Up for a Raise? Use These Five Strategies to Make It Happen.

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About six in 10 workers are heading into the holiday season with bigger paychecks than last year, according to a recent survey by MagnifyMoney — and about half of those who received a raise said it was accompanied by a promotion.

That's all well and good, but categorizing the results by gender yielded some disconcerting figures: More men reported pay increases than women (64 percent vs. 52 percent), and men were also more likely than women to receive a promotion alongside their raise (54 percent vs. 37 percent).

Data from the United States Census Bureau backs that up: The real median earnings of all U.S. workers increased 3.4 percent

between 2017 and 2018, but when you break down those median earnings by gender, men made almost $10,000 more than women.

This barrage of negative numbers doesn't do much to help boost women's confidence in the raise department: About two in 10 women doubted they'd receive a raise in the next year, according to MagnifyMoney's survey – more than twice the amount of men who said the same. And believing you deserve a raise is oftentimes the first step towards getting one.

To that end, here are five key tips for the next time you ask for a salary boost (even if it's your first time). To start, Lewis C. Lin, author of *71 Brilliant Salary Negotiation Samples*, has five magic words that can mean real progress in any negotiation: "Is there any wiggle room?"

Pay attention to timing.

Read the room. When you're deciding when to set up your raise conversation, avoid days (and times of day) when your manager is often stressed. Ask when you've recently gotten a significant piece of praise or completed a notable task; otherwise, align your ask with your company's performance review cycle. Check sites like Glassdoor and PayScale to make sure you're asking for a raise that makes sense based on your title, industry and location. And to avoid your manager feeling blindsided by the request, ask them a few days in advance about setting up a time to discuss your "compensation and career trajectory," says Stefanie O'Connell, author of *The Broke and Beautiful Life*.

Avoid using your personal life as reasoning.

One important trap to avoid when negotiating a raise? Making it about your personal life, whether you're expecting a baby, caring for aging parents, dealing with medical bills or

anything else that means you're in need of more working capital. "Those are reasons to seek out a raise, not reasons for your employer to give you one," says O'Connell. Don't lean too heavily on your years of experience or time served at the company; instead, focus your efforts on the impact you've had there so far. Ask yourself what you're doing to contribute to your employer's bottom line and what you're doing that goes above and beyond your current pay rate.

Get the numbers on your side.

It's important to build a strong case for your raise — one that, if you were in your employer's shoes, you couldn't argue with. Make it as airtight as possible, and back it up with real results you've driven, revenue you've brought in or impact you've had on the company. For jobs in sales and other metrics-heavy professions, this may be easier to calculate, but if you're in a job with less tangible metrics, you'll need to define how success is measured in your role. One idea: Look at your company's mission statement, the original job description for your own role or the posted descriptions of current open roles. Are there certain qualities, characteristics or initiatives the company especially values? How have you demonstrated those things in a measurable way? Bring concrete examples, whether they're metrics or anecdotal, and be prepared to present them (that might mean rehearsing the conversation ahead of time in the mirror or, even better, with a trusted friend or colleague). If you don't already have a "kudos folder" — a place where you keep compliments and positive feedback on your work — then it's a great idea to start one, says O'Connell.

Focus on the future as much as the

past.

It’s important to have proof of your past performance as backup in any raise conversation, but there’s another tool used less often that can also work in your favor, and that’s your future performance, says Lin. Position your argument like this: What more can the company expect from you if you do receive the raise? What additional responsibilities will you take on? How will they add to the company’s goals and bottom line? For example, Lin says, if the company prioritizes sharing knowledge among team members, you could pledge to put on a brown bag lunch once a month for the next year educating your team on up-and-coming sales strategies in your sector. In a way, this strategy mirrors a consumer making a selection while shopping: If I pay more money, what will I get from this product or service?

Take time to consider a counter-offer.

If your employer doesn’t agree to the number you floated, don’t feel the need to respond right away or even on the same day. If you feel compelled to respond immediately, you may end up undercutting your value, says O’Connell. It’s better to ask for a day or two to think things over. And in the case your employer denies the raise outright, ask about he roadblock: Is it your performance? Budget concerns? If it’s the former, you can open up an honest conversation about success metrics and how you can exceed expectations next time around. If company financials are the reason, ask if you can revisit the question next quarter — and then be sure to follow up and make that conversation happen. In the meantime, you can also negotiate for more paid time off, a new title, more remote working days, additional training opportunities and more. “Any negotiation should be a broader discussion about your life within a company,” says O’Connell, “and that’s a lot broader than just

money.”

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