

D3 Negotiating Salary Tips

You have the most power to negotiate salary after you have impressed your future employer during an interview, but before you sign an official employment offer. Most employers will informally offer a candidate the position before they give you anything to formally sign, and this is a good time to talk about what you want.

Your new employer wants to hire you, undoubtedly received buy-in from other firm/team members, and has no desire to keep interviewing. More than anything, they are anxious for you to start work. If appropriate, this is the time to ask for additional compensation.

Here are some helpful D3 reminders/tips when negotiating salary:

Always be ready to talk salary, but do not be the first one to bring it up.

- The one exception to this rule is if the firm/company asks you to start signing papers, but never brought up what you will be paid. This is a discussion you need to have, so make sure you have it before you sign off on a new job.

Know what you are willing to accept before you walk in the door.

- Many candidates never give themselves a chance to negotiate a better salary because they do not spend enough time thinking about it beforehand. Take some time and consider the compensation that you would be happy with receiving. What number would you walk away from because it is too low for you? Do not get locked in a bad position because you are not sure what you are willing to accept in the first place.

Know what you are worth.

- Get as much data as you can on the going rate for the job. Check online and offline sources. Reach out and talk to people at similar positions in different companies/firms. If they are willing to tell you, find out what they make. Keep the conversation relaxed and simply ask, “What kind of salary could someone like me expect at your company/firm?”

Understand the company’s financial position.

- If a large firm/company and a small firm/company have similar openings, then the large one will usually pay more because they have more financial leeway. Where are you interviewing? How is that company/firm doing financially? Some firm/companies simply don’t have much flexibility and it’s important to realize that going in.

Talk with the recruiter, not against them — they need to sell you.

- The typical recruiter/HR representative almost never has the ability to make the final decision on your compensation package. After you negotiate with them, they will need to go back and confirm the package with a hiring manager or another supervisor (partner). In other words, the recruiter is going to sell you to the hiring manager. It is up to them to communicate why you deserve a higher salary. You want their support because they are going to need to sell you..

Some perks are easier to negotiate for than others.

- Typically, a signing bonus is much easier to negotiate than more vacation days or a shorter waiting period on 401k matching. There is usually some flexibility in your salary range as well, which is another good area to focus on. Not all perks are created equal.

If you are meeting resistance, then ask about starting at a higher pay grade.

- A higher pay grade helps because you can often earn a raise without needing a promotion.

Ask to shorten the period that it takes for you to come up for a raise.

- You might not be able to start higher on the pay scale, but it is very possible you could get a raise after 6 months on the job instead of 12. That is a quick boost for you and it only takes a few minutes to negotiate.

Remember that the salary negotiation is a conversation and conversations are two-way streets.

- If you make an offer and then continue to talk and make another offer, then you are negotiating with yourself. Allow the conversation to go back and forth and do not make more than one offer in a row.

Ask, “What is the salary range you have allocated for someone in this position?”

- This is a great question to ask at the very beginning of a job interview or the first time you meet a recruiter. It gives you the ability to get information on the expected salary before the actual debate arises later on.

“I’m going to need more information about the job/total benefits/expectations before I can name a number...”

- This is an excellent phrase to use if the interviewer is pressing you for a number and has not revealed their expected salary range yet.

“Do you have any flexibility in that number?”

- This is a great phrase to use right after the interviewer names their expected salary for the position. It offers a nice transition into the conversation of asking for more money.

“I’m a bit disappointed...”

- This is a great phrase for starting the salary negotiation once you have discovered what they have initially offered you. “I’m a bit disappointed in the starting salary. What can we do to figure this out?”

“That sounds like a good starting place...”

- This is another solid phrase to use if you want to ask for a higher salary range. “\$65,000. That sounds like a good starting place. Now we just need to figure out the details.”

“Let’s review this after 3 months...”

- If you are having trouble making headway with the negotiation, but you are fine with starting at the package they gave you, then you can use this phrase to get a quicker boost. “Let’s review this after 3 months and talk about a raise once you’ve had a chance to see my work.”

“Can we get that in writing?”

- If you negotiate for a better compensation package, then make sure you get all of the details in writing.

If you do not ask for a higher salary, then the answer is always no.

- It takes some guts to push back and ask for more, but it is far better to ask and be turned down than not to ask at all. Getting what you want does not mean that you need to act unprofessional. Furthermore, you are not going to lose an offer because you tried to negotiate for a higher salary. If you want to keep it really simple, then just smile and ask for what you want while offering some proof to back up your request.

Additional D3 Information

For additional information and insight concerning salary negotiations, please consult with a D3 representative. As industry leaders in legal staffing, we pride ourselves on offering our expert commentary and analysis of a wide range of subjects affecting a candidates’ employment search. www.d3legalsearch.com