

# What to do when a prospective employer asks about your current salary Like 3

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Examiner  
December 23, 2013



In this video, certified employment interview consultant and author, Laura DeCarlo, provides expert tips to prepare you for a salary negotiation. [on.aol.com](#)



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## What is the best way to respond to a question about salary in the interview?

As [we discussed last week](#), job seekers can't seem to get away from prospective employers asking about their most recent salary in the interview process. To add to the awkwardness of the question, companies nowadays make the bold move to inquire about candidate's expectations and history around money long before an offer is on the table.

While many experts present contrasting opinions on the appropriate ways to respond to questions about salary, the best answer will be one with which you're comfortable and prepared.

Here are three key points to consider when developing your response to prospective employers:

- **Know your personal stance.** Maybe you think employers have no business in asking about [pay](#), especially at a first interview? Or perhaps, you don't have any qualms about the topic and feel that a future employer has the right to ask you whatever they want. No matter how you feel about the question, create your clear opinion on the topic. It is important to believe in your stance, as trust in your response adds to your credibility and confidence as a candidate. Furthermore, knowing exactly how you



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feel about the topic will forge the content of your reply, and influence the tone and delivery of the message.

- **Craft your response.** There are a bevy of helpful articles on the internet that can help candidates develop the appropriate phrasing to the salary question. As many experts suggest an approach that deflects a direct response, [Carol Martin](#), founder of the [InterviewCoach](#) website, provides great examples in dialogue format to help you find the words for a natural-sounding rebuttal. She offers [several solid variations of how to politely decline details about your situation or expectations around pay](#) in an article published on [Biospace](#), a biotech and pharmaceutical news and jobs website, earlier this year. ([Click here](#) to read her article.)
- **Have a strong back-up response by acquiring market intelligence.** While withholding pay information might be your primary approach to dealing with the question, know that employers will press you for an answer. You'll be hard-pressed to find a company that will shy away from asking it again just because you politely declined upon first response. In many cases, employers view such information to be critical to their interview process -- and in some cases, their right to know. Some companies will even suggest that candidacy in the interview process will end if the question is not answered.

With this in mind, you'll want to develop a back-up response that deals with the objection in a way that is satisfactory to both you and the employer. [Lisa Quast](#), contributor to [Forbes.com](#) and Fortune 500 company trainer, gives some great [advice when dealing with this. And what's #1 on her list? Getting educated on what salary ranges are for your particular industry and roles within the profession.](#) If you wish to avoid giving an actual number for your current salary or expectations, you could utilize market information in this manner:

“Based on my research, similar positions within the same geography and industry are currently paying between \$X and \$Y. My current job pays about Z% less than that stated range, as it doesn't carry as much responsibility as this new position. The new role would be a step up professionally for me, I would expect the range to be in that new range.”

The example builds off of examples provided by Quast and Martin, by adding variations of phrasing to address current salary. The reply above throws the employer a bone, so to speak, with some tangible information about the current level of pay.

Taking this approach suggests your willingness and flexibility to compromise with an employer without having to share your actual numbers right from the start. You are able to provide such information in a way that regulates the level of detail you wish to share while showing your future employer that you acknowledge the importance of their need for such data.

**Has a prospective employer asked you about your salary? How have you handled the question? Share your thoughts.**

