

How to Ask for a Raise—and Get It!

When was the last time you asked for a raise? If you are like most people, you waited until you were frustrated, angry, and resentful. Not the best frame of mind for trying to make a positive change. You probably made some critical mistakes. You may have:

- Made your appeal based on emotion
- Given your boss an ultimatum
- Failed to plan ahead what to say figuring you could just “wing it”

And how did that strategy work for you? Did you get everything you hoped for? Probably not.

There is a better way to ask for a raise that doesn't involve emotions, ultimatums, or even slamming doors. The answer is planning. Be prepared with objective documentation that proves beyond doubt that you deserve a raise, and have a strategy that puts that information forward in the best possible light.

1. Research salary surveys.

If you suspect your current earnings are below average for your industry in your state, verify your suspicion by checking out salary surveys. Your state employment service agencies probably provide a salary survey for your industry. Average earnings can vary greatly from state to state, so be sure to get information that is appropriate for your area or region. Make copies of any salary surveys you find.

Additionally, if you suspect your earnings are low within your own company, ask your human resources representative if he/she can provide the normal salary scale for your position. Ask for a copy if possible.

These two documented sources will help support the fairness of your request for a raise. By providing a rational argument and proof of competitive salary in your request for a raise, you'll increase the likelihood that your boss will say yes.

2. Prove your worth.

Fairness alone won't convince your boss you deserve a raise. You'll need documented proof that illustrates your contributions to your organization. If you are waiting for your boss or supervisor to notice what a great job you are doing, forget it. No one is paying that much attention to you. It's up to you to prove how much you are worth—literally.

The best time to begin documenting your accomplishments is in your first week of employment. Keep a weekly journal of what you've done that proves such things as:

- Creating revenue opportunities
- Discovering costs savings
- Helping a coworker meet or beat a deadline
- Developing a better process
- Completing tasks ahead of time
- Generating good will with clients or customers

Use your list of accomplishments to update your resume, featuring a “Highlight of Accomplishments” section that illustrates the positive impact you’ve had on your company. An updated resume is your most convincing evidence that you deserve a raise. It will also put your boss on the alert that you are ready with an updated resume when a recruiter calls or when the right career opportunity presents itself.

If you don’t have a record of your accomplishments and contributions, you are not ready to ask for a raise. A **career coach** can be a valuable asset in helping you compile your list of accomplishments. Trained in the art of asking the right questions, a **career coach** can help you quickly identify the contributions you’ve made to the company. This will build not only your case for a raise, but your confidence as well.

3. Plan your strategy.

Too often, people don’t think about what they’re going to say until they’re actually in their boss’ office. That’s too late. You have to plan your strategy in advance, just as you would plan any business project. It’s the only way to succeed.

With copies of salary surveys and salary scales, you’ll have quantifiable evidence that your request for a raise is a reasonable one. And you’ll be able to back that up with a strong list of accomplishments that demonstrates how valuable you are to the company. Practicing how you want to present your case can be the final key to success in getting the raise you want and deserve.

Choose a friend or family member who has been in the position of hiring others, and ask them to let you practice your request for a raise. If you’re not comfortable with doing that, or if you don’t know someone who is a hiring manager, a **career coach** can help you craft your presentation.

A **career coach** has real-world experience in hiring and decision-making, so they’ve been in your boss’ shoes. They can provide you with strategic tips that will help you win over your boss—or provide you with a way to keep the negotiations open even if your initial request is denied. Creating a strategy with a **career coach** will give you guidance on how to ask for the raise, how to present yourself, and how to close the deal.

Once you have your documentation, your accomplishments, and your strategy in hand, you’ll be ready to approach your boss with confidence. And you’ll be well on your way to getting the raise you have truly earned.

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