

## **How to get paid: what to say to your boss to get the salary you deserve**

[Essence](#), [May, 2005](#) by [Ella L.J. Edmondson Bell](#)

Negotiation is a simple fact of business life. The higher up you move at work, the more important become your skills at bargaining for what you want--and that includes not only requesting more pay but also asking for and landing key assignments that position you for your next promotion and even more earning power. As Grazell R. Howard, CEO of the executive search and consulting firm The Libra Group Ltd. in Charlotte, North Carolina, puts it: "Whether you're an entry-level employee or a seasoned executive, the negotiation skills it takes to manage your career effectively are the same."

Overall women who work full-time year-round now earn 76 cents to every dollar made by their male counterparts. Interestingly, Carnegie Mellon University professor of economics Linda Babcock, coauthor with Sara Laschever of *Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide* (Princeton University Press), suggests that men ask for what they want two to three times as often as women do and also initiate negotiations four times as frequently. Of course, success is never a simple matter of "Ask and you shall receive." You won't always get what you ask for, but if you don't ask for anything at all, you're more likely to end up with less than you deserve.

Negotiate from the beginning. Many women are uncomfortable starting off a negotiation because we see it as combat with the person sitting across the table. Truth is, a successful negotiation works more like a strategic conversation among collaborators than a contest between adversaries. Whenever you're interviewing for a new job, Howard says it's very important to state your salary objectives clearly from the start. The average increase in salary for a new position over a previous job is 10 to 15 percent, she says. When you get a job offer, make it a habit not to accept the first figure your prospective employer names. Say "I'm very excited by this opportunity and believe your company will be great to work for. But a salary of \$45,000 is more in line with objectives I discussed with human resources when they first called me." Ask if they'd consider a signing bonus, one way employers sometimes give a sought-after candidate money beyond the job's current salary range. But if the offer is firm and there's no possibility of

a front-end bonus, your fallback position is to ask if they will agree to review your performance and discuss a raise or bonus in six months. Be sure to get your salary offer and your special-review arrangement in writing.