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important than ever that companies take a strategic approach to recruiting and hiring. Above-average compensation packages can go a long way in helping your ...

Paul McDonald • Mar. 04, 2016



Money might not buy love, but it must be a central part of the package you offer your top picks for open accounting positions. According to a recent [Robert Half survey](#), 54 percent of chief financial officers interviewed said they offer new hires higher [salaries](#) than they received in their previous positions, at an average 10 percent increase. Still, while starting salaries are one of the major deciding factors in whether candidates accept a job, that's often just the tip of the iceberg.

With public accounting firms facing increased competition for skilled staff, it's more

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make sure what you're offering is in line with – or, ideally, above – market averages, benchmark the starting salaries for job titles at your firm and in your city. Use resources such as the *Robert Half Salary Guide for Accounting and Finance* and [Salary Calculator](#) to get the most up-to-date information on salary ranges and compensation trends.

Prepare for changing expectations

A new generation is entering the workforce, and your compensation packages should reflect the changing expectations of Generation Z, as they are referred to. This cohort's top priorities when accepting a job, according to the [Get Ready for Generation Z](#) report from Robert Half and [Enactus](#), are opportunities for career growth, generous pay and making a difference in society. So offer strong starting salaries, but be sure to also outline a possible in-house career path and highlight your firm's corporate social responsibility track record.

Go above and beyond with perks

Most compensation packages include the usual array of insurance benefits, 401(k), two weeks of vacation and so forth. But to attract and land top performers, you'll have to get more creative. Here are some of the [perks today's workers value](#):

- **Generous time off:** While your public accounting firm may not be able to match tech startups offering unlimited vacation time, a generous vacation policy, either from day one or accrued with seniority, is a prized perk.
- **Flextime and remote work:** Allow employees to choose the hours to come into the office — if any at all. This autonomy shows your staff you trust them to get their work done, be it in the office, at home or at a coffee shop. If your company culture values face time and in-person collaboration, still consider giving workers the option to telecommute a couple times a week.

- **Wellness:** When competing job offers come with similar starting salaries, health

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... welcome package. For new hires customize their workspace and tech tools. Give them a startup allowance and allow them to choose their own laptop, desk configuration, office chair (or exercise ball), plants and ergonomic accessories.

Be ready to negotiate

Your top candidates may not be completely won over by your offer, no matter how good you think it is. Have in your back pocket additional ways to close the deal, including hiring and retention bonuses, bigger starting salaries, performance incentives, and sweeter perks.

With public accounting firms of all sizes vying for talent, candidates with in-demand skills know they have options, and they will scrutinize and negotiate starting salaries and benefits. To bring onboard the new hires you need to grow your firm, start now to create compensation packages that will attract and land these highly skilled professionals.

Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. He writes and speaks frequently on hiring, workplace and career-management topics. Over the course of more than 30 years in the recruiting field, McDonald has advised thousands of company leaders and job seekers on how to hire and get hired.

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