

Want a raise?

Before you ask, do your homework.

Dear Carmen:

I have been working at the same position for over a year. My boss often compliments my work. I appreciate her praise, but quite frankly, I would prefer to be compensated monetarily for my efforts. I could really use a raise in salary. How do I ask her for one without jeopardizing our working relationship?

~ Erica

Dear Erica:

Your situation is understandable. You appear to be a hard worker, and you feel you deserve to be paid accordingly. What's more you seem to like your job. Before you march into your boss's office to ask for that pay increase, you might want to consider doing a bit of homework.

First, you'll want to find out what the traffic will bear for the job you are doing. An obvious way to research the pay scale for a comparable position is via the internet. There are innumerable web sites like www.salary.com that provide tools for calculating what you should be making. You can also do a bit of sleuthing within your current work environment to determine what others in your position may be earning.

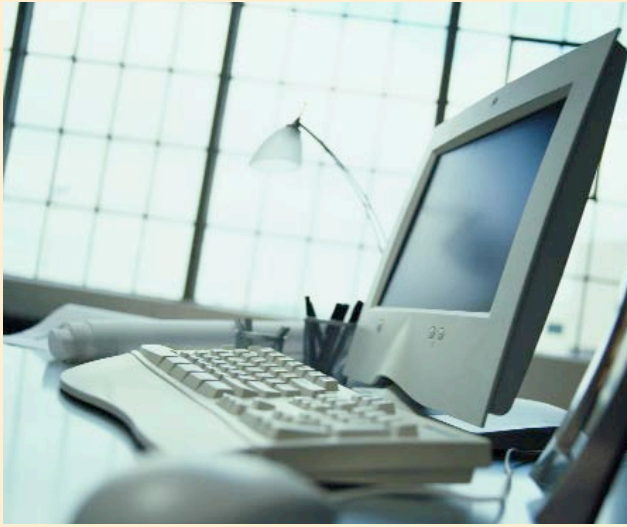
The second issue to research is the financial viability of your current employer. For example, you may have a better chance of getting a raise if your

employer is in the high tech industry rather than the real estate business based on the current slow-down in real estate sales nationally. If your employer is experiencing a tight financial situation, asking for a raise at this time might not be the best move.

After you have done your homework, summarize in writing your assets and accomplishments as well as your employment goals. Then set up an appointment to discuss your salary with your boss. When you meet with her, remain upbeat and positive. Under no circumstances should you use that time to undermine the work of other employees. This meeting is about your qualities and work skills not your criticisms of other people.

Remaining professional and positive throughout the meeting is important. Never threaten to leave the company if you don't get the raise you want. Simply





wait until the meeting has concluded and your boss has ample opportunity to respond to your request. It could even take a week or more. Then, if you do not get the raise you want, it would be appropriate to begin searching for another job that can advance your career and increase your compensation. At that point, you should offer your resignation to allow time for a replacement to be found. One final suggestion – always leave a company on a positive note. You never know when you will need a recommendation in the future. Good luck with getting that raise.

Sincerely,
Carmen

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