By Julie Desmond
julie@insightnews.com

Newly engaged, and with her fiancé stationed halfway across the country in the Army, Sola wanted nothing more than to get out of Minnesota and get her life's next chapter underway. She consulted me for some resume help and my strongest message fell on deaf ears: Don't quit your job yet, I told her. She sent out her resume, interviewed twice and promptly gave two weeks' notice to quit her job.

You've shot yourself in the foot, I told her. She gave notice on her apartment and started packing. Sometimes people make mistakes. Sometimes, so do I. Sola was confident. She knew there was a demand for her skills and she knew where she wanted to be. My experience says that finding a job is easier when you have a job, and negotiating a better salary is easier when you have a salary. Sola didn't follow my direction, but she didn't let me down, either.

Sola's specialized computer skills made her a prime candidate for certain positions. Within her two week notice period she received two job offers (results not typical). One was an offer she wanted. The company knew it. They also knew she was eager to relocate and that she had given notice on her current position. The ball was in their court and they knew that, too.

They offered a salary 10 percent less than Sola's current pay, plus a higher price for medical insurance and no help relocating. When she told me this, all I could think was, You didn't? She said, I did. But not right away.

Sola handled the lowball with class. She thanked the manager for the offer. She exuded all the excitement she was feeling for the opportunity. And then she asked if she could get back to them by the end of the week. No problem, they said, underestimating my confident friend.

She got back to them in less than a week, thanked them again, let them know she wanted the position but then she brought out her true colors, which are very true, as it happens. She said, I just can't get past the pay. It's so much less than I'm making now (a true statement, as she was still within her last two weeks). She explained that as much as she wanted to take the position, the salary had become an obstacle.

She kept the conversation professional, friendly and honest, negotiating the way she might with

a co-worker, seeking a win-win solution. By the end of the week, she had a slightly higher salary, stock options and bonus potential. It was not equal to her current salary, but it was much closer and enough to justify the move. Would you do it differently next time, I asked? She smiled, Next time, I might not be so quick to quit my job.

Julie Desmond is Talent Manager for Express Employment Professionals. Write to julie.desmond@expresspros.com

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