



[DR. SHIRLEY SAYS...]

By: DR. SHIRLEY A. WHITE
President
Success Images

Reprinted from the August 2004 issue of BIC

Asking for a raise: Strategies for success

The ability to successfully ask for a raise is probably one of the most useful communication skills you can master. There will be times and situations where no matter how hard you work and how well the company benefits from your efforts, it will still take much more than “just being patient” to get you that raise.

Though there is no single best approach to this cause, here are five strategies to consider when you decide it's time to ask for the raise:

➤ Make sure you deserve it. Develop a “brag sheet.” Make a mental account of your accomplishments during the past six months to a year. Write them down, and indicate how you contributed in a way that went beyond the call of duty. (Start today keeping an account of your achievements.) Show how your talents improved the organization's bottom line, reduced costs, increased revenue or created some type of positive change. Quantifying your contributions will certainly improve your chances.

➤ Prepare your strategy. Do your research. Getting a raise requires that you know where you stand in your industry. What is the standard for your position and geographical location? It is certainly ill advised to ask for a raise without knowing the salary range for your position and level of experience. Check out search engines such as Yahoo and Google; search for key words “salary survey.” Also, research “The Wall Street Journal,” America's Career Infonet

and salary.com. Once you know your worth, you're ready for the next step.

Consider your organization's raise policy, and then prepare several alternate packages that would make you happy. Make “Plan A” the largest raise you hope for and “Plan C” something you can live with that is better than the usual cost-of-living raise.

➤ Timing is everything. An essential part of winning the “getting-a-raise” game is timing. Consider the company's current financial position. If the economy is bleak, and the company is struggling, this clearly is not an appropriate time to ask for a raise. On the other hand, if the financial picture is bright, ideal times to ask would be during a performance review, when you've recently had a spectacular success, been given more responsibility, or in some way demonstrated your worth to the organization.

➤ Know your manager. Knowing your manager's personality and leadership style can help you tailor your presentation. If your boss is a quick decision maker, be sure to get to the point and give your alternatives so he/she can make a decision. Alternately, if your boss makes decisions slowly and likes to chat, go with the flow. Just make sure you make your point before you leave. If you are unable to, schedule a follow-up meeting. And, of course, selecting a time when your manager is in a good mood always helps.

➤ Just do it! Finally, you need to go for it. Select the day and time (schedule an appointment with your boss if necessary). Above all, be confident. Your confidence level will result from dressing appropriately and being prepared to state your thoughts. Overcome objections and negotiate. Writing a script and role-playing with a friend/relative can also increase your confidence level. In addition, make sure you bring to the meeting

Show how your talents improved the organization's bottom line, reduced costs, increased revenue or created some type of positive change.

a copy of your “brag sheet” and any other documentation that will support your cause.

Do avoid being overly aggressive, giving ultimatums and threatening to quit. Keep in mind, you want a raise, not a pink slip.

Remember, a major key to being successful in asking for a raise is to make sure your manager is always aware of your accomplishments and hard work. This is one of the best strategies for helping you get a raise or a promotion. The boss may not be aware of what you are doing, so it is up to you to bring it to his/her attention.

Good luck on all of your endeavors!

For more information, please contact Dr. White at (225) 769-2307. □