

Asking for a raise

By  Juliette Attwell

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In this week's column we look at when and how to ask for a raise, whether or not you should wait around for your dream job to become available, and how a period of unemployment looks on your CV.



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I have a question for you regarding asking for a raise. Our fiscal ends in June and starts in July again. Our salary increase also takes place around this time, if management decide to give an increase. I would like to get a raise or ask for one. I'm working in the Marketing division as marketing assistant and going into my third year (beginning October) in this division. When do you think would be a good time to ask for a raise and what do think I need to look at to justify my raise. Can you give me some pointers on how to go about this? - C

Hi C,

Thank you for contacting me.

Asking for a raise is always tricky; most people hate asking for money and may feel greedy and guilty in doing so. There is no need for this. You are entitled to be paid your worth and if you have been performing well, then it's definitely within your rights to do so.

You haven't mentioned whether you've received a raise in the past, or what the company's policy on increases is, but I can give you a general idea.

If your last increase was more than a year ago, then you can broach the subject, if you received one more recently, then you should probably wait a full year before asking again. Remember to be two things when going into your meeting; honest and prepared. Schedule a time when you know your boss isn't stressed and hassled (maybe a Friday afternoon) and send a meeting request. Before your meeting, prepare a list of achievements and successes you've accomplished over the past year, eg. sales or leads you've brought into the business, ways you helped reduce overheads, ways you assisted in landing

a prize client or ways you went above and beyond the call of duty.

Once in the meeting, be very open and honest with your boss, try to motivate your reasons for asking with the successes you've had in the past year. Remember your boss isn't entitled to give you a raise so if the answer is no, then respectfully thank them for their time and ask whether it can be reviewed in three months' time. If it's perhaps not in their budget at the time, ask what you can do from your side to increase your value to the business so that the business, and in turn your salary, can grow. This type of partnership approach will show them that you are interested in the success of the business and not just your own back pocket.

Best of luck and I hope it all goes well.

My dream job doesn't seem to have a lot of job openings, but there are other positions in the field that I would have the skills for. Would you suggest getting into a job while looking further for the ideal, and possibly switching within the first year? Also, how badly does a period of job searching (unemployment) reflect on me? - Elna

Dream job

Hi Elna,

Thank you for your mail.

Although you may think your dream job is in a certain field, this may not in fact be the case. I have so often heard stories of people accepting jobs they initially see as a 'stepping stone', but fall so in love with the job / industry / company, that this in fact becomes their dream job. So in short, my answer is YES. Apply for jobs, go for interviews and take that leap of faith, you may just accidentally fall into your dream career.

A period of unemployment is understandable on your CV, especially given the recession our country has recently experienced. If at all possible, try not to have a period of more than six months. If you are struggling with this, then try to find some temporary / part-time roles to help you fill the time, whilst looking for a job - this will reflect well on your CV. If it is any longer, then your reasons need to be valid and explained. How this is seen by the hiring manager depends on the type of person they are as well as company policies.

I hope this helps and I wish you the very best!

Remember to always love what you do!

Juliette

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