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get on and get ahead

How to... get a pay rise

by Scott Beagrie

Why is it important?

Annual or regular pay rises are a vital factor in ensuring that we continue to feel valued and content at work. And since any future salary is likely to be influenced by your present income, it is important to make sure your pay keeps pace with market trends.

Many individuals feel the outcome of their pay rise is pre-determined, but it is possible to exert some influence over it without seeming to be pushy. This is especially important if you are in an organisation that doesn't have a job evaluation scheme in place. And while a pay review may only happen once a year, remember that preparation and assessment for it should begin several months before.

Where do I start?

Make enquiries about pay structures, both internally and externally, to find national averages for the market value of your job. Trade unions and online salary checkers can be helpful for this. Gauge how your pay measures against your findings. Allow enough time to conduct your research.

Simon Cooper, senior training consultant at Tack International, recommends beginning your strategy at least eight to 12 months in advance of the pay rise.



Anything that links your talents to the bottom line will increase your value.

"Most pay awards above the normal inflation-linked rises will be judged against your performance in your job role," he says. "This will give you time to collect data, records and generally be able to prove what an excellent job you have done in the period under review."

Know your worth

Figure out what sets you apart from your colleagues, and be prepared to provide supporting evidence. List your unique selling points and key skills – your manager may already be aware of these, but there's no harm in

reminding them.

Factor in qualifications gained, courses undertaken or any project work that might have boosted your talents and expertise during the past 12 months. Remember, anything that links your talents and achievements to the company's bottom line or business objectives should increase your value.

Find out what is expected

Much of your pay rise will be based on how well you have performed against any targets or objectives set by your manager. Be clear about what is expected of you, and ascer-

tain this as early as 12 months before the review date, advises Cooper.

"Ask your manager what rewards you can expect if you are successful, and how exceptional performance will be measured and rewarded."

Improve negotiation skills

Having put your case together, you must now present it. Decide what level of pay rise you ideally want to achieve, and keep in mind a figure that you are willing to accept. As in any negotiation, the outcome must be mutually agreeable, so be realistic. Your approach should be polite, but confident and insistent. However, don't confuse assertiveness with aggression, and make sure your body language isn't threatening.

Listen carefully to what your manager says, and back up your claims with the intelligence gathered. Your manager will have to justify their decision to their own manager, so the more tangible your reasons for claiming a pay rise, the more comfortable your manager will be recommending the increase.

If you don't succeed...

If you are disappointed with the outcome, refrain from acting on impulse and saying something you might regret. After the meeting, consider whether your man-

if you only do 5 things

- 1 Begin your preparation in good time
- 2 Know your market value
- 3 List your key selling points
- 4 Set a minimum increase you'll accept
- 5 Learn how to negotiate

ager's reasons for refusal were valid. If so, set out to address the problem areas, and make them aware of your intentions.

If you genuinely believe your salary doesn't reflect your value, don't let these feelings fester.

"If, after reflection and discussion with your manager, you still feel the reward was unfair, you may have the right to appeal to a higher authority," says Cooper. "If so, think about what else you have learned that will strengthen your case."

FOR MORE INFO

Books

How to Get a Pay Rise, a Bonus or Promotion
Ros Jay, Prentice Hall, £9.99,
ISBN 0-273-654-837

Websites

Tack International
www.tack.co.uk
Croner Reward
Salary Search
www.salarysearch.co.uk

expert's view... on getting a pay rise



Simon Cooper
Senior training consultant at sales and management training provider, Tack International

What key questions is your manager likely to ask?

■ Try putting yourself in your boss's shoes and ask yourself: what have you done that merits an increase greater than what your colleagues might receive? Why should your boss give you a pay rise? They'll have to justify this to their own boss. How have you

performed against targets, goals, objectives and special tasks? The onus is on you to prove your case.

How should you close the deal?

■ Think about the following negotiation stances, and make sure you can justify your case in each instance.

First, what would you like to achieve as a pay rise (say 7.5%)? This is your opening gambit. Second, have a target figure in mind of what you would accept (say 6%), and finally, the minimum increase you deem fair based on your achievements (say 3.5%).

Remember, this is a negotiation, so

be prepared for some give and take.

What are the do's and don'ts of asking for a pay rise?

■ Be positive (but not arrogant) about your achievements – overplaying the modesty card won't get you that rise.

Emphasise areas where you have helped others and shown a team ethos. Prepare thoroughly, demonstrating results against targets and areas where you have added value to the company. Don't whine about what other people may or may not have got, and don't believe your hard work will be recognised automatically.

What tactics would you personally use when seeking a pay rise?

■ Planning is key. If you have all your justifications to hand along with the relevant information, you'll probably be more prepared than a typical manager for the negotiations ahead.

Remember, though, that negotiation is about achieving the best outcome for both parties.

There is no doubt that a well-prepared case, backed up with evidence and put across with conviction, will go a long way towards helping you to secure the pay award you think you deserve.