

# Making An Offer They Can't Refuse

## Introduction

An offer is usually the last step in a deeply detailed search process that hopefully provided opportunities for all of the major stakeholders to reach mutual clarity on fit for the role and what the key functions and tasks of the job at hand are. But in too many cases this mutual understanding unravels at the offer stage, when miscommunication and a lack of clarity can cause a whole search to fall apart.

*Below you'll find tips for making an offer your top candidate can't refuse:*

- Talk salary at several key junctures along the way
- Be prepared
- Don't forget the excitement

## Talk salary at several key junctures along the way.

There shouldn't be any surprises at the offer stage. If you're working with a search firm, you should have very clear information about the candidate's expectations and your search lead should have communicated the salary range to the candidate. It's also important to make sure that the candidate is at least generally aware of what the benefits package entails before you reach offer stage. This is particularly important when it comes to medical benefits, which are a make or break for many candidates.

## Be prepared.

Write out some talking points of necessary. If you need an offer letter approved by a lawyer or HR person be sure you do so before talking to the candidate. Here are seven steps to take when making an offer:

1. Call the candidate and tell him/her about how much you and the staff like him/her, what, specifically, you think he/she will add to the organization, and how excited you are about the possibility of her/him joining the team.

2. Give her/him the details: base salary of x, bonus, and the benefits.
3. If appropriate, remind the candidate that the offer is contingent on references.
4. Mention your preferred start date, but note that it can be discussed once the offer is accepted.
5. Schedule a time to connect again for a final decision, **no more than three days later**.  
This is critical. We know from tough experience that the longer a candidate has to think about an offer the less likely it is that he or she will accept it. The best possible schedule is to make an offer on a Thursday or Friday and give the candidate the weekend to consider.
6. Follow up your call by mailing the candidate a hard copy of the offer letter along with a hard copy summary of benefits, including medical insurance and paid time off.
7. Close with re-emphasizing how excited you are and how much you hope he/she will accept.

## Don't forget the excitement.

The deal isn't closed yet. The way you communicate with a candidate when you're making the offer is an important opportunity to reinforce your interest and solidify the candidate's excitement. As mentioned above, be as specific as possible when telling a candidate why you are so excited about the possibility of adding them to your team (I believe your strong track record with major donors and your ability to build and implement a development pipeline is going to help us transform our fundraising program).

## Conclusion

Finally, remember that there are others ways to make an offer more attractive than increased salary. More and more non-profits are offering creative compensation packages that include benefits such as flexible work arrangements, a reduced work week, the ability to work from home, performance bonuses, or professional development opportunities. All of these could go a long way toward attracting your candidate of choice as well as retaining him or her in the long run.