

The Right Way to Ask for a Raise

If your company's bottom line is growing, don't wait to request a salary bump. Our insider advice will help get you to yes.

BY KORIN MILLER

▶ Love your job but think your paycheck is total crap for all the work you put in? You're not the only one. "Annual pay increases are rare, thanks to the recession, leaving many people feeling stuck in a financial rut even as they continue to work harder than ever," says Lee E. Miller, coauthor of *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiating*. Instead of fuming in your cube and cruising Monster.com every night, start planning to make a play for more money, because no matter how good you are, few bosses are just going to hand you extra cash.

Time It Right

Congratulations! Your division's sales numbers have totally rebounded. Don't wait—make your move now. It helps to pop the question within a month after the company has had a big success, especially if you contributed to it, says Lois Frankel, PhD, author of *See Jane Lead*. Your head honcho will have every reason to believe that profits are looking up, so she'll be in a more giving mood.

PLEASE DON'T GO

Nearly one-third of bosses worry that their star employees will leave for a better, higher-paying gig.

SOURCE: CAREERBUILDER.COM SURVEY

If the company is doing just okay, find out when your boss submits her annual budget for next year (ask that nice lady in accounting), and broach the topic several months beforehand. That way, she'll have a chance to work out where the additional money could come from.

Another good time: when you receive an outside job offer or right after a recruiter from another company calls to say they're interested in you. Miller recommends saying something like this to your boss: "I want you to know that an appealing job opportunity has come up, but I love working here and would like to stay. Is there any way you can make my salary a little more competitive?" By taking this approach (instead of

giving an ultimatum), you're letting your boss know that you're in demand without coming across as cocky.

Pretty sure your company has zero funds to spare? Miller still recommends bringing up the subject three months before your annual review. That way, if some money becomes available before your yearly sit-down, you'll be one of the first people your boss thinks of.

Stress Your Strengths

What really compels your manager to boost your salary is the belief that it'll benefit the company—and make her job a hell of a lot easier—if she keeps you motivated and happy, says Phyllis Mindell, EdD, author of *How to Say It for Women*. In other words, she has to feel like it'd be a nightmare to lose you. So remind her of how much you do, says Miller. List the clients who



Looking like a million bucks never hurts.

