

SALARY NEGOTIATIONS: DEAL OR NO DEAL

By Robert Mandelberg, CPRW

Salary negotiations are a lot like the game show *Deal or No Deal*, except of course for the 26 models and Howie Mandel. When you're presented with an offer, you have two choices: You can either accept it, or reject it and gamble for a better payout.

Negotiations of any kind require a certain degree of skill to be successful. And since salary negotiations are probably not something you do very often, you are at a disadvantage right off the bat. To make matters worse, the hiring manager is usually quite experienced in this area. She has probably taken courses with titles like *How to Make Potential Employees Weep During Salary Negotiations (Parts I and II)* and *Benefits? Don't Make Me Laugh!*

The only way you stand a chance in a salary negotiation is to be prepared. It is a common misconception that companies want to pay the lowest wages possible. This is simply not the case. While it is true that employers want to reduce labor costs, many of them understand that it is actually more expensive to hire someone at a bargain-basement salary, spend months training him, and then have to go through the same process all over again six months later when this employee resigns because he found a better paying job.

Employers realize that it is much more cost effective in the long run to pay a fair salary and keep workers happy. In fact, human resources departments conduct salary studies to be sure they are offering competitive wages.

How will you know if the offer is fair? **By doing research ahead of time.** Friends or contacts in the field are great sources for salary information. And there are websites that publish salary ranges for a wide variety of positions based upon industry, level of experience, and geographic location. Some sites are free; others charge a fee.

Once you ascertain the salary range for your target position, you will be prepared to enter into a meaningful salary discussion. While employers may not want to start you at the very top of the range, you certainly don't want to start at the very bottom. In an open and honest dialogue, there is usually a happy medium that will satisfy both sides. So next time you are faced with a salary negotiation, do your research and you can turn ***Deal or No Deal*** into ***The Price is Right***.

Robert Mandelberg founded The Creative Edge Resume Service in 1987. Since that time, he has helped thousands of clients reach their career goals. Rob is a published author, a Certified Professional Resume Writer (CPRW), and a Certified Employment Interview Professional (CEIP). Contact Rob at Rob@ResumeRob.com or (732) 544-1285.