Getting the Offer You Want: Strategies and Tactics for Negotiating Your Job Offer

Dr. Peter S. Fiske
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UC Berkeley
My perspective…

- Hired ~ 15 PhD scientists and engineers for my companies
- Friends/Contemporaries who have joined academia
- Negotiation training
  - Haas School of Business
  - Crucial Conversations

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My perspective

- How you conducted your job search greatly affects your negotiation position
  - You can significantly affect your value proposition
- You can find out a LOT about the company’s negotiating position with a little digging and clever questions
- Most people think that PhDs can’t/won’t negotiate
- They are right
PhDs over-value their technical knowledge and under-value the broader range of skills they have
What image does the PhD conjure?
Transferable skills

1. ability to function in a variety of environments and roles
2. teaching skills: conceptualizing, explaining
3. counseling, interview skills
4. public speaking experience
5. ability to support a position or viewpoint with argumentation and logic
6. ability to conceive and design complex studies and projects
7. ability to implement and manage all phases of complex research projects and to follow them through to completion
8. knowledge of the scientific method to organize and test ideas
9. ability to organize and analyze data, to understand statistics and to generalize from data
10. ability to combine, integrate information from disparate sources
11. ability to evaluate critically
12. ability to investigate, using many different research methodologies
13. ability to problem-solve
14. ability to do advocacy work
15. ability to acknowledge many differing views of reality
16. ability to suspend judgment, to work with ambiguity
17. ability to make the best use of "informed hunches"
Personal qualities

1. intelligence, ability to learn quickly
2. ability to make good decisions quickly
3. analytical, inquiring, logical-mindedness
4. ability to work well under pressure and willingness to work hard
5. competitiveness, enjoyment of challenge
6. ability to apply oneself to a variety of tasks simultaneously
7. thorough, organized and efficient
8. good time management skills
9. resourceful, determined and persistent (and able to live on $2K/month!)
10. imaginative, creative
11. cooperative and helpful
12. objective and flexible
13. good listening skills
14. sensitive to different perspectives
15. ability to make other people "feel interesting"
The skills that will REALLY count ...

Leadership
Persuasion
Humor
Tact
Understanding of Risk and Reward
Understanding of Investment and Return
Organization
Sensitivity
Drive
Perspective
Creativity

Good News: You can LEARN These!

“Give me ten people who have all of these skills and I could do anything”
Negotiation is the culmination of career development

Career development is a continual process

Career development is part of being a professional

Job Search/Action Plan
Resumes, Interviews
Networking, Researching

What's out there? What options do I have? Would I prefer business, non-profit or public sector? What jobs fit my skills? What careers and industries use them? What organizations are a good fit? What do I need to be competitive? Who can connect me to these organizations?
Exploring the World of Work

1. Keep your eyes and ears open
   • read the newspaper
   • talk to people
   • browse the Web
   • hear outside speakers

2. Build your skills base
   stay conversant with the latest technologies
   attend workshops
   take a class or two outside your area

3. Build your NETWORK
Networking: How most people get their jobs

Networking is:
Developing relationships with people who share your professional or personal interests
Alerting them to your career goals and abilities

Networking is not:
Tiresome schmoozing for a job
Restricted to the slick and superficial

As a young scientist you have been networking throughout your career, you just probably didn’t realize it!
Who is my Network?

Anybody you know and feel comfortable talking to can be part of your Network:

- Schoolmates
- Recent graduates
- Collaborators
- Friends from High School or College
- Past bosses and colleagues
- Family
- People you meet at seminars, conferences and workshops
- Other people who are looking for jobs

and

Anybody they know

The most valuable in your network are those already established in the career field that interests you and who are willing to give you help
“The best preparation you can make toward the goal of having an [academic] career is to find yourself a “research aunt or uncle,” someone with little or no authority over you, who has enough experience to act as a sounding board and giver of accurate advice. Do not be shy about getting to know the people outside your advisor’s realm.”

Peter Feibelman, A Ph.D. is NOT Enough!
Constructing a bio

Biography for Dr. Peter S. Fiske

Dr. Peter S. Fiske is the Chief Technology Officer of PAX Mixer Inc. and PAX Water Technologies as well as VP for R&D for parent company PAX Scientific, Inc. In his various roles, Fiske manages day-to-day operations for PAX Water and PAX Mixer, overseeing all aspects of Sales, Marketing and Product Development. Under his leadership, PAX Mixer Inc. won a prestigious 3-year, $2M Advanced Technology Program award from the Department of Commerce.

Prior to joining the PAX Companies, Fiske was co-founder of RAPT Industries, Inc., a start-up based on technology from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where Fiske was a staff member for 6 years. Fiske identified the technology while at LLNL and, as a second-year evening M.B.A. student, developed the business plan for RAPT which won first place in the third annual U.C. Berkeley Business Plan Competition in 2001. Fiske and his partners subsequently closed a series A round of investment and since then have raised over $12M in government funding from the DOD, NIST and NASA. Fiske led negotiations to license a portion of the technology to a major semiconductor equipment manufacturer, and led the first sales of products. Fiske was CEO of the Company from May, 2001 to April, 2004.

Fiske is the author of 20 technical articles, most in international peer-reviewed journals including SCIENCE. He presently serves on Rep. Ellen Tauscher’s (CA-10) Small Business Advisory Committee where he works with other small business owners and Congressional staffs to evaluate and propose legislative initiatives to increase the growth and economic vitality of the East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area.

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Focusing on Specific Opportunities: Becoming an Insider on Every Job

Research your career field of interest as thoroughly as you research your science

Stalk your next job like a big game hunter

Techniques for getting on the inside track:
- Informational Interviewing
- Interning
- Volunteering
- Part-timing
- Moonlighting
- Consulting
- Incorporating the outside world in your research
Informational Interviewing

“Going directly to places where you would like to work is six times as effective as mailing out résumés and cover letters.”

Richard Bolles- What Color is Your Parachute

Advantages to Informational Interviewing:

• you are in control
• you can ask sticky questions that wouldn't be appropriate in a job interview
• you can see people in their actual work environment
• you can get feedback and advice
• you can make sure the work environment is right for you
• you can gain visibility
• you can practice being perfect for when it really counts
Informational Interviewing: How do I get started?

- Get a point of contact through your network or the career planning and placement center you are using

- contact the person by phone or e-mail, explain that you want to learn more about the career field and that you got their name from ____. They may refuse or say that another person would be more appropriate. If so, contact that person and move forward.

- prepare some of your questions in advance - don't waste time: a typical informational interview is only 30 minutes. People do NOT enjoy answering questions that could or should have been investigated elsewhere

- questions asked usually pertain to:
  1. Required background and training
  2. Specific information regarding the career
  3. Personal experiences
  4. Advice
  5. Future trends

If you do well the person you talk to may end up being a useful part of your network

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Informational Interviewing:
Some final advice

• Treat it like a formal interview for a job:
  – do your homework
  – think carefully about what you want to learn
  – prepare questions
  – act professionally
  – write a thank-you note

• Do not treat it like a formal interview for a job:
  – do not ask for a job, even indirectly
  – do not speak with one person and assume you have the whole story
Why are people willing to be bothered?

- People like to “give back”
- People like talking about themselves
- Finding fresh talent is critical to an organization’s success
- Information transfer is a two-way process they may learn something important from you
After the interview, and before the negotiation...

- Be certain you know what the time frame is for the next step
- Send a thank you note/follow up on any questions
- Follow up with network/contacts
- Get on with your life
Negotiating an offer: Time is an asset

• Try not to get locked into a salary before you are offered a job
• Delay the salary negotiations as long as possible
• NEVER provide salary history – even when asked on an application form
Value the offer fully

Consider these other parts of compensation:

- health care
- schedule of raises
- bonus plan
- commission plan
- stock option
- pension plan
- profit sharing plan
- employee education/tuition reimbursement
- stability of company
- dependent tuition reimbursement
- paid parking
- car provided
- vacation
- sick leave
- maternity/paternity leave
- flex time/alternative work schedule
- anticipated work hours
- relocation allowance
- potential for advancement
## Term sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>My goal</th>
<th>Their offer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base salary</td>
<td>$90K</td>
<td>$75K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>2 weeks/yr</td>
<td>2 weeks/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>Self/family +++</td>
<td>Self/family +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional devel</td>
<td>~$3K/yr</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next perform eval</td>
<td>Within 6 months</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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<td>WFH/Flex schedule</td>
<td>1 day/week</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sick leave</td>
<td>1 week/yr</td>
<td>2 weeks/yr</td>
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<tr>
<td>401(k)</td>
<td>3% employee match</td>
<td>No match</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSA</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>$1K/yr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>???</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Moving the baseline

• Seek 3rd party sources of salary or benefits data
• Discuss offer with your trusted advisors/network
• Improve their estimation of you
  – Add scope to your job
  – Introduce additional SKAs
Can you get the offer raised?

Consider the factors listed below. The more that are true, the greater your flexibility:

- You possess unique abilities
- They have few other candidates for the job
- The search has been going on a long time
- This is a unique position in the organization
- The organization is flexible in general
- You have other offers
- They really need someone soon

In contrast, you will have less flexibility to negotiate salary and benefits if the following are true:

- The job is at an entry level and similar to others in the organization
- The organization is highly structured and rigid
- The organization expects you will take what is offered
*NINJA INTERVIEW TIP*

- Get answers to those questions
  - From your network
  - During your interviews
Understand your BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)

• What are the alternatives to accepting an offer?
  – Say NO?
    • Move in with your parents?
  – Other mode of employment?
    • Consult?
    • Temporary/term employment?
  – Delay start date?
What is not professional during a negotiation

- Lying
- Dragging out the timeline for no good reason
- Nagging
- Losing your cool
And if you don’t get the offer...

- Be positive and gracious
- Seek feedback and advice
- Communicate your interest in future opportunities

~10% of job offers that are made are declined
Perceptions and Realities: Overcoming Stereotypes

According to business people, academics/scientists are:

• simple minded about money
• impractical about time
• no sense of deadlines
• socially passive
• value ideals as absolutes

Other potential perceptions to overcome:

• hermit vs. leader
• arrogant vs. team player
• rebel vs. organizer
• problem person vs. solution person
Summing it all up: You must be a T-person

Experience, Drive, Communications, Leadership

What your school can give you

Your PhD Thesis, research, expertise

What you must create for yourself
Some final thoughts

1. Job hunting in the new century involves personal connections, chance encounters, and random opportunities.
2. The more people you know, the greater your "job cross section."
3. Getting a job in science requires the same job hunting skills and techniques as any job (including getting a job in academia).
4. Thinking about finding a job is stressful, demoralizing and produces anxiety. Actually doing something about finding a job is liberating, empowering and fun.
5. You can serve science, your community, and your country in many different environments - don’t be afraid to consider a non-traditional career path just because it is unfamiliar to you, your advisor, your department or your family.
Further information and resources

Peter Fiske’s columns at ScienceCareers.org: “Opportunities”


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