How to talk about your pay expectations in a job interview

The basic and most important rule is never to give a number first. The person who gives the first number is saying that you are too low and you will not be taken seriously. If you request a salary higher than the range, the interviewer will see nothing, and most probably will not take your salary offer seriously. Salary negotiation is really a game to see who gets to give the first number.

Fortunately, the company cannot make you offer a salary without offering a salary, so you can ask your ideal and nobody can compete with you and you have a specific figure to work with. There are three confidence levels that you can confidently tell them that you can do it. If you can get a job but it is not what you ideally need and you are moving to a different function or industry, when you are not asking for a specific number. Always emphasize you would like to learn more about the job first.

Rule No 1: No matter how hard you are pushed, always keep in mind what you are interested in and the position you have applied for.

Rule No 2: Don’t talk about salary as much as possible. Remember your power to negotiate is always emphasized if you are asked about your salary expectations, but in any case you are not necessarily ideal and you are moving to a different function or industry, when you are not asking for a specific number.

Rule No 3: If you have to provide a number, provide a range rather than a number and make the lowest number of the range as your bottom limit. The reason is to research the salary for the position from possible channels such as your own networks, headhunters and friends. Figure out a reasonable market salary you are willing to accept. (Contact zeyong.d @sinawal.com for questions and career advice)

Contributed by Jennifer Zhao, consultant at New Area

BUSINESS DIARY

BEIJING

Event: New vice president of International Business Development at China Europe International Business School
Date: July 27
Details: Beijing University formally takes over the position of vice-president of the inter-

Shanghai

Event: China Game Business Conference
Date: July 27-July 29
Details: China Digital Entertainment Expo & Conference
Add: 12436 Huangpu Road, Pudong Distri-

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