



BUSINESS SCHOOL

ALUMNI NETWORK

Career Edge Webinar Series

Negotiate Your Best Salary

Q&A with Sue Wyman

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Q: As a hiring manager, would you recommend working with central HR to get new hires the best salary possible? Often, we have the budget and desire to pay more, but are restricted by HR's parity approach.

A: If you want the best talent, you need to pay competitively. If you want to keep your current talent, you have to do the same. Parity shouldn't mean that we pay everyone below market. That approach leads to a disgruntled workforce and turnover – both are expensive propositions.

Q: How do you research salary when your job has a large range? How do you find data that differentiates between small, medium, and large companies?

A: I recommend looking at Glassdoor for specific company information – research target companies and their competitors. LinkedIn Salary can give a broader base of information, but combining results from the two should provide useful information – the only way to get specific and current information is to ask the company you are talking to – they may or may not be willing to give you the information.

Q: If in current position preparing to ask for a raise: How do I present the data about compensation research - the salary numbers acquired from Indeed, etc. - to make the case for an increase?

A: Yes, use those numbers, and don't forget to have your accomplishments as part of your justification – make them specific and as measurable as possible.

Q: As a former recruiter, how do you respond to a candidate who doesn't want to share compensation info? Is it a negative against the candidate?

A: The candidate's approach and attitude made a difference to me. If the person was a jerk about it, I probably wouldn't have felt that more than just about their compensation. I could understand them not wanting to tell me because they thought it would hurt their chances for improvement. I was recruiting people out of target companies, so I could approximate what they were making on people who did share the information.

Q: Most online applications to simply submit your resume to a large corporation have a required field for "desired salary". The field cannot be skipped and will often not allow for a range to be submitted – it is looking for a specific number? What is the best way to answer in order to allow you to open the door of communication with the company, to not price yourself out, and to also not sell yourself short?

A: Either determine an amount that would be suitable (based upon your research) or put \$00000 into the field. They are asking for desired salary, not your current salary, so you can take that into consideration. Aim 10-20% higher than what you really want.

Q: I have heard compensation questions perpetuate the wage gap and pay inequality for women and minorities. Do we really need to give this information?

A: That is why it is illegal in Oregon, Delaware, California, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Puerto Rico. See next question for more.

Q: There is legislation and a movement out there towards restricting employers from asking about salary history - how should that factor into negotiating?

A: It's illegal in seven states and Puerto Rico and until it's illegal in Colorado, the question will be asked. You could try this: "I know that multiple cities and states have made the salary history question illegal with the goal of ending the cycle of pay discrimination. I think ending pay discrimination is important and therefore I don't disclose my salary history. Help me understand the range for this position and I can tell you if it's a fit or not." Bold and a little scary but it would be interesting to see how it worked.

Q: When is it too soon/too late to leave a job?

A: Too soon is if you have a track record of short stints at companies – staying two to three years is optimal, but not always possible or advisable. Too long is if you can't learn or earn more in the foreseeable future, but there are exceptions. If you love your company and love your job and it is a total fit for your lifestyle needs, then maybe learning and/or earning more isn't your top priority. Everything is on an individual case basis.

Q: How do recruiters typically get paid? Would they benefit from placing an applicant with a higher salary vs a lower salary?

A: It depends on the recruiter. Third-party recruiters generally get paid a percentage of base compensation. Retained recruiters can be paid a percentage of **total** compensation (base, bonus, and options). Some recruiters have flat fees, but that is not typical. Internal recruiters and many contract recruiters are not paid a percentage of the base. Some contract recruiters are paid by the project or on an hourly basis.

If I thought my fee was affecting the base for a candidate, I would freeze my fee so it didn't impact the candidate getting a higher base. None of my clients ever took me up on that offer, and they did often pay a higher base than they originally wanted. That totally depends upon the client and the attributes of the candidate.

Q: How do I ask for a large raise in my current role? \$10K-\$15K or more.

A: Having your accomplishments quantified and your market research complete. Can you make that much if you change companies? Is it a reasonable ask? Are your peers being paid more than you? Know what your exit strategy is if you don't get the increase you want.

Q: If you are switching industries, and have tons of expertise in your current industry (therefore make good money) and have zero experience in the new industry, how do you negotiate your base pay to match what you currently make?

A: Sometimes you can't. Sometimes you have to take a hit to change industries. Be clear on your reasons for changing as you may question your decision when you make a lower salary. Try to make a change where there is value in what you did before and you can demand a higher base.

Q: After going to HR and understanding ranges for my new promotion position, I asked for the mid-range and was not even allowed the minimum. Should I go to HR after this conversation/shut-down from my hiring manager?

A: They were probably operating on what the percentage increase was from your current base. If you go in low, it's hard to climb out of that. Sometimes you have to change companies; it's just a sad fact. Take the promotion, do the new job for a while and then get a higher amount somewhere else. You can talk to HR, but it's usually the hiring manager that has the final say.

Q: I've read that HR expects you to negotiate your salary when they make you an offer, but what if the salary is higher than you were expecting? How do you know what to counter with if you believe you will be getting a higher salary than you thought you would?

A: This is a good problem to have. Maybe you negotiate up 10% or look at all of the other components (vacation, title, etc.) and see if you need to negotiate on any of those.

Q: Does providing information about certifications you have work in your favor for persuading the "Yes" to a 15% increase?

A: If the certifications are valued by the company, then it can work.

Q: Recently asked my boss for a raise. They were uninterested in the data I gathered and was ready to present. They are taking my request for a raise to their boss, but I have not had the opportunity to give a number I would be happy with. If they come back with an offer, would it be appropriate for me to counter if I do not think it is enough?

A: I think it is fine to counter – have your data ready to go as it might be a conversation point this time around.

Q: I am potentially moving from California to Florida. I have a job offer in CA for \$165K. I am interviewing in Florida with a job that has a stated range of \$115K-\$135K. How do I negotiate the Florida offer up from \$135K to \$150K when the employer is going to say the cost of living is cheaper in Florida so the pay will be cheaper?

A: You're only asking for around a 10% increase from their high point, that doesn't seem outlandish. Do your salary research on the title in Florida and see what you come up

with. Many companies pay the same amount for a role be it in California or anywhere else – if people transfer from SF to Denver, they aren't asked to take a cut in pay.

Q: I have a lot of professional experience, am completing a master's program, and moving into another industry. What strategy do you recommend for finding positions that are not entry-level in the new industry?

A: It depends upon the role that you're going to – the experience you have is probably broader than just 'industry experience'. There are roles in every industry that have leverage-able skills. If you're going from a marketing role to an accounting role, then you would have to start at a more entry-level, but that's an extreme example.

Q: With negotiations at a "frugal" company stalled, I am considering leaving but love my job. Is it ever advantageous to say I really want to be able to stay but need X amount? Or is that bad negotiating?

A: I think you start by doing your research and then talking to your boss. Tell them that you love the company (if you do) and your job, but that you've found that comparable positions pay XX% more than what you're currently making. "Help me understand if we can talk about a higher level of compensation." Some organizations won't ever pay appreciatively more – you have to decide if it's worth it to stay or if you could love your job someplace else.

Q: I'm in an environment that doesn't usually consider giving base salary increases. A coworker recently presented a job offer from another company to our administration in hopes of getting a higher base salary. Is this approach recommended?

A: The interview process can be long and tedious for both the person interviewing and the company interviewing them – I think you have to be serious about it to be fair to all concerned. If you go to the trouble of getting an actual offer, I think you have to be serious about taking it. If it's just a ploy, your boss will never forget that you were looking and the other company might know that you were playing them. It's a small world. Be careful.

Q: Should it be a turn-off if an employer demands to know your current compensation? Sounds like they're basing their offer on your current salary.

A: It is totally normal for a recruiter or HR person to ask for your current compensation. They will absolutely base their offer on your current salary. Until it's illegal for the question to be asked, it will almost always be asked.