



Salary Negotiation Scripts for Different Scenarios



Why Most Professionals Leave Money on the Table

What This Resource Solves

- Not knowing what to say after an offer
- Fear of asking for more and losing the offer
- No script for counter-offering with confidence
- Uncertainty about timing and tone
- Lack of practice with real scenarios
- No follow-up framework after the conversation
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Research consistently shows that a majority of professionals accept the first offer they receive — not because it's the right move, but because they don't know what to say next. Silence, anxiety, and fear of damaging a new relationship cause talented people to undersell themselves every single day. The gap between what you earn and what you're worth isn't always a skills problem. More often, it's a **scripts problem**.

This resource exists to close that gap. Whether you're navigating a new job offer, asking for a raise after a strong performance review, transitioning into a new industry, or negotiating freelance rates — the right words, delivered with confidence, change outcomes. You don't need to be a natural negotiator. You need a reliable script, an understanding of timing, and the courage to speak.

This playbook is structured in three phases: **Before** (how to prepare), **During** (what to say and when), and **After** (how to follow up and close). Each section includes ready-to-use scripts, customizable templates, reflection prompts, and real-world examples grounded in how negotiations actually unfold in today's workplace. Read it cover to cover the first time. Then return to the specific scenario you're facing when you need it most.

Prepare Before You Negotiate

Negotiation is won or lost before you ever open your mouth. The professionals who negotiate successfully aren't necessarily more confident — they're more prepared. Preparation transforms anxiety into authority. When you know your number, your narrative, and your non-negotiables, you enter the conversation from a position of strength rather than hope. This phase covers the three pillars of pre-negotiation readiness.

1

Know Your Number

Research market rates using LinkedIn Salary, Glassdoor, Levels.fyi, and industry reports. Identify a specific target salary — not a range — and a walk-away floor. Write both down.

2

Build Your Case

Document 3–5 concrete achievements tied to business outcomes. Use the formula: **"I achieved [X result] by doing [Y action], which delivered [Z value]."** Quantify wherever possible.

3

Anticipate Objections

List every pushback you might face — budget limits, internal bands, "we'll revisit in 6 months." Prepare a calm, specific response to each. Objections are not rejections; they're negotiation moves.

4

Practice Out Loud

Read your scripts aloud. Record yourself. Practice with a trusted colleague or coach. Your brain processes spoken language differently from written — rehearsal prevents freeze-up in the moment.

  **Prep Worksheet:** Before your next negotiation conversation, write down: (1) My target salary: ____ (2) My walk-away floor: ____ (3) My top 3 achievements with outcomes: ____ (4) The objection I'm most afraid of and my response to it: ____

Script 1: Negotiating a New Job Offer

This is the most common and highest-stakes negotiation scenario. You've received an offer — congratulations. Now is not the time to immediately accept or panic. A brief, confident pause and a well-phrased counter-offer almost always result in a better outcome. Recruiters expect negotiation. Hiring managers budget for it. The candidate who negotiates is not penalized — they're often respected more.

Initial Response Script

"Thank you so much — I'm genuinely excited about this role and the team. I'd like to take a day to review the full offer before I respond formally. Is that okay with you?"

This buys you time without signaling hesitation. It also signals that you are thoughtful — a quality every employer wants.

Counter-Offer Script

"I've done some research on market rates for this role and my experience level, and I was hoping we could land closer to **[Target Number]**. Based on my background in [specific skill/achievement], I believe that reflects the value I'll bring. Is there flexibility there?"

When They Push Back

"I understand there may be constraints. If the base isn't flexible right now, I'd love to explore whether there's room on [signing bonus / remote flexibility / performance review timing / equity]. I want to find a number that works for both of us."

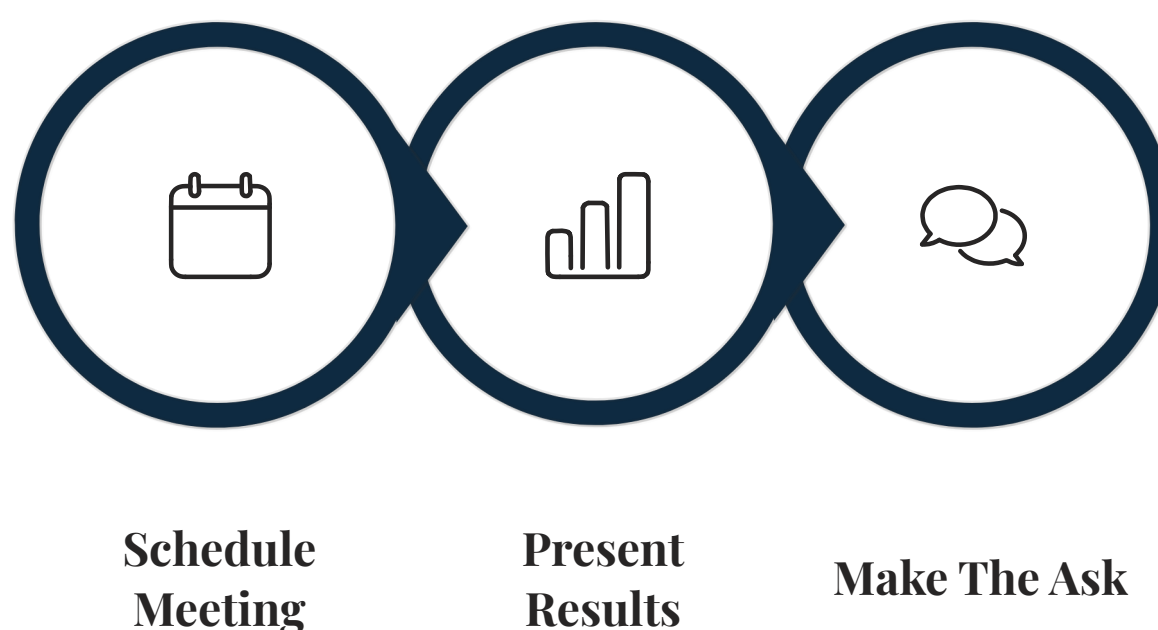
Closing the Negotiation

"That works for me — I'm excited to make this official and get started. Thank you for working through this with me."

 Always get the final offer in writing before verbally accepting or resigning from your current role.

Script 2: Asking for a Raise in Your Current Role

Asking your current employer for more money requires a different approach than negotiating a new offer. Here, you already have a relationship, a track record, and implicit leverage — the cost of replacing you. The most common mistake professionals make is timing this conversation wrong or leading with personal need instead of professional value. Never say "I need more money because of my rent." Say "Here's the value I've delivered and what I'm asking for in return."



The silence after your ask is powerful — resist filling it. The person who speaks first after a salary ask is often the one who concedes.

The Raise Request Script

"I'd love to set up some time to discuss my compensation. Over the past [time period], I've [key achievement 1], [key achievement 2], and [key achievement 3], which collectively resulted in [measurable outcome]. Based on this and current market data for my role, I'd like to discuss moving my salary to **[Target Number]**."

If They Say "Not Now"

"I understand the timing may not be ideal. Can we agree on what milestones or timeline would make this the right conversation? I'd love to plan for it formally."

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Wrong Timing

Never ask during a company crisis, right after a bad quarter, or in a hallway.

Personal Framing

Keep it professional. Never cite personal expenses as justification.

Vague Ask

Always name a specific number. Ranges signal uncertainty and invite low offers.

Script 3: Negotiating as a Career Changer or Freelancer

Career changers face a unique challenge: they're often entering a field where they lack direct title-to-title experience. This creates self-doubt that can suppress your ask before you even open your mouth. The truth is that transferable skills — leadership, project management, client communication, data analysis — carry real market value. Your job is to frame your background as an asset, not an apology. Freelancers face a parallel challenge: setting rates confidently with clients who may push for discounts.

Career Changer Script

The Reframe: "While my background is in [previous field], I bring [transferable skill 1], [transferable skill 2], and [transferable skill 3], which directly maps to what this role demands. I've done research on the range for this position, and I'm targeting **[Target Number]**."

Freelancer Rate Script

The Rate Anchor: "My project rate for this scope of work is **[Rate]**. This is based on [deliverables], [timeline], and [expertise]. I've included a full project breakdown in the proposal — I'm happy to walk you through it."

When Client Pushes Back

The Scope Pivot: "I want to make this work within your budget. We could reduce the scope to [adjusted deliverables] for **[Lower Rate]**, or I can match the original scope with a payment plan. Which would you prefer?"



Reflection Prompt: What are your top 3 transferable skills that apply to your target role or client? Write them down and build them into your script before the next conversation.

Script 4: Handling Difficult Objections

Every negotiation will hit at least one objection. How you respond in that moment defines the entire conversation. Most professionals freeze, apologize, or cave — not because the objection is valid, but because they haven't prepared a response. Below are the four most common objections professionals encounter and the exact script to navigate each one. Read these, adapt them to your voice, and practice them until they feel natural.



"The Budget Is Fixed"

"I appreciate the transparency. If the base isn't flexible, are there other components we could look at — a signing bonus, additional PTO, an earlier performance review, or remote flexibility? I want to find a way to make this work."



"Let's Revisit in 6 Months"

"I appreciate that. Could we put that in writing and agree on the specific metrics that would trigger the review? I want to make sure we're aligned so there are no surprises for either of us."



"That's Above Our Band"

"I understand. Could you share where this role sits in the band? I've done market research suggesting the range is [X-Y], and I'd love to understand how your structure aligns. If there's headroom in the band, I'd like to target the upper end."



"Others at Your Level Earn Less"

"I can only speak to the value I bring and the market data I've researched. Based on [specific skills, certifications, or outcomes], I believe [Target Number] is well-justified. I'd love to revisit the specifics of my background together."

  **Golden Rule:** Never accept or reject an offer in the moment. Always ask for time to review — even 24 hours — before committing. "I'd like to review the full package before I respond formally" is always acceptable.

Following Up After the Negotiation

Most negotiation guides end when the conversation ends. But the follow-up is where professionals either lock in their gains or let them evaporate. Whether the negotiation went your way or not, how you handle the 24–72 hours after the conversation shapes your professional reputation and sets the stage for future conversations. There are three outcomes you'll face: agreement, partial agreement, or a "no for now."

✓ Outcome: Agreement

Send a brief, professional email confirming the agreed terms within 24 hours. Never assume verbal agreements are final.

"Thank you for the productive conversation. To confirm, we've agreed on [Salary/Rate], starting [Date], with [any other negotiated terms]. Please send over the updated offer letter when you have a moment. Looking forward to it."

↔ Outcome: Partial Win

Acknowledge progress, document what was agreed, and establish a clear path to revisit the rest.

"Thank you for working through this with me. I appreciate the [signing bonus / PTO / review date]. I'll plan to revisit the base salary at my [90-day / 6-month] review as discussed. Looking forward to a strong start."

✗ Outcome: No

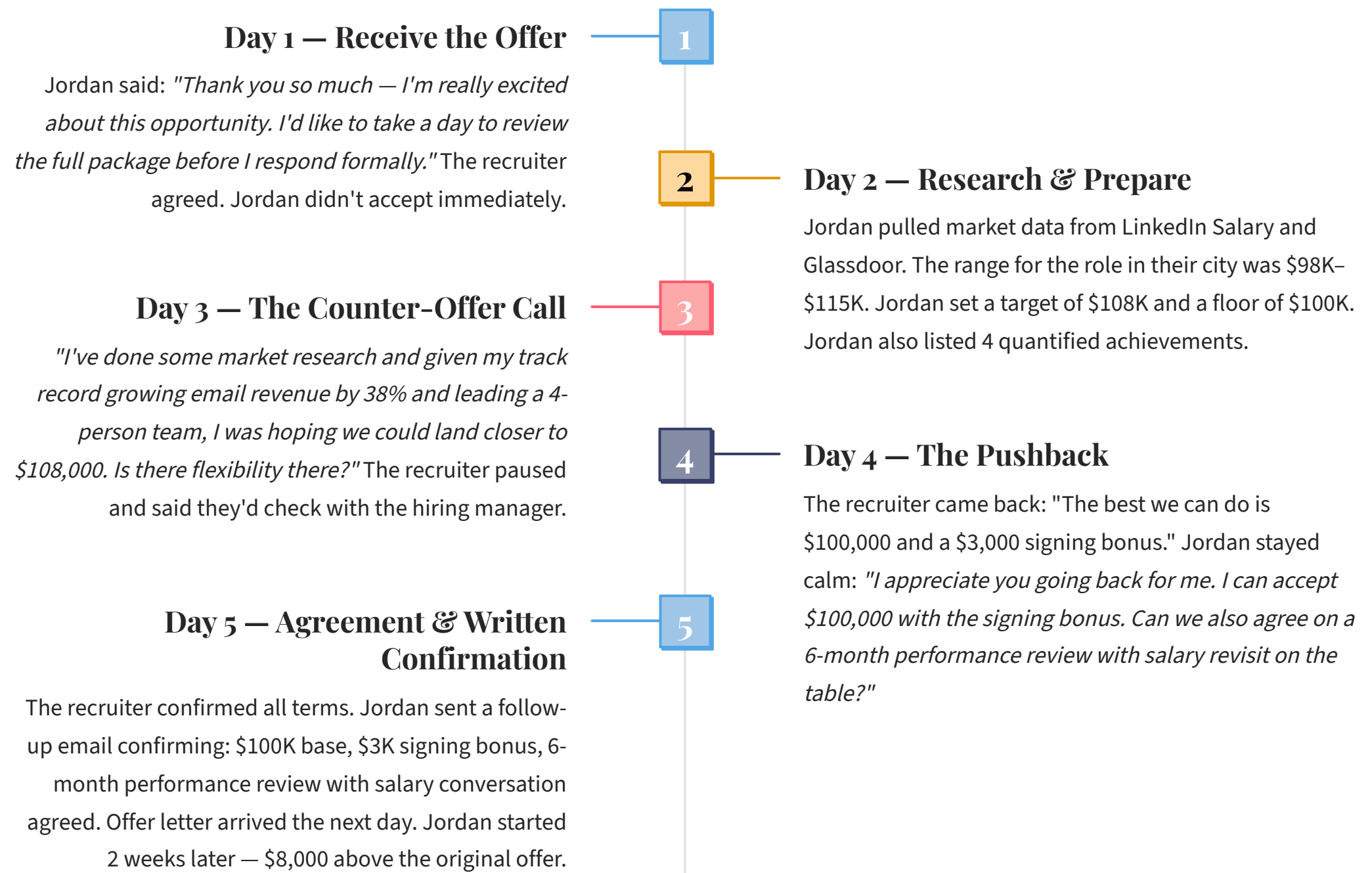
A "no" is information, not failure. Stay professional, set a review date, and consider your options calmly.

"I understand, and I appreciate the honesty. Could we schedule a formal review in [3/6 months] where we revisit this? I'd also love to understand what milestones would support a salary adjustment at that point."

✓  **Pro Tip:** Always follow up any salary conversation with a written email — even if everything was verbal and agreed. Paper trails protect everyone and demonstrate professionalism.

Case Example: From Offer to Counter to Close

Meet Jordan, a marketing manager with 7 years of experience transitioning from a legacy media company to a SaaS startup. Jordan received an initial offer of \$95,000 — \$10,000 below their target. Here's how Jordan navigated the negotiation using the scripts in this playbook, step by step.



🏆 **Result:** Jordan negotiated an additional \$8,000 in base salary plus a \$3,000 signing bonus — a \$11,000 improvement — simply by using a script, doing research, and staying calm under pushback.

Key Takeaways & Your Next Steps

Negotiation is a skill, not a personality trait. Every professional at every level can learn to negotiate effectively with the right preparation, the right words, and the right mindset. You now have the scripts, the frameworks, and the case example to walk into your next conversation with confidence. Here's what to hold onto as you move forward.



Preparation is your unfair advantage

Know your number, know your value, and know the objections before you enter any salary conversation. Professionals who prepare outperform those who improvise every time.



Lead with value, not need

Frame every ask around the outcomes you've delivered and the market rate for your skills — never around personal financial circumstances. Employers pay for value, not sympathy.



Silence is a negotiation tool

After you make your ask, stop talking. The first person to fill the silence often concedes. Practice sitting with the discomfort — it pays off literally.



Every "no" is a door, not a wall

A rejection isn't final — it's an invitation to reframe, pivot to other benefits, or set a formal review date. Keep the conversation open and professional at all times.



Follow up in writing, always

Verbal agreements are fragile. Send a confirmation email within 24 hours of any salary discussion. This protects you and signals professionalism that hiring managers remember.

Your Action Checklist

- ☐ Identify the specific negotiation scenario I'm preparing for
- ☐ Research market rates for my role, level, and location
- ☐ Write down my target salary and walk-away floor
- ☐ Draft 3–5 quantified achievements to use as my case
- ☐ Select the script that fits my scenario and customize it
- ☐ Practice my script out loud at least 3 times
- ☐ Prepare responses to the 4 common objections
- ☐ Plan my follow-up email template in advance

Remember This

The worst they can say is no — and even then, you've started a conversation that didn't exist before. Negotiating is professional. Negotiating is expected. Negotiating is how you get paid what you're worth.

You've got this. Now go use your script. 🚀