

# Media Article



Vocational Guidance Services

## It's not just the Money

After interviews, assessments and background checks, it seems you are finally top of the pile and an employer wants to make you an offer! Of course, this is an exciting time, but there are hard decisions ahead: for the employer, selecting you as top candidate will have been a hard decision; now you will have to debate whether or not to accept their offer.

Turning down an offer after all the work and time you have put into the recruitment process is not easy; but before you jump to agree, make sure you have considered all factors about the job offer.

An important point to keep in mind is that your decision should not just revolve around gross pay. Undeniably, that basic salary is key – you have to consider the bills and cannot be expected to take a position that would lead to a decrease in living standard. Issues to consider when looking at the salary are: 'is this a fair offer, reflective of market rate in my profession/position?' (Colleagues, peers and friends should be able to advise). What benefits are on offer? These sometimes far outweigh the take home amount – for instance – will the company cover school fees for children? Or help you pay for that degree or professional qualification you aim to get?

The offer factor here is to also establish how your salary will/could improve in the future – for instance – will pay be linked to performance, allowing you fair opportunity to prove yourself? How often is salary reviewed? Your potential salary should be more of a deciding factor than starting salary.

Aside from salary, though, there are other critical issues to consider. Firstly, and this might sound strange, the job itself should be examined. Will it be interesting/challenging for you? Will it teach you new and valuable skills? Does the work fit into your career path goals?

Then what about the company itself? What is its reputation – as a brand for its services and products and also as an employer? How does it treat employees? Is the company dedicated to innovation, cutting edge keeping up with the times, or is it better known for laying off people? What demand do you foresee for the company's goods and services? Is it a financially stable operation? When working for this company, would you be proud to tell other people where you work?

Tied into company profile is the culture. Will you be expected to work long hours, just so the boss can see you burn the midnight oil? Will they expect you to attend corporate weekend retreats or functions on a regular basis that eat into your personal time? Will you be deemed 'not a team player; not suitable for promotion' if you resist your social life revolving around work events and 'hanging' with work colleagues/the boss? Or will they respect your private time and be flexible enough to allow time off for emergencies or for school meetings or a child's sudden illness?

The other factor to consider is who you'll be closely working with. You will have met the person you will be reporting to during interviews. Did they treat you with respect? Did they keep you waiting without apology? Did they listen carefully to you and allow you a chance to ask questions? Do you think you'll get on with them – can you see them as a mentor? Did they ask about your development and career plans? Also consider who will be your peers and colleagues. Sometimes they can make your life a minefield and are more difficult to handle than the boss, especially if they have reason to resent or be jealous of you. So try to meet some of them or ask around – your friends/present colleagues will probably have heard something about the people who work there. Are they similar age and outlook to you? Are they professionals? Do they seem excited about their work?

Another simple factor to consider is the job's location – will it be a long and hellish commute? Is the work environment conducive?

So as you can see, there is much to debate before signing the dotted line. An employer will never expect an immediate decision, and if you are still not 100% certain, then explain that this is such an important decision you may require some time to think it through before committing. Remember, what you should never ever do is to sign a contract or letter of offer and then change your mind: that shows complete lack of professionalism.

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