

How should I negotiate with a headhunter?

Q *"Following my interviews with the company, the headhunter called me with the offer and I told him I'd think about it. I'd like to ask for more money but, since I'm not dealing directly with the employer, I don't know how to handle this negotiation with the headhunter. What's the best way to do this?"*

A Negotiating with a headhunter is very different from negotiating directly with an employer. The key is to know how headhunters think. *They want to close the deal.* What headhunters like least is a wishy-washy candidate who is not ready to make a decision. Headhunters want to know exactly what you want. They may not always be able to get it for you but, if it's reasonable, they will try to satisfy you (and the employer) to get the deal closed. If you make your needs clear to the headhunter, you're more likely to get what you want.

When a company is ready to hire you, the prudent way to negotiate with the headhunter starts with separating acceptance of *the job* from acceptance of *the terms*.

! What I'm about to describe is perhaps the most important way *to make a headhunter work for you*.

The two components of a job offer

There are two components to a job offer: the job itself and the terms. Both may be subject to negotiation.

The job

Forget about the money for a minute. Do you want to do this work with these people in this company? You must decide this first.

- *If aspects of the job are not satisfactory, now is the time to tell the headhunter.*

How to say it "I'm not prepared to accept or reject the offer, but I'd like to discuss the job itself with you. I'll be frank. What I'm concerned about is [the title, the tools I'd have at my disposal, the organization structure, the work itself, etc.]. If these aspects of the job were different [explain], then I would feel better."