

How to ask for a pay rise

How many times have you asked for a pay rise in your career? Unless you're a particularly hardnosed careerist, it's unlikely to be more than once or twice.

As a nation, we British aren't great at shouting about ourselves. We generally prefer quiet modesty to loud and proud self-promotion, but when it comes to our careers we'd do well to employ a little of the latter.

So, if you feel you deserve a pay rise, how do you go about asking for one? It's certainly not rocket science, but here are some tips to make that awkward conversation a little more bearable – not to mention successful.

Work out what you're worth

Before sitting down with your boss you'll need to work out what you're worth and, more importantly, why you deserve an increase.

Do some research and work out what the average salaries for your industry and role are, then think about what value you're bringing to the company. Just doing your job isn't going to be enough, so think of examples of when you've gone above and beyond, or have delivered more value than your colleagues.

Choose the right moment

They say timing is everything, and it certainly helps to pick your moment here. If you have regular appraisals with your boss it's best to wait until then to bring up your pay, rather than bother them when they're busy.

If there is no appraisal system in place, just ask your boss when they can spare 20 minutes for a meeting. No need to tell them at this point what you want to talk about, just make sure they don't think you're resigning!

You'll also need to think about whether the business can afford to give you a pay rise. If there's currently a freeze on recruitment and finances are tight, asking for more money is likely to be unsuccessful and make you look rather foolish.

Be prepared to sell yourself

When you eventually sit down with your boss to discuss your pay, remember that you're selling yourself and will have to deliver a convincing pitch to get what you want.

Before the meeting, write down exactly what you want to say, using plenty of arguments as to why you deserve an increase. Remember that a pay rise is a business decision that'll only be granted if it makes financial sense to the company, so make sure your pitch is centred on the tangible value you bring and be willing to negotiate more responsibilities or day-to-day tasks in return for higher pay.

Remember it's not all about money

Don't be disheartened if you're not able to get a pay rise; often it's down simply to a lack of finances within the company and not a reflection of your performance. And besides, there are other ways of being rewarded.

Negotiating a pay rise is exactly that: a negotiation. If extra pay isn't an option, suggest other benefits like increased annual leave, discounted gym membership or subsidised travel. This will be a

more manageable expense for your company and won't leave you feeling completely unappreciated. Just make sure you don't burn your bridges if no rewards are forthcoming – it could leave things a little awkward around the office!