

How to Make an Offer They Can't Refuse

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In September 2006, New York Enterprise Report published an excerpt from this article. The full version of that article is provided here.

"Thanks, but no thanks."

Maybe the candidate did not reject your offer so blatantly, but even the most polite rejection may make you wonder, "What happened?"

Good question. It is important to understand the state of employee-firm relations today because although we might not like to admit it, some very outdated views still exist. Traditionally, employees were viewed as parts of a rational machine - a machine that cost money to run and needed to be maintained. In short, employees were the liability. Business leaders have shifted from this view, but it would be safe to say that many small firms have not caught on. In this modern service-based economy, employees have become your most valuable asset. They are the best chance you have at marketing, building, and differentiating your company. Without employees, the company is a hollow vision and a pointless mission.

As an employer, you are not looking for a "filler;" you are looking for who will help you get to the next level. The person you hire must fit not only the position but your company.

Hiring the wrong person is a liability.

The interview process can be daunting. With hundreds of resumes, dozens of applications and time consuming interviews you may feel pressured to "just fill the position." Considering that it takes at least 20 to 30 hours of management time to recruit and on-board just 1 person, it will cost your company thousands of dollars when you have to replace them in six months.

Candidates are not just looking for extrinsic rewards... They are also looking for intrinsic rewards. They want to enjoy what they do and feel good about it when they tell others.

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When you do find that great candidate, remember that while you are interviewing them, they are interviewing you; you are their next level. With this in mind, making the offer begins at that first point of contact - not when you call or write to make an official offer. From the moment the candidate steps foot into your company, they are making assumptions about what it means to work there. From the color of the walls to the candy machine in the corner, they are making judgment calls just as you do when you shake their hand.

This is where the offer begins.

Candidates are not just looking for **extrinsic** rewards, like compensation, bonuses and a \$100 gift certificate to Jelly of the Month Club. They are also looking for **intrinsic** rewards. They want to enjoy what they do and feel good about it when they tell others. They want to feel their contribution is acknowledged and their talents appreciated. In American society, you are what you do, and people want to see how their work makes an impact.

Evidence shows that intrinsic rewards are more important factors in their decision to work at a company than salary alone. Fortunately, that is where small firms have the upper hand on big business. You can provide the meaningfulness that the *emerging employee* really wants.

Answering these questions in the interview helps eliminate the ambiguity that causes someone to reject an offer. How close is the job related to the company vision? What is the type of management style? How will they be rewarded for hard work? What are the coworkers like? What is a usual work week? How flexible is the job? How are employees encouraged to develop? How will their contributions serve the bottom line? Is what you can provide what they are looking for in an employer?

You have made your match. Now what?

It is time to *extend* the offer, begin with a telephone call. When you call the candidate, tell them which of their skills made them a fit for the direction of the company, **not** just the job.



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Then, invite them to join the company. Give them the space to choose your firm by immediately asking if they are able to accept now or need some time to think about it. If they cannot respond now, two or three days should suffice.

If they are able to accept, inform them that they will receive a letter that specifies all aspects of what it means to work at your company. Often overlooked, the letter is another significant point of contact when recruiting that great candidate. Again emphasize the skills they possess that got them hired and reaffirm its integral role in the company's success. Be sure to show enthusiasm about having them join your team. Do this by reiterating the benefits your company offers for hard work and commitment.

The following are important elements in an offer letter:

- Salary
- Bonuses
- Tuition Assistance
- Medical
- Vacation
- How they will grow
- Stock options
- Formal/Informal Events
- Profit-sharing
- Other major benefits

A succinct description of these elements - and the reason the candidate is deserving of them - may be the final deciding factor as to whether you will successfully recruit the perfect fit. Overlooking this opportunity may not only leave you wondering, "What happened?" but also, "How much did this cost?"

Go ahead, make them an offer they can't refuse.



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About Retensa

Retensa is a leader and innovator of Employee Retention Strategies. They combine experience and web-based technology to develop, motivate, and retain a company's best employees. Retensa builds solutions and metrics to help firms reduce turnover and create a high-performing workforce.

To create the "*Retention Environment*," Retensa provides additional expertise in Leadership Development, Human Capital ROI, Mentoring, On-line Employee Surveys, On-line Exit Interviews, Executive Coaching, and Succession Planning. For more information about the results you can achieve visit www.retensa.com or call direct at 212.545.1280.

*Is this a challenge at your
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