

Best Tips for Best Offers: Negotiating the Deal!

By Chris Hingle

Would you trust a stranger with your livelihood? What about the business or division you control? When companies choose new executives, there's a lot at stake for everyone at the table, and trust becomes crucial when the time comes to negotiate a deal.

Trust Takes Time

From the very beginning of the executive search, hiring managers and candidates should work to understand each other's motivations and develop mutual respect. Honesty and candor on the part of both parties can help develop confidence that their relationship will work in the long term. As interviews progress, candidates and their interviewers should gradually become more confident that they can negotiate successfully, despite divergent interests. If everyone involved makes an effort from the beginning to cultivate trust between the new hire and the company, the final negotiations over salary and benefits will go much more smoothly.

Understand the Culture

Employees at ease with a candidate will be more likely to share information on how the company operates day-to-day. Is it a fast-paced, high-stakes startup environment? If so, the candidate will know to expect a pay package weighted toward performance bonuses rather than base salary. Is the company older, larger and more forward thinking? These could be signs that the candidate can expect a pay package more focused on long-term results. In the end, if the candidate doesn't understand how the company structures its pay, then one won't know how to evaluate a fair offer.

Negotiate in Good Faith

Once trust is established between the candidate and the hiring manager, it's important to take an objective look at what motivates the company's offers and the candidate's responses to them. The interview process lays the groundwork for a successful negotiation by giving each side a thorough understanding of what the other expects. Be honest about your goals from the beginning, and you'll have more success achieving

them in the end.

Look at the Total Opportunity

As any ambitious manager knows, there's more to a position than the paycheck. For executives looking to increase their responsibilities, the career opportunities provided by a jump from a regional position to a national position could be worth much more than the accompanying salary upgrade. Don't just consider the value of the position in the next year. Rather, keep in mind what the position will do for your income and responsibilities over the next 5 or 10 years. Beyond salary, it's also important to consider factors that can have just as big of an impact on quality of life. Will you have to move, travel constantly or immerse yourself in a more competitive environment? It's important to consider all of these factors before coming to the negotiating table.

Salary and benefit negotiations happen much more smoothly with trust already established between the parties and a mutual understanding of their motivations. A good sign that talks are getting somewhere is when each side is willing to bend to satisfy the other. The best pay package will be generous enough to make the new executive excited about the new job, but not so exorbitant that he or she is not motivated to earn more or take risks.

At Christopher Frederick, we've spent more than 20 years seeking out the candidates best suited to our clients' top positions. To learn more about how we can open doors for your company, contact Chris Hingle at 800-EXU-FIRM (398-3476), chingle@cfrederick.com