**How to Negotiate a Pay Rise**

**The Easy ways**

1. Be an employee in a large organisation where pay rises are calculated in a structured manner and automatically increased on an annual basis
2. Join a union where they will negotiate pay rises on behalf of the work force
3. Negotiate your pay and regular pay rises after you have been offered the job but before you start work with the company – more on this below.
4. Earn or apply for a promotion in this company or another.

**The Other Ways**

Even when working for a large organisation, if you have been there several years you may find yourself stuck at the **top of the pay scale** for your position. Feel you’re worth more? You have two options: look for promotion to the next level or ask at your annual appraisal if you can take on extra responsibilities with the possibility of extra salary.

No **annual appraisal**? Ask for one.

**Extra responsibilities?** Know your **job description**. Legally, you must receive this in writing within one month of starting a job. Ask your HR Manager or boss for a copy if you don’t already have one.

Does it accurately describe what you are doing? Many jobs change with time, and this could be a reason to ask for a pay rise. Beware the clause, usually at the end: “And any other duties as agreed by both parties” or wording like that. That is your company’s wriggle room to say whatever you are doing is covered in your job description.

Even if there have been no changes, you can still ask for a pay increase because of the length of time and therefore experience you bring to the post.

Have you covered for another colleague during the year? There could be extra salary because you provided cover, especially if you covered for a person on a higher grade than you.

Have you had **extra training**, even if paid for by your employer, that is helping you to be more efficient or responsible? Always try to get and keep a certificate for any training; or at least make a record alongside your CV of date and type of training.

You may want them to offer extra training. If they won’t budge on the pay level, perhaps you could ask if they will help pay for extra training, especially if they have used your lack of expertise as a reason to keep the pay low. If they agree, ask for this in writing – an email will do. Or perhaps if they won’t pay for the training, they may allow you some time off to attend or revision time.

Have you been a good employee, helpful, efficient, responsible? If you are lucky enough to get a good customer review, or letter of thanks, make sure you keep a copy. If yes, you are in a good position as a valued and valuable employee to ask for a raise. If you have received verbal or written warnings, perhaps you need to improve before you ask for a raise!

**Do your research.** What is the typical salary for someone in your position? Search on the web searches (type in salary comparison UK for a range of websites) and ask friends or even other colleagues what they are earning. (Some employers frown on their employees talking to each other about salaries, usually because they have a flexible structure and people have negotiated different pay rates individually.)

What has the rise in the cost of living been in the last year? Ideally, any salary rises to match at least this.

Has your company done well or badly in the last year? If well, this is a good time to ask for a pay rise. If badly, this is their excuse not to increase salaries but perhaps you can still argue that you have done well and improved your area of work, despite the bigger picture. If a company claims to have done badly for several years, perhaps you should consider moving to a company with a more secure future.

**Best time to ask for a pay raise?**

**Before you start working there.** Yes, really. Unless the job was advertised at a fixed rate per hour and several people are employed at the same rate, doing the same job – in which case, **join a union** in the hope you all get a pay rise. Everybody is entitled by law to be able to join a union. Your company should not say that unions are frowned upon in their sector. You do not have to even tell your employer that you are in a union.

Many jobs are advertised with a pay range – e.g. £16-18,000. Don’t negotiate the salary at the interview – too soon! – unless they introduce the subject. Once they have offered the job, they will usually offer a salary at the bottom end of the range advertised. Do not take their first offer! Tell them you wish to accept the job but would they consider increasing their offer. They may offer reasons why not; you must be ready with reasons why.

Perhaps the job comes with targets that must be achieved. Part of your negotiation could be to ask if there will be a pay rise if you meet or exceed the targets. If possible, set a date in the future with them now when this will be reviewed.

Also ask at this stage when pay increases are usually granted and how they are calculated. It may be annually. It may depend on targets. If they have no pay increase strategy, that is a warning light. It doesn’t mean you don’t accept the job, but you may choose to regard it as a stepping stone to a better job – don’t tell them this! If they say your pay will be reassessed at the end of the training or probation period, get in writing when this period ends.

Make a note of your start date on your CV. Make a note in your diary to ask for an appraisal around a year after this date, when you can start the pay negotiation again.

**In Summary**

* Keep your CV up to date; perhaps set a date each year to review and update it.
* Do your research beforehand.
* Have an increase in mind – what is the maximum you think they’ll pay, what is the minimum you will accept.
* Ask for an annual review of your position and performance.
* Always be polite – you are asking, not demanding.