

WORKHERHOLIC · CAREER GUIDE

GUIDE 02

The Salary Negotiation Playbook

Scripts, market data and a four-step framework to negotiate your worth — in African markets and across borders.

Volume 01 · 2026

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Stop leaving money on the table.

African women are offered, on average, 17–24% less than equally qualified men for the same role — and accept the first offer twice as often. This guide rewrites that script.

- 01 The four-step negotiation framework
- 02 Market data — what tech & professional roles actually pay
- 03 Scripts: recruiter screen, offer call, counter, close
- 04 Negotiating beyond base — equity, bonus, remote stipend
- 05 Cross-border offers (USD, EUR, GBP) — what to ask for
- 06 Your negotiation prep worksheet

CHAPTER 01

The Four-Step Framework

1. Anchor before they do

The first number on the table sets the ceiling. If asked for expectations early, give a range based on market data, not a single figure, and tie it to scope: "For a senior role with this scope, I'm targeting ₦18–22M base, depending on the full package."

2. Make them say it first, when you can

If you can defer: "I'd love to learn more about the scope before I share a number — what range have you budgeted for this role?"

3. Negotiate on value, not need

Tie every ask to outcomes: revenue, scale, risk reduced, time saved. Never to rent, school fees, or another offer's lifestyle.

4. Always counter — once.

85% of offers have headroom. Counter once, professionally, with a specific number and a one-line justification. Then stop talking.

The 10% rule

If you have one offer, counter the base by 8–12%. If you have a competing offer, counter to match the higher one — plus 5% for the cost of switching.

CHAPTER 02

Market Data Snapshot

Use these as anchors, not gospel — your role, scope and company stage matter. Update with Levels.fyi, Glassdoor, and BigCabal salary surveys before any call.

Role	Lagos (₦/yr)	Nairobi (KES/yr)	Cape Town (ZAR/yr)	Remote (USD/yr)
Software engineer · mid	8–14M	2.4–3.8M	550k–800k	45–75k
Software engineer · senior	18–32M	4.5–7M	900k–1.4M	85–140k
Product manager · mid	12–22M	3–5M	700k–1.1M	60–95k
Product manager · senior	26–45M	6–9M	1.2–1.9M	110–170k
Designer · senior	15–26M	3.5–6M	750k–1.2M	75–120k
Data / ML · senior	20–35M	5–8M	1–1.6M	95–155k

Indicative ranges based on 2025 community data; senior bands assume 6+ years and leadership scope. Always validate against current listings.

CHAPTER 03

Scripts You Can Steal

Recruiter screen — deferring the number

You

"Before I share a range, can you tell me the band you've budgeted? I want to make sure we're aligned on scope — and I don't want to under-sell either of us."

Offer call — first reaction

You

"Thank you — I'm excited about the role and the team. I'd like a day to review the full package and come back with any questions. Could we schedule a follow-up tomorrow?"

The counter

You

"Based on the scope we discussed and market data for senior product managers in this market, I was hoping we could get the base to ₦28M. Everything else in the offer looks great — is there room to make that work?"

Closing — securing the win in writing

You

"That works for me. Could you send the updated offer in writing today so I can sign? I'd like to give my current employer notice on Monday."

CHAPTER 04

Beyond Base Salary

Base is one of seven negotiable levers. If base is fixed, move to the others:

- Sign-on bonus — one-time, often easier to approve than base.
- Equity / RSUs — ask for the strike price, vesting schedule, and refresh policy.
- Performance bonus — % of base, and what triggers full payout.
- Remote / equipment stipend — one-time setup + monthly.
- Learning budget — typically US\$1k–3k/year.
- Title — “Senior” vs “Lead” changes your next offer too.
- Start date — buy yourself two extra weeks of paid leave.

Get it in writing

If it isn't in the signed offer letter, it isn't real. Verbal promises about “next review cycle” are the most expensive words in tech.

CHAPTER 05

Cross-Border Offers

If you're being hired into a USD/EUR/GBP role from Africa, the company is saving 30–60% versus a local hire. You should not be paid 60% less.

- Anchor in the offer currency. Never accept a “local-market” adjustment without seeing the equivalent role's US/EU band.
- Ask: “What does this role pay for someone based in your HQ?” Then negotiate within 15–25%.
- Get paid in stable currency where legal — USD via Deel, Remote, or Wise.
- Confirm tax responsibility (employer of record vs contractor) in writing.

CHAPTER 06

Your Negotiation Prep Worksheet

Fill this in before the offer call. Practice your numbers out loud.

Role & level	The exact title and band
Target base	Your ideal number
Walk-away base	Below this you say no
Market range — low	From research
Market range — high	From research
Top 3 value points	Why you're worth the top of band
Counter ask	Specific number + one-line justification
Non-base levers	Sign-on, equity, remote stipend, leave, title
Decision deadline	Date you need a written offer

KEEP GROWING.

Negotiate like you've already won.

Get weekly salary intelligence, live offer benchmarks and negotiation scripts from women who've been in the room.

workherholic.com

Career intelligence for African women.