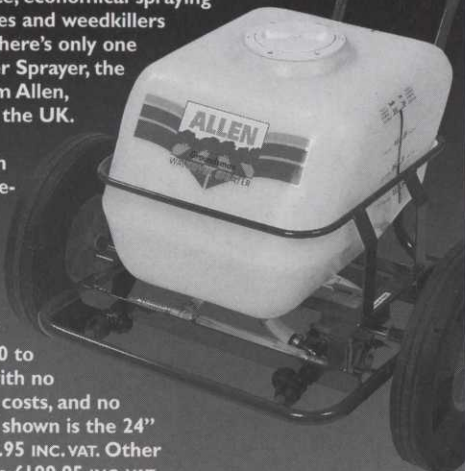


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**Brin Bendon, Managing Director of Vector Training Ltd, gives some top tips for negotiating salaries and benefits**

# Your money or your life

**'Let us never negotiate out of fear - but let us never fear to negotiate.'**

John F. Kennedy

## **Salaries - a sensitive issue**

Despite the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers Salaries and Conditions of Employment, Golf Greenkeepers often feel that many employers ignore these recommendations and prefer to negotiate with their employees individually. If greenkeepers wish to avoid disappointment they should learn to negotiate. That said, the thought of negotiating one's salary appears as a daunting prospect for some. However, with a little research and preparation, it need not be.

Salary discussions will probably be part of your selection interview, but they may also form part of your meetings with network contacts or recruitment consultants.

Of course, salaries are a sensitive issue and should be handled courteously and professionally, with both sides feeling they have reached a satisfactory agreement. We should not view these discussions as confrontational.

## **When to raise the subject**

The keys to successful salary negotiations are timing and knowledge. Mention salary too early in the process and you will appear to be more interested in money than the job. But if you delay until the offer is in writing, the employer may be reluctant to negotiate.

It is important to distinguish between simple questions about the salary offered ('what range of salary do you think is appropriate for this

job?') and negotiating your salary. You will have to judge when it's appropriate yourself, but these points may help you.

## **If you already know the salary offered**

- recruitment agencies, public sector jobs such as with municipal golf courses and advertised vacancies tend to state the salary, so there is no need to ask for information
- only mention it at the end of the interview if you think they are likely to offer you the job and it is appropriate to start negotiating
- you cannot normally negotiate with a recruitment consultant or agency, but you can find out salary bands

## **If you don't know the salary**

Timing will vary according to the type of interview. What you should do will depend on the stage of the interview.

## **If it is just a screening interview**

- you can ask for information about the salary range at the end of the interview
- it is not appropriate to start any kind of negotiation

## **If it is the main interview and they give you the salary range up front**

- knowing their intentions puts you in a stronger position
- do not start any negotiations unless you are sure they are keen on you

## **If it is the main interview but they do not mention salary**

- ask for basic information about the salary range at the end of the interview
- find out what the next stage is
- they may start negotiating with you. This probably means they are keen; start negotiating

## **Whenever you are sure that you are their first choice**

- you can start to negotiate
- your strongest bargaining point is when they want you, but before they've got you
- if they say they will put their offer in writing don't wait! Broach the subject in detail and start negotiating
- if the employer asks directly 'How much?' try referring the question back by enquiring what range they have in mind; alternatively, state your requirement and gauge their reaction.

# Your money or your life

## Knowledge is power

You don't want to appear aggressive by being too firm, but you need to be assertive and have the confidence of standing on firm ground knowing what you need, what the market will bear and, ideally, what the employer can offer.

Know your needs and your value. Make a fair claim and back it up.

- you need to avoid over- or underpricing yourself
- review your financial needs and compare them with your current or ideal salary
- work out the total value of your package, before and after tax, so that you have figures ready for comparison
- include benefits such as pension bonus, car, shares, health cover etc
- weigh up their worth against factors such as job satisfaction, prospects, location

## Know the market and know your worth...

- research the market value of someone with your skills and responsibilities
- BIGGA, network contacts, and job advertisements can provide this information
- if the employer asks your salary expectations you can then give a realistic range

## Know the employer's limitations, and what they can afford

- public sector and some private sector employers may have defined salary ranges tied to a grading structure, possibly with defined starting salaries
- this means there may be little room for negotiation, although the salary is probably fair with a clear review policy
- more informal employers often do not have pay scales for jobs, and individual salaries and reviews depend on individual negotiating skills, management decisions and peer group salaries
- many of these types of employer want to obtain your services for as low a salary as they can negotiate.

## Negotiating techniques

If the salary package is lower than

your expectations, try negotiating rather than rejecting it immediately, as there is often some leeway. It is better if you can get the employer to start talking first as you will be able to establish their entry positions. But don't start negotiating until you are sure that you are their first choice.

## Make clear what you want

- start with the salary itself and then move to the benefits package
- explain that your minimum salary level is somewhat higher than the offer and that you would ideally like a higher figure

...but show it is well-considered and you are reasonable

- put forward a rationale to support your position
- refer to your research on market figures
- reinforce your commitment to the job

Be cautious about being offered a salary which looks too high; there may be unforeseen problems and you could be vulnerable in a future redundancy programme.

## Be prepared to negotiate...

Learn to signal and recognise signals, that is, subtle hints that suggest possible areas for movement or concessions. Link proposals into a package using the "If you, then I" formula.

E.g. "If you would be willing to consider investing in my training for NVQ Level 4 and cover the costs of taxing and insuring my van, then I might be willing to agree to the salary on offer for the first six months pending a subsequent salary review."

## If they won't negotiate

If the employer will not be flexible in their offer, or if their offer is not good enough, ask them for time to consider. You may have more offers in the pipeline or they may reconsider.

## ... still on a positive note

If it is clear that you are not going to reach an agreement or accept the job, be sure to end on a pleasant note. If the lack of agreement was simply

over salary or some other condition, they may approach you several months later and improve their offer. They may also remember you and consider you for other jobs.

## Your current salary

You must avoid using 'sales tricks' such as deliberately avoiding answering questions about salary. It looks suspicious, so if the interviewer asks for your salary, tell them. Otherwise, only volunteer it if it is clearly to your advantage e.g. if you know the salary on offer and it is near your existing package

## Who else may ask about salary?

Your network contacts may need to know your salary expectations so that they can arrange introductions at the appropriate level. Tell them honestly, giving them a realistic upper and lower figure. Anyone they refer you to may ask similar questions. This need not prejudice subsequent negotiations.

## Recruitment consultants and agencies

## Volunteer appropriate information

Agencies and consultants need to know both your current salary and your expectations. Employers usually ask them to identify candidates within specific salary ranges. The salary level also classifies people who approach them directly. This is why you should be realistic and do not pitch yourself too high or too low.

## Employers who advertise

There is considerable debate on whether to include salary details or not. The dangers are that if your salary is higher than the one on offer, you may be regarded as too expensive, or with suspicion (why will he or she take a drop?). If it is significantly lower, you may be regarded as too inexperienced. Therefore...

- if the advertiser asks for your salary details, you should give them
- if there is no mention of the salary offered and they have not asked for your salary details, don't mention it
- if the salary offered was stated in the advertisement and they have

not asked for your details, only state them if it is clearly to your advantage

## Speculative letters

If you make a direct written approach to employers, do not mention salary as they may reject you on salary grounds alone, before considering what you could offer them. When you are calculating the value of packages proposed by employers, you need to look beyond the salary figures. You are unlikely to glean all the information you need at interview without looking mercenary, but the written offer should give full details

## Basic salary

- is it at the market rate?
- how often is it reviewed?
- is it based on performance?
- how is performance measured?

## Bonuses

- do they pay them?
- what are they based on?
- are they pensionable?
- is there a profit sharing scheme?

## Pensions

- what type and what sort of benefits?
- what contributions do you and the employer make?

## Other benefits

- car
- medical cover
- service contract
- holiday entitlement
- notice period



Brin Bendon is the Managing Director of Vector Training Ltd., an approved training provider for BIGGA and many other corporate and public sector clients. Brin is well known to many Greenkeepers in his role as one of the lead tutors on the BIGGA's Management Development Programmes. Vector Training can be contacted via telephone on 01904 642462 or by email: enquiries@vector-training.demon.co.uk.

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Golf course managers throughout Europe are the latest converts to advanced pumping system technology that is revolutionising the way courses pump water. Kevin Shaw of Flowtronex Europe investigates...

# Cruise control



Final checks to control panels before shipping to site

The new intelligent pump systems are more efficient and cut down on waste and maintenance - all important factors in helping to reduce bottom-line costs.

The secret is variable speed control - known in the trade as Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) - which regulates water pressure, extends the life of piping and reduces energy consumption.

Today VFD accounts for more than 80 per cent of all pumping systems sold to golf courses in the United States and now it is set to challenge the conventional technology used on most of Europe's fairways.

Traditionally, irrigation pumping systems are fed by fixed-speed pumps, which function only at full throttle. During non-irrigation times, or low flow demands, a smaller jock-

ey pump keeps pressure in the system. Once the irrigation system is back on line the main pumps are activated and a surge of water shoots through the piping to maintain line pressure while the sprinklers are operating.

These fixed speed systems carry with them certain drawbacks including pipe blowouts, power inefficiencies and additional maintenance. The new

# Cruise control

VFD technology brings with it smoother start-ups and gradual pressure increases, reducing wear and tear on pipe work, cutting electricity consumption and requiring less day-to-day maintenance.

#### Cruise control

Variable Speed Drive systems can be compared to cruise control on a car. Just as cruise control maintains a constant speed by varying the amount of petrol fed to the engine, VFD maintains a constant output pressure by changing the speed of the pump according to the amount of water required in the irrigation lines.

Since a VFD system only runs the pump fast enough to deliver the pressure desired, it operates at a greater efficiency than a fixed speed station.

VFD also reduces the frequency of what is commonly called water hammer, a sudden surge of water that can cause pipes to leak, rupture, or literally blow out of the ground.

Turf irrigation consultant Robin Hume sees the prevention of water hammer as one of the key benefits of variable speed systems. His company, Robin Hume Associates, installed

its first VFD systems in the early nineties, in Belgium.

AVFD is much more controllable, he said. It is particularly good in conjunction with other pumps when you are dealing with different flows, because you can set parameters for ramping up and down, setting pressure and flow limits.

Variable Frequency Drive can be used on large or small irrigation systems. The key factor is the need for controllability, rather than size. We installed a VFD system at Twickenham RFC to irrigate the pitch. The most important thing there was having a fully automatic system that could maintain a smooth flow and allow them to draw off small amounts of water when required.

At the other end of the scale, St Andrews' new VFD irrigation pump set is the biggest in the country. It works superbly and is pleasantly quiet, he added.

The only downside to VFD is the initial capital outlay - variable speed is more expensive than fixed, even though the prices are coming down. But you will save that extra cost in

efficiencies over the lifetime of the system.

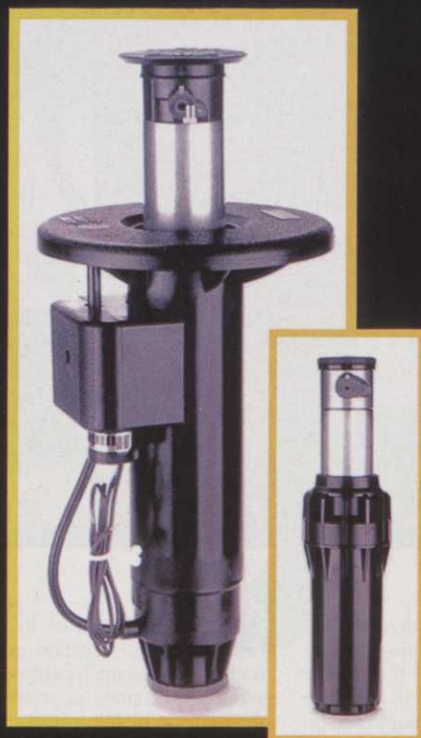
Golf course irrigation consultant Phillip York agrees that VFD brings all-round benefits and says the initial cost should not be a deterrent when considering whether or not to use a variable speed system. The cost is more than offset by the advantages, he said.

VFD provides stabilised pressure, which allows for casual or automatic use of the irrigation system on demand without having to switch units on and off.

We have far less trouble post-installation with variable speed drive because there are less surges through the system, reducing leaks and breaks in the pipes.

#### User-friendly

Another benefit of variable speed systems is their ease of use. The pressure and flow rates of water in the irrigation lines are monitored and controlled by computer technology and Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs). These controllers help make decisions for the system. For exam-



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Irrigation systems at work at Chart Hills Golf Club, Kent

ple, they measure pressure in an irrigation line and then send back an electronic signal which tells the motor to speed up or slow down, depending on the necessary pressure level.

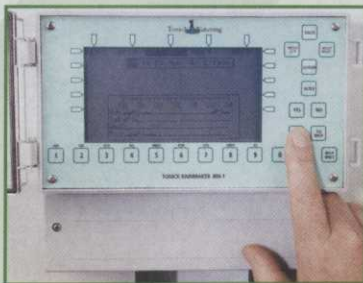
In fact, the introduction of VFD acted as a catalyst for the pump station industry, promoting a technological whirlwind of programmable logic controllers and software as well as a general substitution of electronics for mechanics. Such advancement has changed every pumping system, including conventional fixed speed control.

Some of this software is so advanced that users can remotely monitor systems operations from almost anywhere, via modem, on a personal computer or laptop. The benefits of this are obvious. As well as freeing the course manager from the confines of the pump house, it also allows him to get on with other important tasks elsewhere, while still having access to the system at any time should he require it.

Being able to monitor remotely is a big advantage for us and for course managers, explained Robin Hume.



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Variable speed pumpset installed at the Millennium Dome in London for landscape irrigation

For us it means we can check a system from our office in Shrewsbury and so we need fewer technical people on site, and for managers it means they know exactly what is going on and if there are any leaks in the system.

#### Reaping the benefits

Variable speed control is growing in popularity around the world. While initially more expensive, VFD systems can offer long term savings in power

costs and repairs, as well as simplifying daily maintenance. The technology is tried and tested and the accompanying software can produce better efficiencies, smoother operations and smarter operator interface.

With the rapid pace of developing technology in this field, as in the wider world of computer technology, there may come a time when new systems will be outdated almost as soon as they are installed. But for now the specialist manufacturer of pump sets has

the upper hand. The benefits are many and VFD systems with their compatible technology have unleashed a wave of positive changes.

Reliability, high-tech water delivery, reduced energy consumption and hassle-free operation has enabled variable speed control to revolutionise the irrigation industry. In just over ten years fixed-speed pumps have become the exception rather than the rule in the United States. All eyes are now on the European golf industry.