



## 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
  - Promotions with increased compensation
  - Salary ranges for job titles with job descriptions
  - Consistency in expectations, skills, and responsibilities along with qualities and characteristics for next level position and promotion
- Typical work anniversaries
  - Scheduled quarterly check in and yearly reviews
  - Frequent access to HR for goal setting and tracking – quarterly preferred
- Consistency and fairness in compensation parity- based on skills
  - 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
  - Salary and performance reviews to be separate discussions
  - Salary could be a letter or email with an option for review meeting for negotiation
  - 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?
  - 360 reviews are helpful (with feedback from more and less senior colleagues and clients etc.)
  - Frequent check -in, at least 3 times per year
  - Mentors should be advocates
  - Achieving goals part of bonus?

#### **Group 4:**

- Transparency
  - Company gender pay gaps made public
  - What are AIA compensation reports conveying? Are roles up to date?
  - Use of coffee cards to incentivize out-of-office discussions
  - Full disclosure on finances and burden cost
  - Roles and description of what is required to move up
  - Having Knowledge of firm's monthly finances before asking for a raise
- Power
  - Job Responsibilities- how do these vary between large and small firms
  - Advocate for yourself
  - Build resiliency in the firm, particularly with regards to staffing
  - Teaching along with learning
  - What are risk factors
- Fairness
  - Having transparent pay bands
  - 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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