

Ten tips on negotiating a pay rise

PAUL FINDLAY
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Time of day and location are important – negotiating a pay rise in familiar surroundings can provide a ‘home ground’ advantage while, if you’re a morning person, holding the meeting late in the day can be a disadvantage.

Many employees thinking about asking the boss for a raise are intimidated or nervous about the negotiations involved.

However, there are practical and effective negotiation techniques that can help you develop a win-win situation next time you’re negotiating a pay rise.

There are lots of practical tips to getting off on the right foot, bargaining technique, controlling your emotions and breaking an impasse. You also need to identify what information to share early in the conversation and what to hold back.

It’s always important for the employee to think seriously about what the employer wants before negotiating a pay rise.

Your employer will be interested in increasing sales and retaining customers. You may be bringing in \$1.6 million in business. You must ask ‘am I willing to back myself to do better?’ and could say, ‘if I bring in \$1.8 million in sales would you pay me 20% of the increase?’

Employers like stretch targets. You might push for a 2% increase on your base now and a share of increased sales if they’re achieved. That’s a win-win. The important thing is to be flexible in the negotiations.

Personal negotiating skills are effective listening and speaking, a sense of humour, a positive attitude, respect, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, persistence, patience and creativity. Without them, negotiations will be difficult if not impossible. Negotiation is necessary because neither party will be able to get everything they want. Knowing that there must be concessions, each party should adopt an attitude of understanding that they get the best deal possible in a way which is acceptable to the other.

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Our ten top tips for negotiating a pay rise are:

Prepare well – if you’re going for a new job, research what it’s worth in the marketplace. If you’re going for a pay rise, research comparable salaries for similar positions.

Be clear – effective speaking and listening is necessary to establish what you’re looking for and what you’re prepared to accept.

Maintain your self-confidence – don’t settle for less than you feel is fair. Good negotiators understand the importance of balance. You’ll have to make concessions, but set a bottom line and ensure you are not beaten below it.

Stay positive – negotiations can become fraught so being able to see another point of view while being sanguine about what you can achieve is essential.

Don’t blurt out your expectation first – listen to what the employer is offering before revealing what you think you’re worth. If it’s less than you hoped for, put a counter offer.

Don’t stop at the first hurdle – if the initial answer is no, don’t give up; keep talking.

Consider the full compensation package – if the push for a pay rise is being met by a brick wall, negotiate on conditions and benefits.





Try to influence the time and place – biorhythms can play a part in the result. For an advantage in negotiations, try to hold them when and where you are most comfortable.

Reach a consensus – this may be bittersweet, but it is better to have 50% of something than 100% of nothing.

Use your emotional intelligence – if the temperature is heating up, take a break if you can. There’s little benefit in allowing a negative atmosphere to torpedo negotiations at a delicate stage.

Paul Findlay, Managing Director, PD Training

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