How Much are You Worth?

(It’s more than you think!)

A Seminar Aimed at Senior Engineering and Geoscience Students

E. Croft, P. Eng. ©1996-2011, E. Croft
Starting with the DATA

• [http://www.apeg.bc.ca](http://www.apeg.bc.ca) – click on compensation survey
• Take the MEASUREMENTS - Do the online Employment Responsibility Evaluation
• Be sure to REFER to the Benchmark Employment Descriptions
• READ the Compensation Report (get full information).

APEGBC reported 2010 starting (200-250 point) median salary is $58000 (same as 2008).
Don’t Sell Yourself Short

• The decision to hire you is the “big” one.
• **REASONABLE** salary negotiations generally won’t affect it.
• In some sectors future pay raises can depend on your starting salary (especially true for public sector, private sector is typically merit based).
Keep in mind Sectoral Differences

• Some areas are hot, and some are not...
  – Changes from year to year... engineering is cyclical
• Sector median salaries can range widely around the overall industrial median.
• Key message: focus on what makes you valuable to employers and on what YOU want to do in your career...
Don’t Sell Yourself Short II

- Being “too cheap” reduces your value to your company.
- Compare yourself fairly to your peers – networking pays – find out what others are being offered in comparable jobs.
- Points to consider in comparison (and for negotiation):
  - Prior co-op program/summer experience.
  - Working out of town and/or irregular hours.
  - Performance bonus, profit sharing, overtime pay, RRSP and benefits premiums.
The Numbers Game

• Whoever names the number first loses.

• For new grads with little experience, industry sector starting salaries are roughly the same for everyone.

• Answer How much? with your own questions:
  – What is the salary range for this position/others like it in the company? **(you should try to find this out ahead of time)**
  – How do your compensation levels compare to industry average?
  – Are subsequent increases merit-based or scale-based?
  – If merit based, then what kind of increases can be expected for outstanding, average and mediocre performers?
  – What are the measures of outstanding performance?

• **Don’t get cornered into a naming a number first– that is HR’s job.**
Other Salary Tools

• [http://www.hitechsalary.com/index.cfm](http://www.hitechsalary.com/index.cfm) (salaries seem a bit high, but will give you a ballpark – specific to cities in Canada)

• [https://www.payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com) (specific to cities in Canada – salaries seem reasonable)

• Job Advertisements often list pay scales – this helps to give you guidance – Globe and Mail, APEG site.
Don’t Sell Yourself Short III

• **Carefully** review any contract you are asked to sign.
  – If there are things you can’t agree with, black them out and initial the blackouts before you sign.
  – Make sure you keep a copy of your contract.

• Engineers are **NOT covered by the Employment Standards Act** – ensure that all aspects your employment and compensation (hours, holidays, vacation, leaves, termination) are *spelled out in your contract*.

• Make sure the process for review and advancement is clearly understood. Your first review should be *within 6 months*.
Take Your Time

• Don’t “jump” ... But don’t drag it out...

• Think about other “compensation” that is meaningful to you.
  – Will you enjoy your job?
  – Will it balance with your life interests? (trade off with salary)
  – Is there a clear path for advancement? (future benefit)

• Engineering is cyclical, it has slow times and hot areas... - stay networked and current through courses, professional volunteer activities, conferences, etc.
Act Professionally

• Once you have accepted an offer you cannot turn around and accept another (better offer) from another company. *Keep your commitments.*

• Do not directly discuss other offers during negotiations – this usually provokes a highly negative response.
Gender Based Pay Inequities

• Good news – for the most part entry level salaries are about the same. This is progress!

• Bad news – as careers progress divergence STILL occurs – women get paid less for the same level of responsibility (this isn’t really news – many studies to support this fact...)

• Lets have a look at the data...
1998 Compensation Survey Data
Compensation by Responsibility Point

Responsibility Points

- male median salary
- female median salary

Compensation
2010 Compensation Survey Data
Compensation per Responsibility Point

- Male median $/point
- Male mean $/point
- Female median $/point
- Female mean $/point

Responsibility Points:
- <200
- 225
- 275
- 325
- 375
- 425
- 475
- 525
- 575
- 625
- 675
- 725
- 775
- 825

Compensation per Point:
- $350
- $300
- $250
- $200
- $150
- $100
- $50
- $0
- $50
- $100
- $150
- $200
- $250
- $300
- $350
Summary

• Starting salaries are comparable – that is good.
• As experience goes up, women are increasingly underpaid compared to their male counterparts (based on a “normalized” factor – responsibility points).
• SO... WHAT CAN YOU DO?
Knowledge is Power

• Know the starting salaries of your peers.
• Know the recommended starting salary.
• Re-evaluate your salary/experience EVERY year. Evaluate both yourself and your employer.
• NETWORK NETWORK NETWORK – stay connected throughout your career.
• Understand your value and communicate that value well.
Self Evaluation

– What have I done to distinguish myself from the average performer?
– Have I volunteered for the tough assignments, out of town work, tight deadlines, extra effort?
– If I want to be promoted, have I trained my successor?
– Are Project Managers and Clients clamouring to have me on the Project Team for their project?
– Am I volunteering to attend client meetings and make presentations?
– Am I going the extra mile compared with my peers?
– Have I come up with any creative ideas to reduce cost or effort, or improve income?
– Do my peers come to me for advice and assistance?
– Am I getting involved in professional or association affairs, and making a name for myself in the outside world?
– If yes to the above, then I can negotiate an above-average salary.
Employer Evaluation

– Am I learning, growing, contributing and enjoying my job?
– Do I have the flexibility and support to pursue both my career and life goals?
– Do I have opportunities for development, advancement and leadership?
– What kind of feedback am I getting from my boss - do they value my contributions?
– In a dispassionate light, does my salary reflect my self evaluation?
– If yes to the above, this is a company that you can have a strong, long-term relationship with.
Recommendations

• Keep your resume up to date – it is hard to update if you “let it go” for several years. Your strong resume is valuable to your company.

• Be well mentored, and proactive in your career.

• Get involved in professional societies – Networking is crucial.

• Hone networking skills. Three great suggestions:
  – Read Dale Carnegie's 'Winning Friends and Influencing People'.
  – Join Toastmasters (or similar group).
  – Get out there and practice.
Stay Connected

• Student Development
  – Clubs and Teams
  – Mentoring Programs
  – Women in Engineering Groups

• Professional Development
  – APEGBC [www.apeg.bc.ca](http://www.apeg.bc.ca)
    • DAWEG and other Divisions
    • Branches
  – Consulting Engineering Societies: CEBC
  – Discipline societies – ASME, IEEE, SAE, etc.
Questions?