Ethics of Accepting or Rejecting a Job Offer

Once you have accepted a position, you are ethically (and sometimes legally) obligated to take that job, even if you receive a better offer a few days later. Telling an employer “no” after you have already said “yes” is unethical and unprofessional. To avoid falling into this position, follow these recommendations:

1. Take time to review your options. Never accept a job offer on the spot.

2. If you are waiting to find out about several offers, let the employers know that you have several offers pending and would like to know where you stand in their process. This step may move an organization to extend an offer to you sooner than they had planned.

3. Before accepting the offer, be sure it represents the type of job you want and has a salary that is compatible with your lifestyle.

4. Be prepared to say no. It is unethical to accept a job “just in case” the offer you really want does not materialize. Employers want a firm commitment from you.