



We Like You and Want to Hire You!

BY PAGE S. MORAHAN, PhD, AND JUDITH KAPUSTIN KATZ, EdD

In previous columns, we described the steps you have successfully traversed to get to this milestone. You prepared an Executive Summary, which you used in conjunction with your curriculum vitae (CV) to present your best qualifications and stand out from the crowd (February 2005). And you sent them accompanied by a cover letter tailored to the specific position (May 2005). Then, you used tools to stand out in the initial interview (October 2005).

You passed the initial interview (phone, off-campus, or on-campus). You returned for a second and perhaps third interview, on-campus. You liked what you saw, and they liked you.

Along the way, you continued to stand out:

- ❖ You sent thank-you letters, tailored for the key people you met by sending some additional information or amplifying on some issues that came up in the interview. You included thanks to key helpful staff people who assisted with logistics.
- ❖ You did your homework, studying documents the search committee sent you, and asking clarifying follow-up questions that show you know your job.
- ❖ You learned more about your fit with the campus and organizational climate by asking nonthreatening questions and observing carefully. How do people treat each other? How formal or informal is the culture? How collaborative or competitive are people? How well are details, particularly financial details such as reimbursements, handled? How family-friendly is the school? (See Bickel J, "Deciphering the Organizational Culture and Developing Political Savvy," *APS*, September 2005, for more insight on organizational culture.)

Now, they say they'd like to hire you, and want to know what they need to offer for you to accept! In this column, we discuss some key aspects of negotiation—it's *not* all about salary and benefits. Negotiation

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involves determining what it is that you want and need, and stating your case assertively so that ultimately most of your needs and wants are met. To do this, it is vital to first understand clearly what is needed and wanted by your potential employer (section chief, department chair, etc.), and then to provide grounds for a match between their needs and your skills, abilities, and experiences.



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Doing this in such a way that both parties feel that they have gotten what they need and want is an art. In good negotiating, each side will make concessions and the aim is for a win-win solution. Negotiating well is also a science; what follows are some variables to consider.

Timing is a crucial variable. The window of opportunity for negotiating is widest between the time an offer is extended and when it is accepted. Discussing your needs *before* an offer seems to be forthcoming is presumptuous and may work to sour a prospective employer. Even when you are asked early in the interview process what it would take to get you to come, it is best to talk in general terms—you don't want to either (1) state specific needs that are too low because you want to be sure you get the job, and then leave yourself little negotiating room, or (2) state specific needs that are way too high and put you out of the running as a candidate because the school thinks they will not be able to come up with a package to attract you. On the other hand, trying to add yet another perk or benefit *after* an agreement has been concluded may cast a shadow on your arrival. And, once on the job, your bargaining power is greatly diminished.

Review the information you have about the position and the organization. This is the time to do your "due diligence" and learn as much as possible about the position and its context. If you are being offered an endowed professorship, for example, do you know what part of the endowment you get, what it can be used for, and how it may vary from year to year? What a \$2 million endowment means in your current institution and in the new one may differ considerably.

Research comparable salaries, benefits, and recruitment packages by field and geography by checking with professional organizations and government offices and the surveys they publish. Contact colleagues in similar positions in similar settings, or any mentors. This is not the time to "go it alone" or to be shy about talking about salary and money issues. Ask your colleagues what they know now after being in a similar position for a while, which they wished they had asked for up front.

Re-examine the inventory of your skills, abilities, values, and experiences.

You will be negotiating from the point of the competencies and benefits you bring to the job. How unique a combination are they? How closely do they match the particular needs of the organization at this time?

Assess your financial and nonfinancial needs and wants. We find that faculty tend to neglect considering the full array of issues that may make the difference between struggling in the new job, or ensuring you can be successful.

Consider such issues as:

- ❖ salary, benefits and perks
- ❖ relocation expenses
- ❖ spouse/partner job support
- ❖ parental/family leave
- ❖ facilities and equipment
- ❖ scope of responsibilities
- ❖ sabbaticals
- ❖ parking
- ❖ contract terms
- ❖ title/rank
- ❖ money for dues, subscriptions, travel
- ❖ tuition reimbursement
- ❖ research equipment
- ❖ support staff
- ❖ professional development funds
- ❖ day care

As examples, parking can be a very valid negotiation point. You could make the case that you will be more productive if you have a guaranteed parking spot if you are required to travel between several sites on numerous occasions during the day or week, or if you routinely will be working late in an unsafe environment and would have to wait a half hour or so for security to escort you to your car. Likewise, you could make the case that certain up-front professional development (organizational development consultant, executive coaching) would ensure that you would reorganize a troubled department and deal with complex personnel issues in the most expeditious and successful manner, so that you and the dean could quickly achieve the vision that both of you desire.

Prepare a proposal of what you need (based on your research as discussed above). This may be totally for your use, a document that you will use in setting your priorities, and planning and rehearsing your face-to-face or telephone negotiations.

However, sometimes you will be asked



Judith Kapustin Katz, EdD: "Each issue should be explored as a search for mutual benefit, with a focus on the employer's needs and values and what you bring to meet them. Reinforce the match between your skills and experience and the employer's needs."

to send a written proposal to the person with whom you will be negotiating. This document has mixed functions—both additional interviewing and negotiating. The interviewing aspect is critical when, as is occurring more often, schools negotiate with more than one candidate at a time; if one candidate's needs cannot be met, or other issues come up (such as dual career move challenges), then the school can immediately move with one of the other candidates and not lose the time and expense of starting a second search.

There are no clear answers about what is best for proposals in these circumstances. You might indicate this is a draft business plan, with the phasing in and out of what you need over a three- to five-year time period. You would include in this your estimates of when grants could come in, additional clinical revenues become real, etc.

For example,

"I very much appreciate your interest in my coming to XXX as YYY. I am sending you a draft business plan, with some of the major elements that I know will be needed to ensure the rapid success of YYY that I know we both want. I will be refining this as we talk and as I gather more information about the specific situation at XXX."

This shows that you are approaching the position in a businesslike manner, and gives you some latitude to add or modify.

Plan and rehearse your negotiating strategy, preferably out loud with someone else. This crucial time sets the precedent and tone for the relationship you will have with your future employer. You need to learn how your future boss likes to be communicated with, and adjust your style accordingly.

Proceed with an attitude that *persuades* rather than *pushes*; that *wins them over* rather than *wins over them*; and, above all, *treats them with respect*. There may even be times that you engage in behavior that seems opposite from that you would naturally exhibit, for example:

- ❖ *Suspend your reaction*—don't strike back; feel your feelings and try to understand what is coming up for you, before your respond.
- ❖ *Listen*—when you feel like talking; be aware of the nonverbal cues if negotiating face-to-face.
- ❖ *Question*—when you feel like telling. Also, probe for the issue that may be underneath the first "surface" question that you asked. Do not be satisfied with accepting the surface response; probe further in a respectful manner. We often hear clients say, "I assumed that was what he/she meant when they answered xxx to my question; I didn't think I needed to ask more."
- ❖ *Bridge*—don't push for your way. Acknowledging points made does not necessarily mean agreeing with them. You could say something like, "I understand how you can see it that way, but..."
- ❖ *Educate*—don't escalate.

Focus on concerns and priorities for mutual gain, not individual interests. Each issue should be explored as a search for mutual benefit, with a focus on the employer's needs and values and what you bring to meet them. Reinforce the match between your skills and experience and the employer's needs, and the fact that the negotiated item (such as an MBA department administrator rather than a regular administrative assistant, or a postdoctoral fellow paid for the first two years) will enable both of you to ensure that their need (smooth financial management or securing grants) is met more rapidly or effectively than it would be without that item.

Set your priorities carefully. Be fully aware of what you are willing to give and

what your limits are. Be clear what you must have in order to accept the position; if it becomes evident that what you must have cannot be offered, graciously say you're sorry that you cannot reach an agreement and you will withdraw from further consideration.

As an example, in one negotiation for a clinical department chair position, it was clear that the dean had decided that that department was not in his top five for development, but was to be one of the mid-level departments. The candidate was clear that she wanted to be chair of a department in a medical school in which the department would be one of the school's top priorities, with a goal of being one of the top five in the country in terms of research and scholarship. So the two graciously stopped the negotiation, with both respecting the needs of the other. After all, it is the very rare medical school in which every department in the school can become one of the top five.

Matters can change, and you don't want to burn any bridges in the small academic medicine community. Perhaps negotiation

with the second choice will not come to fruition, an important accreditation is up, and the school must have your specialty, and may come back to you with a better offer.

Win:win—aim for a fair and equitable agreement, one that seeks to understand and meet each other's needs. Present all areas to be negotiated at the same time, although you may sequence them carefully. Generally it is best to obtain agreement on some simple items first, to create a sense of partnership before moving to the more difficult issues. However, pulling one more issue out after all is thought to be on the table will serve to create suspicion.

Be sure to receive the negotiated offer in writing before writing an acceptance letter. If it is not the institution's policy to do so, summarize your understanding of the terms agreed to in a note. If their understanding of the terms does not agree with yours then they must say so. In your acceptance letter, restate your understanding of the terms you have agreed to, including your starting date. In complex negotiations, which often occur at the department chair

or dean level, or with complex clinical practice situations, it is wise to seek legal counsel before finalizing the contract.

There are also additional considerations if you end up negotiating with two places; the references below give tips on handling these. We'll continue discussion of making the transition from your current job and into the new position in future columns. We hope that this information is useful to you, and we would be very interested in your feedback on any experiences you have with any of the concepts and tools we have presented. ❖

This article includes information from J Chapman. *Negotiating Your Salary*. 4th Ed. Ten Speed Press © 2000; JM Citrin, *Harvard Business Review* November 2005: 46; and DM Kolb, It pays to negotiate: negotiating conditions for leadership success. CGO Insights, Briefing Note No. 23, January 2006. (www.simmons.edu/som/cgo).