GUIDE TO

ACCEPTING THE JOB

FIRST STEPS
✓ Evaluate all aspects of the job offer including salary, benefits, the starting and/or ending date, and the details of the position itself.
✓ Know your goals and values before entering a job negotiation.

EVALUATING THE OFFER
Once a company is prepared to extend a job offer, examine these aspects of the positions/companies thoroughly and with caution to make the best decision:

Job Specifics
The position itself. Make sure that you are familiar with the position you are being offered, including the required training, job tasks, environment, advancement opportunities, benefits, and location.
The starting date. Though the company may want you to begin working right away, be sure that you have enough time to recover from school, move, and settle in.

Money
Compensation for moving costs. Ask if the organization reimburses for moving expenses.
Signing bonus. Depending on the industry you are in, a signing bonus may or may not be negotiable.

Benefits
Benefits packages vary widely by employer and industry. You can attempt to negotiate, although not all benefits will be negotiable. Here are some of the top benefit options among many:

Health Insurance (Medical/Dental/Vision). The most common plans are a Preferred Provider Option or Health Maintenance Organization, both of which have costs and benefits.
Paid Time (Vacation/Sick Leave/Maternity and Paternity Leave/Flex Time/Overtime). Companies vary in how many vacation days/sick days are given to employees and how they accumulate. Some companies offer overtime or bonus pay, or allow you to be flexible in working from home or in the office.
Retirement Plans (401(k), 403(b), 457, Pension Plans). The 401(k) plan is used by most private companies and the company may match what you put in. The 403(b) and 457 plans are used in education, non-profit and government fields. For pension, your employer will put an amount of money into an account for you and it accumulates over time.
Life/Disability Insurance. The main purpose of life insurance is to provide financial assistance to your family should something happen to you. Disability is divided into short-term disability (which can include an allocation for sick pay) and long-term disability (which kicks in at six months to a year).
Other Benefits. These could include Profit Sharing/Stock Options, Tuition Reimbursement, Dependent Care, Employee Assistance Programs, Professional Development, and more.
**NEGOTIATING THE OFFER**

When/how to negotiate. It will be difficult to negotiate after you have accepted an offer. Be up front about your non-negotiable points. Be aware of what the employer can and cannot negotiate. Often, the employer cannot negotiate on company policies like vacation or the dental plan, but they may be able to negotiate your salary or flex time.

If you don’t ask for it, you won’t get it. The first offer the employer extends you may be the may not volunteer to offer more benefits or a higher salary unless you ask. They also can’t read your mind - ask for what you want (within reason).

Know the facts. Researching salary ranges and typical benefits in your field will help you determine what is reasonable and fair. Be logical with your requests, but be firm with what you are and are not willing to accept.

Make them want you. You will hold more ground in negotiation if you’ve already proven that you’re a hard worker and willing to go the distance. Arrive early for all interviews and appointments, get information about drug tests, physicals, or background checks to the employer as soon as possible, and ask what else you can do. Remember to act in a professional manner.

Don’t show your hand too early. When negotiating topics like salary, never be the first to mention a figure as it weakens your negotiating position. If the employer asks you for a starting salary figure, ask them for the typical salary range for that position. You can then evaluate that range based on the salary research you have done. If that doesn’t work, you should already have a figure in mind that you can justify. You will have a stronger position if you negotiate on what you are worth using your research than if you rely on what you need to pay your bills.

Beware sharing competing offers with the employer. Proceed with caution. You may get a better offer or you may have your offer rescinded.

Get it in writing. Be sure to get your final offer in writing from your employer.

Don’t over-negotiate. Assuming you take the job, you will be working with the person with whom you are negotiating. Don’t start your job off on the wrong foot by being overly aggressive.

**NEGOTIATION EXAMPLE**

When speaking with an employer, Be direct, concise, polite, calm, poised, and positive.

Here is some example phrasing that can get you started:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to join your team! I am very interested in working with you and your company; however, at this point I would need ____________ (state your reasoning succinctly and what part of the offer is lacking).

If you were able to ____________ (give your proposed solution), I would gladly accept the position immediately. Is this something that you could help bring about?“
Accepting the Offer

- Once you and the employer have reached an agreement on a job offer, it is time to formally accept the position. In the acceptance email, specify the job you are accepting and the name of your supervisor.
- Review your starting salary, basic job responsibilities, and the date you will start work.
- If you have primarily been communicating with the employer via email or some other electronic source, stay consistent and keep to this mode. However, remember to still use professional language and to cover all important points.

Today’s Date
Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to be the Head Mascot for Columbia, Missouri. The offer was very appealing and I appreciate the extra time that was given to me to reach a decision.

After much consideration, I have decided to decline your offer.
The decision was very difficult, but I have decided to accept another position that more closely matches my skills and career goals at this time.

Thank you again for your interest. Your consideration has been greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Truman T. Tiger

Declining the Offer

- If you decide that a position or job offer is not for you, you should formally decline the offer in writing.
- When declining a job offer, tactfully state your reasons for not accepting the job. It is beneficial to convey your appreciation for the interview and the employer’s time because you may want to work for them in the future.
- Remain professional as you are highlighting your decision to pursue other opportunities. Try not to burn bridges.

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Being Declined By An Employer

- Unfortunately, you probably will not be offered every position you apply for. Just because you were not right for a position at one time does not mean that you cannot reapply in the future.
- One way to show your genuine interest in a company is to respond personally to rejection letters. By responding, you will give a positive impression of yourself, and the employer will be more likely to keep you in mind should future openings occur.

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**FIRST YEAR ON THE JOB**

To help you be most successful as you begin your professional work life, there are some best practices to help you along the way.

**Managing Your Career**

**Develop a career plan.** Where would you like to see yourself in the company, or in your profession, in two years? How about in four years? Be sure to manage your expectations.

**Be successful on the job.** Focus on the job you are currently being asked to do. Also, volunteer for additional projects and show your strong initiative.

**Be aware of additional educational opportunities.** Continue to seek training, including seminars/workshops, tuition reimbursement programs, and professional orgs in your field.

**Be aware of your money.** Identify your income and compare to your expenses, evaluate and track your current spending, setting financial goals, and sticking to them.

**Plan ahead on requesting time off.** One way to demonstrate your commitment to your position is to be mindful of the amount of time you ask off, as well as your punctuality to work!

**Organizational Culture**

**What is organizational culture and management styles?** Organizational culture is the unspoken beliefs, customs, and attitudes of a company or organization. Organizational management style is the way management makes decision and relates to their employees.

**How are employees rewarded?** Are employees rewarded for their individual performance, teamwork, or something else?

**Where are the financial resources channeled in the organization?** Often, financial resources will be directed towards accomplishing the company’s main mission. By knowing the organization’s mission, you can begin to understand the organization’s priorities.

**Building Relationships**

**Relationships with supervisors.** One of the most important relationships formed is the one with your supervisor. Learn what they expect from their employees and then deliver it!

**Identify mentors.** Find someone who has a good reputation and has been with the organization for a longer period than you have. They can provide insights into the company’s culture and help you understand and navigate the company’s landscape.

**Earning a Raise or Promotion**

**Work for a raise, but don’t expect it the first year.** Exercising initiative and promise for future promotions and raises is most important. *Earning* a raise is the real key to getting one. Consider:

- Do you perform all tasks to which you are assigned, in addition to going out of your way to help others or to take on new assignments?
- Are you pleasant and easy to get along with? If you are difficult to approach, or not a team player, you will need to improve those interpersonal skills.
- Are you positively contributing to the company? How?
- Do you take initiative at work, and are you dependable? When?

**NEXT STEPS**

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about your job search and to schedule a mock interview.
- ✓ Visit [https://career.missouri.edu](https://career.missouri.edu) and click on the “Resources” Tab to visit Mizzou Career Tools, where you can search our site for more handouts on this and other topics relevant to you!