

Job Decision Checklist

by Anne Hull

How do you know what type of job to look for? Consider this scenario: After interviewing with several companies, you have three jobs that look pretty good to you. How do you decide which one to accept? What should you consider most important? Salary? Benefits? Here is a way to think through what will be satisfying to you in your next (and future) jobs.

1. List what you want from your work.

Wants are the characteristics and conditions of the work that you desire. You'll see a sample list below. Create your own list based on your personal values, goals and lifestyle.

2. Give each item a weight

Weight = Value, or how important this want is in your happiness with the work. Use a scale of 1-5 with 1 being low value and 5 your highest. It wouldn't make the list if it weren't already very important. These are your 'deal breakers.'

3. Rank each job opportunity

For each of your offers, write in the company name at the top of the column. Then weight each offer in each of your categories.

4. Total each Column

Add up the +/- column to get a grand total for each Offer.

In this example, Chris listed all the things that she could think of that would make her love or hate her next job. She wanted to be sure she made a good decision, not just based on salary and getting an offer. These are listed in the WANTS column. They are in no particular order. This is Chris's list. You can use this as a starting point for creating your own list.

Next she gave each of them a numerical value with 1 "low" and 5 "high" as to how important they were in her decision. This is helpful when lots of things are "really" important. This value is the WEIGHT of each item.

Then, for each of the three opportunities she is considering, Chris looked at each item and how each opportunity met that WANT. She gave them the same 1-5 ranking *without regard to WEIGHT*. She is really excited about Offer A, a large, highly regarded and well-known company. Offer B is medium-sized organization in an industry that she was not familiar with. Offer C is with a 5-year old start-up company near her home.

Then she did the math of each opportunity against the WEIGHT and had either a positive or negative number. A "0" was a match of what was important to her and what was

offered by that opportunity (WEIGHT 4 + OFFER 4 = 0). Sometimes the offer exceeds the importance is better (WEIGHT of 4 + OFFER of 5 = 1) a positive number. Sometimes the offer is less than what is wanted and that is a negative number (WEIGHT 4 + OFFER 2 = -2) We often refer to this as a trade-off.

Chris's List

WANTS	WEIGHT	Offer 1 Co. A	+/-	Offer 2 Agency B	+/-	Offer 3 Co. C	+/-
ORGANIZATION:							
comfort in field or type of industry, e.g., government/private sector	5	5	0	4	-1	4	-1
size, growth rate, market potential	3	4	1	4	1	3	0
facilities and working conditions	4	4	0	3	-1	2	-2
desire to work there for a period of time	2	5	3	4	2	4	2
POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION							
how and by whom performance is judged; whether a salary review is included	3	3	0	3	0	5	2
number of realistic opportunities for promotion, and to what level	4	2	-2	2	-2	5	1
MANAGEMENT AND CO-WORKERS							
stable management	3	4	1	3	0	3	0
interest in employee well-being, e.g., E.A.P., pay, training, layoff/restructuring support	5	4	-1	4	-1	5	0
professional calibre	5	5	0	4	-1	4	-1
compatible approach on policies	5	5	0	4	-1	3	-2
COMPENSATION							
starting salary, long-term outlook	4	5	1	4	0	4	0

other benefits, e.g., insurance, profit sharing, tuition assistance	2	5	2	4	2	4	2
JOB							
duties and responsibilities	5	5	0	4	-1	5	0
initial opportunities offered	4	4	0	4	0	2	-2
utilization of your abilities	5	4	-1	3	-2	5	2
training programs, inside/outside of co	4	4	0	3	-1	3	-1
broadening of experience for future jobs	5	5	0	3	-2	5	0
amount of travel	3	5	2	5	2	2	-3
amount overtime	3	2	-1	5	2	1	-2
job compatibility with your medium/long-range career goals	5	5	0	4	-1	5	0
LOCATION							
geographic area, environment	5	4	-1	3	-2	5	0
cost of living	5	4	-1	3	-2	5	0
distance from work (commute time/cost)	4	4	0	3	-1	5	1
COMMUNITY							
desirable amenities in the area	4	5	1	4	0	2	-1
WORK/LIFE BALANCE							
Work from home	2	0	-2	3	1	0	-2
Flex hours	4	4	0	5	1	5	1
GRAND TOTAL			0		-8		-6

Which offer would you choose? Are you comfortable with that decision?
 Is OFFER 1 a perfect match? Should Chris keep looking for another offer?
 You may not know how an offer meets your WANT and may need to ask some more questions. Numbers aren't everything, but they sure can give you a different perspective. Look at what you may have to trade off, as well as the unexpected benefits.