

TALKING SALARY

There comes a point in every potential job change when the question of salary will arise. This may be as early as an indication of salary expectations in an application or CV, during an interview, as part of a formal offer, or even during an informal or off-the-record sounding out. It is always a sensitive subject and the applicant needs to be prepared whatever the situation.

Some background

Normally salary and related items (such as bonuses) are discussed, unless openly specified as part of the job description, towards the end of the recruitment or appointment once the parties involved have realised there is serious interest on all sides. However, salary may be brought up at other times during the recruitment process. It is often better to let an intermediary such as Olsen Recruitment Services handle the situation to avoid any awkwardness or difficult position to develop.

Using an intermediary allows greater, though indirect, openness between the parties as the intermediary is

the filter or buffer leading to less discomfort generally. For instance, Olsen Recruitment can take a role similar to an arbitrator or mediator and bring the parties together once a tentative agreement has been reached without either party having any surprises, second thoughts or disagreements. This allows the future relationship to start off on a better footing.

Final salary discussions may take place "face-to-face". In this case Olsen Recruitment can play a valuable role in preparing both sides with background information and expectations along with potentially valuable guidelines.

One The first step

An applicant when applying for a position (or agreeing to an informal meeting as a result of having been contacted by Olsen Recruitment), must decide before applying for the position what salary and other earnings related conditions are the minimum acceptable. It appears most individuals do not consider changing jobs unless the new position offers a direct salary of 10% more than their current job. If the individual is applying for a position that

is a definite advancement with greater responsibilities, then more can be set as the goal. In any event, realism is needed. An applicant should not set an unrealistic target (say 50%) except in very unusual cases. Olsen Recruitment can help in setting a realistic target salary. In any case, the target salary should be somewhat flexible which means you have an acceptable range rather than a single figure.

Two **When is the best time to discuss salary?**

We advise that the best time to discuss salary (and package information) is after any interview or informal meeting has taken place, and an offer has been made - not earlier (unless you have been specifically asked).

Three **If you or Olsen Recruitment is asked about your salary before a potential interview**

First, it is important to be absolutely open about salaries, bonuses, performance pay, profit sharing or any other "take-home pay" earnings. This avoids surprises later and firms, in general, do not wish to waste time interviewing candidates whose total salary package is higher

than the range they would pay. In that respect, many firms ask (and expect) their consultants to advise the firm on a candidate's salary (the 'market' rate salaries and local market conditions) on receipt of a CV.

Four **If you're asked about salary expectations during your interview**

Many of the candidates we've successfully placed have, at some point during their interview, been asked what their current salary is. There is a simple reason for this: the firm is at least thinking about making an offer. In this scenario, the advice, as mentioned above, is to tell them the full and accurate details of your salary and your package.

If you join them at a later stage, more than likely they will ask you for your P45. On your P45 they can calculate your last salary. Even if you don't have a P45, part of their reference request may ask a former employer for details of your last salary. So there's very little reason to be secretive about it. But if they don't ask for salary details, don't volunteer them upfront; instead wait. The ideal time to discuss salary (and package) expectations is at the end of the interview/informal meeting when

you're presumably thought of as a strong, maybe even the preferred candidate. However, if they do ask you what you expect, and you've used a consultant (see the First step above), you should have a figure or range in mind – and Olsen Recruitment will have prepared you for such an eventuality by advising you what other similar candidates are paid for a comparable position. It is not a bad idea to respond or present your range with words like "somewhere in the upper thirties/ upper forties/mid- fifties" according what your actual range is.

Finally it is preferable not to start negotiating or accepting a salary offer right away unless it is a very acceptable offer. Instead, indicate interest in the offer, ask if it could be put in a formal offer (along with other terms and conditions), and discuss the formal offer with Olsen Recruitment.