, housing, food and more. However, don't try to use your expenses as a bargaining chip, such as telling the employer that you require a higher salary so you can afford your monthly car payment.

These calculations are for your own information and shouldn't be shared with a potential employer. If you must state a salary, do so in a range but say it would also depend on other benefits offered to you by the employer.

Remind the hiring manager that salary is not your only motivation for applying. Repeat your interest in the position, and let them know you are confident you could come to a fair agreement if the opportunity arises. Stress why you deserve the salary by sharing work experiences, internships, related coursework and skills that match the position requirements.

Salary and benefits can be discussed later in the recruitment process if they aren't addressed by the hiring manager. Often-times, salary and benefits may not be discussed until an offer is made.

BENEFITS FOR CONSIDERATION

It's more than just the salary, as additional benefits can really add up. "Some job seekers hear the word compensation and only think of the annual salary or hourly wage," shares Sprout. "They really need to pay attention to the total compensation package, which includes all benefits, retirement, pension and variable pay offerings," adds Sprout.

If you are a new graduate, you may not be accustomed to the value of health insurance, 401k and other benefits. For instance, paying for health insurance out-of-pocket can consume a large portion of your income.

The following lists some benefits that may be offered. You should consider these benefits in addition to salary as part of the overall compensation package:

- Health/Dental/Vision Insurance
- 401k/Retirement Plan
- Share/Stock Options
- Short & Long-term Disability
- Life Insurance
- Vacation/Holidays/PTO
- Mobile Phone
- Vehicle/Mileage
- Continuing Education/Education Reimbursement
- Bonus/Incentive Rewards



- Discounted Products
- Flexible Working Hours
- Gym/Health Club Membership
- Parking
- Uniforms
- Relocation Package
- Expense Account
- Employee Discounts
- Child Care Reimbursement

Whether or not employers offer these benefits may depend on the position and company. For instance, sales roles are more likely to receive

a vehicle/mileage and a mobile phone, whereas a research associate might receive a uniform allowance and continuing education. According to the last *U.S. AgCareers.com HR Review*, the most common benefit offered was health insurance. Another important point to consider is who pays for benefits (if applicable); for instance, what (if any) is your share of payment for health, disability or life insurance? Does the employer provide a 401k match?

GET IT IN WRITING

If not provided to you, you should always request the offer in writing.

The offer letter should be a comprehensive list of salary and benefits.

Do not accept an offer on the spot or before you receive details in writing, and take time to review it for at least a few days.

Both Flaman-Johnson and Sprout recommend replying to a job offer within two to three days. Some employers will specify a deadline on the offer. At this time it is appropriate to ask additional questions about benefits, vacation, etc.

IT'S UP TO YOU!

Keep in mind that you do have some control over your salary and benefits once you are on the job. The majority of companies conduct reviews annually and your salary increase, along with any bonuses or incentives, will most likely be based on your performance. In the latest *U.S. Agribusiness HR Review*, the predominant range was a 2.1% to 3% salary increase, with the majority of businesses offering some type of bonus program.

When starting a career, new grads may need to be flexible in starting salary negotiations. "Look at the culture of the organization, career paths, chance to gain expertise and opportunity for advancement, along with the organization's reputation," says Flaman-Johnson. Often it is the organization's culture, rather than the salary, that keeps employees most engaged.