

Hidden Job Market Secrets

Acing the Million Dollar Interview Question

by Debra Feldman, the [JobWhiz](#)

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It can come near the beginning of an official job interview or sneak up before the meeting is about to close, but under any circumstance, poised executives are always ready to answer the most important question that surfaces in a serious dialogue between decision-makers and prospective employees. Exact phrasing varies but the meaning is clear: "What will it take for you to join our team?" or "What is it going to cost to get you here?"

Does the very thought of being in such a situation make your hands clammy, your heart race and your stomach churn? Would you prefer any punishment rather than confront this? Unfortunately, part of accepting a job offer frequently entails negotiating the terms of employment. Get prepared and save yourself some last minute angst. Here are a few tips to help you face the inevitable with confidence and armed with good advice.

Tips on How to Answer: Advantage Candidate

- 1. Do your homework.** Be prepared with figures and facts demonstrating your value to the prospective employer. Know your worth in the market. Research what comparable positions with similar responsibilities command in your industry and in your locale.
- 2. Make it clear that your goal is fairness.** You want to be compensated commensurately with what your colleagues are paid for comparable responsibilities, and you want to be rewarded for superior performance.
- 3. Show that hiring you is not an expense but a smart investment.** Prove that you will be able to add to the bottom line through increased sales, cost reductions, revenue gains, enhanced productivity, etc. Have tables or charts to illustrate the impact your expertise will have. Use actual data if available.
- 4. Never reveal an exact number for your desired salary or what you are currently making.** Give a range that will allow you more room to negotiate for bonuses, benefits, time off, etc. because no two jobs are the same, no two candidates are alike. See Tip # 6 below.
- 5. Have a bottom line in mind.** What is this opportunity worth to you? What will you give up? What can you exchange to make the numbers work? Is there a necessity, must have, uncompromising need? Then, be willing to be flexible on the rest. Think about time off vs. salary, educational opportunities vs. conference attendance, etc.
- 6. Remember that this should be a win-win for you and your future employer.** Make sure that they understand that you want this job and you are confident that if they also agree that you are the right choice, together you can make this happen. Take the focus off the dollars and put it on the chance to have an impact, find solutions, move forward, etc.
- 7. Work this out with your future boss rather than their HR staff person.** Only your future boss knows what they need and will go to bat to get this deal together for you. It's their budget — show them your "other" skills right from the beginning with your abilities to negotiate for yourself!

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[Debra Feldman](#) is the JobWhiz™, a nationally-recognized expert who designs and personally implements swift, strategic, and customized senior level executive job search campaigns, banishing barriers that prevent immediate success. Her gift for cold calling, executed with high energy and savvy panache, connects candidates directly to decision makers, not HR. Network Purposefully™ with the JobWhiz, and compress your job search into mere weeks, using groundbreaking techniques profiled in Forbes magazine(2/28/05) and featured in an upcoming syndicated television series. In addition to writing columns and conducting workshops for several revered professional associations, Debra provides career guidance to alumni of top-tier business schools. Contact Debra at www.jobwhiz.com to expedite your executive ascent.