

FABULOUS PHRASES TO USE WHEN NEGOTIATING

Salary negotiations do not have to be a battle. If a company has offered you a job, they want you. If you have gone through the long interview process and are the final candidate after weeks and months of conversations, you hopefully want them too. Take their first offer as the starting point for a discussion and start a collaborative process.

Sometimes having your go-to phrases can give you the right amount of confidence and tact to get you grounded and informed to have an effective compensation negotiation. You want to take control of the messaging and work on your time frame. As a former recruiter, know that it's okay to take a pause and regroup. However, clever phrases can only get you so far. Understanding WHAT you want and WHY, backed up with data is always a winning combination. See which phrases below work best for you.

INITIAL OFFERS

“I am excited by the opportunity to work together. Let me take a few days to look over this offer.”

Take your time. As a former recruiter, I know first hand that most jobs needed to be filled YESTERDAY. You are now in the driver's seat. Take a pause, read the offer line by line, and be ready for your counteroffer. Take a look at our article “I CAN NEGOTIATE THAT?” to see what's important to you. Sign up for our Negotiator package and connect with a compensation lawyer. Take your time to dot the i's cross the t's. It's not impossible but hard to change the terms once you've signed the document.

“If my colleagues were to share their salary with me, would I still think this is a great opportunity?”

If you have a salary offer and want to make sure it's the best offer on the table, ask your manager to confirm it's the best they can do. Make them double down on their offer and keep them on their toes. The taboos around sharing salary are losing power in the new generation of the workforce. Your co-workers will talk. And managers should know this and be thoughtful in the decisions they take to pay employees.

“Based on my research...”

It's only natural to see if you can get a higher salary than your offer, but it needs to be grounded in reality. Rather than reacting to their initial number, do your homework and start TALKING. This is the basis of our company WAGER: TALK, SHARE, ASK, LEARN.

Some of our clients have unknowingly been underpaid their market worth and receive incremental increases on a depressed salary. Talk to as many people inside and outside your network as possible. The details on your specific job may not be apples to apples, but gathering a range of data is imperative for an informed discussion to outline your case for increasing your offer. Companies don't want to lose you to the competition and start over with the job search. Bring a reasoned number and have an honest conversation.

“Let's set that aside for now and come back to it later.”

If faced with an issue that can cause the negotiation to permanently stall, by using this phrase you're effectively putting the issue on the back burner while you take on the challenges that you know are more easily dealt with. By proving that progress is possible, you'll develop a dialog that forms the foundation for future agreement and illustrates a clear intention to move forward.

“Is that number flexible at all?”

If an employer offers a number that's below your desired range, pushing back is essential — but you want to make sure you handle it with tact. Saying “is that number flexible at all” is a graceful way to give the employer the opportunity to offer more, or even mention other perks you can gain if a higher salary isn't in the picture.

“I would be more comfortable if...”

Blunt phrasing like “I need” or “I want” can be a turn-off to employers. But expressing your desired salary with this phrase is a collaborative way to let recruiters know specifically what you're looking for so they can focus on that dimension of your job offer.

“If you can do that today, I’m on board.”

Often recruiters are just as anxious as you for salary negotiations to come to a close. So if you can explicitly spell out what it would take for you to accept an offer, you’ll be doing recruiters and hiring managers a favor.

ALREADY EMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR A RAISE

“This is not what I was expecting.”

And a long pause when discussing a bonus or raise. What’s important about this phrase is that it’s not saying it’s a bad bonus or a good bonus. The long pause will add to the dramatic effect. Often, the person on the other side of the table will ask, “What DO you think would be fair?” And at this point, you should have done your research and have a great answer!

“My skills are an asset to the future of the company.”

If you are looking for a long-term partnership with the company, know what skills the company will need in the near-term and market those skills during your reviews or ongoing conversations with management. These skills have worth. For example, If you know your company is looking to expand in Asia and you speak a useful foreign language, this asset has worth. Each employee has to either increase revenue, or increase margin, and if you can show to your employer how you are bringing ‘value’ to the company you can make a compelling case for a raise.”

“I would prefer not to leave.”

This is a good phrase for employees who are negotiating a raise and feel like they are not advancing in relation to where they want to be. It is part of a defensible strategy and should only be used if you are truly at a decision point. **WARNING** – This phrase should not be taken lightly. It’s a risky proposition that could backfire. Don’t use it if you don’t really want to leave.

WAGER endeavors to make all its educational content as informative and accurate as possible. However, this list is by no means exhaustive, and each and every situation is as unique as any role, and the individuals who fill them. For bespoke information and support, specific to your situation then please check our [WAGER’s Pro Packages](#).