

FAST COMPANY

How To Get The Raise You Deserve When You Work From Home

Remote workers can earn fair salary hikes if they know how to leverage their circumstances.



[Photo: Tran Mau Tri Tam via Unsplash]

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Working from home has plenty of advantages, but visibility isn't one of them. This can be problematic when leadership is considering who to promote. While it's not impossible to move up within a company when you're working remotely, it's certainly more challenging, says Amanda Augustine, career advice expert for TopResume, a personal branding website for professionals.

"A November 2014 study of travel agency employees by Stanford University found that work-from-home employees were less likely to be promoted," she says.

Out of sight can mean out of mind, so it's imperative that remote workers deliver above-average and quality work. "Demonstrate that you're connected and available when your boss needs you," she says. "Be cognizant of how long it takes you to respond to emails, complete your projects, etc., during your established working hours."

All employees should be proactive about their career paths, but those who work from home have some special challenges when they decide to ask for a raise.

CONSIDER THE MEDIUM FOR THE MESSAGE

Remote workers have figured out the best way to communicate with their managers—often email or instant message — and it may be easy or tempting to use that method when asking for a raise, says Dennis Collins, senior director of marketing for West Unified Communications, a provider of conferencing and communication tools for businesses.

The only time telecommuters should use email in raise negotiations is for sending a follow-up question.

"Think about how you would handle the conversation if you were in the office, facing your manager in person," he says. "Just as you wouldn't poke your head into a manager's office and swiftly ask for a raise, you shouldn't bombard them with a question about salary via IM," Collins explains. "The challenge is stepping

outside the usual rules of engagement and choosing the best medium for the message you want to deliver," he says.

STAY AWAY FROM ONE-DIMENSIONAL TOOLS

Email and voicemail messages can easily be misread, which is the last thing anyone wants, says Collins. The only time telecommuters should use email in raise negotiations is for sending a follow-up question, especially if the answer was no.

"[This will] dissipate any potential awkwardness with the next meeting," he says.

BE FACE TO FACE

Body language can tell you a lot about someone's mood, and when you work from home, you're challenged because you won't have this information, says Loren Miner, COO of the

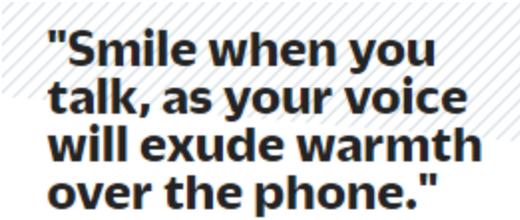
virtual national recruiting firm Decision Toolbox. "It's harder to plan the timing of your request," she says. "You can't see faces or read body language, and you don't work side by side, so you don't know whether your supervisor has had a rough day, or just come from a terrible client call."

Whenever possible, wait until you have a face-to-face meeting scheduled to broach the subject. It is too easy to misread a reaction over the phone. Plus, it's much more difficult to say no to a smiling face of a deserving employee, says Miner.

If an in-person meeting isn't possible, make use of video chat, says Miner. "You can reap similar benefits of an in-person meeting, with the added benefit of keeping an outline that can't be seen nearby to help you remember your talking points," she says.

IF YOU'RE USING THE PHONE

When an in-person meeting or video chat isn't an option, good phone communication skills can make the conversation easier, says Miner.



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"Smile when you talk, as your voice will exude warmth over the phone," she says. "Keep a positive and upbeat mentality when you make your request. Pretend that you know the answer is going to be yes when you're asking, and your positive attitude will reinforce why you deserve the raise."

STEPPING OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE CAN HAVE ADDED BENEFITS

While technology can take away awkwardness, it's the conversation that really matters, and Collins encourages remote workers to step outside their technological comfort zones.

"When someone is a true work-from-home employee, their main source of communication may be email, but when scheduling a difficult conversation, they have the option to conduct a more personal meeting via audio or video conference," he says. "This ultimately helps build rapport and create stronger