

Fictional demonstration

An offer and closing plan for a critical hire

I'd settle the role and operating expectations before asking the founder to approve an offer in this example. Compensation is one part of the discussion. It would not resolve an unclear on-call remit or a disagreement about how much authority the engineer would have.

The assumed situation

A fictional product team has reached the final discussion for a staff infrastructure engineer. Record F01 is an invented candidate example. The role, evidence, preferences, compensation and conversations below are fictional. No actual person, offer or achieved hire is represented. The company owns the hiring decision and formal employment terms.

Readiness question	Example finding	Action before an offer
Is the essential work established?	Interview notes discuss recovery and incident judgment; a final question about tenant boundaries remains.	Technical lead decides whether one focused evidence discussion is needed.
Does the role match the discussion?	F01 expects operating authority; founder still expects approval on every release.	Founder and technical lead agree on the authority and explain it clearly.
Are operating expectations understood?	The team has not explained the on-call rotation or escalation support.	Engineering owner confirms the actual arrangement before presenting it.
Is the package approved?	Illustrative base range is \$185,000 to \$205,000; no package has been authorized.	Named compensation approver confirms the written package and conditions.

The pay range is invented and is not market guidance or a current service price. There is no basis to treat the record as offer-ready until the essential evidence and approval questions are resolved.

Prepare the candidate discussion

Use the candidate's own stated questions in a real engagement. Do not invent an objection to create urgency. In this example, F01 asks who owns release decisions, how on-call work is shared and how the role will develop over the next six months.

Fictional concern	What the team can show	What remains open
Authority to improve reliability	A role charter with operating decisions and escalation boundaries.	Founder agreement on which release decisions need escalation.
A sustainable on-call arrangement	The current rotation, support coverage and incident review process.	Engineering lead must verify the rota rather than promise a future headcount.
A useful first six months	Two agreed outcomes and the dependencies the team will supply.	Development expectations need a discussion, not a guaranteed promotion.

A proposed closing sequence

Step	Owner	Useful output
Resolve the last evidence question	Technical lead	Written rationale for readiness or a specific gap to discuss.
Confirm role and operating expectations	Founder and engineering lead	Consistent explanation of authority, support and near-term outcomes.
Approve the package	Company compensation approver	Authorized written terms prepared through the employer's process.
Discuss the offer and questions	Designated company representative	Clear explanation, space for questions and agreed next contact.
Review the response	Recruiting owner	Accurate status and open concerns; no invented acceptance or start date.

Agree on a reasonable decision period with the candidate. Explain any real constraint accurately. Do not manufacture a competing offer, deadline or exception. A question about the role may need another company decision, rather than a stronger sales pitch.

Completed example readiness memo

O15. Recommendation: hold package presentation until the founder and engineering lead agree on release authority and on-call coverage. Technical lead owns the tenant-boundary evidence question. Compensation approver owns the package. Recruiting owner maintains the next-update commitment to F01. Status: proposed in a fictional case; no offer has been made.

What I would cover in the preparation call

Ask the hiring lead to explain why the role is ready to proceed and which questions remain. Confirm that everyone will describe the same responsibilities and package. Review the candidate's stated concerns, choose who can answer them and agree on the next contact. Keep compensation approval separate from the recruiting recommendation.

If the candidate asks for a change

Record the request accurately and take it to the authorized owner. A higher base request, a different work location and a narrower on-call remit are different decisions. Explain what the company can actually approve. Do not promise a term, flexibility or review date that the relevant owner has not accepted.

Handoff after the decision

If an offer is accepted, the employer confirms the formal process, start arrangements and onboarding owner. If it is declined, record the reason the person chose to share and the limits of that evidence. One decline is not a compensation benchmark. An unresolved offer stays pending when calculating acceptance.

Advisory scope

I could help the team prepare the readiness review, clarify concerns and organize the closing discussion. The employer approves the hiring decision, package and formal terms. Legal, immigration, payroll and employment advice are outside this sample; any execution or candidate communication would need its own agreed scope.

Next step

Review one critical hire against the readiness questions. Name the remaining decision owners before setting an offer presentation date.