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The Right Process for the Right IT Staff

Making an Offer

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You have gone through your interview procedure and uncovered the perfect candidate for your position. The next step is to make an offer that they will accept and feel excited about joining your team. The negotiation stage can often be one of the trickiest parts of the process. Here are our top tips on how to get that all important offer accepted in this candidate driven market.

STAGE 1 - Be Prepared

- o Look at your notes and records of the conversations you have had with the candidate. What are their salary expectations? Are these reasonable? If not, have you discussed why they are too much?
- o If you do need to go lower than the minimum, you need to explain to them why and how they can realistically attain the amount they requested (with timeframes and quantifiable targets, not vague promises).
- o Reread their original motivations and requirements for their new career. Ideally have 3 or 4 key points. For example, if they wanted to reduce their commute, work on new technology, get into fin-tech or lead a team, make a case using these points. You can then use this information to sell the role back to them.
- o Make sure you have the full details of the whole package, including all benefits, stock and shares, training packages, car allowances, holiday pay etc. Work out the full value of the package, as well as the base pay. You then can offer an impressive amount saying “we are offering a package of £90k made up of £70k base, £10k car allowance etc.”
- o Make sure you have the offer fully confirmed and signed off by all stakeholders and decision makers. Ensure that it is possible to get the contract, paperwork and any checks out as soon as the candidate accepts. Do not make an offer if you do not already have approval. Ideally get a bit extra wiggle room in terms of figures and start dates.

Stage 2 – The Soft Close

- o Pick up the phone. Tell the successful candidate that the interview went extremely well, and you are liaising with stakeholders, but hope to have good news for them soon.
- o Resell and reconfirm their key motivates. “If you were offered £70k would you take it? “It would be great not to have to drive so far, wouldn't it? “If we could ensure you would remain hands on yet develop some new skills would you accept”. This is called a “soft close” and means when you do put the offer to them, you have more chance of them accepting on the spot.
- o Check where they are with other processes, do they have other offers?
- o Tell them you will get back to them shortly and to keep near their phone.

Stage 3 - Make Adjustments, Prepare Offer Documents

- Adjust the offer (remember to get sign off) if necessary, based on the information you have just collected.
- Write up an email with the offer letter (subject to contract) attached and a summary of the position.
- Make sure there is a call to action explaining how you would like them to respond and what they need to provide, so that you can prepare their contract.
- Attach any other info, for example the benefits schedule, info on stocks etc. This should be ready to go as soon as you get off the phone to the candidate.

Stage 4 – Make the Offer

- Ring the candidate and make the offer. Be upbeat and positive and try and get them excited. Sell back the previous points and say why you think it is a brilliant offer.
- Ask them if they would like to accept in principle so you can get the paperwork out.
- If they do not accept on the spot, don't worry. Many want to discuss a new position with their family. However, do try to get a feel for if they are just holding out for another role.
- Quote themselves back to them, "you said earlier that if you were offered £XK you would definitely accept, what has changed?" "Is there anything we can offer to encourage you to accept?" Never be too pushy though. A couple of questions and back off.

Stage 5 – Back It Up

- As soon as you get off the phone send the pre-prepared email (make sure you ask all the details such as name, address, NI etc. as well as putting a formal statement accepting the offer). Text them to make sure they have received it and ask if they have any questions. Put in a provisional start date based on their notice period.
- Get the hiring manager (if a different person from you) to ring up and check they have the offer, (give it a couple of hours). Explain how excited they are that they are coming on board.
- Follow up as agreed to find out if they have accepted and, if not, why. Do not be confrontational or pushy though, just be sympathetic.

If They Accept:

- Excellent. Remember, you let them know how pleased you are that they have decided to join the team and reiterate what a great decision this will be and all the great projects they will be working on. Make sure you have the details to send out the contract, collect the references and discuss start dates.
- Invite them on an upcoming social event that you are going on with the team.
- Discuss counter-offers, make sure they understand that they certainly will get one. Explain why accepting one is a bad idea. Maybe send over some information on why 80% of people who accept counter-offers leave within a year or less. Find out when they are handing in their notice.
- Ensure that they have pulled out of all other processes. Guide them on how to do this firmly but fairly, maybe help them with the wording. Ask them to write an email confirming they have done this (and removed their details from job boards).
- Get the contract out to them via email ASAP (and put a copy in the post).
- Ring to check they have received it and again confirm when they are handing in their notice, continue to congratulate and keep reminding them why they took the offer and why not to take another one.
- If they need help on resigning perhaps send them a draft cover letter, advise them what to expect. Offer to coach them.
- Call on the day of the meeting, to make sure they are going ahead and are well prepped. Get them to diarise calling you as soon as they get out.
- If all goes well, then make sure you have the signed contract and keep in touch with them weekly (get their team mates to connect on LinkedIn etc) to make sure all is well right up to the start date.

If They Don't Accept / Take a Counter Offer:

- Try and understand their motivation. If it is something you feel is in your company's remit to match, then do so.
- Avoid getting into a bidding war with someone who has made up their mind.
- If time allows, ask the hiring manager to ring again to find out if anything can be done/improved.
- If the candidate still doesn't accept, then wish them well and make sure you stay in touch with them in case anything changes.
- Ask them if they know anyone else who might be suitable.
- Ring / email in a couple of weeks to see how he is getting on. Sadly, many jobs are not what they are sold as and sometimes candidates come back on the market. Counteroffers nearly never last, so it is in your interests to keep in touch.
- Make an offer to your second choice if still available.