LESSON 2

THE OFFER & NEGOTIATION PROCESS: SEALING THE DEAL

Introduction: The Final Hurdle

You have made your decision, you have conducted your reference checks, and you are ready to extend an offer. This is an exciting moment, but it is also a critical and delicate one. The way you handle the offer and negotiation process can have a significant impact on a candidate's decision to accept your offer and on their perception of your organization. This lesson will provide you with a step-by-step guide to extending an offer and navigating the negotiation process with professionalism and confidence.

Extending the Offer: A Personal Touch

In today's impersonal, digital world, a personal touch can make all the difference. Whenever possible, the hiring manager should extend the offer verbally over the phone before sending the formal written offer.

The Verbal Offer Script:

- **Express Your Enthusiasm:** Start by telling the candidate how excited you are to offer them the position. "I am thrilled to be calling you today to officially offer you the position of [Job Title]."
- **Briefly Reiterate** Why You Chose Them: Briefly mention one or two of the key reasons why you believe they are the best candidate for the role. "We were so impressed with your experience in [X] and your creative ideas for [Y]."

- **Review the Key Terms of the Offer:** Briefly review the key terms of the offer, including the salary, the start date, and any key benefits.
- **Give Them Time to Consider:** It is important to give the candidate some time to consider the offer. A reasonable timeframe is 24-48 hours.
- **Follow Up with a Written Offer:** Immediately after the verbal offer, send a formal written offer letter that outlines all the terms and conditions of the offer in detail.

Navigating the Negotiation: A Collaborative Approach

It is increasingly common for candidates, especially from the younger generations, to negotiate their job offers. It is important to be prepared for this and to approach the negotiation not as a battle to be won, but as a collaborative conversation.

Step 1: Listen to Their Request

If a candidate comes back with a counter-offer, listen carefully to what they are asking for.

Step 2: Understand Their Motivation

Try to understand the “why” behind their request.

Step 3: Know Your Limits

Before you enter into a negotiation, know the maximum salary you are willing to pay and the non-negotiable aspects of the offer.

Step 4: Look for Win-Win Solutions

If you can’t meet their salary request, look for other ways to sweeten the deal (e.g., signing bonus, extra vacation, professional development stipend).

Step 5: Be Prepared to Walk Away

If a candidate’s expectations are unreasonable, be prepared to walk away.

The Importance of a Great “No”

Just as important as how you handle your “yes” is how you handle your “no.” For the candidates you did not select, it is crucial to provide a professional and respectful rejection. This is not just a matter of common courtesy; it is a matter of protecting your employer brand.

- **Be Timely:** Don’t leave candidates hanging. Let them know your decision as soon as possible.
- **Be Personal:** Whenever possible, make the rejection a personal phone call, especially for candidates who made it to the final round.
- **Be Honest (But Not Brutal):** You don’t need to go into great detail, but it is helpful to provide a brief and honest reason for your decision. “We were so impressed with your background, but we ultimately decided to go with a candidate who had more experience in [X].”
- **Keep the Door Open:** If you were impressed with the candidate, let them know that you would like to keep their information on file for future opportunities.

ACTIVITY: MASTER THE NEGOTIATION CONVERSATION

Time needed: 45 minutes

What You'll Do

Practice salary negotiation by playing both sides of the conversation. Learn what works before your real negotiation.

Step 1: Choose Your Scenario (5 minutes)

Scenario A - Restaurant Supervisor

- Offer: $32,000, 10 days vacation | Industry average: $35,000-$38,000
- Your value: 3 years experience, bilingual, reduced turnover by 15%

Scenario B - Marketing Coordinator

- Offer: $42,000, office-based 5 days | Industry average: $45,000-$50,000
- Your value: Managed 50K+ followers, increased engagement by 40%

Scenario C - Front Desk Manager

- Offer: $38,000, 12 days vacation, night shift | Industry average: $42,000-$46,000
- Your value: 5 years in hotels, fluent in 3 languages, 4.8/5 ratings

Scenario D - HR Assistant

- Offer: $36,000, no training budget | Industry average: $38,000-$42,000
- Your value: CIPD qualified, reduced hiring time by 25%

Step 2: Prepare (10 minutes)

Download the workbook and fill in:

- What they offered vs. what you want
- Your minimum acceptable salary
- 3 reasons you're worth more
- Industry research notes

Step 3: Write Both Conversations (20 minutes)

Conversation 1 - You as Candidate

Write a script with 3-5 exchanges showing:

- Thank them and show excitement
- Make your counter-offer with specific number and reasons
- Handle their objection
- Negotiate middle ground
- Close the deal

Example: "Thank you! I'm excited about this role. Based on my experience reducing turnover by 15%, I was expecting $37,000. Can we discuss that?"

Conversation 2 - You as Hiring Manager

Candidate wants $4,000 more, hybrid work, extra vacation. Your budget allows $2,000 max.

Write your responses using:

- Acknowledge their value
- Explain constraints
- Offer alternatives
- Find creative solutions

Step 4: Self-Check (5 minutes)

Score yourself (1 point each):

✅ Used specific numbers, not ranges?

✅ Explained why you're worth it?

✅ Stayed professional and positive?

✅ Offered alternatives?

✅ Didn't apologize for negotiating?

✅ Avoided saying "I need the money for bills"?

6 points = Ready | 4-5 = Practice again | Below 4 = Review lesson

What to Avoid

❌ "Could you maybe go higher?" → ✅ "Can you offer $38,000?"

❌ "I need this for rent" → ✅ "Based on my skills, $X is fair"

❌ "I'll take whatever" → ✅ "Let me review and respond tomorrow"

Submit Your Work

Upload:

- Completed prep worksheet
- Both conversation scripts (candidate + hiring manager)
- Your self-assessment score

Pro Tip: Practice out loud twice before any real negotiation. It gets easier each time.