

After all of your hard work, you have received a job offer! You now have an important decision to make, and it's about a lot more than just salary and benefits. Consider important criteria when determining whether or not you'll accept a job offer.

Step 1: Analyzing Specific Job Situations

A critical part of evaluating an offer is to gain as much information as possible about the specific job situation. Begin by looking at this from three different perspectives: The Position, The Organization, The Industry.

The Position

- Daily tasks: routine or project oriented
- Degree of independence
- Opportunity to learn new skills
- Opportunity to apply academic training
- Exposure to outstanding colleagues
- Hours: both stated and expected
- Criteria used to evaluate you
- Personalities of supervisors/colleagues
- Values of supervisors/colleagues
- Opportunity for travel
- Pressure and pace of work
- Fit of position with long term goals
- Transferability of skills after 2 or 3 years
- Opportunity for growth/career development

The Organization

- Organization's mission/goals
- Technological innovation
- High investment
- Quality of products and services
- Management style/quality
- Profitability/stability
- Corporate culture
- Importance of your division/team to the organization as a whole
- How individuals in the department and/or company communicate with each other
- Opportunity for advancement
- Commitment to professional growth
- Reputation and image of company
- Integrity/ethics/company values
- Future of company/products
- Stable (satisfied) customer/client base

The Industry

- Growth history/future
- Market trends
- Dependence on the business cycle
- Dependence on government policies/programs

Step 2: Understanding the Climate or Culture of the Organization

The climate or culture of the organization is the set of conditions that reflect the values and attitudes that drive policy (or daily operations). It is the “personality” of the organization. Here are some factors to consider that will help you understand if the culture is one in which you will fit, and if the lifestyle provided through this position is one with which you will be comfortable:

Contribution

- Level of participation allowed in decisions that affect the department and the organization
- Your ability to speak up
- Opportunities for career growth
- The organization encourages new ideas
- There is recognition for special achievement

Lifestyle

- Cost of living
- Recreational/cultural opportunities
- Employment opportunities for spouse/partner
- Proximity to family and friends
- Commuting distance/costs
- Long-term professional and personal prospects for self/spouse/partner
- Child daycare options

Office Personality

- Demeanor of people in the company
- Company bulletin boards/work site
- Noise level of work area
- What type of people have seniority/leadership positions
- Training and professional development opportunities
- How you are treated during the interview
- Company newsletter

Step 3: Assessing the Economic Stability of the Organization and the Salary/Benefit Package

Determining whether an organization is financially stable is an important part of your evaluation process. It will also help you evaluate both the monetary and non-monetary aspects of the financial package being offered.

Organizational Strength

- Ask for a copy of the annual report, if applicable
- Check trade journals and other publications
- Determine if the organization is public or private
- Determine if the organization is driven by research and development or is it cost driven
- Determine if there is an opportunity to buy into the company
- Identify the turn-over or attrition rate

Compensation and Benefits

- Salary/bonuses
- Evaluations/reviews
- Medical/dental benefits
- Retirement plan
- Holidays/sick leave
- Life insurance
- Stock options
- Relocation expenses
- Educational benefits
- Others