The White Paper Technique

Make Your Skills and Your Value Known!

Be sure to list your skills on your resume and especially on your LinkedIn profile. Don't be shy! Remember that skills on your profile are how recruiters find you. You can even think of them as keywords. Also, if a given skill isn't your best skill, list it anyway. The goal at this stage is to be found, open doors to new opportunities, and get invited to interviews.

If you want to see some of the keywords I'm using take a look at my LinkedIn profile. While you're there, connect with me.

Using The White Paper Technique

A White Paper is a document that proposes a solution to a given problem. Traditionally White Papers are several pages in length, but yours can be one or two pages. Your white paper should highlight how your skills can be of use and how you would use those skills to fix a problem, relieve a pain point, or move your employer toward *their* desired goals. You can even use a two column format as in this example:

Item *(List problems, pains or desires here.)*	Proposal *(List skills and or solutions here.)*
The Linux team is too busy with day-to-day operations to implement any new solutions for the company.	Skill: Shell scripting and automation. Solution: Script, schedule, and automate as many day-to-day tasks as possible in order to free up the Linux team to work on company initiatives.
The company is spending an enormous amount of money on computer hardware and hosting.	Skill: Performance analysis. Solution: Install a metrics collection agent such as collectd or statsd across the entire environment. Store the metrics in a central location using graphite. Graph the data using Grafana to determine underutilized and overutilized resources. Use this data to make resource allocation decisions including the consolidation of services and the retirement of servers.

Do Your Homework

Before you can use the White Paper technique you need to do your research. If you're interviewing for a new position, try to find out as much as you can about the company, hiring manager, team, and why they are hiring for the position you are applying for. This way you can align your skills with the problems or goals of the company or the hiring manager.

If you're going to be using your White Paper to ask for a raise or negotiate a higher salary, use websites such as PayScale.com, Salary.com, and GlassDoor.com to provide supporting documentation.

Bring a Physical Copy With You

Print out your White Paper and have it with you. When the topic of compensation comes up, say "Before we get to that, let me show you something I put together." At that point you pull out your White Paper, set it on the table, and start going over it.

The focus of conversation shifts to your White Paper when you do this. This takes the pressure off and allows you to have a conversation that won't be argumentative or adversarial. At this point, it's about the facts in your paper and your proposal.

Overcoming Objections - What to Say When You Hear "No".

When you encounter an objection just remember that you **A-R-E** worth it!

A	Agree
R	Reframe
E	Explain

Start out by **A**greeing with the objection. You can use phrases like, "I agree with you", "I see your point," "I understand," "I hear where you're coming from" and "That makes a lot of sense."

Next, **R**eframe the objection. Use a transition word or phrase like "However", "Having said that" and "Actually." Then follow it with why their objection is invalid, how the opposite could be true, or suggest an alternate viewpoint.

Finally, **E**xplain why you are worth the higher salary. If you can demonstrate how you intend to provide even more value to the company than the additional salary you are asking in return, be sure to mention it.

Prepared Responses to Common Objections

Here's how to respond to some of the most common objections you'll encounter when negotiating your salary or asking for a raise. Notice how the **A-R-E** framework is being used.

Objection	Response
We don't have a budget for that.	I understand that times are tough. For an average candidate, I agree that the budget would be a good place to start. However, I'm totally committed to making an above-average contribution, and I think I've demonstrated a track record for doing just that. I'm simply asking that the compensation reflect that.
We can't afford to pay any more in salary during this down economy.	I understand that times are tough, but look at this as an investment in finding the right candidate for this position. Actually, I think that's even more important in a tough economy, because the right person can help you be more efficient and cost effective and even turn things around. That's what I intend to do. With that in mind, what can we do here?
We pay all of our [Job Title] employees this amount.	I can see where you're coming from. Having the same pay rates among employees with a similar job title is definitely important, because if word got out that one person was being paid more than another, it could have a negative impact on team dynamics. With that said, I think there's a bit of a gap here and I need to consider the fair market rate I've been seeing, which is really in the $X to $Y range. What can we work out in this range?
We have a process for determining salaries and this is the number we calculated for you.	Using a standard process or a formula makes a lot of sense to determine a starting point for a salary. However, I think I've demonstrated that what I bring to the table goes well above and beyond the standard or average candidate. For example, we discussed X, Y and Z. That's why I'd like to discuss a range of compensation that reflects that difference.
Let's start with the proposed salary and discuss an adjustment in six months.	I would be open to revisiting this in the future and I'm glad you're open to that too. I totally get the need to evaluate someone based on performance. Still, I'd like to take some time today to talk about this a bit more because I would be taking a risk coming it at this pay rate. I'm not saying that I have to have $X, but I do need to start at a level of compensation that offsets some of the risk I'm taking and reflects my experience.