

Q&A Column
Author: Mark Swartz

Email Subject Line: Lower Pay Comes Before Experience

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Headline: Trading Off Lower Pay For Experience

Summary:

I may be about to accept a job offer that is of high interest to me, and will help me towards my field as a recent college grad. However, I was expecting a higher wage. Is there a way to accept the offer with them granting me higher pay than their standard?

Michelle K., St Catharines, Ontario

Landing Page copy

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Dear Mark,

Question: I may be about to accept a job offer that is of high interest to me, and will help me towards my field as a recent college grad. However, I was expecting a higher wage. Since I don't have the experience required, they still want to give me a chance, and talked about starting me off at a wage less than what I make now. Is it really worth it, or is there a way to accept the offer with them granting me higher pay than their standard?

Michelle K., St Catharines, Ontario

Dear Michelle,

Sounds like you're up against the old conundrum often faced by recent grads: do I try to find the highest paying job possible, regardless of what type of work I'll be doing, or do I attempt to gain employment directly in my field – even if the wage is lower?

While bigger bucks are no doubt important now that you've finished school (and probably want to pay off your student loans quickly!), experience in your chosen occupation is critical. Here you have an employer that is willing to train you, expose you to the realities of worklife, and take a chance on you, even though you're not really qualified for the job. I have to tell you that thousands of graduating students would log off facebook.com in a heartbeat and leap at the chance for such an opportunity. This kind of situation doesn't present itself every day.

Mind you, I can appreciate your concern about the wages. Sure it would be great to get trained *and* be paid a gazillion dollars. However you might have to forgo the latter immediately if this employer doesn't budge on their offer. A few years down the road, when you're much more experienced and ready to market yourself to another employer, your value may be such that you can command the type of salary you're really looking for.

One tactic you might consider in the here and now is to negotiate a series of raises before you sign on. For instance, you can ask for a performance review in six months, and again at the end of the year, with increases built in if you meet certain agreed upon milestones. If the employer agrees, you're getting the best deal possible. And if they don't, you can decide whether to take a pass, or else accept and be grateful. What you want to avoid is accepting the offer, then starting off your new gig with a big fat chip on your shoulder. Nobody wins under those circumstances.



Mark Swartz, MBA, M.Ed., is a [speaker](#), [career coach](#) and [author](#). He can be reached via his website, www.careeractivist.com. The above article may contain material not included in the edited version.

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