

Sounds Good—Can You Put That in Writing? By Kathi Guiney SPHR, GPHR- President **YES! Your Human Resources Solution**

The hiring process is a carefully choreographed dance that lets both candidate and employer lead at different times. We've focused on the initial steps of this dance in the **YES! Your Human Resources Solution** blog and past articles, so let's move to the last stage: the offer of employment. This is the phase that both employer and candidate most anticipate; but there are fancy dance steps involved!

The Verbal Offer

The verbal offer is the time to solidify the relationship with your top candidate. The candidate will also be able to affirm interest in the position. You can recap key components of the position, the reporting structure, and communicate the proposed total compensation package—a critical moment where the employer leads the dance. This communication should be upbeat and confident with no apologies for what is being offered. Who would feel good about an offer that begins, "I wish I could offer you more, but..."?

This conversation should solicit feedback from the candidate on the offer parameters. By listening to questions about the job, company benefits, and other topics, you'll get a feel for the candidate's priorities and how to address these in the written offer. Ask the candidate to think about the verbal offer and to give you a call the next day. Turning over the responsibility for follow up indicates the candidate's interest and participation in the process. Let's face it everyone is happier with a 'deal' they had input in creating!

The Written Offer

The written offer is the final step to confirm and clarify the offer with the candidate. The offer letter has the legal weight of a commitment from the employer, so say what you mean and do not leave anything to assumption.

The offer letter should include the position title, reporting structure and salary quoted in the pay-cycle rate and the annualized rate. Also important is the work location and proposed start date. Don't forget to mention that tax and other deductions will apply. Failing to mention the deductions can lead to misunderstandings about take home pay.

It is important to mention if company benefits are offered and the benefit eligibility date. Keep language simple to allow for changes in costs or plans. Instead of listing each specific benefit detail, best to say something like, "Effective the first of the month following your start date, you will be eligible to enroll in the Company benefit plans. Details of these plans will be provided under separate cover."

The offer letter should emphasize any employment-related requirements like proof of right to work in the U.S., background checks, confidentiality agreements, and the at-will nature of employment in California. Include a statement that the company maintains the right to change programs and job duties as needed.

Conclude the offer letter with a welcoming statement and confirm the start date. The offer letter is formal, so ending with “We look forward to you joining the team” puts a personal element into the document. The employer and the candidate should sign and date the offer letter once accepted.

Once signed, you officially have a “seal the deal” moment can bust a move’ in a victory dance!