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How to leverage a competitive job offer

Do I stay or do I go?

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MAY 11, 2022

The stakes have never felt this high.

You've been sweating since you received that confusing phone call from a headhunter about a week ago.

The Zoom call with Talented Inc went well and they've offered you the job. The pay is a big improvement and the role is a step up.

You've been kicking shit for a while and now your hard work is paying off.

You're hot! And people know it!

The phone call felt like evidence you've still got it - like a new divorcee at a bar.

And when they talk about the money... ohhh when they talk about the *money*.

So if it feels so good, why does it feel so bad?

You love your job, and the loyalty you have feels like a burden. They are something like an ancient Roman patron, sponsoring your career.

You've organised to speak with your boss this afternoon about your "future".

You walk into the meeting room.

"I have received a job offer. Can you match it?"

SCENE ENDS.

Here ' s how to leverage that job offer

Figure out why you are thinking about leaving in the first place

Recruitment and HR experts agree that if it's just about money or flexible arrangements, you might go to your current employer and ask them for a counter-offer.

But if it's about career growth, poor company culture or values misalignment, a counter-offer from your current employer might not help.

Step by step

Take your boss out for coffee but don't do it at the busiest point in the day, leadership and workplace culture expert Tammy Tansley says.

If you have a good relationship with your boss, give them a heads up on what you want to talk about.

"That way they've got a chance to get their thoughts together in advance as well ... You don't want to ambush someone," Tansley says.

You should always have something in writing from a prospective employer before

talking with your current employer. It doesn't have to be a contract - just an email will do.

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gets very tricky," she says.

Go into the chat knowing exactly what you want to do if your boss says "unfortunately, there's no developmental opportunities for you at the moment" or "you're at the top of your pay scale". Will you stay or will you go?

And this might feel personal, Tansley says, but you should keep an open mind.

"Rather than being defensive about it or getting into arguments, understand why that's their position. It might be that they have their hands completely tied or maybe it's a very constructional organisation and it's just not possible."

Also, don't expect an answer on whether they can give you a counter-offer on the spot, particularly if it's a bigger organisation.

"What you might say is look, I'd like to give this other organisation an answer in the next 24 or 48-hours or whatever. Does that give you enough time to come back to me?" Tansley offers.

Another possibility, is your boss saying: "I can't do anything now. But I see great things in your future. And come talk to me in 6-months time."

"What I would be doing is if you're happy with that, if that fits your circumstances, I

would be popping an email that afternoon, saying:

✍️ 'Thanks very much for the chat, just confirming that this is where we got to [insert a convo recap here]. I will put the time in my diary in October for a further chat. In the meantime, if there's anything you can see that would be helpful, then open to having a discussion.' ✍️

"So, I keep them accountable," Tansley adds.

What are the risks?

Tansley said the biggest risk here is playing the conversation badly.

"I think it's a perfectly reasonable thing to do. But I think if the conversation goes badly, and ... things escalate, then that can damage the relationship," she says.

"The other thing is that it gives your current employer warning that you are looking (around) which sometimes can be a good thing but sometimes makes them question how committed you are to the organisation," she says.

If you have a good relationship with your boss and you are respectful, then they shouldn't be too offended by your looking elsewhere.

Another option is to be transparent with your boss if you start looking around for other jobs.

Do not:

- Hold your employer to ransom. If you want more money and are waving around a job offer as your method to get there, then "it often leaves a sour taste in people's mouths," Tansley says.
- Bluff! It always kicks you in the arse.

You have the counter-offer, now what?

Think about why you wanted to leave in the first place and what needs to change for you to be happy in the long-term, Career and Interview Coach Leah Lambart says.

"Research shows that ... for more than half of employees who accept a counter offer, things don't necessarily change for the better, particularly if the issues are more than just salary-related," she says.

If it's about more than just salary, you want to be confident that promises will be kept.

"Getting this in writing can be helpful so that you have clear parameters around what is actually part of the counter-offer," Lambart says.

She also says not to stay in your current role out of loyalty or fear of putting your employer in a difficult position. "Be true to yourself and put yourself first," she says.

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