



# OWN YOUR PAYCHECK!

**HOW TO NEGOTIATE THE HIGHEST  
SALARY (PLUS GET ALL THE PERKS)**



**BEYOND B-SCHOOL**  
MAXIMIZE YOUR MBA INVESTMENT

# About the Beyond B-School **OWN YOUR CAREER** E-book Series

You can no longer depend on someone else to manage your career and train you for your next job. To succeed as an accomplished business professional today, **you must own your career.**

Technology pioneer Andrew Grove, Co-Founder of Intel, now a global giant, saw this change very clearly in 1997. In his business classic, *Only the Paranoid Survive*, he advised managers to:

“... accept ownership of your career, your skills, and the timing of your moves. It is your responsibility to protect this personal business of yours from harm and to position it to benefit from changes in the environment.

**Nobody else can do that for you.”**

Writing 15 years later in 2012, business visionary Reid Hoffman, Co-Founder of LinkedIn, with over 400 million online users worldwide, echoed this imperative in *The Start-Up of You*:

“... if you want to seize the new opportunities and meet the challenges of today’s fractured career landscape, you need to think and

**act like you’re running a start-up: your career.”**

In order to own your career, you need the very best advice and skills on a wide range of topics. Beyond B-School strives to be your go-to source of training to grow your career.

One widely underestimated and misunderstood area is the power and responsibility you have for negotiating your salary. You don’t want to leave money in the pocket of your employer. So we begin the OWN YOUR CAREER e-book series with this guide titled OWN YOUR PAYCHECK.

Let us know what you think of the e-book. Also, let us know what other topics should be covered in the Beyond B-School OWN YOUR CAREER series.

You will also want to review the video training resources we bring to schools, individual managers and companies. So take a look on our website at [www.beyondb-school.com](http://www.beyondb-school.com) or shoot me an email at [roy@beyondb-school.com](mailto:roy@beyondb-school.com), and I will arrange for a guest pass to the programs you would like to review.

To your success!

Roy Young, CEO

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a business professional, you have the power to make sure your pay is commensurate with the value you now produce or the potential value you likely will produce for your employer. This guide will help you take the steps to make sure you know how to negotiate your salary, whether you are beginning a new job or securing a raise in your current position.

The guide is organized in two parts. **Part 1 covers the three steps to prepare your assets for effective negotiation:**

1. Build a portfolio of “wins” or accomplishments;
2. Adopt an “I am worth it” (not arrogant) mindset;
3. Research your current market value.

**Part 2 provides instructions to deploy three steps for effective negotiation:**

1. Delay negotiating until you have a firm salary offer;
2. Take the lead to start the negotiation process, remembering that your employer expects it;
3. Escalate the conversation in a collegial manner seeking clarity and collaboration to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

You are the entrepreneur of your career, so own it! Whether you are about to start a new job or you deserve a raise in your current job, use the strategies in this guide to control the outcome of any salary negotiation. Your employer expects you to take the lead. If you do, it will certainly pay off.



# INTRODUCTION

## Take Power Over Your Paycheck.

Do you feel like your boss or your potential new **employer makes all the decisions** about your compensation?

Does it seem like **you don't have any control over how much money you take home** besides waiting for your next review or hoping you get a good offer?

### Wrong.

As a business professional, **you have power over your own paycheck.** You are the only one who can make sure the money you earn is commensurate with the value you now produce or the potential value you likely will produce for the company.

This guide will help you take the steps to **make sure you are not leaving money that should be in your pocket** in your employer's bank account!



Take control of your pay by making one crucial decision: build your case from a position of strength.

You will take the field with an arsenal behind you:

1. An accurate assessment of your own **market value**
2. An in-hand **inventory of your accomplishments** to present at the key moment
3. A **strong personal brand** that enhances the perception **of your value**
4. Strong negotiating skills that result in a **competitive salary and benefits** at the right job for your professional goals

# KNOW YOUR PLAYBOOK

## The Foundation for Maximum Compensation

The foundation of this work is building a case for your value with hard information. Information will power your case for compensation in two ways. First, **by presenting your experience, results, and professional goals in the most effective possible way** and distributing that information to potential and existing employers: that's your personal brand -- your unique promise of value. Second, by researching and **educating yourself about the actual market value of your skills, experience, and responsibilities**: that's essential knowledge. These steps are crucial for setting yourself up for a successful negotiation.

### Lead the Conversation

Whether you are a new hire or ready to discuss your next raise, you should be prepared to **lead the conversation about what compensation you deserve** in a way designed to bring the conversation to a mutually satisfying solution and meets your needs. Use the professional "wins" you pull together in the first step to get you in a confident mindset: you deserve this.

**Remember: your salary is not just the money you need to live on; it is an important measurement of your value that should appreciate year over year.**

The techniques in this playbook will show you how to effectively lead the conversation with the right timing and with the right questions, so you can maximize your salary and feel confident you're not leaving any money on the table. But remember: essential to great negotiating strategies is the strong foundation you have built, consisting of your mindset, your personal brand, and your market value.

### Get Prepared

Your paycheck playbook is organized into two parts:

**Part 1: Build the Case for Your Value**

**Part 2: Lead the Negotiation**

# WAIT!

Before you go forward, there is one thing that you need to know:

Your negotiating position  
for a better salary is  
**never stronger**  
than when  
you are  
**first hired.**

Because we advocate starting from that position of strength, this playbook is primarily designed for **people negotiating compensation for a new position**. But along the way we note how these strategies can be adapted for effective raise negotiation.

If you are seeking a raise, make a promise to yourself to keep this in mind: if your current employer is unwilling or unable to offer you the salary raise you deserve, you must **consider the option of looking for new potential jobs**.

Consider the techniques in this playbook the beginning of a revolution in the way you think about your career. **You are no longer just an employee**: you are the entrepreneur in control of your own path, making decisions on your own terms.

We are here to provide strategies, guidance, expertise, and support, but **you control the outcome**.

Get ready to be the boss of your career.

**The time to take ownership is now!**

# PART 1

## Build the Case for Your Value

The best negotiation techniques in the world, as important as they are, will only get you so far: strategic and effective preparation and presentation of your assets are the **most crucial steps to regaining authority** over your earning power.

If you are **truly committed to success** at the negotiating table and earning the salary you deserve, you will take the time to work through these three critical steps:

- 1 Assemble a portfolio of your wins:**  
confidently leverage your accomplishments.
- 2 Adopt an “I am worth it” mindset:**  
practice your p’s: positive, poised, and prepared.
- 3 Know and own your value:**  
invest fully in your own advocacy.

Preparing your assets will provide you with an invaluable opportunity: take a real look at your accomplishments and experience. Eliminate any lingering self doubt.



We've got your **back**.

## Assemble a Portfolio of Your Wins

**Keeping a portfolio of your career growth can (literally) pay off.** And it's not just important during salary negotiations: it's also a crucial tool for performance reviews, raise discussions and job interviews.

First, you need to know what belongs in your portfolio, how you should organize it, and the right way to present your experiences and successes to **maximize their impact and your salary potential.**

Mastering this foundational task means gaining a significant advantage. So how should you **communicate the value you produced** for an employer?

### Articulate your accomplishments.

An employer needs to know what you have done and how well you've done it, and they want to hear about it in the context of **how your efforts will benefit the company.**

So start gathering evidence by excavating each item on your resume. **Forget the usual statistics or overused buzzwords.** For each assignment, project, or role you have taken on, answer these questions as specifically as possible:

- 1 What condition were things in **when you started** the project or job?
- 2 What did you **change/transform?** against? Who **benefitted** and how?
- 3 How was your **performance in that role** evaluated? What metrics?
- 4 What accomplishments are you **most proud** of from that role?

Make sure to include **special assignments or initiatives** that were outside of your job responsibilities, especially those you generated proactively.

**There are three types of accomplishments most relevant to MBAs:**

1. **Result or benefit accomplishments;**
2. **Scope or complexity accomplishments;**
3. **Before and after accomplishments.**



## Accomplishment Statements: Examples

### Examples of **Very Specific Results or Benefits:**

- Increased revenues 47% over previous year by rationalizing customer base and focusing efforts on tier-1 accounts
- Within the first year, grew revenues 8% while reducing workforce by 25%
- Helped secure the single largest outsourcing agreement in the company's history, a multi-year contract valued at over \$30M
- Introduced the quality enhancements that improved first-pass yield by up to 40% for premium brands

**Focus on your best skills and provide proof through executed actions with significant results.**

### Examples of **Scope and Complexity:**

- Led the training strategy and operations for a national division with over 30,000 employees across 800 chapter sites, both domestic and international
- Created and implemented new market-specific strategies designed to capitalize on new business opportunities in Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway and France
- Directed all stages of a \$20M infrastructure project and coordinated the activities of 5 separate project teams
- Managed up to 20 concurrent development projects with full accountability for all deliverables
- Project planning, business and technical specifications, budgeting, forecasting, timelines and implementation

### Examples of **Before and After:**

- Turned a struggling territory from #5 to #1 in the region by rationalizing the client base and focusing efforts on tier-1 accounts
- Rebuilt an underperforming operating infrastructure and positioned it for growth - integrated the new strategy, reorganized staffing models and put new cost controls in place
- Transformed the company from a stalled \$80M energy contractor into a \$550M industry leader with Fortune 500 accounts across North America
- Successfully salvaged a \$15M project plagued with major delays and cost overruns - rebuilt the project roadmap, refocused the team and met all subsequent milestones on time and on budget

## Compile evidence of your value.

Sure, you could start from scratch— but we’re guessing you already have plenty of files and **work samples worthy of inclusion**. Go through this list and start digging into your old emails and work documents!

### EMAIL

Written correspondence is an underused resource; your inbox probably has a **wealth of evidence of people’s good opinion** of you.

Follow these expert-vetted steps to add **any hidden gems** to your win pile.

#### 1 From Your Boss

Search through your archives for **positive feedback or nice comments from your boss**.

For example, if you turned in a report, and your supervisor responded, “Great work—and thanks for getting this in early, I really appreciate it!” that would be a fantastic email to include in your portfolio.

More general emails work as well. Maybe he said, “Since you always present so well, I’d like you to give the run-down at tomorrow’s session.”

#### 2 From Colleagues

After you’ve found examples from your boss, look through your email for praise from your co-workers. Even though it might seem odd to include nice things your peers have said, doing so will show that you’re **respected by your colleagues and can work well on a team**.

Let’s say a team member in another department asked for your expertise on a project. After you helped him, he sent you a message to say, “Couldn’t have done this without you, thanks so much!” That would definitely be great to put in your portfolio.

#### 3 From Your Clients

Client emails are also excellent examples of your work ethic and reputation. Again, you’re looking for any positive feedback that is **evidence of the benefit you will bring to a prospective employer** at a new company or will continue to bring to your clients in your current position if you are seeking a raise.

# PART 1 | Step 1

## PROJECT DOCUMENTS

We recommend including the **biggest and most notable projects** you've contributed to over the past year or so.

Create a summary page for each project with this format:

Problem  
– Action/Solution –  
Results

### Include:

- how long you worked on the project
- your primary role
- who else was involved
- the results (who benefitted and how)
- the main skills you used
- the new skills you picked up (if applicable).
- other project documents—press releases, company newsletters, team-wide updates from your boss

### Context:

- articulate results in terms of speed, cost reductions, revenue or profit generated, client satisfaction improvements, etc.
- Provide any other project documents (press releases, company newsletters, team-wide updates from your boss)
- highlight any testimonial quotes from the beneficiaries of your efforts to boost the proof and your personal brand (unique promise of value).

Anything that displays your continual career growth should be added to your portfolio.



## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Consider including **any official training, courses, or certifications** you have finished or received, whether at work or independently. Find the file documenting your graduation or completion and add it to your portfolio.

You can also document “unofficial” **education and professional skill development**. For example, maybe your boss taught you the basics of search engine optimization (SEO). Write up a short brief explaining your SEO knowledge and a couple ways you've used it in your job.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Even those who have never had a legitimate 9-5 job can put together a portfolio.** Start by collecting your transcripts, recommendation letters, evidence of extracurricular activities, prizes, scholarship documents, and so on.

If you've completed an internship, include a half-page overview of the position, the industry and company, **what you learned, and what you accomplished**, along with any emails praising your work that you might've gotten from your internship supervisor.

**Remember: whatever evidence ends up in your portfolio, you have to use it with purpose! Stay focused on building your case for a higher salary: proving your value to a company.**

## MISCELLANEOUS

Any awards you've won should absolutely be included in your portfolio. (Just make sure they're **relatively recent and work-related**—no one will care about the prize you won playing hockey in college.)

If you've got any work samples of which you're particularly proud (say, **a really well-written report or a comprehensive proposal**), those would be appropriate too.

## Organize your portfolio of wins.

### PRESENTATION

There are two basic ways to compile your portfolio. You can take the low-tech route and collect everything in a binder or folder, or you can digitize all your materials and store them on your computer.

**Tech Tip:** To digitize your portfolio, you will want to convert everything into PDF files using Adobe Acrobat (for things already in a digital file form) or by using your smartphone (way easier than a scanner), using apps like [CamScanner](#) or [To PDF](#).

**The digitized approach —although more time-intensive—is definitely recommended.** It's pretty easy to misplace a physical binder or folder, but you'll never lose or damage the virtual version. Plus **the majority of your materials will likely already be in computer files or online**, whether they're emails, reports, documents, etc.

## ORDER

You've got some discretion in how you actually arrange the files themselves. One option is to **group your materials in chronological order**, from most recent to oldest. Go with this method if you've clearly grown over time, so that your **most glowing praise, best praise, and biggest achievements** are at (or very close to) the beginning.

Alternatively, put **your most impressive materials at the front**. Maybe the first document is an email you got a year ago from your boss's boss saying you did a fantastic job on a project, while a certificate you earned three months ago is in the middle and a nice note from your coworker is toward the end. This organizational system is ideal if you've got a lot of material and you want to **focus your audience's attention** on certain components.

You can also organize by type, i.e., awards, then emails, then project briefs, and so forth. When all of your materials fall into three or four categories, this approach makes a lot of sense.

## Make Your Portfolio Work For You

After you pull together all of these materials, you should have a pretty solid base for your portfolio. Now start actively looking for new things to add!

## KEEPING IT UPDATED

**Keep tracking your wins, whether that means every day or once a week.** Best practices include creating an email folder for "Wins" where you can store positive feedback, adding new awards, certificates, honors, etc. to your portfolio immediately, and creating new project briefs for any great new work you are proud of.

### Tech Tip: How do I store and share my digital portfolio? How can I organize it if it's digital?

Worry not; you have a wide variety of tools to choose from when it comes to storage, sharing, and organizing your portfolio files.

[Dropbox](#) is an easy, secure, and free platform. Create a "Portfolio" folder and upload your files—you can even create sub-folders, such as "New Skills 2016" or "January - September Milestones." If you'd rather use a different platform, [Google Drive](#) and [Microsoft OneDrive](#) are great options as well.



## GOING FURTHER

**Daily Reports:** Tracking your wins every day not only **keeps you focused and motivated**, but it also ensures you never miss an opportunity to add materials to your portfolio.

### **Tech Tip: Are there any tools out there I can use to make my digital portfolio more efficient or effective?**

**Updates:** There are some great tools out there like [Day One](#), a beautiful iOS journaling app that enables you to write a brief update each night. You can use it as a progress tracker (and pull the best stuff every few weeks). [Trello](#) is another effective tool for recording achievements. Basically, you create online bulletin boards (or “boards”) onto which you pin Post-it notes (“cards”). Some people track their victories with a “Wins” board and cards for “Client Feedback,” “Skills Learned,” “Processes Implemented,” etc.

**Visual Refinements:** Consider creating a website on WordPress, Weebly, [PortfolioBox](#), or Wix. You’ll need to invest some time and creative energy into this endeavor, but your efforts will be rewarded by an impressive end product.

[Squarespace](#) is an easy-to-use website builder that makes it simple to design a professional-looking portfolio. However, unlike the other tools mentioned, it’s not free—the basic version costs \$72 for a year-long subscription, or \$12 per month.

You also must have a LinkedIn profile, and not just a bare bones one. It’s actually a big factor in the job search process and is an effective way to make your case and raise your value publicly.

**Verbal Feedback:** But how can you document **positive verbal feedback**?

If the person who complimented you is a relative stranger, we suggest sending them an email saying, “Thanks so much for saying (compliment) today—I really appreciated your kind words!” They’ll respond with something along the lines of, “You’re welcome, it was my pleasure.” They may even repeat or reinforce their earlier praise. In any case, now **you’ve got a written record of the feedback**, so screenshot this exchange and add it to your portfolio.

On the other hand, If you’re pretty familiar with the person (they’re your boss, coworker, or long-time professional

connection), then go ahead **and ask them for a written version of their comment**. Send them an email saying, “I was so happy to hear (compliment)—in fact, I’d love to add it my work portfolio. Would you mind writing out your feedback so I can upload it?”

## You are Ready to Start Showcasing Your Wins!

Whew! That sounds like a lot of work to complete Step 1, but trust us, this method is extremely effective and will serve you well throughout your career. In Part 2, you will learn specifically how your portfolio becomes so decisive in the negotiation process. It is the means by which you will take back control of that paycheck when you're seated at the negotiating table (of course, you have to get to the table first, but we'll talk about that later).

### THE CHECKLIST

- ✓ Collect the materials you already have
- ✓ Organize them and choose a storage system
- ✓ Continually update and add to your portfolio
- ✓ Decide what is appropriate to add to your resume and LinkedIn profile. (There is a lot of conflicting advice out there about this step, and it is extremely important: it's the main way you will distribute this information! Be careful and use trusted guidance— see note.)

### A Note on LinkedIn

You must have a LinkedIn profile, and not just a bare bones one. It's actually a big factor in the job search process and is an effective way to make your case and raise your value publicly. It is mandatory and extremely important to do it well. If you aren't sure how to proceed, let us know and we will connect you with some personalized LinkedIn training materials.



**Most people just rely on their resume to sell their value.  
Now you know better.  
Your portfolio of wins is your secret weapon in negotiation.  
The reward? Actual dollars on your paycheck.**

# PART 1 | Step 2

## Adopt the “I Am Worth It” Mindset

The hiring process for a new job **always includes negotiating salary and other forms of compensation**. Employers make job offers with the expectation that there will be negotiation, and that you will respond with a request for an increase above the initial offer. Not taking advantage of this means you are dropping your end of the deal: you must be prepared to counter.

Throughout your career, these skills will be essential as you are promoted, change positions or companies, or seek financial reward for positive changes or specific accomplishments. **You can build the right mindset to walk into a negotiation** by using your portfolio of wins and reflecting on your own accomplishments. Own your capabilities and your results; that is how to get the salary you deserve.

You MUST commit to maintaining this attitude:

- 1 I have earned this
- 2 I am not going to be talked down
- 3 My accomplishments provide evidence that I am ready and deserve this compensation
- 4 I am not arrogant if I express this position; rather I can expect to be treated with respect and value
- 5 All employers expect candidates to negotiate compensation
- 6 If you are being offered a new position, your leverage to negotiate salary for this position will never be greater

**Keep in mind that it is rare for a job offer to be rescinded if you ask for more money. The employer has already decided you are the #1 choice, and they don't want to settle for #2.**

If you negotiate the right way (and you will after reading this guide), you almost **certainly will increase your compensation**. While the outcome is less certain if you're asking for a raise, you may need to initiate the negotiation. Remember: you are worth it, and if an employer isn't willing to hear you out, **it's time to find a new job.**

# PART 1 | Step 3

## Know What You Are Worth

Providing compelling reasons for your request with hard facts will absolutely put you at an advantage. Do the research and you can make a compelling case before the discussion turns to dollars. This research should complement your wins portfolio; use that information to guide your research into your market value, and when you make your case at the negotiating table.

**To determine your market value, you must consider three variables:**

1. Objectively Researched Value
2. Individual value
3. Risk Factors

### Objectively Researched Value (ORV)

To find out what a comparable job pays (ORV), use these databases compiled from user-submitted salary information:



It's a good idea to use more than one or even all of these sources so you have the **most comprehensive information possible**. For all these sources, you will be able to filter the results for region, years of experience, education, etc. You might have to pay for the reports, but it will be worth it. It is an excellent idea to check these annually to **make sure your paycheck is keeping pace with your value**.

In addition to these large databases, you might use headhunters and peers to learn about **salary levels in your industry and functional area**.

## Individual Value

In addition to ORV from sources with data on market averages, you should consider **your own value as a result of your experience and accomplishments**, as this relates to the business problems you will solve and the ongoing tasks that need to be completed.

You have likely already done a thorough analysis to prepare for the job interview if you are new to a company or in the running for a promotion, but try now to **establish what you think is the economic benefit you bring to the company**. This information will give you leverage in your negotiations.

**Establish that you are ready to do the job now, and that the cost of hiring you or raising your salary is significantly lower than the economic value you will generate in the future.**

**This information will be critically important** if a salary range has been established for the position, as it often is in large companies because they will not risk upsetting the established norms of a large compensation system. In fact, that is part of the reason you are increasingly likely to be underpaid the longer you stay with a single company.

Know the minimum that you will accept for the position or raise, considering the likelihood of finding a better job and your willingness to wait. As a new hire, **if the company will not meet or exceed your minimum, you should walk away**. Don't brand yourself as someone who doesn't know what your talents are worth. You have generated this opportunity, so you should know that you can generate other opportunities.

If you are requesting a raise and denied your minimum amount, take into account these factors:

- 1 In your value research, were there many jobs open for similar positions in your field? Search some keywords on Indeed.com (without looking at specific positions) and can get an idea of **how many opportunities are out there**.



- 2 Are there specific reasons provided about why your request was denied? Sometimes the reasons are related to the financial health of the company and you must take into account how likely it is for those factors to be resolved. If the conditions are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, looking for another job is the real answer to your question. But **the initial denial of a request should not end there**, even if salary freezes or similar reasoning is given. In Part 2, you will learn how to handle that kind of response.
- 3 If the reasons relate to your own performance (and are controllable), **look objectively at their merits**. If you agree and are willing to work on them, set specific objectives and return to the negotiation in six months with examples of how you have rectified any problems and raised the level of your performance.
- 4 If there are other issues or no reason given, it's time to start exploring other options: often, this indicates an **unwillingness (or inability) to look after and reward employees** on the company's part.

**Remember, a company is your employer, not your friend; do not stay put out of a misplaced sense of loyalty.**

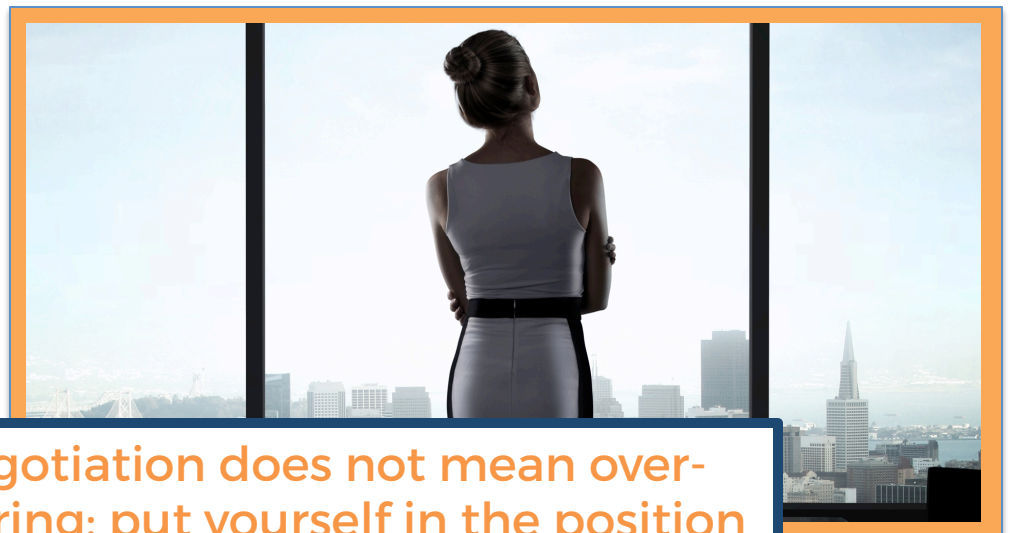
# PART 2

## Lead the Negotiation

You are ready to shift your focus to **how to capitalize on preparation work you have completed** as advised in Part 1.

You will learn how to **deploy three crucial steps** specific to salary negotiations for new hires (we also note throughout how similar techniques can be used for existing employees requesting or countering a raise offer):

- 1 Delay until you receive a definite salary offer:** make the timing work to your benefit.
- 2 Enter negotiation mode after the initial offer:** work together to find a solution.
- 3 Escalate the negotiation for the win-win:** ask the right questions to get the best package.



Leading the negotiation does not mean over-aggressive posturing: put yourself in the position to insist on your requirements, and create opportunities for both sides to come to a solution.

## PART 2 | Step 1

# Delay Until You Receive a Definite Salary Offer

During a job interview, it is tempting to get excited when the hiring manager asks about your salary. You mistakenly take this as a sign you are the number one candidate, but the employer is just trying to **screen out candidates who look good on paper** or may want to know if you are affordable, given the budget.

**The longer you avoid talking about compensation, the more you are going to make once you become choice #1.** You have more time in the interview to sell yourself as someone who is already qualified to do the job, beyond what is written on your resume. You become choice #1, and no one wants to have to settle for choice #2. First, you need to make your case, then talk about money.

### **Use your portfolio as your main support.**

**You should bring a printed version of your portfolio with you**, in a three ring binder or similar. Make sure you have picked the most relevant files from your materials, and include a table of contents so it's easy to get a quick overview of what's inside.

If you are seeking a raise at your current job, **you should specifically look for examples of the ways you've saved money**, improved reputation, increased customer loyalty, or generated more revenue. After shaking hands, give the portfolio to whoever is going to be talking to you about compensating and say, "I've brought along some examples of my work from the past X (1 to 3) years." Then refer to the materials in the book throughout the negotiation.

**For new hires, the rules are straightforward. As an experienced business executive, you must resist providing any information about your compensation requirements until the company gives you a formal offer.**

Regardless of what number you actually provide, **you cannot benefit from providing salary numbers on request.** Consider what the results are for each level of salary request to a potential employer.

## If the salary you request is...

### Too low...

- You are dismissed because you must not be that good.
- You are going to leave soon after you find out what others in the company with similar experience and responsibility are making.
- You don't value (or, potentially, know the value of) your own experience, skills, or abilities.

### Too high...

- You have not had a chance to sell the hiring manager on your value and the special skills and experience you will bring (beyond the job requirements) to the company, and the hiring manager will likely write you off as too pricey before you can even make your case.
- You are not aware of the complete compensation package including all benefits independent of salary, so a number that does not take into consideration the other valuable or prioritized benefits you might want is incomplete and potentially misleading, and doesn't allow the company to make its best case to you.

### Just right...

- What happens if the responsibilities exceed your initial assumptions based on the job description and title? You haven't gotten a good handle on the job fit because the conversation is already focused on salary numbers.
- It's probably actually too low: your bargaining position as a new hire is the strongest negotiating position you can be in when discussing salary, and you should take advantage. By educating yourself on your market value, having your portfolio of wins at the ready, and the very best techniques prepared for deployment, you have an opportunity to make a case for a salary not dependent on the current organizational pay structure.



**Employers can be insistent, but it is essential to be prepared to put off talk about the salary you seek during the interview.**

## Control the conversation.

So how do you put off talk about the salary you seek during the interview? Here are three possible scenarios with recommended responses:

### 1 If you are asked how much you are making now or in your last job:

“Fit is most important to me. If the fit is good for us both and you offer a competitive compensation package, I am sure we’ll come to an agreement. If it’s OK with you, **I would like to hold off on this discussion of salary and compensation.** Let’s keep talking.”

### 2 If you are asked about the salary you require:

“Could you give me an idea of your range for the position?” or ask “what is the ballpark for the position?” Then **you need to get more time to sell yourself**, so say something like: “I am sure you want to know if you can afford me. It shouldn’t be a problem if you can pay a competitive salary. Let’s keep talking.”

### 3 If the employer insists saying something like: “I really need to know the money.”

**You can inflate your most recent compensation by quantifying all the benefits you received, including vacation, bonus and insurance.** And you might say your average base over the last five years was XXK. If you completed your MBA, might then say: “I pursued and completed an MBA in order to learn XYZ, and now I am prepared with the latest management tools.” You might also reference your peers from school. (Note: with your Objectively Researched Value, you should try to determine what difference an MBA makes for average compensation at comparable companies.)

**Think about when you consider buying something that you hadn’t planned for. You likely go through the following thought process:**

**Budget:** “I can’t afford to buy it.”

**Fudget:** “Can I trim from other expenditures?”

**Judgit:** “Is the value I get higher than the cost?”

**You may have to guide the employer to think about each of those three steps in the negotiation process.**



# PART 2 | Step 1

A similar situation can arise when asking for a raise; do not let your supervisor or boss rush your case. Start with your accomplishments and reasoning before you get to an actual number.

## 1 Discuss what you have learned about your own market value, and indicate the company is getting you at a deal.

Double down on your continued loyalty to the company, but make it clear that **the support flows both ways**. Tell them the new salary number you are requesting is in line with the market value of your skills, and refer back to the individual accomplishments you already presented. Make it clear that you are a valuable commodity, and worth the additional cost.

## 2 Provide a job description that describes what you were hired for, and another that provides what your duties and responsibilities are now.

Say: “Back in \_\_\_\_\_, I was hired to do the \_\_\_\_\_ job with these duties [hand over your out-of-date job description]. **The job I do now looks more like this** [hand over the job description you used to benchmark your salary.]”

## Consider the language

How you will phrase your raise request: a specific added amount annually, monthly, or even hourly? A percent increase of your current salary? The total figure you want?

A percentage is often the most successful. Your workload and value may have increased since your last raise or promotion, and your salary must reflect that.

Say: “10% is absolutely reasonably equivalent for the work and value I outlined, and the increase will mean I produce even more effectively.”

**Play with the numbers and figure out which presentation (and it might be several) will give you the most leverage.**

Another option is to break down that number hourly: a \$10,000 raise is only about \$5 more per hour in a standard 40 hour work week. If you are salaried, make the case that your work goes beyond 40 hours a week. You are committed to being a team player and those hours. But your compensation must reflect that time, effort, above-and-beyond work ethic, and corresponding value to the company.

## Enter Negotiation Mode After the Initial Offer

When you receive the initial offer, regardless of how you feel about it, **defer the negotiations**. The offer is either too low, just right or above your expectations. This is true for both new hires and existing employees. Here's what to do:

### The offer is too low...

Look down and be silent for a few seconds. You will be asked, "What's wrong?"

**If you are a new hire, say:** "Nothing is wrong. I would like to think about your offer. How about we get together in 2 or 3 days to discuss it? Let's hammer it out to make it work. I am excited about the job, and I know it's a good fit, but the **salary is a bit low according to what my market research tells me.**"

**If you are an existing employee, say:** "That's a good start, but it won't close the gap between my market value and my current salary." Many people consider this the end of the line because you were offered something. Here's the thing: you are also expected to negotiate. **Think of that number as an anchor;** let's say it's a 5% raise. You need to make a counter-offer, while re-affirming a compelling reason to either accept it or counter with more than the initial 5% but smaller than your offer of 20%. This is true even if you were pre-empted with a raise offer.

**Remember: don't just say "thank you" because you were given something.** You are expected to counter-offer. That is part of the process, including in regular reviews. Your manager may say that is all they have been authorized to give you. Say: "Let me see if I can convince you that the company's needs and mine would be best served by paying me my true market value." Even if your manager is skeptical, make your case. "If I had to be replaced—which of course I wouldn't want—this is how much it would cost to replace me [name your requested salary.] My replacement, however, would have to be brought up to speed, introduced to our clients, and incorporated into the business."

**Stick to your guns! This is not a time to back off.** Clarify that you are offering a benefit to your first bargaining partner and suggest that further benefits could well flow to him or her as a result of your own strategy. Be ingratiating and inclusive as well as generous. Get in the room with the person who has the authority to get you what you want. Be persuasive but firm, not contentious or argumentative. Make it clear that you are looking for a solution that benefits both you and the company.

## **The offer is just right or more than you expect...**

**Still assume you can get more.** The initial offer is probably at the middle of the company's range for the position or what your manager is authorized to distribute.

**If you are a new hire, say:** "I don't think we are going to have a problem about money, but I would like a few days to think about your offer. I do have a few questions and need some things clarified. Can we meet in 2 or 3 days to hammer out the details?"

**Make sure to request that the meeting is face-to-face;** a video call is acceptable, but in-office, face-to-face is best. Never use email communication, even if you are inclined to avoid experiencing tension or confrontation, because it is difficult to be collegial, comprehensive and clear.

**If you are an existing employee:** You may want to consider bringing some additional benefits into the discussion (since this indicates that the manager probably had the ability to go higher than your initial ask). Check out Step 3 for guidance on negotiating other potential perks outside of salary.

# Escalate Negotiation for the Win-Win

If you are a new hire, you have secured a meeting to negotiate final compensation. You assume the initial offer is not a “take it or leave it” offer. The employer expects to negotiate with you to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement. If salary is not negotiable, other compensation benefits will be more flexible.

**Keep your tone collegial and professional. Use these 2 key words frequently:**

**CLARIFY** (you cannot be faulted from taking the position that you want both parties to be clear about important details)

**WE** (the posture you take is as a member of the company or department team)

**Prepare a list of questions**, including questions that are easy to answer and questions that get at the major points of negotiation.

Make sure you start the discussion saying **how excited you are about the position and the company**, including how you have already started to think about addressing priorities.

You should start the negotiation process by saying you want to clarify a few things. **Begin with easy questions and then continue to the tough questions**, choosing from the lists below.

### Easy questions:

Is there a 401K matching benefit? When you will be eligible? (This is dictated by law.)

What are the options for medical insurance?

What time does the workday start? What are the hours typically kept by managers in the company and in this department?

Is telecommuting (working from home) allowed? If so, how often?

How many company holidays are there in the calendar year?

Who are the support staff dedicated to me and those who are shared with others?

Would I have a private office with a closed door or an open space?

Ask about some discretionary benefits, such as: sign-on bonus and relocation allowance; incentives; cell phones and office equipment; vacation; travel allowance.

**Tough Questions:** Decide on the order based on the initial offer, again emphasizing you are asking for clarity.

How much paid vacation do you include in the position?

Will I be eligible for a year-end bonus? If so, how is the bonus calculated? Make sure no part of the bonus is “discretionary”: the formula should be based on objective measures of personal and company performance.

How can we come to an agreement on a salary? The salary offer is low based on my research on the market. What I mean by “market” is . . . [then sell your value based on skills and accomplishments. The promise to execute on projects quickly makes you a good bet on the value you will immediately contribute.]

Request 10% or 15% more, shooting for the top of the salary range established for the position.

Strengthen your case with specifics about the value you bring in addition to the requirements of the position, as covered in Part 1 of this guide.

## Request Facetime with Higher Management

For existing employees seeking a raise who have requested a meeting with higher management, you have secured a meeting with the person who will have the authority to offer you the compensation you are negotiating for.



**Stay calm, engaging, confident, and open to finding a solution that is beneficial to both sides.**

Often, once the meeting with those in authority has been set up, they will initially stick to the original offer. Go through the same steps and **make your case again, including using your old and updated job descriptions**. You can also bring benchmarking data with you to the meeting, including factors like education, skills, experience, and geographical area.



## Don't Be Afraid To Counter!

If your case is strong, the person in authority will often give a small concession; for example, from 5% to 7.5%.

If they are still not meeting your minimum, **counter again!** Be understanding and grateful, but stay strong. Say: "Thank you for working with me on this. I know it was probably as hard for you to make that concession as it would be for me to accept much less than 20%. Still, I'm confident we can find a number that works for both of us. I'll double your concession of 1.5% to 3%. That's 18%, which is 2% less than market."

Frequently a manager will bring up company-wide policies or salary ranges that prohibit progress. This is still not the time to back down. **Steer the conversation into a discussion:** why is the manager concerned? If it is an issue like company-wide salary structure, ask questions and listen to the answers! Your goal: to learn about the company's needs, desires, preferences, priorities, challenges, and concerns. After listening and responding in kind, move the conversation back to the salary discussion.

## Your Response Is Important

**Make a strong statement that you are conceding some of your demands significantly and indicating you expect the other side to respond in kind.**

For example, when you doubled their concession of 1.5% by coming down 3%, they will feel they should reciprocate your action.

**Keep talking as if the number on the table is a proposal, because that will require you both to employ the language of negotiation.**

Our example of 20% and 5% has a difference of 15%; make that your goal. **Frame your willingness to negotiate as something you do primarily for your employer's benefit.** Treat the negotiation as a problem to be solved, rather than a win-lose game.

**Indicate that you are also concerned for the company's overall health, priorities, and challenges.** Now, you are ready to make your major concession. Say "Taking into account everything you've told me, I'm willing to go to 15%. That is halfway between our first two offers." Then wait for the final offer from the manager; sometimes they might need to go discuss the actual number and get back to you. The final offer may be lower than that 15%; accept it, then consider your options regarding new opportunities that might be a better fit for you.

### If you are happy with the raise you were offered...

Have a list of potential benefits ready that you have prioritized. For example, consider requesting:

- (401)K matching benefits and eligibility

- Flexible scheduling: hours and opportunities to work from home

- Changes or requests for support staff

- A private office

- New bonus structures (potentially based on new responsibilities)

- Equipment: technology requests like new computer/laptop/tablet/cell phone

- Vacation or personal time increase

Remember that different companies may have different methods for handling these requests, **but that doesn't mean that anything is necessarily off of the table even if they have specific guidelines for things like vacation time.**

Offer to speak to other people who have a higher authority or an ability to override some corporate limitations. **Continue to support your case with strong reasoning backed up with specific accomplishments and results.**

**In every negotiation, come to the discussion with your eyes on your value, your priorities, the needs of the company, and how to find a balanced solution.**

# Go!

Your future salary awaits...

**You should be feeling  
more confident  
and  
committed to getting  
the compensation  
you deserve.**

But this is only one part of maximizing salary for the length of your career.

**You must create the opportunity to negotiate.**

Beyond B-School provides training and instruction on all facets of career development, from personal branding to networking, all created with one goal in mind: a better job at a higher salary.

**We are committed to establishing you as the boss of your own career, the entrepreneur of your professional path.**

**We look forward to providing you with the tools and support you need to successfully seize the day, the job, and the salary you deserve.**

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