

~ Chapter Seven ~

Get a Raise Before You Start

Learn how to:

- Understand the psychology of the hiring manager and negotiate a raise before you start
- Obtain job offers
- Evaluate offers against predetermined criteria
- Develop negotiation skills

Always Learn the Next Step of the Interview Process

By now you know the importance of always learning the next step of an employer's selection process when you are interviewing. In "**Chapter Seven: Interviewing for Success**," you learned to ask, early in the interview process, "Would you explain your selection process?"

Your goal was to learn how employers planned to identify and select their ideal candidate. All potential employers will have a different process. Some simply will hold only one interview and, if they like you, make you an offer. Other potential employers will have you interview with seven people and respond to various written assessments before you even get narrowed down to the short list. Once you understand their process, always try to gain a commitment for taking you to their next step. If the next step is an interview with Bill Stypes, ask when you may schedule your meeting with Bill Stypes. If the next step is having candidates write a brief business plan, ask if and when they would like your business plan.

By understanding the employers' selection process, you eliminate a lot of guesswork and the waiting game. So many job seekers spend their evenings waiting, wondering and worrying if they will get a call back from the employer. When you understand their selection process, you do not have to wait, wonder, or worry. You will feel more in control. In sales, we call this strategy closing for the next step. You continually strive to gain commitment from the buyer to agree to take the next step of the buying process.

Always Appear Wanted

Imagine you and your significant other decide to try a new restaurant. You see an ad in the paper for a place you've never heard about before. Feeling adventurous, you drive to the restaurant at 7:00 p.m. Friday evening. When you pull into the parking lot you see only six cars in the lot. Are you likely to think you have found a great new place to eat? Of course not! In fact, there is a likelihood you will decide not to be adventurous and drive to one of your favorite places to eat dinner. On the other hand, if the lot is fairly full and you are told you have to wait thirty minutes for a table, you will have the impression that this must be a great place to eat. This is why savvy restaurant marketers always ask their employees to park in front during traditionally slow nights. Their restaurant always appears busy, so customers assume it must be a good place. When you are seeking employment, you want to create that same "in demand" image. Employers want to hire people who are wanted.

Imagine job seeker, Jim Naples, in a conversation with hiring manager, Susan Williamson.

Susan asks, "How long have you been looking for a job?"

Jim says, "It has been seven months now."

"How has it been going?"

"Not so good, I have hardly had any interviews."

At this moment, Susan is probably thinking, No one wants to hire this guy; he must not be very good.

Now let's pick up the same conversation and give Jim a different answer... Susan asks, "How has it been going?"

Jim replies, "It is very exciting! I've been meeting with so many people. There really are a lot of opportunities out there. But I've really been looking forward to this meeting, Susan. I have learned a lot about your company and, from what I know so far, I believe my talents are a great fit here."

At this moment, Susan is probably thinking, This guy must be good since it sounds like a lot of people are interested in him. Just like you prefer to dine at a restaurant others prefer to dine at, employers prefer candidates who are wanted by other employers.

It is important to note, Jim never lied. He has been meeting a lot of people and there are a lot of opportunities out there. He did not say he has been getting a bunch of offers; he hasn't. If you have received many offers, do not hesitate to tell people. If you have not had many offers, you can still project the image of a positive, proactive job seeker who is very busy. People's perception of you is likely to be that there are many cars parked in your lot!

Why You Have Negotiation Power once the Offer has been Made

I reiterate throughout *Buy Me, I'm Worth It* that the goal of your job search is to get an offer. Worry about whether or not you will accept the offer once the offer has been made.

To understand the importance of securing an offer before you worry too much about evaluating and negotiating, consider the following scenario. Trish Baldwin, hiring manager, gives a candidate an offer letter on a Friday afternoon. That evening, while having dinner with her husband, Bill, they have the following conversation.

Bill asks, "How was your day?"

Trish, bright smile across her face, responds, "I am so excited! You know how long I've been trying to find the right person to fill Jim Fischer's position since he transferred to the West Coast?"

Rolling his eyes and shaking his head, Bill says, "Honey, you've been working overtime since last Christmas trying to do the work of two people since Jim left. Of course I know how long you've been

trying to find the right person.” He thinks for a split second, and, leaning across the table, bursting with enthusiasm, says, “Tell me you hired someone! I’m ordering us a fine bottle of wine.”

“Not yet, not yet... you’ll jinx it!” Trish almost yells, “I gave this guy, Tom Downey, an offer letter today. He is so perfect. I probably shouldn’t say this, but I thought Jim was good. Bill, this guy blows him away!” Trish glances around as if Jim Fischer might be at the table behind them.

“Is he going to accept your offer?” Bill asks anxiously.

Trish crosses her fingers on both of her hands and says, “I’m pretty sure, but I don’t know for certain. This guy is good and I know he has had other offers. He really seems to want to work for us, but he wanted to talk to his wife and think things over until next Tuesday.” Trish sighs, “Bill, I want this guy on board so much. If he says ‘no’, it will be like starting the search all over. Ahrrg, I can’t wait until Tuesday!”

It is important to understand what employers go through after they make an offer. Typically, employers like Trish have been diligently interviewing. They have been striving to find the right candidate for the position. While they are busy reviewing resumes, talking to recruiters, placing recruitment ads, and scheduling interviews, they are not able to give their other responsibilities the time they deserve. Recruiting usually tends to be a small portion of the work they have to do each week. Adding a talent search to the rest of their workload can be very time consuming, creating the constant feeling that there is just not enough time in the week to get everything done. That is why once a candidate is found who is right for the position, the employer really wants the candidate to accept the offer and start as soon as possible. It is also why it is so frustrating if the candidate decides not to accept an offer. In most instances, the hiring manager does not want the ‘second choice’ candidate.

Here is an analogy that will help you see why it is so important to become the number one choice and get

an offer before you begin negotiation. Picture yourself shopping for a new car. You visit a dealer Saturday morning. You identify a car you want; however, you decide you would be more comfortable shopping around a bit to validate your decision. You visit several other dealers and return to the original dealer later in the day.

The salesperson, Stephen, greets you, “Hi Tom, glad to see you again!”

“Stephen, I’ve made a decision. I want the car I was looking at earlier.”

Stephen replies with a sigh, “Tom, I hate to tell you this, but someone else bought that car an hour ago.” Not wanting to lose a sale, Stephen says, “You know, we have another car very similar. It does not have the moon roof or leather package and it is a slightly different color, but I’m sure you will like it.”

How will you feel?

You had a number one choice. Now it is gone. Most likely you will keep searching to find the car you wanted; you will not settle for a number two choice. Once the employer has decided you are the number one choice, he does not want a number two choice. He wants you, number one, and he is willing to be flexible in the negotiations to hire you.

Managing Expectations When You Start

Welcome to your new job! It is time to manage expectations. During the first few days on board be sure to ask your hiring manager, “Why did you hire me?” Listen carefully. Ask for more information, “Was there anything that clearly pushed me over the edge when you compared me to other candidates?” This information helps you understand and manage expectations. Plus, it is a great ego boost that is often needed after months of job searching!

Have a discussion with your new boss about priorities. Ask what needs to be accomplished first, second, and third. Discuss target dates for completion of tasks. Ask how success will be measured. Make sure you are comfortable with the challenges. If you feel unrealistic expectations are being set, raise the issue now. By managing expectations, you will ensure your new job is a terrific career opportunity!