



**Fox Valley**  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
Student Employment Services

# Evaluating a **JOB OFFER**

Acceptance and Rejection Letters  
Negotiating Salary

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# Evaluating a Job Offer

When you receive a job offer, it's important to take the time to carefully evaluate the offer so you are making an educated decision to accept or reject the offer. The last thing you want to do is make a hasty decision that you will later regret.

## Tip

*Do not accept any offer you don't have in writing:* This may seem obvious, but many forget it. Only written offers constitute real offers.

Consider the entire compensation package - salary, benefits, perks, work environment - not just your paycheck. Weigh the pros and cons and take some time to mull over the offer. It is perfectly acceptable to ask the employer for up to a week to think it over.

## **Money Matters**

Money isn't the only consideration, but it is an important one. Is the offer what you expected? If not, is it a salary you can accept without feeling insulted? Will you be able to pay your bills? If your answer is no, then don't accept the offer, at least right away. Make sure that you are getting paid what you're worth and you are happy with the compensation. Nobody wants to be in a position where they realize that the salary isn't enough - after they have accepted the job offer. If the compensation package isn't what you expected, it's important to be well prepared to negotiate a salary that will pay you what you are worth. Job seekers need to spend time researching salaries in their industry in order to successfully negotiate the maximum salary for the job offered. See more information on Salary Survey Information Resources (referred to on page 6) at [www.fvtc.edu/ses-students](http://www.fvtc.edu/ses-students).

## **Benefits and Perks**

In addition to salary, review the benefits and perks offered. Sometimes the benefit package can be as important as what you get in your paycheck. If you're not sure about the benefits that are offered, ask for additional information or clarification. Find out details on health and life insurance coverage, vacation, sick time, disability, and other benefit programs. Inquire about how much of the benefits costs are provided by the company, in full, and how much you are expected to contribute. If there are a variety of options available, request copies of the plan descriptions so you can compare benefit packages.

## **Hours and Travel**

Before accepting a job, be sure that you are clear on the hours and schedule you'll be expected to work. Also, confirm what, if any, travel is involved. If the position requires 45 hours of work a week and you're used to working 35 hours, consider whether you will have difficulty committing to the schedule. If the nature of the job requires that you will need to be on the road three days a week, be sure that you can commit to that as well. Also, consider travel time to and from work. Is the commute going to take an extra hour or will there be parking fees you're not paying now?

## **Flexibility and Company Culture**

Many of us with small children, elderly parents, or other personal considerations, need flexibility in our schedules. To some of us the ability to work a schedule that isn't a typical forty hour work week is important. It is also important to feel comfortable in the environment that you are going to be working in. One candidate for a customer service job realized that there was no way she could accept it, despite the decent salary, when she was told she had to ask permission to use the restroom. Ask if you can spend some time in the office talking to potential co-workers and supervisors if you're not sure that the work environment and culture are a good fit.

## Your Personal Circumstances

There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to accepting a job offer. You have to do what is best for you. Everyone has a different set of personal circumstances. What might be the perfect job for you could be an awful job for someone else. Take the time to review the pros and cons. Making a list is always helpful.

### Tip

*Set up a decision tree for selecting among job offers:* Even if you have only one offer, you should still go through this exercise. On a piece of paper list the pluses and minuses associated with each job; put down everything no matter how trivial. Using this list, organize your priorities. Pick those items that are most important to you and put them at the top of a new sheet.

After you have picked the most important items, but before you have made a decision, discuss your reasoning with people you trust. In talking, you may discover that you have some of your priorities wrong. If you have been honest with yourself, the most important elements should be clear.

Also, listen to your gut - if it's telling you not to take the job, maybe you should listen. Keep in mind that if this isn't the right job for you, it's not the end of the world. The next offer might just be that perfect match.

It's much easier to turn down an offer than it is to leave a job that you have already started. The employer would prefer that you decline rather than having to start over the hiring process a couple weeks down the road if you don't work out. So, take the time to thoroughly evaluate the offer. Ask questions if you have them. Take the time you need to make an educated, informed decision so you feel as sure as possible that you, and the company, make an excellent match.

### Tip

*Within a reasonably short time, make a decision:* Sleep on it overnight or wait a couple of days. If it is the right decision, it will seem like the only decision. If it is not, you will have second thoughts. If this occurs, either you have been lying to yourself, or two of the jobs are essentially indistinguishable. Try going through the analysis stage again, watching for places you are fooling yourself. This is a particularly good time to go back to a person you trust who may be able to point out where you have mixed up your priorities. Normally, the first decision will stick, and you will experience increasing confidence in it.

## Acceptance and Rejection Letters

Whether you are accepting or rejecting a job offer, you should let the company know your decision as soon as possible. In either case, be polite, brief and to the point.

### Tip

*Announcing the decision:* Accept the offer by calling the person who made it. You will need to follow this up immediately with a letter of acceptance. In the letter you should acknowledge the explicit offer you are accepting including any changes that occurred. Keep this simple. Further say when you will/can start. Do not forget to convey how enthusiastic you are at the possibilities this new job offers. Make the person who made the offer happy with the process.

*Graciously turning down the other offers:* Call immediately after you have accepted the offer with a rehearsed, short speech. Typically, start out saying how great the offer was, how much you appreciated the effort that went into constructing it, and how sad you are that you have decided not to accept it. The offerer has probably worked hard to get the resources for the offer and will want to be able to put as positive a spin as possible on your rejection. Someday in the future, this person or the department may be able to do you a favor. In your rejection, you should strive to maintain the high regard the individual and the department has of you.

## **Job Acceptance Letter**

Even if you have accepted a job over the phone, it's a good idea to write a job acceptance letter to confirm the details of employment and to formally accept the job offer. Your letter can be brief, but it should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the opportunity
- Written acceptance of the job offer
- The terms and conditions of employment (i.e. salary and benefits)
- Starting date of employment

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information even though it is on file with the employer. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you already have been offered the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

## **Sample Job Acceptance Letters**

Date

Jane Fieldstone  
87 Washington Street  
Smithfield, CA 08055

Dear Ms. Fieldstone:

As we discussed on the phone, I am very pleased to accept the position of Marketing Manager with Smithfield Pottery. Thank you for the opportunity. I am eager to make a positive contribution to the company and to work with everyone on the Smithfield team.

As we discussed, my starting salary will be \$35,000 and health and life insurance benefits will be provided after 90 days of employment.

I look forward to starting employment on July 1, 2010. If there is any additional information or paperwork you need prior to then, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Date

Ms. Jane Brown  
Human Resources Manager  
Open Door Company  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for offering me the position of Assistant Accountant with Open Door Company. I am pleased to accept this offer and look forward to starting employment with your company on August 3.

As we discussed, my starting salary will be \$40,000 and health and life insurance benefits will be provided after 60 days of employment.

Thank you, again, for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I am eager to join your team and make a positive contribution to your company. If there is any further information or paperwork you need me to complete, please let me know and I will arrange it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

### **Job Rejection Letter**

When you have decided to reject a job offer, you should let the employer know in writing that you are declining the offer. Your letter should be polite, brief, and to the point. You don't want to burn bridges because this employer may have a better offer for you down the road. Don't get into any specifics. Even if the hours are awful, the work environment is terrible, or the pay isn't enough to make ends meet – don't mention it. You should include the following:

- Thanks and appreciation for the offer
- Written rejection of the job offer

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information and phone number, even though it is on file with the employer. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you are declining the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.

### **Sample Job Rejection Letters**

Date

George Gillhooley  
87 Delaware Road  
Hatfield, CA 08065

Dear Mr. Gillhooley:

Thank you very much for offering me the position of Marketing Manager with Hatfield Industries. It was a difficult decision to make, but I have accepted a position with another company.

I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to interview me and to share information on the opportunity and your company.

Again, thank you for your consideration.

Name

Date

George Jones  
87 Delaware Road  
Hatfield, CA 08065

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you very much for offering me the opportunity to work at Bronson Associates. Unfortunately, I will not be accepting the position as it does not fit the path I am taking to achieve my career goals.

Once again, I'd like to express my gratitude for the offer and my regrets that it didn't work out. You have my best wishes in finding someone suitable for the position.

Sincerely,

### **Sample Job Rejection E-Mail Message**

Subject Line: Job Offer – Your Name

Thank you very much for offering me the opportunity to work at ABCD Company. Unfortunately, I have accepted another position that more closely matches the career path that I wish to pursue.

I would, again, like to express my gratitude for the offer and my regrets that it didn't work out. You have my best wishes in finding a suitable candidate for the position.

Best regards,

Your Name

## **Salary Negotiation**

Before you start talking pay (and salary negotiations) with a prospective employer, you need to find out how much the job (and you) are worth. You will need to take the time to research salaries so you are prepared to get what you're worth and a job offer that's realistic and reasonable.

Once you know what you should be earning, how do you go about getting it? Start by being very patient. When interviewing for a new position, do your best not to bring up compensation until the employer makes you an offer. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, say that they are open based upon the position and the overall compensation package. Or tell the employer you would like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary. Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary research you've done up front. Once you've received the offer you don't need to accept (or reject) it right away. Sometimes just delaying your response, within a reasonable period of time, can get you an increase in the original offer.

If you're ambivalent about the position, a "no" can bring you a better offer too. "I turned down a position I knew I didn't want, regardless of salary, and received three follow-up phone calls upping the compensation package." However, be careful. If you do definitely need that new job,

there's a risk that the employer may accept your declining the position and move on to the next candidate.

## **Do's and Don'ts**

Most people wouldn't put salary negotiation high on their lists of desirable activities. Even though you may prefer getting a root canal to negotiating your salary, if you want to get paid what you're worth, you better learn how to do it right. These dos and don'ts of salary negotiation can help you get the salary you deserve, whether you're entertaining a job offer or asking for a raise.

- *Don't look at how much money your friends in other fields are making:* You may be envious of your friends who are earning more money than you are. If they aren't working in the same field, you shouldn't make those comparisons.
- *Do research salaries in your field:* Look at recent salary surveys, talk to others working in your field, and contact your trade or professional association to find out what other people are paid for doing the same work. Remember that salaries differ by geographic region.
- *Do consider how much experience you have:* Those with more experience can hope to earn more money. Remember to talk about the amount of experience you have if it will help you negotiate a higher salary. If you don't have a lot of experience, be realistic about the salary for which you can ask.
- *Don't talk about how much money you need:* When you are going through salary negotiations, don't tell your boss (or future boss) that you need to make more money because your bills are high, your house was expensive, or your child is starting college.
- *Do talk about the salary you deserve:* When presenting your case during a salary negotiation, talk about how you will earn the salary you are requesting. Highlight what you have done, or will do, for the company. Also, discuss the salaries in your field (based on your research).
- *Do be flexible:* When going through a salary negotiation, you aren't likely to get the exact amount of money you want. You will probably have to compromise. The trick is to figure out how much you are willing to compromise and what you will do if your boss doesn't offer you a salary you find acceptable.

It's important to be well prepared to negotiate a salary that will pay you what you are worth. Job seekers need to spend time researching salaries in their industry in order to successfully negotiate the maximum salary for the job offered. Keep in mind that the cost-of-living varies widely throughout the country.

## **Salary Survey Information Resources**

This information is available through the FVTC website: [www.fvtc.edu/ses-students](http://www.fvtc.edu/ses-students)

- [FVTC Program Salary Information](#) – Entry-Level Wages for the past 5 years
- [FVTC Graduate Employment Research Report](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Labor](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [Wisconsin Projections 2004-2014: Employment in Industries & Occupations](#)
- [Salary.com](#)

Additional sources of information:

- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Trade Associations
- Public Libraries
- National Association of College and Employers (NACE)



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