



EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SEARCH RECRUITING & CONSULTING

Leni Miller, Founder & President
(415) 331-0269

Facts of Life About Salary and Compensation

Compensation is top of mind for every Executive Support Professional (ESP). Learn more about EASearch insight into compensation by reading "Facts of Life About Salary and Compensation".

Supply and Demand

One of the biggest influences on salary is supply and demand. When there is a great deal of something available, it is less expensive than when it is rare. For example, Africans who live near the diamond fields may trade a six-point gem for a loaf of bread.

The more specialized your skill set, the more "rare" a diamond you are. For example, the more your experience includes Executive Support for a senior management team, the more polished your gem! In addition, the fewer of you there are, and the more specialized your experience, the higher the compensation you can demand.

Combat Pay

When soldiers go to war, extra pay is awarded due to the "hazardous duty" required. All compensation is impacted by the influence of "combat pay".

The window washers who clean high rise building windows in our cities make many times the pay of their small town country cousins. A member of the police force in New York City makes far more compensation than did Fred, the school crossing policeman in the small town where I grew up.

The Chief Executive Support Professional person for a demanding, non-appreciative manager, generally makes more than someone who assists a caring, sensitive, empowering and appreciative boss in the same geographic area. And, of course, there is everything in between.

Meaning and Passion

Most of us work for free when something matters deeply to us. We raise children, we do volunteer work, enjoy hobbies and gain great emotional and psychic compensation.

People's desire for "meaning" in their lives impacts their level of compensation. A not-for-profit, for which we recently recruited, attracted a woman to the position who could have commanded at least \$20,000 more a year in a "for profit" business that held less meaning for the candidate.

The candidate's deep passion for the cause of this not-for-profit organization created psychic and emotional compensation which, in her mind, more than compensated for the financial disparity.

Geographic Variations

The cost of living associated with different geographic locations obviously impacts compensation.

Recently, EASearch recruited a senior level Executive Assistant from the Dallas/Fort Worth, area. Our candidate was making high salary in the Dallas area. She desperately wanted to relocate to the Bay Area where she had many relatives, including her mother.

The candidate indicated that she had researched the cost of living differentials and indicated she would accept what was considered a high salary in the San Francisco Bay Area. After careful interviewing and an in-depth dialogue, the true impact of the possible lifestyle change for the candidate set in. With the

addition of state taxes, the increased cost of housing, and the need to accept a smaller apartment the move became daunting.

In the final analysis, even the strong emotional pull of family, a client willing to help with relocation and even proximity to the ocean (a big lure), did not offset the many perceived sacrifices a relocation would require. Compensation was dramatically impacted by how many people with specific skill sets are drawn to a specific geographical area.

How many people with similar skill sets and experience are drawn to a geographic area by its attractiveness, impacts compensation dramatically. If you are the only plumber in town, you have a very different compensation scale than if there are four of you in the same area. If you decide to relocate to New York City, your hourly pay may be higher, but everything else will scale up too, including the number of competing plumbers and the cost of living!