

6 Ways to Help Your Boss Say Yes

Steve Gillman

How to Get a Raise: 6 Strategies That Will Help You Earn More Money



Source: 401K 2012 under Creative Commons

by - December 12, 2014 -

Are you worth more than you're paid? If you think so, have you asked for a raise?

[Recent surveys](#) reveal that 59% of workers are afraid to ask for a raise, yet *no* employers report firing or demoting an employee for asking. In other words, **it can't hurt to ask for more money, as long as you have good reasons to support your request**. Boosting your income at your current job is one of the simplest ways to [earn more money](#), and can often be lucrative.

Conventional wisdom dictates some basic preparations you should take before asking for a raise, like researching salaries for similar jobs. But there are also several additional strategies you probably haven't considered. We'll get to those ideas, but they are best used in conjunction with the following tried-and-true steps.

1. Research and Prepare

The better prepared you are for the conversation, the more likely you are to hear a positive answer. You may not need four to six months of preparation, as job coach [Joel Garfinkle](#) suggests, but you can't approach your boss without a plan. You need to know how much you can reasonably ask for, and how to ask for it.

So how much are you worth?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics compiles [wage data for over 800 occupations](#). Locate the job title on their list that

most closely fits what you do, and you'll find the average hourly and annual wage. Click on the title (if it's linked) for more details.

For example, the "mathematician" data shows an annual average of \$103,310, but when you click through you'll see that federal government mathematicians average \$107,630 per year, while mathematicians working at colleges and universities make \$78,500 annually.

National averages are a place to start, and you can find some additional information on websites like [Payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com), or [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com). But talking directly with your peers in similar positions and looking at actual job postings if they mention wages might be even more accurate, [suggests Molly Triffin](#) on LearnVest.

Once you have an idea salaries for similar jobs, you can start reading up on [how to negotiate with your boss](#). Even if your request is perfectly reasonable and deserved, *how* you ask makes a difference. As part of the preparation for this you'll want to do the following...

2. Link Your Request to Your Performance

Obviously, before you ask for a raise, review your work to make sure you've been doing a good job. If you've been consistently hearing great feedback or hitting your targets, you're on the right track.

ABC News spoke with the negotiating experts that star on "Shark Tank" about [how to get a raise](#). Not surprisingly, they thought compensation should be linked to performance. Here's what they had to say:

Robert Herjavec: "It's about what you can do for the company... And people that fix problems get paid more."

Barbara Corcoran: "...make sure the boss knows every little thing you're doing above and beyond."

Daymond John: "You gotta know what your boss needs... And how do you fit part of that solution?"

It's best if you can directly link your work to an increase in sales or profits, but at least offer evidence that the company is doing better because of your efforts, and try to be specific. Corcoran reminds employees that, "asking for a raise is a sales job."

3. Time Your Request Right

You've done your research and preparation, created an argument for higher pay, and planned your "sales pitch" to the boss. **But *when* is the best time to ask for a raise?**

Job coach [Joel Garfinkle](#) advises avoiding asking for a raise on Mondays. He suggests the following as the best times for negotiating your raise:

- After you complete a major project
- When you've been assigned more responsibilities
- After a big win, such as signing a major client
- Following an increase in your visibility or stature
- Just after you save the company a lot of money
- When your boss is in a good mood
- At a time of day when stress levels are lower in your workplace

Your Three Secret Weapons

Now let's look at the three strategies you probably haven't considered. Use them *in addition* to the steps outlined above, not in their place.

4. Ask for an Odd Amount

When we use more precise or "unusual" numbers in negotiations, we're perceived as being better-informed, [according to research](#) conducted at Columbia Business School. That prompts counteroffers with smaller differences. The experiments involved participants negotiating the purchase of a [used car](#). Starting with a nice round number resulted in purchasers paying an average of \$2,963 more than their initial offers, while those who used a more precise number to start negotiations paid an average of \$2,256 more than their initial offers. Specifying an unusual number helped buyers save an average of \$707!

These findings may well translate into other types of negotiations. For example, if you say you want a raise to \$55,000 per year, your boss might round down to \$50,000 in his counteroffer. Asking for \$54,850, or some similarly precise-sounding number, might boost your chances of ending up at \$53,000.

"We often think a higher anchor is the way to go," [the study's lead author told The Wall Street Journal](#). "But you risk upsetting people if you're too extreme. We found that you could be less extreme if you were precise and still do better in the end."

5. Become a Specialist

Author and entrepreneur [Brian Horn](#) suggests using a strategy he calls "microspecialization." He says, "The more specialized you get, the less competition you have and the more money you can demand." He has a five-step process for becoming a specialist, which makes you *the* expert in some niche within your industry and company.

For example, if you work as a sales rep for outdoor gear, you might learn everything there is to know about the gear needs of Boy Scouts and other youth programs. This knowledge might help you make large-quantity sales, but it also makes you the go-to guy if, for example, a program director has a question about backpacks.

As the company specialist in a given area, you're not as easy to replace as other employees. That gives you more leverage when it comes to negotiating a raise. In fact, Horn suggests that it can even earn you a raise without the need to ask.

6. Take Advantage of Tools

You don't necessarily have to do everything yourself. Good help might make the difference between a \$6,000 raise or "We'll talk about it next year."

Some helpful tools are free. For example, [GetRaised.com](#) doesn't charge you to enter your information and access expert help and guidance. They say their process has resulted in an average raise of \$6,726 for users.

For \$29.95 to \$79.95, Salary.com offers a [Personal Salary Report](#) that gives you the "tools to negotiate with confidence." You can see a sample report for free, which might be useful even if you don't buy their service.

If you're willing to spend a little more on a potential raise, you could consider hiring a job or career coach. You might pay \$100 per hour for a consultation, but it [might be worth it if the coach helps you significantly boost your earnings](#).

Your Turn: What strategies have you used to ask for a raise? What's been most successful?

