

How to Negotiate a Raise or a Discount

Learn what it takes to ask for a promotion, haggle for a discount, or raise funds for a charity

PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 12, 2011 | BY KRISTEN DOLD



Ask for a Raise or Promotion

In a shaky economy, it's best just to be damn grateful you have a job, right? Wrong, says Joel Garfinkle, author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*. "You can still ask for more money if you can show that you're going to have an impact on the company's bottom line," he says. Do your legwork: Ask an HR rep what time of the year raises are given out. And aim for a nice day. Experts say that people tend to be in better moods when it's sunny.

First pitch: Say you're sympathetic to the tough times, then offer specific ways that you can save the company **money**, such as taking on extra work, says Vickie Milazzo, author of *Wicked Success Is Inside Every Woman*.

When they're hesitant: OK, time to take a different tack. Let your boss know you're worth the salary boost by presenting evidence of your value, such as e-mails from clients saying "You rock!" (or words to that effect) or the jaw-dropping results of a project of yours, says Elaine Varelas, managing partner at Keystone Partners, a career-management firm in Boston. Be friendly, but wipe off the too-eager grin.

"Over-smiling is a credibility robber for women when negotiating," says Carol Kinsey Goman, Ph.D., author of *The Silent Language of Leaders*. When they're still not convinced: If your boss won't budge, ask if she can show the love with tuition reimbursement, work-from-home days, or a gym membership.

Stop! Pushing further will only jeopardize your **relationship with your boss**. But leave the door open for future discussions by asking what tangible things you can do between now and your next evaluation to pump up your paycheck.

Negotiate a Buy

Walk in with a fistful of competitor ads and prices from online retailers like Amazon and eBay so the salesperson knows you can easily shop elsewhere.

First pitch: Dive in with your price first, says Terry Bacon, author of *Elements of Influence*: "Shoot for 20 percent below the lowest price you've seen locally, and use that as a starting point for the negotiation."

When they're hesitant: Try, "I like this, but what can we do about the price?" This makes it seem like you're working together, says Goman.

When they're still not convinced: Offering to pay in cash saves the store the cut it has to give the credit-card company, which can be around 5 to 7 percent of the item's price, says Bacon. Or haggle on noncash stuff, like free delivery or a better service plan.

Stop! At a standstill? Thank the salesperson and tell her to call you if anything changes.

Raise Funds for Your Charity Race

Weeks before the big ask, send your friends links to stories related to the charity. Tell them why the cause is important to you (e.g., your cousin was just diagnosed with juvenile diabetes) or point out how it might hit home. ("Heart disease is the number one killer of women!")

First pitch: Tap family and close pals who are likely to donate. "Mention those contributions when you appeal to coworkers. When people see that there's strength in your cause, they feel more secure about pitching in," says Laura Fredricks, author of *The Ask*. The best time to hit them up, by the way: on or just after payday, when people are feeling flush.

When they're hesitant: Dangle fun incentives in front of reluctant donors. Promise them that once you reach your goal, you'll host a dinner party or bring a plate of your famous brownies to the office.

Stop! If you get a flat-out no, let it go. You could push harder, but the cost—annoying your pals and coworkers—isn't worth it.

Nab a Discount

Whether it's the cable company or a retailer, figure out how long you've been a customer and how much cash you've dished out. Drop that into the discussion.

First pitch: Find out the customer service rep's name (and use it) and ask where she's located. "The person on the line is often treated like a machine, so a few questions can help form a connection, which may make her more open to helping you," says Barbara Bellissimo, author of *Become Your Own Great and Powerful*.

When they're hesitant: Stay friendly. (That old adage about catching more flies with honey? True.) Displaying some vulnerability will also help bring down the rep's defenses, says Michael Pantalon, Ph.D., a psychologist at Yale University. Stroke her ego by saying, "I know it's up to you. What do you think is my best option?"

When they're still not convinced: Stress that you would like to stay a loyal customer and will give frequent shout-outs about them to all your friends.

Stop! If the service rep repeatedly says no, ask for a supervisor. Do it before you annoy her, or the manager could start talking to you on the defensive.

ISSUE DATE: JANUARY 2012