
Should You Accept a Take-it-or-Leave-it Job Offer?



By [Horacio Falcao](#) , INSEAD Senior Affiliate Professor of Decision Sciences

If you find yourself in such a situation, there are many more options than yes or no.

As I wrote in my last post, “take-it-or-leave-it” job offers seem to be **becoming all too prevalent**. Unfortunately and more often than not, firms are putting their first, last and best offers on the table when it comes to salary negotiations with new candidates.

This is unfortunate because the “don’t even try it” message they’re sending only communicates power and closes the door for understanding the realities of people and their needs. It also demotivates them and makes them believe that there is no room for dialogue in this firm.

While I argue that this practice could be drastically improved and firms need to listen to their applicants, it is also important to prepare for the day you get that “take-it-or-leave-it” offer.

Take it? Or challenge it?

If you do find yourself in such a position, it may seem intimidating and your options limited, but there are a few things you can do.

First, attempt to identify if the "don't even try it" is limited to the salary (or options in start-up or internet companies), since this is usually the most visible and relevant part of most compensation packages. If it turns out that this is the case, then move the negotiation to other areas of your compensation where there may be more room to customise the package to your particularities: talk about vacation, support or training, where they may be willing to talk about it and may even have more flexibility.

Second, if the "don't even try it" is seemingly absolute, ask why? If it is about transparency and fairness, check if you can at least ask questions and ventilate ideas without any commitment. After all, if no one ever tries the system, the firm will not learn to evolve and improve its hiring competitiveness in the market.

Negotiation is a great window to learning and the candidate can argue that their intention is to explore the process to enhance their understanding. However, it will be important in this context to communicate that s/he will be glad to have his/her package be transparent and that they align with the company's spirit of fairness as well.

Do you really want to be here?

If the employer still insists on "don't even try it" then, you may want to check if this extends itself to other parts of the company culture, and, if it does, then you may want to ask yourself if this is the kind of culture you want to be in.

*This article is an outgrowth of one of Horacio's recent blog posts to his **Negotiations group on Yammer**, where he follows trends in negotiations and shares his views with the INSEAD student community for discussion and debate.*

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