

I Deserve a Raise. Do I Dare Ask for One?



you can prove that you are deserving with concrete examples of accomplishments, such as showing the weekends you have worked.

➤ TIMING IS IMPORTANT

Most companies have a budgeting cycle; be aware of it. Come in two months before, not two weeks after, the company has made raise decisions. Do not ask on a Friday afternoon or before a vacation; your arguments will be long forgotten by the time your boss returns to work or presents your case to those

above him. Do not ask during a crisis.

➤ PREPARE YOUR CASE

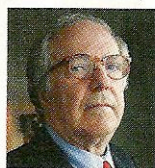
Determine your best arguments, such as how hard you have worked, what you have accomplished, or how you have mentored others. Learn about the pay system and find out how discretionary decisions are made. Try to determine what others make. Anticipate your bosses' arguments.

➤ ASK FOR HELP, NOT MONEY

It's best to approach your boss for assistance rather than directly requesting cash: that way he is more likely to become your advocate. Say, "I would really appreciate your guidance on what I need to do to get a raise." Most people like to be mentors. Cultivate that instinct.

➤ LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

If you do not succeed, don't start a confrontation. Do not threaten to leave unless you are prepared to do so and have a place to go. Walk away in a friendly and amicable way. Your turn may come the next time around. —Interviewed by Beth Kowitt



THE EXPERT

ROBERT BARNETT

SR. PARTNER, WILLIAMS & CONNOLLY

A contract negotiator for top execs at Deutsche Bank, Carlyle Group, and AT&T, he has also done publishing deals for Bill Clinton and Sarah Palin.

NO ONE HAS TO TELL YOU that things are tough around the office. Ever since your team's headcount was slashed, you've put in extra hours and taken on additional projects without complaining. You deserve a raise, but in this time of constrained budgets, is it safe to ask? *Fortune* consulted Robert Barnett, senior partner at the law firm Williams & Connolly, based in Washington, D.C. In addition to his negotiating bona fides, he also helps prep presidential candidates for debates. But don't worry: You don't need Barack Obama's skills to get a raise.

➤ DON'T WAIT FOR A REBOUND

If you wait for the boom days, you may be waiting a long time. Make your move when



ONE-MINUTE MENTOR

Networking for Introverts

ALLISON HEMMING, president, *The Hired Guns*, a digital talent agency

Ditch the pitch.

Instead of that infamous elevator pitch, learn to tell the story of you. Keep it short and sweet, think about where you've been and where you're going, and it'll blow away the 15-second drivel most people deliver.

Build confidence.

Rather than throwing yourself into a super-charged group of expert backslappers, take baby steps. Start with one-on-one meetings that you orchestrate.

Don't go it alone.

Bring a wingman. Being introduced by someone who knows your story will elevate your importance and set you at ease. And when you introduce someone else, you'll see how easy it can be.

Arrive early.

As things get started, everyone is feeling a touch awkward and eager to meet others. Once the party is hopping, it's harder to insert yourself.