

How not to get yourself a raise in 10 easy (but awkward) steps

By [Candice Eaton-Gaul](#)

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I, like most HR professionals, have a natural interest in human behaviour and observing awkward conversations is like an ice-cream on a hot summer day - amusing but doesn't usually last very long. I am often asked by friends, family and sometimes even by strangers, how to go about asking for an increase. My starting point is to enquire what their plan was going to be, and see if I can just make some suggestions so that they may stand a better chance of bringing home a bit more bacon.



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Creating awareness is the new hobby of all the hip and happening types, so as not to be left out, this article is aimed at creating awareness on how **not** to get yourself an increase. So on behalf of HR professionals everywhere:

1. Don't resign in the hope you will get a counter offer. You won't. You will be unemployed. This is an easy way to get yourself an immediate decrease in salary.
2. Don't use corporate events as a platform for serious personal discussions. The year-end function is almost the worst possible time to approach us about your remuneration.

3. Don't wait in our parking spots before or after work, in the hope of starting a random conversation leading to the topic of an increase. Unless you are prepared to help find the shoe that has gone missing in the drive to work that still needs to be put on, you shouldn't be there. If you are prepared to do that, we shouldn't be working together.
4. Don't phone us at 11pm or at 3am. If you do have too much to drink, and make an inappropriate call, and suddenly realise when we answer that it may be a career limiting move, don't stay silent when we repeatedly say "Hello... *(insert colleague name here)*... *(insert colleague name here)* why are you calling...?". Since the 90s, cell phones have this new thing, caller ID. We are most likely sober, and not talking is just making things a little more awkward.
5. Don't WhatsApp or text us at times that you wouldn't ordinarily have called. You may be making your New Year's resolutions on 31 December after a few glasses of bubbly - this is not the time to outline your goals, dreams and life ambitions to HR. We are, at that time, fuelled by our own bubbly, also making our own New Year's resolutions, which most likely don't include any reference to you.
6. Don't say "Why don't I earn what *(insert colleague name here)* earns?", unless you can handle the truth which may be, "*(Insert colleague name here)* is a qualified specialist with 15 years of experience in her field and your claim to fame is the meme you created of people eating lunch in the canteen," or it could simply be because you are just not that good. If you ask the question, don't be offended when your feelings get trampled on by the truth.
7. If you happen to bump into us at the shops, or at a social function on a weekend, don't stare in disbelief that we actually have friends, or social lives, we are probably just as surprised at the fact that we have been invited out as you are. If you then sink six beers to be able to lose enough inhibition to stop behaving like you are a nine-year-old seeing your teacher at a restaurant, please don't saunter over and strike up a conversation about your earnings and your true future potential. At that stage, it is most likely that you are not at your peak performance.
8. Don't ask for an increase if someone else in your team resigns and you get some of their work. The economy is in a fragile state and most businesses are feeling the pinch. Being given more work is a chance to become more valuable and an opportunity to showcase your brilliance and to demonstrate your willingness and reliability. Don't turn this into an opportunity for your employer to see that you are a clock-watcher with an inflated sense of self-importance and a bad attitude - this should be strictly reserved for friends and family.
9. Don't moan about your salary to every co-worker you can find. Nobody likes the groaning grump and your co-workers, in most situations, have no ability to change the situation for you. Don't ask the wrong person for an increase. If you work in a hierarchical environment with a thousand people, and you email the CEO for an increase, unless you report directly to that person, your mail will, in all likelihood, be ignored.
10. Don't ask for an increase if you have committed any gross misconduct or if you are, or there is even a chance that you may be, the worst employee ever known to mankind. It makes us wonder whether, during your last performance appraisal, there was any point in taking the time to explain to you where you didn't meet the expectations of the employer. It will also make us question why we ever thought that HR is a viable career option, as well as the meaning of life itself.

So, book time in the diary and have an honest and open conversation with the right person. Motivate your value in the business in terms of what you currently do and how you plan to contribute in future. If that doesn't work, in the words of my inspirational ex-boss, "You are paid what you are worth. If you don't like it, work harder."

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