

Azzarello Group Article

How to get that raise or promotion

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The focus of this article is on managing and having the right conversations, that will get you what you want and deserve for the effort you put into your job.

There are many things you need to do to secure that raise or promotion, but the fit into two basic categories:

1. Have the right conversations about it
2. Do the right stuff.

In addition to conversations, you need to:

- ✦ Do your job really well.
- ✦ Do the right things above and beyond your current job
- ✦ Build your credibility
- ✦ Develop and manage your personal brand
- ✦ Get the right experiences
- ✦ Manage your publicity
- ✦ Use your network and mentors the right way

I have had this "compensation" conversation many, many times with employees, and I've also had it many times personally with my bosses. **I've seen people (including myself) do it well, poorly, and not at all.**

All of these things mentioned above are covered in detail in my [Getting Your Career Breakthrough working guide](#) as well as the [Build Your Career Plan workshop](#)

But I wanted to share some insights and approaches in this article for getting the part right, where you need to discuss this with your manager.

Comfortable with the Conversation?

Some people are quite comfortable with this conversation and some people are quite uncomfortable with this conversation.

If you are uncomfortable, you need to recognize that:

- ✦ Others are also uncomfortable, so you're not alone, and
- ✦ Others are comfortable, so you can count on the fact that they will be having these conversations, and you will be left out by comparison if you're not.

So if you are uncomfortable with it you have three choices:

- ✦ Get over it, or
- ✦ Stay uncomfortable and do it anyway.

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You have to ask

Consider an environment where the rule is "no raises", or there is a very small amount of money to go around. Consider that there are two equally deserving and talented individuals. Here are the conversations.

Individual #1

"I understand that the environment is very difficult for raises so I'm not expecting anything this time." Inside this person is thinking something like (I don't want to come across as unreasonable, I want to come across as thoughtful, helpful and not annoying, and that will be appreciated and rewarded later.)

Another version of this conversation is not to have the conversation at all -- as it has the same effect.

Individual #2

"I understand that the environment is very difficult for raises right now. Even so, I would like to revisit my performance and have a discussion about it."

"9 months ago, we agreed on performance objectives which if accomplished would result in increased compensation. As you can see I have delivered on all of these results, and then some and I also took on this additional project which has benefited the company by increasing our margin on this product line.

Can I get your feedback on these accomplishments? ... (Assuming it's very positive then.....)

If your hands are tied right now, I would like to understand the timeline of what is possible, and if it's not a raise, is there [stock, bonus, promotion, etc.] that could be possible?

I'm very motivated, but I think you can understand that at some point this level of performance will be hard to keep doing if it is not recognized by the company. You have my commitment to keep delivering for you, but I need to know what I can expect over time.

Can we set some more objectives outside the normal process that will allow you to get approvals and take action on this?"

If the manager gets a little flexibility in paying raises or bonuses, which equally deserving person do you think will benefit? If you think the manager will give the silent person credit for being reasonable and not asking for anything, guess again. The meek do not inherit the bonuses most of the time.

Your manager probably doesn't even remember how you are being paid, if it's high or low, and what discussions and commitments there are in place. He has too many people to worry about. It's up to you to drive the discussion, remind him of the situation and ask for what you want.

Understand what is realistic

You don't want to be having this discussion if you are not performing at a very high level. I've had many people have this type of discussion with me, only to be faced with

my feedback that they were not performing up to the level of their peers, and did not contribute anything beyond the letter of their job description, so they were being unrealistic in their request.

It's the combination of great performance AND asking that's the magic formula. Either one on its own doesn't work.

If you are not performing, pushing on this conversation only puts you in a deeper hole, and will indeed annoy your manager.

If that is the case, stop digging; focus the discussion on what your desired outcome is, and what your manager sees as the gap you need to fill.

Agree on a plan to fill the gap then focus on the work, not the compensation, until you get on the high ground.

If you don't have this conversation, you will toil away wasting time, never realizing that your performance is not competitive.

Not all managers will be focused enough to ensure that you are on your best path. They should be, but you can't count on this, particularly if you are doing OK. They might not even know you are capable of more.

You manage the process

You need to be the one managing the process of this conversation over time.

- ✦ You need to take the lead with your manager on getting meaningful objectives defined.
- ✦ You need to take the lead on making it clear what your career and compensation goals are.
- ✦ You need to take the lead on having a conversation with your manager about how you are progressing.
- ✦ Do this at least twice a year if not every quarter.

As long as you are a top performer and you are being reasonable, **your manager will appreciate your taking this process burden off of him, and will respect you for asking.**

Patty Azzarello was the youngest person to become a general manager at Hewlett Packard at the age of 33. She ran a \$1B global software business at the age of 35, and became a CEO for the first time at the age of 38. A few of her roles were the VP and General Manager of HP OpenView, CEO of Euclid Software, and Chief Marketing Officer for Siebel Systems.

Patty is the CEO of Azzarello Group, www.AzzarelloGroup.com a unique services organization focused on helping business leaders actually get done what they want to do, and get a bigger payoff from their hard work. Azzarello Group delivers practical, experience-based tools to business leaders, through products and services including articles, e-books, mentoring programs, executive coaching, public speaking, small business retreats, and business execution workshops.

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