



NEGOTIATION SKILLS

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Negotiation generally involves handling, fielding, discussing, and considering offers of employment. For the candidate, it certainly is about using techniques that will ensure you obtain the best salary/compensation package. But, it is also about ethical communication, relationship building, professional behavior, collaborative attitude, respectful interaction and managing expectations. It requires preparation and research, active listening and understanding, demonstrating your value, awareness and maturity, persuasive skills, and ethics and integrity.

PROPER PLANNING

Be informed and knowledgeable. Preparing in advance will increase your confidence and credibility. To be an effective negotiator, you'll need to conduct research, obtain information, and gather data. The process of planning ahead of time will allow you to know your worth, to know the realities of the industry and market, and to help you manage your expectations.

Salary Parameters – Salary information is easily accessed from such reliable resources as the US Dept of Labor (Occupational Outlook Handbook). However, salary is quite often expressed in terms of national averages. In practical terms, compensation varies greatly based on a number of critical factors. These factors include: industry or field, job function, market, region, location, company type, company size, and candidate experience and credentials. The research you conduct and the data you gather should include... Market comparisons... Cost of living... Typical salary for your job function... Your credentials and qualifications as they relate to company and industry requirements... and your personal needs.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening skills are key to your success as a negotiator. Negotiation, as an important communication activity, is a two-sided transaction. It is a two-way street. So, the best advice is to... Listen first, talk second... Seek first to understand, then to be understood... Put their needs first, then yours.

For you to have credibility, to be taken seriously, and to be heard and understood, you must ensure the other person has first been respected in the same manner. True negotiation cannot occur until both sides have been understood. For the objectives to be clear and the outcome to be favorable, you need to know them and they need to know you. Your objective is more realistic, and you will have more credibility, when you understand the context.

Their regard for you is more heightened when they realize you are considerate of their needs and respectful of their values. When they recognize that you took the time to understand their requirements first, only then will they be convinced of your credibility and better able to determine your worth to their organization.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Effective negotiation requires maturity and emotional intelligence. It is important that you monitor your emotions, control your impulses, display patience, display humility, be respectful, be considerate, recognize their feelings, affirm their needs, and be appropriately deferential.

Do not display any sense of entitlement. Do not act presumptuous or arrogant. Do not assume an adversarial stance. Play fair. Deal in good faith. Act with integrity. It's not about what you want. It's about what you're worth. It is about what is fair and reasonable and about what you have earned. It is not about getting more than you deserve.

RELATIONSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

It is instructive to remind yourself that you are not haggling with a stranger over an object at a flea market. When you are bargaining with a street vendor, you are interacting with somebody you will never see again. Professional negotiation that takes place after a job interview, pursuant to an employment agreement or contract, is likely to be with a person or party for which you will have an ongoing relationship.

So, keep it friendly. Maintain a collaborative attitude. Build rapport. Make a connection. Focus on mutual benefit and a win-win outcome. At its lowest level, negotiation is about getting what you want. But, as a relationship-oriented activity, it is also about acceptable outcomes, mutually beneficial results, a common goal, the best alternative, and synergistic solutions.

Win-Lose - You got what you wanted, but they were left unsatisfied with the outcome

Lose-Win - They got what they wanted, but you were left unsatisfied with the outcome

Lose-Lose - Neither of you got what you wanted; you were both dissatisfied with the outcome

Win-Win - You both got what you wanted; you were both satisfied with the outcome

Compromise - An outcome in which you achieved your objective at some cost to the relationship

Accommodation - An outcome in which you salvaged the relationship at some cost to the objective

Collaboration - An outcome that achieved a good balance between the objective and the relationship

DEMONSTRATE VALUE

As a negotiator (and applicant), it is your obligation to prove your worth by providing evidence of your value. Your best approach to doing this is to address their needs and connect with their requirements. Align with their ideals and standards. Match your background and qualifications to the job description. With their requirements in mind, describe yourself to them in terms of your... Education and knowledge... Experience and activities... Skills, abilities, competencies... Personality and attitude... Goals and motivations.

PERSUASIVE SKILLS

Negotiation requires effective persuasive skills. To be persuasive means to be... Compelling, Influential, Convincing, Eloquent, Impressive, Credible, Believable, Plausible, Sincere, and Trustworthy. Your goal is to win them over, not bowl them over. Be charming not forceful, assertive not aggressive, genuine not slick. You are not trying to... coax, lure, argue, debate, entice, seduce, wheedle, tempt, trick, apply pressure, overwhelm, manipulate, or take advantage. Don't make demands or ultimatums. Don't be insistent or obstinate. Don't exaggerate or use hyperbole. Don't be forceful or pushy. Don't brag or boast.

During the interview session, avoid self-centered objectives and one-sided outcomes. Avoid discussion of salary, compensation, and benefits. Avoid expressing the idea, "What a great opportunity this is for me!" Your attitude should not be... What's in it for me? What do I want and need? What do I get out of the deal? Instead, your attitude should be... Here is what I can do for you. Here is what I bring to the table. Here is what I can contribute. Tailor your language. Adapt to their values and needs. Show relevance. Align and connect with what is important to them. And discuss your background and credentials in a factual manner. Instead of bragging or boasting, you are simply stating the facts.

At the beginning of the process, if discussion of salary comes up, use words like "negotiable" and "open." Express salary expectations as a range instead of a single figure. You might even want to communicate your open attitude by saying, "Once we have discussed my qualifications, you will be able to better determine what I am worth to your organization." At the end of the process, after the offer has been made, you can say... Is that offer firm/final? Is that offer negotiable? Is there room for negotiation? Would you be open to discussing this further? May I ask a few questions?

LEVERAGE TACTICS

When negotiating, timing is key. The best moment to begin negotiating is after the relationship has been established, after the interview is complete, and after the offer is made. You are worth more at the end of the discussion than at the beginning. The more they know you, the more you are worth. Let the other person go first. Let the other person make the offer.

If you have multiple offers, use that as leverage to size up the offer and to compare and contrast. You can use higher or better offers from other parties as a way to discuss the possibility of matching or raising their offer.

Play the reluctant party. Don't respond too quickly or too enthusiastically to an offer. Observe patience and restraint. Say, "Can I take some time to think about your offer and get back to you later?"