

# Job hunters should update their negotiating skills along with their resumes: experts

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## FULL TEXT

### How to negotiate after receiving a job offer

When Nav Nagra received a job offer in April, she was fully prepared for the next step: Negotiating with her new employer over compensation details such as salary and vacation days.

"The first offer on the table is not always the best one," the 33-year-old Vancouver-based marketing and communications manager said.

Her readiness was due in part to her mother, who works in human resources and had always encouraged her to advocate for herself and ask for what she thought she deserved.

To help "knock it out of the park," Nagra also hired Vancouver-based Lisa Christie Coaching & Consulting for support with everything from interview preparation to the negotiation stage.

As the economy reopens from pandemic lockdown measures and Canadians return to the workforce or look to make a career change, experts say a primer on negotiating should be high on a job hunter's to-do list.

Negotiation can be a stressful experience for many job seekers, but for younger Canadians who graduated during or after the 2008 financial crisis, there can be this idea of "we should be grateful for what we get," said Kathryn Meisner, a career and salary negotiation coach in Toronto.

"A lot of us have grown up with a feeling of scarcity and then to get a job with a salary attached it, there's almost this thinking of 'I should just take this because I don't want to rock the boat.'"

It can also be challenging for job seekers to negotiate because most people aren't taught how to do so. And, even further, conversations around money and salary negotiation can still sometimes be taboo, which makes it difficult to share experiences with colleagues or peers.

Nagra said her career coach taught her how to compare the job description to what she was bringing to the table without the need for additional training.

"I thought I brought about 70 per cent of what the job ad wanted to the table, so I decided I wanted 70 per cent of what the salary range was, and I approached it that way." Her new employer accepted the proposal.

Nagra also successfully negotiated four weeks of vacation, just like her old job, up from the two weeks initially offered.

When Meisner supports clients with negotiation, she recommends they keep a \$10,000 range in mind.

"The benefit of a range is that because you can assume an employer is probably going to negotiate you down, you want the bottom of that range to actually be at or above the ideal salary," Meisner said. "So, if they do negotiate you down, you're still going to get closer to what you want. Then it's a win-win feeling."

For example, if you want to earn a yearly salary of \$65,000, then you could propose a salary \$70,000 to \$80,000 salary to start.

When it comes to figuring out what salary range to aim for, Meisner says to take any research done on Google with a grain of salt.

"What is more important is talking to other humans, either people who are at the same level as you or people who

have more experience negotiating," she says.

"I want people to be asking their friends or their colleagues, not how much do you make, but questions like 'What has a successful negotiating strategy been for you? What's your current salary range or what other non-financial compensation ... do you get?'"

While most people think of salary when it comes to negotiating, job seekers can also negotiate for more vacation time, flexible hours, job location, the start date, whether or not they'll travel for the work, a professional development allowance, mobile devices or the budget to buy them, and anything else that's important to them. It's also becoming more common to negotiate for remote work if that's not already part of the job offer, Meisner said.

Many people can be afraid to negotiate because they fear the employer will retract the offer, but the worst that's likely to happen is that the employer says "no." In that case, you can either accept what's offered or go somewhere else that can meet that offer, she said.

Even for job seekers who are in the early stages of their careers, negotiating is still a good learning experience and an opportunity to sharpen your skills for the next time.

"Think about your future self," Meisner said. "If you're 25 and what you negotiate at 25 is going to influence what you negotiate at 27, and what you negotiate at 30, 40 and 50, then if you start negotiating now, not only does your skill get better, but you are more likely to make more money over the entirety of your career."

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