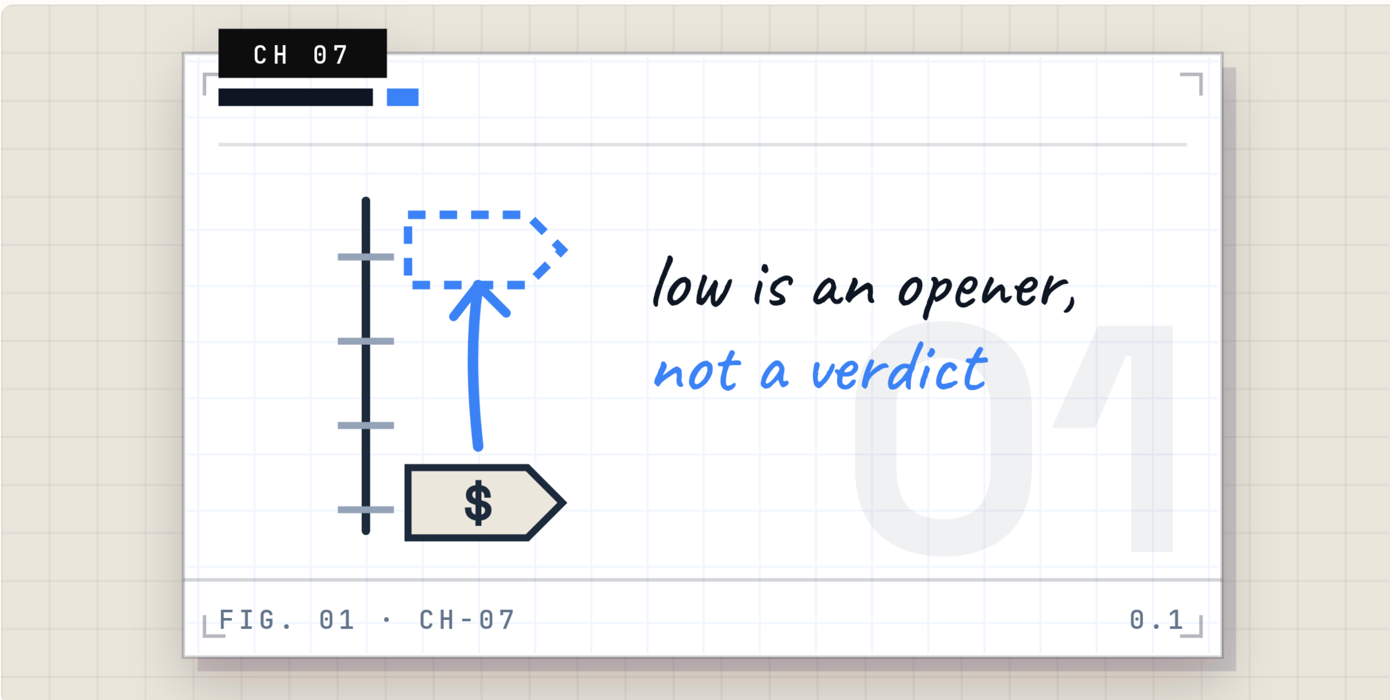
FIG. 01 · NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

NOTES, UPDATED JUN 11, 2026

They offered me less than I expected. What do I do now?

By **Chris Baldwin** · Founder, Baldwin Blueprint · Updated June 2026



SHORT ANSWER

Assess the offer against your market value and the job's true scope. Frame your counter-offer around the value you bring to the role, using specifics from the original job posting. Focus on impact and future contributions, not just your past salary history.

A lowball job offer feels like a slap in the face. It makes you question your worth and leaves you wondering if you should just accept it out of desperation. I understand that anxiety, but I'm going to show you how to respond to a lowball offer with confidence and strategic clarity, using the very details of the job itself.

FIG. 02 I never let base pay decide an offer on its own. I lay the offers side by side and weigh the things that compound, like how fast I will grow, who I will report to, and what equity is actually worth. The smaller base often wins once you score the whole picture.

§ 01

Is this offer really ’low’ or am I overvaluing myself?

Determine if an offer is truly low by comparing it to current market rates for similar roles in your specific location and industry, then carefully assessing the company's size and overall financial health to set realistic expectations for your compensation.

Most people look up a general number and think that's their fair value. But your value is tied to what *this specific company* needs and what *this specific role* demands. I always advise people to dissect the original job posting for clues about the real budget and the problems they're trying to solve. Look for keywords about growth, revenue, or specific challenges that indicate higher value.

§ 02

How do I frame my counter-offer without sounding greedy?

Frame your counter-offer by focusing on the specific, measurable value you will bring to their business, directly linking your unique skills and experience to their stated needs and challenges outlined in the original job posting.

Instead of saying, 'I want $X because I made $Y at my last job,' say, 'Based on the Blueprint I developed from your posting, I see that achieving [specific company goal from posting] requires someone who can [specific skill from posting] and [another specific skill]. My experience in [relevant experience] directly addresses these needs, and I believe a salary of $X reflects the accelerated impact I can deliver.' You are not just asking for more; you are demonstrating why you are worth more to *them*.

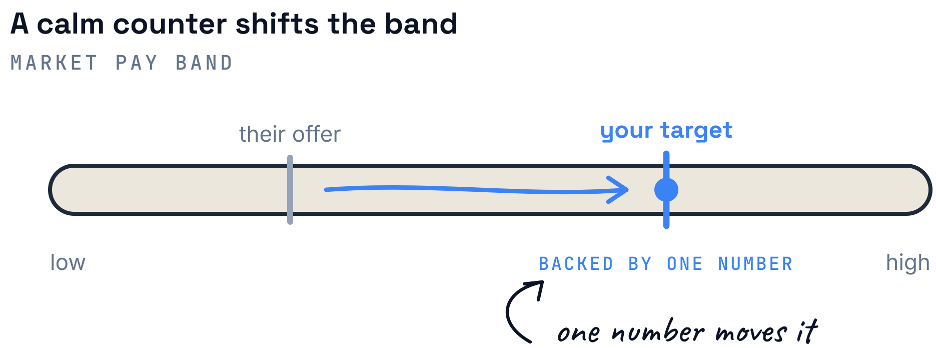


FIG. 03 A counter does not have to be a fight. I stay calm, name one real market number, and that single fact quietly slides the offer up the band. One good data point moves more than a paragraph of wanting.

§ 03

What if they can’t meet my salary expectations?

Explore other forms of compensation and benefits if the base salary budget is rigid, such as signing bonuses, equity, professional development budgets for certifications, or flexible work arrangements, to build a more attractive and comprehensive total package that meets your needs.

A hiring manager might have strict salary bands, but more flexibility exists elsewhere. I've seen candidates successfully negotiate for a specific certification course, a budget for industry conferences, or even a review for a title bump after six months. Your Blueprint's 30/60/90 day plan can even be used to negotiate a performance-based bonus structure, linking your pay directly to achieving their critical objectives.

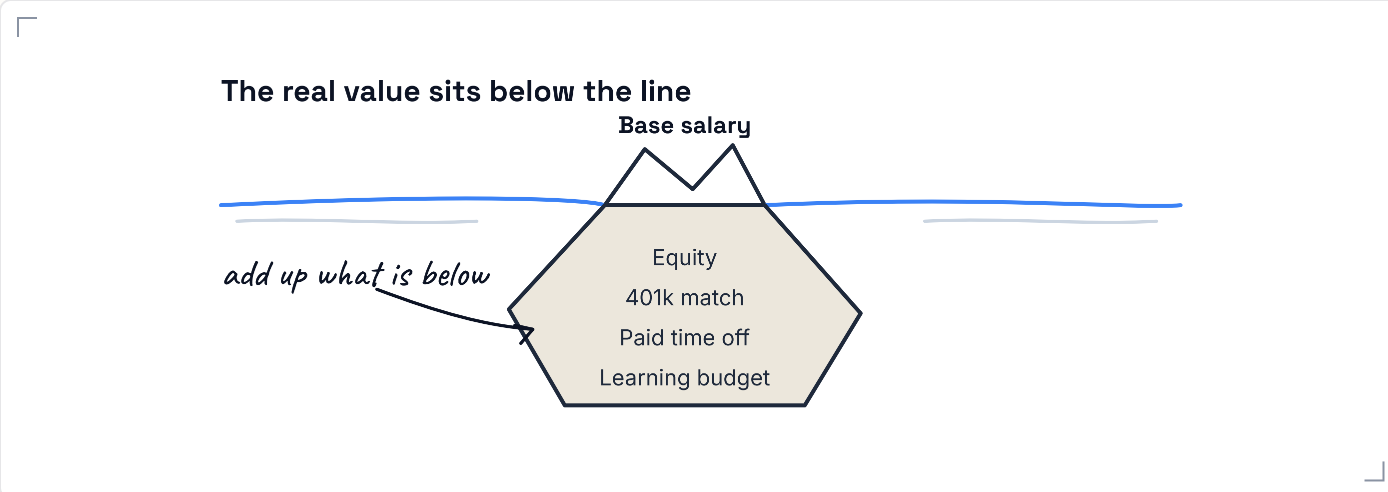


FIG. 04 Base salary is just the part of an offer you can see above the surface. The real value, the match and the equity and the time off and the learning budget, sits quietly below the waterline. I always total the whole iceberg before I judge a number.

§ 04

When is it time to walk away from a bad offer?

Walk away from an offer when the compensation, benefits, or growth opportunities fundamentally fail to align with your long-term career goals and personal financial needs, as accepting a truly bad fit can be more detrimental than no offer at all.

This is the honest caveat: sometimes a lowball offer isn't a negotiation tactic; it's a reflection of how they truly value the role, or you. If you've presented a compelling case using your Blueprint, and they still won't budge significantly, consider what that tells you about the company culture or their financial health. Don't let desperation force you into a role that will leave you resentful and looking again in six months. Your time is valuable.

§ 05

How does the Baldwin Blueprint help me negotiate this offer?

The Baldwin Blueprint provides a concrete, 12-page strategic document built directly from their job posting and your resume, giving you a powerful, objective basis for negotiation that shifts the conversation from your past to their future impact.

Imagine walking into a negotiation with an Impact Memo detailing exactly how you'll solve their problems, or an Account Map showing how you'll engage their key stakeholders.

The Strategic Signals highlight what they truly value, allowing you to tailor your counter. Your 30/60/90 day plan isn't just for onboarding; it's proof of your immediate and sustained value, making your salary request feel like an investment, not an expense. The first draft is free, no card required, so you have nothing to lose by trying it.

WORKED EXAMPLE · 30/60/90 LINE

BEFORE

I'll get up to speed quickly and start contributing.

AFTER

By day 30, I will have audited current CRM processes and presented an initial proposal for optimizing lead conversion, directly addressing the 'improve sales efficiency' goal outlined in the posting.

NEGOTIATING A LOW OFFER

What most people do	What actually works
State desired salary based on past pay	Justify salary with future impact on *their* goals
Focus on personal needs or market averages	Reference specific company challenges from job posting
Sound apologetic or hesitant to ask for more	Present a confident, data-backed strategic plan
Negotiate only on base salary	Explore total compensation: bonus, equity, development, title

The takeaways

01 Ground your counter in the job posting's specific needs.

02 Demonstrate future impact, not just past experience.

03 Negotiate total compensation, not just base salary.

04 Use your strategic Blueprint to justify your value.

Questions people ask

What if they withdraw the offer when I counter?

A reasonable counter-offer, presented professionally and backed by value, rarely leads to an offer withdrawal. If it does, it often signals a company culture you might not want to join anyway, or a severe budget mismatch. Confidence is key.

Should I accept a low offer if I really need a job?

Accepting a low offer out of desperation can lead to burnout and resentment, often prompting you to seek another job quickly. If possible, use the offer as use to find something better, or negotiate for a clear path to a raise within a defined timeframe.

Is the Baldwin Blueprint just a fancy cover letter?

No, the Baldwin Blueprint is a 12-page strategic plan, not a cover letter. It includes an Impact Memo, Account Map, Strategic Signals, Experience Accelerator, and a 30/60/90 day plan. All built directly from their job posting and your resume, it shows exactly how you will perform the job and deliver value, far beyond a simple introduction.

How long should I take to respond to a low offer?

Aim to respond within 24-48 hours, acknowledging receipt and requesting a day or two to review thoroughly. This shows professionalism while giving you time to formulate a thoughtful, well-researched counter-offer. Don't rush the negotiation process.

SOURCES

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Glassdoor Salary Guide

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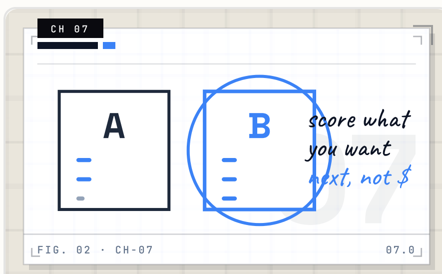

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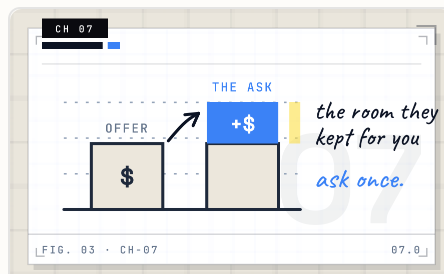

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