CONVERSATIONS TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE PRACTICE
25 March 2019 / Compensation and Negotiation

COMMON THEMES

• Transparency in the compensation system associated with responsibilities
• Timely conversations and reviews on salary and performance as separate and important topics
• Know your salary range or tier for the skills, responsibilities and work that is performed
• Know what intangible compensation is important to you - sabbatical, parent/child leave, flextime, respect, opportunities, mentoring, classes, conferences, non-billable projects, etc...
• Know your own value and worth - use third party metrics (Glassdoor, AIA salary calculator)

NOTES BY GROUP

Group 1:
• Understanding Compensation System for Transparency
• Company needs written documentation and communication of compensation system
• Scheduled reviews and written agenda
• Employees need to know policies for
  o Promotions with increased compensation
  o Salary ranges for job titles with job descriptions
  o Consistency in expectations, skills, and responsibilities along with qualities and characteristics for next level position and promotion
• Typical work anniversaries
  o Scheduled quarterly check in and yearly reviews
  o Frequent access to HR for goal setting and tracking – quarterly preferred
• Consistency and fairness in compensation parity - based on skills
  o AIA salary calculator has varied results
Salary ranges for job titles with job descriptions would be helpful

- Be your own advocate
  - List your accomplishments
  - Find an in-house advocate (not the same as mentor)
  - Educate yourself
  - Manage up

**Group 2:**

- Best negotiation often occurs between multiple job offers before a job is accepted
  - Good time to ask about compensation levels - tiered system?
  - Use metrics - AIA salary calculator

- Constantly market yourself
  - The role of the employer is to sell contract at employee’s value/worth

- Plan
  - What do I need to do to make “X” Salary?
  - What is the time frame?

- Leverage other benefits (small vs large firms)
  - Quality of work/projects
  - Extra vacation days
  - Flexible time

- Keep a journal of success stories
  - Notes about each project goal and project completion
  - It’s like applying for a new job at each annual review (and you are always up to date should you decide to look for a new job)

**Group 3:**

- Transparency
  - What makes up the billable rate should be clear
  - Base pay vs bonus pay (company does well) vs merit pay (employee does well) should be clearly identified
  - Sabbatical - when can this be negotiated?
    - If specific benefits are individually desired, put together a proposal
    - Note: must be seen as a proven benefit to the firm
• Otherwise, negotiate the benefit before taking the job (e.g., in 3 years, a 3 month sabbatical, timed to be compatible with office work flow)

• Conversation
  o Salary and performance reviews to be separate discussions
  o Salary could be a letter or email with an option for review meeting for negotiation
  o Self-evaluation to articulate clear goals and objectives for the year- this should match with employer’s needs and evaluation and goals for the employee and could be used as a part of the merit pay?
  o 360 reviews are helpful (with feedback from more and less senior colleagues and clients etc.)
  o Frequent check -in, at least 3 times per year
  o Mentors should be advocates
  o Achieving goals part of bonus?

Group 4:
• Transparency
  o Company gender pay gaps made public
  o What are AIA compensation reports conveying? Are roles up to date?
  o Use of coffee cards to incentivize out-of-office discussions
  o Full disclosure on finances and burden cost
  o Roles and description of what is required to move up
  o Having Knowledge of firm’s monthly finances before asking for a raise

• Power
  o Job Responsibilities- how do these vary between large and small firms
  o Advocate for yourself
  o Build resiliency in the firm, particularly with regards to staffing
  o Teaching along with learning
  o What are risk factors

• Fairness
  o Having transparent pay bands
  o Having advanced warning on yearly adjustment conversations- bring your accomplishments and...?
• Overtime - what is fair compensation both monetary and non-monetary to deal with market fluctuations
• Opportunities for advancement - exposure and speaking up

• Connections
  • Actively working on pay gap but what about misalignment perceptions in the firm
  • Intermittent check-ins would help alignment

Group 5:
• Positive Experiences
  • Visibility, rigor, fair analysis
  • Salary report tools (AIA calculator, Glassdoor)
  • Power discrepancy between intern/designer vs manager/principal – can be divisive
  • Would like to assume the best but need evidence

• Transparency
  • $ is often taboo
  • If fair pay for fair work should be an organic conversation

• Non-monetary compensation
  • Opportunities
  • Mentorship
  • Socialized to value other things like time off or flex time
  • Feeling valued
  • Parental and child leave

• Negotiate tangible vs intangible (mutually exclusive?)
  • More leverage at time of hire (sabbatical)
  • Do homework on what the job that you do is worth on the open market
  • Research checks and balances
  • Criteria for next jump “qualities” and “skills”- discussion not a list
  • Mentorship/guidance/advocacy for opportunity
  • An even playing field reduces unconscious bias

Group 6:
• Compensation often feels subjective
  • Sometimes driven by experience vs performance?
How does firm define value?

- Transparency could keep employees motivated
- Cost of living increases should be kept separate from performance / value increases
- Compensation structure should be shared with the rest of the firm
- Annual review should be separate from salary review
- When is negotiation cycle appropriate?

**Group 7:**

- Fairness- reduce words that create a me vs we
  - Fine line between collaboration and negotiation
  - We are working toward a common goal
- Meet people in person
  - Better outcomes for problem solving vs blaming
- Negotiate for respect and asking for what you are worth
  - Salary derived from performance review?

**THANK YOU FROM YOUR SESSION LEADERS**

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