

Salary Negotiation in the IT & Telecommunications sales interview

The best sales people often enjoy this part of the process. It represents an opportunity to make, or lose, substantial amounts of money in a very short period of time. Of course, we have a vested interest in successful salary negotiation because generally speaking the higher your basic the bigger our fee...

Remember that you only get one shot at it because you can't re-negotiate after you have started and the acceptance of an offer means that you are entering into a contract.

Seriously, salary negotiation is ultimately a balancing act. Any deal is only a 'good deal' if both parties are happy with the terms. Of course, you want to ensure that the overall package in terms of base, OTE and any possible guarantee is the highest amount possible. However you don't want to enter into a new opportunity with the employer harbouring any grudges or even with an excessive target. The bottom line is that if both the candidate and company think the 'deal' is fair then the candidate is likely to stay longer.

Throughout salary negotiation you must balance the necessity to ensure the employer *wants* you with making yourself sound like a commodity. Every employer needs to feel that there is a genuine interest in their opportunity. It is up to you to say things such as 'ultimately my decision will be based on comparing my options' to illustrate that you are a candidate that other people are also likely to be interested in. Again, empathy is all important.

The first rule of salary negotiation is to make sure they want you before you start to talk turkey. Make them actually *want* you first – only negotiate when you have an agreement in principle that if the package is right, you would be joining the organisation.

If it transpires that the employer does want to enquire as to your salary expectations early on in the process just avoid getting into detail. Give the interviewer a broad indication at the top of the range that has already been indicated and utilise basic SPIN sales technique with something like; *'let's see if you like me first – then we can agree on the detail.'*

When you are confident that the employer is satisfied that you are the right person for the job, it is then time to ensure that you get a fair deal...

The key to successful salary negotiation is very simple – let the other guy go first. If you know their starting point before you have to divulge your own you have a clear advantage.

Again this is basic utilisation of SPIN and is a simple but effective tactic in the IT & Telecommunications Sales interview. Hopefully you will be pleasantly surprised at their starting point however if the number is too low you can give them the opportunity to 'start again' by empathetically and skilfully conveying that the offer is unacceptable.

You must be objective when you are negotiating and you must consider the key variables which will determine what will constitute a good package. The key variables in IT & Telecommunications sales interviews are factors such as the technology you have sold, the vertical markets you have sold into, your location, your proven track record and your contacts within the employer's market.

Obviously, the amount of synergy with your track record and the employer's opportunity will dictate how realistic the package you are seeking is. Remember that if there are variables that you cannot satisfy the employer may consider that employing you is a greater risk than employing someone else. Sometimes agreement on a slightly lower package can represent a 'shared risk' scenario – basically a concession trade, for example you may be happy to accept a slightly lower package in exchange for the opportunity to be trained to sell a certain solution or to work in a specific market.

To conclude, we would like to wish you good luck with your salary negotiations and if you would like any further advice please don't hesitate to contact us.