

When Your Candidate tells you they have Alternative Offers From Other Employers ...What do you do?

This is a situation that is often met in real life, but rarely talked about: What to do when your candidate turns up after a closed interview and places on table alternative offers from other employers? This is something not to be taken lightly.

There are many factors to consider and the situation entails a fresh round of bargaining and negotiations that you have to conduct in a balanced manner.



- First of all, concrete evidence of alternate offers with a candidate shows and affirms your conclusions that the candidate is desirable as an employee and other employers, too, find it so. So, this is a candidate over whom you need to deliberate before rejecting any possibilities.
- The candidate is either window-shopping for jobs or holds your workplace in some favor over others, otherwise he wouldn't be back trying to renegotiate.
- That means either the candidate is unsure of the different openings before him/her, or he/she is sure that something is better than others in your workplace, or he/she has a doubt that something is fishy about the alternate offers.

First think of your own company, and how the candidate might be truly beneficial for your company. A recruitment decision is not a discount sale expiring in 24 hours. You have to renegotiate, but you need to do that with the following in mind:

- Changing company policy on the go just because the candidate has alternate offers would really show company weakness, and the candidate would leave anyway, either now or after six months. It would be difficult for such an employee to regard the company or his/her job with the required esteem.
- Flexibility is life, rigidity is death, and in business you can rarely say nothing can be done, because everything is already finished. Business, and the life of the company is a continuous process, so all deals can be reopened at any moment if it benefits the company.
- You need to find out what it is that made the candidate come back for renegotiation – this is very important. You need to properly phrase the question and ask the candidate what made him/her return for renegotiation despite having alternate offers. You need to be specific and find specific answers.
- Continuing from the above point, you need to push without being pushy, corner the candidate without seeming a bully, and gently coax out the answers to two questions: Why does the candidate want to work for you, and why the candidate does not want to work for those who provided alternate offers. You have to do this without hurting the sensibilities or self-esteem of the candidate.

- Again continuing from the point above, remember that if a candidate is simply going for whoever gives the higher pay – it is an attitude you can accommodate at negotiation, but not at renegotiation. However, if you find that the candidate is genuine and also has other credible reasons besides money to join your workplace, go soft, because you have chances of gaining a good employee.
- Usually, renegotiation is acceptable when the candidate has concrete reasons to prefer your workplace above others like – location, friends or relatives working in your company, time management problems with personal liabilities where he is seeking alternative work schedule arrangements and similar.
- Where the attitude of the candidate clearly shows that he/she is not back to bargain for a higher salary, but to prove that he/she would have worked for your company despite higher pay, or other arrangements being offered by alternative employers, it is good to accommodate.
- If you raise the pay offer, or change other arrangements as a favor to the candidate, do that without hurting or diminishing your current employees or wage structure.

All that said and done, there are two more things to keep in mind in all similar situations. First, it is better to work out an arrangement on alternate fronts where you can accommodate like flexible scheduling. Second, never raise your pay offer right at the table to match alternate offers, but negotiate a deferred raise following a probationary period.