Ask Yourself These 10 Questions Before Accepting a Job Offer

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When you've sent out dozens of resumes and interviewed almost as many times, finally receiving a job offer feels like the ultimate reward. But just because someone offers you a job doesn't necessarily mean that you should take it.

An interview not only helps your potential employer get to know you, it's also an opportunity for you to get to know them and the position. You really can't make up your mind about a job until after the interview. So think back to that interview and mull it over a little before accepting right away. Here are a few important questions to consider as you do this!

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1. What is expected of me up front?

Sometimes people get so excited about a professional opportunity that they forget to ask the basics, like, "When do I start?" or "What would my first few weeks look like, in terms of daily duties?" Don't feel shy about nailing down these types of specifics. You're actually doing your employer a favor by taking the initiative and asking them to make sure that your expectations of the job line up with the reality.

2. Am I happy with the salary?

Believe it or not, a job's salary doesn't always come up in the initial interview. If your interviewer skirts around it in later sessions too, you may need to ask point-blank what the

salary is. Not only that, you'll also have to inquire if there is any room for negotiation. Once you have these fundamental questions answered, then it's time to decide if you feel content with the compensation. If not, let that be a discussion with the hiring manager before you give a "yes" or "no."

3. Does the benefits package suit my needs?

If you're not quite satisfied with the salary, you may find that your potential employer makes up for it with a solid benefits package. Ask as many questions as you like about the benefits to make sure that you have a clear understanding of what they offer, and keep your own needs in mind.

For instance, if you require annual eye exams, vision services will be important to your healthcare package. If you'll be putting kids or a significant other on the plan, ask how much of a blow this will be to your paycheck. Make sure you have all the facts before you accept a job.

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4. Do I feel comfortable with the perceived company culture?

Granted, you can't step into an office building and immediately feel whether its employees are content or totally burnt out, but you can usually get an idea. If it's possible for you to walk through the main part of the office, do so and see how the other employees are working. Whether you're a nose-to-the-grindstone type or a social butterfly, you should be able to get an idea of where your colleagues fall on the spectrum. You can also ask your interviewer about any efforts the company takes to consciously create a welcoming work

environment.

5. How do I feel about the company as a whole?

Even if you land your dream job, your glee won’t last for very long if the company is a sinking ship. Consider how others view the company – job boards often allow former and current employees to rate the company and give a brief description of their experience. If you have any friends already working here, use them as a resource, too. Also, consider public opinion. See what, if anything, is being said online about the stability of the company and the way it treats employees.

6. Are there any red flags with my direct superior?

Typically, at some point in the interview process, you meet the person who will be your boss. It’s obviously impossible to totally assess someone’s personality in a matter of minutes. But if you pay attention, particularly to how your boss interacts with other employees or any other interviewers, you might be able to get a read on how he or she is perceived. Then you can decide if your own personality and work ethic would mesh or clash with your superior’s leadership style.

7. Does this move me closer to my career goals?

It’s easy to get swept up in big pay bumps and tricked-out benefits packages, but never forget that a job is just a building block for your career. In order to create something truly great, you need to be working toward a larger goal – not just bringing home a paycheck every other week. Ask yourself: will this job serve as a stepping stone toward my overarching

goal, or will it set me back?

8. Do I see an opportunity for professional growth?

On a similar note, you should figure out whether or not there’s room for professional growth within the company. The best way to do this is probably by simply asking your interviewers. See what kinds of job opportunities are available at levels above your current position, and inquire about what the turnover is like. This not only gives you a better understanding of how you could potentially move up in the company, but also indicates if current employees are happy working at the company.

9. Are the pace and workload conducive to my personality?

Whereas some people thrive under extreme amounts of stress, others crumble. And while many folks are totally committed to staying until a job is done – even if that’s the wee hours of the morning – others really need eight solid hours of beauty sleep in order to function the next day. You already know what type of person you are, so take this into account when you’re asking questions about the job’s workload and expectations in terms of weekly hours.

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10. Have I thoroughly reviewed my contract?

Before you sign a contract, make sure you know what it says. Many employees receive what they believe to be a formal offer letter, but it actually defines them as an employee-at-will.

An employee-at-will can be terminated or their employment otherwise changed without any notice. If something in your offer letter is unclear, don’t be shy about asking for some time to review it or even sitting down with a lawyer to look it over if the stakes are high.

With these considerations in mind, go into your next job search feeling confident. As long as you ask yourself the important questions before signing anything, you’ll be more comfortable finding and formally accepting the job that’s right for you.

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