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**A Few Tips On
Asking For A Raise**

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A Few Tips On Asking For A Raise



Time To Campaign For Moving Up?

- Economic recovery on the way; even industry reviving
- Maybe you've got your eye on a prize: promotion or raise
- Strategize on how to make the pitch



Associated Press : 2004 Jan. 13 : "Tips on Asking for Raises and Promotions"

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Now may be the time to ask for that raise

Improving economy gives companies more wiggle room on budgets

By EILEEN ALT POWELL

Associated Press business writer

The nation's economic recovery is deepening, and even the hard-hit industrial sector is showing signs of renewed life. So maybe it's time at last to begin your campaign for a promotion or a raise.

"We expect to see gradual upward pressure on wages as the economy recovers," said economist Richard Bayer, the chief operating officer of the Five O'Clock Club, a career counseling and outplacement firm based in New York.

But Bayer cautions that workers have to strategize to get what they want.

"You can't go to your boss and say, 'We just had a baby,' or 'Grandma moved in, and we have higher expenses,' or 'I need a raise,'" he said. "It has to be based on merit."

Merit, of course, can be a subjective issue, so Bayer advises that workers try to make it more objective.

"Start with a piece of paper with two columns," he said. "In one column, write the minimum or basic requirements of your job. In the other -- which should be much longer -- you put in your actual achievements."

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What You Need, Want Is Irrelevant



- Getting a raise or promotion is about **merit**: what you've done, or what you can yet do for firm
- Make merit issues more objective by accomplishments, goals met or coming

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Now ask for a formal meeting with your manager and go in with your paperwork, he said.

"Don't expect them to fall over like dominos," Bayer added. "They can throw out a million reasons for saying 'no.' But don't let the 'no' get you down."

Bayer says getting a promotion or a raise probably will require a campaign:

* At that initial meeting, ask what you can do to "merit" a raise in the future, perhaps by expanding your responsibilities.

* Emphasize that "you just want to be treated fairly."

* Ask for a follow-up meeting in a month or six weeks.

"You don't want to harass them," Bayer said. "Then again, you've got to be persistent."

Peter LeBlanc, senior vice president with Sibson Consulting in Raleigh, N.C., said most big corporations already have budgeted base pay increases for this year. But the improving economy means they may have wiggle room when it comes to employee bonuses and stock options.

What employees need to do is start a dialogue with their bosses about their pay expectations, LeBlanc said.

"Managers don't instigate these conversations," LeBlanc said. "They don't like them, because this is one area of management where they don't know how much they should say, so they're uncomfortable."

On the other hand, he added, employees aren't good about initiating them either.

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Boss Isn't Likely To Come To You

- Often uncomfortable with conversation
- Unsure how much to say: doesn't want to offend, or spend
- Complaining unproductive, negative
- So is asking others about their increases



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"People will go home and complain to a spouse, or they'll complain to co-workers or they'll ask co-workers about their pay increases," LeBlanc said. "That's not productive."

He recommends that employees seek their bosses' help in positioning themselves for future raises.

"Ask him or her, 'What do I need to do this year to get a better increase next year?'" he said. "Or, 'Is there a way I can take on more responsibility and get into a higher pay grade, and would you sponsor me?'"

Both Bayer and LeBlanc caution workers against threatening to quit -- unless they are really prepared to do so.

"You don't want to do anything hostile," Bayer said. "Seeking fairness should be your mantra."

LeBlanc agrees, saying threats can be "risky and unprofessional" -- risky in that your boss could accept your threat of resignation on the spot and unprofessional because workers always have the right to leave any job for a better one.

"If in fact you've got a solid offer, approach your boss and say, 'I've got an offer to leave. ... Can I get some advice from you?'" LeBlanc said. A good boss should be able to come up with a counteroffer to keep a good worker, he said.

Workers who want to know about salary trends can ask colleagues in their professional associations or check job placement services at colleges and universities. Local career counseling services can also help.

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When You Meet With The Boss



- Ask for a formal meeting, and be prepared with lists
- Expect 'no;' don't be discouraged, don't harass, be persistent
- Expect the process to take awhile; this is a campaign

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Two Web sites with big data bases on jobs and salaries are www.salary.com, which is operated by Salary.com in Needham, Mass., and the government-funded www.careeronestop.org.

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Laying Out A Campaign Strategy

- Ask how you can merit a future raise
- Be open to expand duties, responsibility
- Emphasize want to be treated fairly
- Request follow-up meeting 4-6 weeks
- Start a dialogue!





Avoid Using Threats Or Hostility

- Don't threaten to quit unless you've somewhere to go; might be accepted!
- Unprofessional too
- Offer elsewhere?
Get your manager's 'advice' on leaving; might counter-offer





Anticipate Unforeseen Roadblocks



- Your firm may be doing less well than others or economy
- You may have competition for same raises, moves
- Salary budgets may already be set
- Resistance higher up

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Anticipate Unforeseen Roadblocks



Stay Atop Of Career Developments



- Ask professional associations about salary trends
- Talk with a career counselor, colleague at distant firm
- Go online to visit careeronestop.org or salary.com

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