

**GOT THE JOB
OFFER!
NOW WHAT
DO I DO?**

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Strategies for Handling Job Offers E-Book

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Strategies to analyze job offers before accepting, or not.

You've interviewed with a company and things went well. The next step is the job offer. In most cases, it's a simple process — they offer you the job; you accept. But sometimes there are circumstances surrounding the job offer that complicate the process. Questions and answers follow to help you deal with common situations encountered by candidates



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Question

I've been interviewing for several jobs simultaneously. What if two companies offer me a job?

This is a great situation to be in! It feels wonderful to be wanted, doesn't it? Sometimes, it's an easy decision to make. But it can be a difficult decision if you like both companies. Of course, there are advantages and disadvantages to each job, and that can help you make your decision.

A "pros and cons" list can be a good way to objectively evaluate which position is the best fit. Possible categories to assess can include: salary, benefits, work/life balance, company culture and reputation, commuting time/telecommuting, if you will find the work challenging and interesting, who you will be working with (and for!), industry stability, and whether the job fits into your long-term career plans.

A more likely scenario, however, is that you will receive one job offer before the other. So what do you do if the job offer you get isn't from the company you want?

Question

I've interviewed with two companies. I've been offered a job with Company A, but I want to see if I get an offer from my preferred Company B. What should I do?

Do you have an idea of when Company B will be making a hiring decision? Knowing the hiring timeframe can influence how you handle your response. If you've interviewed with both companies, and you expect a response from Company B in the next 48-72 hours, try stalling Company A by requesting the offer in writing so you can review it "before accepting."

You may be able to buy additional time by negotiating the offer, allowing both sides to pause and evaluate. In the meantime, if Company B hasn't told you when the hiring decision will be made, you can contact the hiring manager and ask about a timeframe. You might mention you have a job offer on the table, but you haven't accepted because you are confident the Company B position is a better fit. If their hiring timeframe is forthcoming, you will postpone your decision to accept the pending offer.

However, as the saying goes, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” You may not receive a second job offer. And if you put off Company A for too long — or don’t act “interested enough” — you may risk losing the first job offer.

Question

*I was offered a job, but when I turned in my resignation at my current company, my boss made me a counter-offer to stay.
What should I do?*

This is a tricky one. Based on statistics gathered from Careerbuilder.com surveys there is an 85% chance that an employee who accepts a counter-offer will not be working at the company in six months. Many times, it’s because the employee was terminated, not because they received another job offer.

Let's say you are in the midst of working on a key project when you get another job offer. Your boss may offer you more money to stay so that the project can be completed. However, when the project ends, you may not be assigned to another key project because you're seen as "disloyal" or a "flight risk". Rather, you may be asked to train other employees on your major responsibilities and tasks because the company doesn't want to be caught in that same position again — in case you are offered another job.

From a personal and holistic perspective, there was obviously a reason why you were looking for a new job. Higher salary usually isn't the only reason. Even if your current employer matches the salary offered by the other company, the counter-offer won't address other reasons why you were considering a change.

There may be times in your career you feel like the "grass is greener" in another company's field. You might apply for a position to learn and compare job market offerings and requirements.

Question

What if I interview for a position, but I don't really want the job?

While most of the time you will not be interviewing for a job you don't want, sometimes it can be worthwhile to apply, even if you don't think you'd be interested in taking the job. You never know — you might find that you really *would* want to work for that company!

You can also use the opportunity to practice your interviewing skills. When honing almost any skill, practice makes perfect — and getting the chance to interview gives you valuable practice for when the opportunity arises to interview for a job you do want!

CAUTION
Interviewing for another position is not without risk — be prepared to explain.

Question

My current employer has an informal company policy that if they find out you are looking for a new job, they'll fire you. How do I look for a new job without jeopardizing my current one?

Whether your employer has such a policy or not, it is usually in your best interest to keep your job search private. Employers, colleagues, and customers frequently get uneasy when they learn an employee is planning to leave the organization. You could find yourself being forced out before securing the next employment opportunity.

Take a professional and sensible approach to your job search. Apply only for positions that you would accept if offered. Inform recruiters you are working with your job search is confidential. *Never* use your work email and/or work computer for your job search. Turn off activity notifications on LinkedIn so your contacts won't get emails when you update your profile. Note: make sure your profile meets LinkedIn's guidelines for "profile completeness" to ensure you will be more findable by recruiters and employers looking for professionals with your qualifications.

Question

I interviewed with a company and they mentioned a background check is a standard part of their hiring process. I'm worried what a background check will reveal. What should I do?

Don't wait until you've been offered the job to address significant negative issues, such as a DUI or a bankruptcy. You don't want any issues to "surprise" the employer. If you know a background check is part of the hiring process, you will want to disclose information during the interview process (or on the application, if it asks you about current or previous legal or financial problems); otherwise, you risk having the job offer rescinded when the background check reveals an issue.

The most common reasons for not passing a background check are errors of omission, misstatements of facts, and financial and legal problems. Also, your job application is a legal document, so all information on it must be accurate. If a background check identifies a discrepancy you cannot explain, you may lose the job offer.

Consider postponing giving notice to your current employer until you have confirmation you were not disqualified for the new job by the background check. Otherwise, you might find yourself without a job entirely. Let the new employer know that you will be giving your current company notice once the job offer has been finalized — meaning, when you've cleared the background check.

According to a survey conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), 69 percent of employers conduct a criminal background check as part of the hiring process. You will be asked to provide permission to conduct the background check, and you will likely have to sign a release form.

If a conviction is revealed through a background check, the employer must consider the nature of the crime, its relevance to the proposed job, and the time that has passed since the offense. If you're seeking a sales job, a recent arrest for theft is relevant. If you're applying for a position as an auto mechanic, an arrest for soliciting prostitution — especially if the arrest was several years ago — probably isn't relevant.

Question

What if I don't get offered the job? How do I find out why I wasn't selected?

The easiest way to find out is to ask. You can send the hiring manager a thank you note that also requests feedback on your candidacy; however, you're unlikely to get a response unless you follow up with a phone call or email. And a phone call will probably yield your best chance to find out why, if you can get the hiring manager on the phone.

However, keep in mind the most common reason given for hiring rejections is another candidate was more qualified. It doesn't necessarily mean the individual's technical qualifications more closely matched the job's requirements. Sometimes, it's also a matter of "fit" — whether one candidate or another fits in better with the company culture.

Sometimes, if you can get feedback from a hiring manager, you can use the information to position yourself better for the next opportunity. For example, you may find that it's desirable to have a specific credential or educational background for the type of position you're seeking.

Finally, don't get too hung up on why you didn't receive a particular job offer. Instead, focus on what you can do differently in your next interview — recognizing that every “no” gets you closer to your ideal “yes.”

Several of the scenarios outlined above demonstrate, the hiring process does not always work out. Following up with the hiring manager to thank him or her is always a good idea. It could lead to a job offer, especially if the top candidate turns down the position, withdraws his or her candidacy, or cannot pass the background check.

If, however, you consistently find yourself getting job interviews — but not job offers — then consider what you need to change in your interviewing style, or the types of jobs you're interviewing for, to increase your chances of securing the job offer.

TIP
Keep positive and moving forward.
Learn from the process and keep improving - it will pay off.

ABOUT MATCH RESUMES AND CAREERS

Match Resumes and Careers collaborates with job seekers and employed professionals to develop powerful and relevant career documents and online profiles.

Expertly crafted resumes, cover letters, e-notes, thank you letters, reference lists, Bio's, and LinkedIn profiles are the essential tools candidates need to effectively compete for jobs in today's dynamic market.

All services are provided by a certified professional resume writer. Deborah Olson is a former corporate business executive with an emphasis in marketing and recruiting.

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