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Job Offer Negotiation Kit: Scripts and Tactics to Earn \$10,000+ More

A practical negotiation system for the moment an offer lands, when you have 24 to 48 hours to respond and need to decide what to ask for, what to anchor, and what to confirm before you say yes. The goal is not to bluff or sound difficult. The goal is to compare total compensation, choose the best leverage points, and protect the relationship while still advocating for the value you bring.

1. Foundation

Negotiation goes better when you treat the offer as a business document, not a verdict about your worth. The first job is to separate emotion from structure: what the company offered, when you must answer, what market range supports your request, and which levers actually move the deal. If the base salary is strong but the sign-on bonus is low, that is a different conversation from a role that is under-market across the board.

The safest response window is usually 24 to 48 hours. That is long enough to review the details, compare the package to your priorities, and ask for a written version of anything still verbal. If the deadline is shorter, say you are excited and want to respond thoughtfully. You are not asking for a favor; you are asking for enough time to make a good decision.

Market comp research should come from multiple sources: Levels.fyi for tech and product jobs, Glassdoor for broad ranges, LinkedIn postings and recruiter messages for current demand, Salary.com and Payscale for baseline comparisons, and direct conversations with peers who know the level and scope. If the company is public, compare the offer to similar roles in the same industry and location. If it is a startup, ask about option type, vesting, dilution, refresh grants, and what the equity might mean in a sale.

A strong negotiation is specific. Ask for one thing at a time, explain why that item matters, and tie the request to data or constraints. Salary, signing bonus, equity, remote days, PTO, and start date all have different values. A candidate who can say “I can accept at this level if we can move the base and add flexibility on start date” sounds more professional than someone who says “Can you do better?”

2. Step-by-Step System

1

Build Your Offer Snapshot

Write the offer in a single place exactly as it arrived. Include title, level, team, manager, location, remote policy, base salary, bonus target, sign-on bonus, equity grant, vesting schedule, start date, PTO, and any contingencies. Add the decision deadline and the recruiter or hiring manager name so the record is usable later.

Then rank your priorities. For one person the top issue is salary; for another it is remote work or a signing bonus that offsets a move. Decide what would make the package a yes, what would make it a no, and what would justify another counter. Those three lines keep you from negotiating every detail with equal energy.

2

Research Market Comp

Use at least three independent sources before you name a number. A good range comes from combining public salary databases, current job postings, recruiter signals, and conversations with people doing comparable work. If you are remote, compare against national or high-cost-market data rather than only your local market. If the role is niche, adjust for scarcity and level.

Do not stop at base pay. Compare equity by type and value, bonus by target and payout history, and benefits by real cost. A role with a lower salary can still win if the bonus is reliable, equity is meaningful, and the commute or travel burden is low. Capture your market notes in one paragraph so you can repeat them cleanly on the call.

3

Choose The Right Levers

Decide which lever matters most before you make the ask. If salary is meaningfully below your range, lead with salary. If salary is close but the company will not move much, ask for a signing bonus, extra equity, or a six-month review with a specific adjustment trigger. If the job is right but the schedule is rough, negotiate remote days, PTO, or a later start date.

When you make the ask, keep it concrete. “Based on my research and the scope of the role, I was hoping we could move the base to \$168,000. If that is not possible, I would value a larger sign-on bonus and one extra remote day each week.” That sentence is short, respectful, and easy to answer.

4

Rehearse The Script

Practice once before you send the email or take the call. Start with appreciation, restate enthusiasm, and then say the request. If they ask for a number, say the number once and stop talking. Silence after the ask is useful because it gives the other side space to respond without you filling the room with nervous words.

For email, keep the message readable. One paragraph of appreciation, one paragraph with the request, one line inviting a conversation. If you are speaking to a recruiter, copy the recruiter on follow-up so the record stays aligned. The goal is not to sound tough; it is to sound prepared.

5

Negotiate Salary, Bonus, Equity, And Flexibility

Salary is only one part of compensation. Signing bonus can offset a lower first-year base, especially if the company is trying to manage annual comp budgets. Equity can be valuable if the grant is meaningful, the vesting schedule is clear, and the company can explain dilution and refresh policy. Remote flexibility, more PTO, a relocation budget, or a later start date can all change the real value of the offer.

When you ask for multiple changes, prioritize them. If the base cannot move enough, ask for a second-best combination rather than opening a dozen topics at once. Tie each request to a reason: tax impact, family schedule, commuting cost, or market data. That keeps the conversation focused on tradeoffs instead of trying to win every item.

6

Get Everything In Writing

Do not stop at a verbal yes. Ask for an updated offer letter or email summary that includes the revised salary, bonus, equity, remote arrangement, PTO, and start date. If the company says it will “handle it internally,” ask for the exact wording you can save. Written confirmation is what protects you if the manager changes or HR enters the wrong number.

Exploding offers deserve calm handling. Thank them, ask for the written terms, and request enough time to compare the package to your other options. If they need a faster answer, state that you want to respond responsibly and ask whether a same-day draft is possible. A fast deadline does not cancel the need for accuracy.

3. Key Worksheets & Checklists

1. Offer Comparison Sheet

Offer facts	Title, level, team, location, remote policy, manager, deadline, and who can approve changes.
Cash	Base salary, bonus target, sign-on bonus, relocation, and any guaranteed payments.
Upside	Equity type, grant size, vesting schedule, refresh policy, and liquidity assumptions.
Quality of life	PTO, travel, commute, schedule control, remote days, and start date.
Decision rule	Write the exact package that is a yes and the exact gap that triggers another counter.

2. Execution Checklist

- Record the written offer and response deadline before negotiating.
- Use at least three market sources and note which one best matches the role.
- Choose one primary ask and one backup ask.
- Rehearse the script once out loud.
- Request written confirmation after every change.
- Save the final package in one folder with date stamps.

3. Follow-Up Tracker

Day	Action	Evidence
1	Read the offer and note the deadline.	Deadline captured.
2	Research market comp.	Three sources and one range.
3	Send the counter.	Email sent or call scheduled.
4	Confirm the revision in writing.	Updated offer saved.

4. Common Mistakes

Anchoring only to base salary

The base matters, but so do sign-on cash, equity quality, remote flexibility, and the value of time. A package that looks smaller on salary can still be stronger overall.

Missing the deadline or asking too late

If the response window is 24 to 48 hours, do not wait until the final hour to prepare. Ask for more time early if you need it.

Negotiating without market data

A counter needs a range, not a vibe. Bring multiple sources and compare the role to similar level, scope, and location.

Leaving promises verbal only

Any change that matters should be written into the offer letter or a follow-up email. If it is not written, treat it as unfinished.

5. Next Steps

Once you have your target range, send the counter, wait for the revision, and compare it against your floor before accepting. Save every version of the offer in one folder, and if the final package changes your monthly budget, run it through the [Budget Calculator](#) before you commit. Keep [the tool library](#) bookmarked for future negotiations.

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