

## **GETTING WHAT YOU WANT: (Effective Communications with your boss)**

Shorter hours, a pay raise, change of title, promotion - these are all reasons to initiate a discussion with the boss at one time or another in your career. But remember this prior to approaching the boss about changing something in the workplace. Your boss' number one priority is to make sure you are satisfied enough to do your job well. Otherwise, everyone loses, including him. Always approach your boss with respect and promise yourself never to sell out. Your performance, credentials and merits should warrant you receiving whatever you seek. If, however, you have failed to do your homework to ensure you have solid performance, then it's back to the drawing board first before approaching your boss.

Following are considerations prior to initiating the discussion:

- 1) Set up an appointment to talk when there is enough time for a real meeting, not when your boss is in transit, running off to a lunch meeting, or at 5:00 p.m. on the Friday of a long weekend.
- 2) Know what you want to accomplish before going into the meeting. If it's a promotion or raise, you should picture the outcome and the steps you'll need to take to get there. In other words, don't approach your boss with merely a problem; approach him/her with a solution as well.
- 3) Anticipate the worst-case scenario. For instance, your boss could greet your grievances with zero sympathy or your request for promotion with a steely "I'm afraid that's impossible." Once you have imagined your worst fears, then feel confident that you can weather any negative scenario that may arise.
- 4) Come prepared with evidence to back up why your idea is a good one. Your quarterly review, market rates, written memos of recommendation – anything you think will strengthen your case.
- 5) Keep your cool. Even if the situation becomes heated or you have to plead your case, you are more likely to get your way if you remain calm, on point, and keep the emotion out of it.
- 6) Be assertive and persistent. If you get an initial negative reaction at first, don't back down immediately. You should feel that you've had a fair hearing and discussion and not been dismissed out of hand.
- 7) If the answer is no, ask reasons why. If there is no budging, ask if you can revisit the topic at a later date.

You are entitled to ask for improvements, promotions, or projects with high exposure. Your boss, on the other hand, is entitled to tell you "no". But don't ever feel like you haven't the right to ask. Change doesn't occur without a catalyst, and that catalyst is more often than not going to be you taking a solid initiative.

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