Negotiating: Twenty-One Rules of the Game

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Your negotiating ability is a strength and an asset to your prospective employer. By doing it effectively right from the start, you are proving that when you’re on the other side of the desk, you will negotiate on behalf of the company to make the best deals, get the best prices, and generate the most profit. Some hiring managers even go so far as to say that when candidates do no negotiating at all, or stop negotiating too early in the process, they’re disappointed!

Everyone knows that negotiating for your livelihood is “serious business.” But in another sense, negotiating is a game! I’ll be honest and tell you that employers win this game the majority of the time. Want to know why? Because most job seekers don’t know the rules! It’s pretty tough to win a game when you don’t know how the game is played, right?

Here are the rules that you’ll need to study and master, to achieve your salary potential:

1. Do extensive salary research and preparation
2. Defer salary discussions until an offer seems imminent
3. Discuss salary only with the ultimate decision maker
4. Get the employer to state a salary figure or range first
5. Wait until a firm offer is on the table before negotiating
6. Discuss salary only after you have fully described your relevant accomplishments
7. Know your strategy before attending the negotiation meeting
8. Always negotiate the offer, no matter how good it seems initially
9. Finalize the salary first, before negotiating other items such as benefits
10. Never misrepresent your former salary
11. Don’t confuse salary with the full compensation package
12. Avoid tying your potential salary to your old salary

13. Use silence as one of your most powerful negotiating tools

14. The only real offer is a formal, written offer

15. Leverage one offer against other offers if possible

16. Be patient and disciplined throughout the process

17. Never accept or reject an offer on the spot

18. Be willing to walk away if the offer does not meet your needs

19. Be sure the compensation package you finally accept is a “win-win”

20. Maintain a positive, upbeat attitude and enjoy the process

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