

## The Career Coach

The interview process was grueling, but you came through. They loved you, and you love the job. But the offer is less money than you wanted—a lot less. The clock is ticking. What do you do?



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Recently, a client of mine—let's call her Susan—was offered a job she really, really wanted. It had been an excruciating process with multiple interviews and even a personality test. (In case you were wondering, you can't flunk a personality test as long as you are breathing and haven't hidden the bodies of former co-workers in your basement.)

During the first round of interviews she was told several times that the company needed her experience to fill a gap in one area of the team. The second-round interviewers revealed that she seemed to fit into their unique culture.

But when the call finally came, the offer was almost \$20,000 less than Susan had requested. Her first thought was to take what she could get—this was probably their best offer.

That's a common first reaction, especially among women. But it's one you need to resist. Look at Susan's case: She didn't want the offer to be rescinded (another common fear). But that wasn't likely to happen. The company had a gap to fill. Susan fit the culture, and they knew it. Frankly, they had already fallen in love with her.

When you find yourself in this position (and you probably will), remember to think not just about your new employer, but about yourself. What will make you happy to walk in the door—and not leave you feeling you sold yourself short six months down the road when you're working your tush off? How important is salary—but also the rest of the package, like healthcare benefits, vacation time, length of commute, and corporate culture? And remember, it never hurts to ask for more. The worst that could happen is that they'd say, "No way!"

Besides, you just might get what you ask for—as Susan eventually did. The company met her halfway, she took the job, and she feels good about it.

### Changing Tracks

Dave (not his real name) was bored. As a biochemist he was good at what he did but there was no longer any chemistry between him and his test tubes. His beaker was half empty.

He performed multiple experiments each day but never took the time to experiment with his career formula. What was stopping him? His Belief System—his BS. Dave's limiting beliefs about his abilities held him paralyzed in a job that no longer pumped his pipette. Here's what seemed important to him:

**I can't get a job outside the lab because I don't have a business background.** In fact, several of Dave's colleagues with similar lab-centered experience had already

landed opportunities in business functions that required a strong science background. In addition, he was minimizing the valuable business acumen and experience he possessed. Eventually, he agreed that this belief was BS.

**I've got too much to lose.** Whenever you find yourself coming up with this particular piece of BS, be sure to ask yourself for details. What *really* are you going to lose? For Dave, the list was short, and the clincher was money. But how will Dave feel ten years down the road in the same job, having passed up the opportunity to eventually make more money in a position he loved? How would any of us?

**I'm too old.** At first this BS was a real challenge for Dave. However, he eventually admitted 43 wasn't that old. He could name several reasons why someone with his experience and tenure would actually be more qualified than younger professionals, and he wasn't getting any younger talking to me—although, he was getting wiser.

Behind all this BS was a lot of fear, which is normal for anyone taking a bold step toward the great unknown. It's fear that triggers our need to create "stories" to justify to our friends, colleagues, family and ourselves why we can't have what we really want.

Over time Dave created new empowering beliefs, defined his career goals, created a strategy, took action, cleaned his bench of BS, revised his strategy, and took more action. He's grown more eager to trade in his beakers for a Blackberry and is interviewing for new positions with companies that value his biochemistry background and years of experience on the bench, and appear willing to put him in a new role. ●

*Do you need career advice? Send your questions to [judiglova@optonline.net](mailto:judiglova@optonline.net) and watch for the return of the Career Coach in an upcoming issue of Pharm Exec.*

**From the Coach** What you know can win you a management job, but what will make you a successful manager is something else: It's the quality of your decisions and how well you work with others to maximize productivity that makes you truly valuable to your employer.