Negotiating an Offer

(Suzanne Scott-Trammell) When it comes to negotiating the offer be sure not to start the negotiation process too early. You've got to remember you're still in sales mode, so you've got to create a demand in yourself before you ever get to that phase. If they try to get you to talk a salary too early, you haven't yet created the demand in yourself, so you won't get the best offer.

You can't negotiate on everything, so understand what's most important to you to negotiate on. Also, do your research, so you understand what the going rate is for someone with your skill set in your career field.

It's most important really to negotiate on a good salary. Because your raises from that point on are contingent upon what you start at. So sometimes students are very excited about getting a high bonus, but the bonus is a one-time deal.

Once an offer is made, don't talk in terms of a set figure, talk in terms of a range. Anywhere from 2-10,000 dollars is appropriate. Depending on your level of experience.

Even now more than ever, benefits are very important. So you need to look at the life insurance, the medical insurance benefits, if there's any kind of match that the company offers, professional development and growth is very important. Advancement opportunity within the company. You need to ask those kind of questions.

Also, you want to make sure you're focusing, even during this process, on a win-win situation between you and the employer. This is somebody you're going to be working with later on in your job. So you want to not come across as being so demanding, you've got to do it very professionally, and very positively, and really focusing on a win-win because you're still communicating the type of employee you're going to be.