

The Offer.

Congratulations you are about to be made or are in the process of negotiating an offer. How much am I worth? I'm worth more than that! Think long term not short term.

The offer – Oh, music to your ears. The job is yours; it's just a matter of the offer.

Full-time career – This is a wage or salary package. It will consist of all your financial entitlements, which should be listed as separate items. These include base salary, superannuation, penalty rates and bonuses, if applicable. You need to know when they talk dollars, if this is inclusive or exclusive of the employer Government required superannuation payment. It's very important to understand this.

Issues such as leave entitlement, study leave or subsidies and any industry related entitlements, laptop, mobile phone should also be clearly listed in your letter of offer. If it's been mentioned or promised in discussion, then ensure that you get it confirmed in writing! Never ask about money when interviewers ask if you have any questions. Let them bring the matter up. If they say "The job is yours, you can start next week" then you can raise the subject. Know what you are worth prior to the interview, what the market spread is for your particular role and skill set! Some people try to be tricky and ask you what you think you should be paid. So pitch at say 80% of the high point plus super, that way it gives you both wriggle room. Don't kill the goose that is about to lay the golden egg. But likewise, don't roll over or get taken advantage of. It's negotiation.

In a tight economic market, full-time/part-time work is sometimes the only option either to stay on, or to get a foot in the door. Contract work through an agency is also a reality today and not a bad way to go providing you can keep turning over the contracts without big gaps. In tough times being flexible and staying employed is a good game plan.

N.B. Don't get hung up about \$\$\$'s. Consider taking your first couple of full-time positions as career opportunities for the right reasons, such as – Is it a good company, with a good reputation? Will it give me good training and support in the early years? Do they support further education and are there clear career path opportunities? Do they have a formal induction program or buddy system and will I have a mentor? Will they be around for the three years of my apprenticeship or offer me ongoing employment after my internship? Does this feel like a place where I will be happy and can grow?

In the first 18 months, all of the above are more important than an extra \$2000, which equates to less than \$1 per hour. Three to four years down the track when you have developed good skills and are starting to make a name for yourself, you can then play the money game.

Good luck in your next interview, James E Lynch