



What you deserve

*Asking your boss for a raise requires confidence
— but also common sense*



PHOTO-ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAM CHOI

Lee Miller, a Harvard-trained lawyer and managing director of a human resources firm, has plenty to say on the subject of negotiating wages. He is the author of several books on wages and negotiations, including one specifically for women, which he co-authored with his daughter.

Build your case

Miller says preparation is critical to success. As the work piles up and responsibilities multiply, some people may be tempted to demand a pay rise immediately. Without preparation and good timing, this is only likely to sour relations with your manager or boss. Instead, be ready to make a compelling case — bosses are more likely to respond to a well-reasoned argument. A wise course of action is to research the current market value of someone with your position and responsibilities. Try to work out your contribution in monetary terms, by looking at how your actions have either resulted in gains, or prevented losses, to the bottom line.

With the information to back your case, establish the right time and place to discuss your salary.

Negotiation experts are adamant that you should be yourself when negotiating. If you are a soft-spoken person, then be soft-spoken — you can still be firm and say it politely. In fact, being soft-spoken in negotiations has special advantages. The 'quiet-but-firm' negotiator can often command more attention and when they do raise their voice, the impact is much greater.

Represent yourself

Confidence is critical to success in any negotiation. Projecting confidence (even when you don't feel it) is an important skill. But if you have trouble defending your own interests, then pretend you are



Build negotiating confidence:

PREP

Prepare for the negotiation.

Find out what you can about the market and the fair value of your work.

Relax.

Take a few deep breaths, smile, and don't fidget.

Enunciate.

Speak slowly and firmly. Moderate your tone so you aren't shrill and yelling, but don't back down either.

Project your voice.

The key to voice projection is proper posture and good breathing. When people are nervous, their breath becomes shallow and they slouch. Both of these things inhibit the proper flow of air that creates a confident you. So when the heat is on, sit up straight and make sure to breath normally.

negotiating on someone else's behalf. Many people, women in particular, may feel that it is selfish to be a little aggressive when asking for what they want. These same people may have no trouble aggressively negotiating an agreement on behalf of their company or someone else. So, when it's time to sit down with your boss

“Pretend you are negotiation on someone else's behalf.”

to discuss your salary, imagine what you would do if it were someone else you were negotiating for. You may find that your resolve becomes more solid.

agreement, or BATNA. It may be that your boss, regardless of the strength of your reasoning, won't raise your salary. If that is the case, you need to be ready to walk away and know what your next step is. Getting caught flat-footed can be even more damaging as it indicates to your boss that you have no other alternative to continued employment with the firm. But in today's job market, your own personal BATNA shouldn't be difficult to determine.

William Ury and Roger Fisher, authors of *Getting to Yes*, advise having a best alternative to a negotiated

Everything is negotiable. Miller thinks many people mistakenly assume that everything is a 'take it or leave it' situation. That just isn't the case. Much of business is a matter of negotiations and employment is ultimately, a business decision.



People on the Move



Catherine Ho has been promoted to financial controller, China and Hong Kong, at KPMG. Catherine joined KPMG in 1997, having previously worked in senior finance roles in Australia.



Mark Ho has been appointed director at Phillip Securities Group, responsible for new products and regulatory affairs.

Jacqueline Bennett has been appointed director of corporate and China tax services at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, following a move from the London office.



Turn off PowerPoint Turn on your presentation

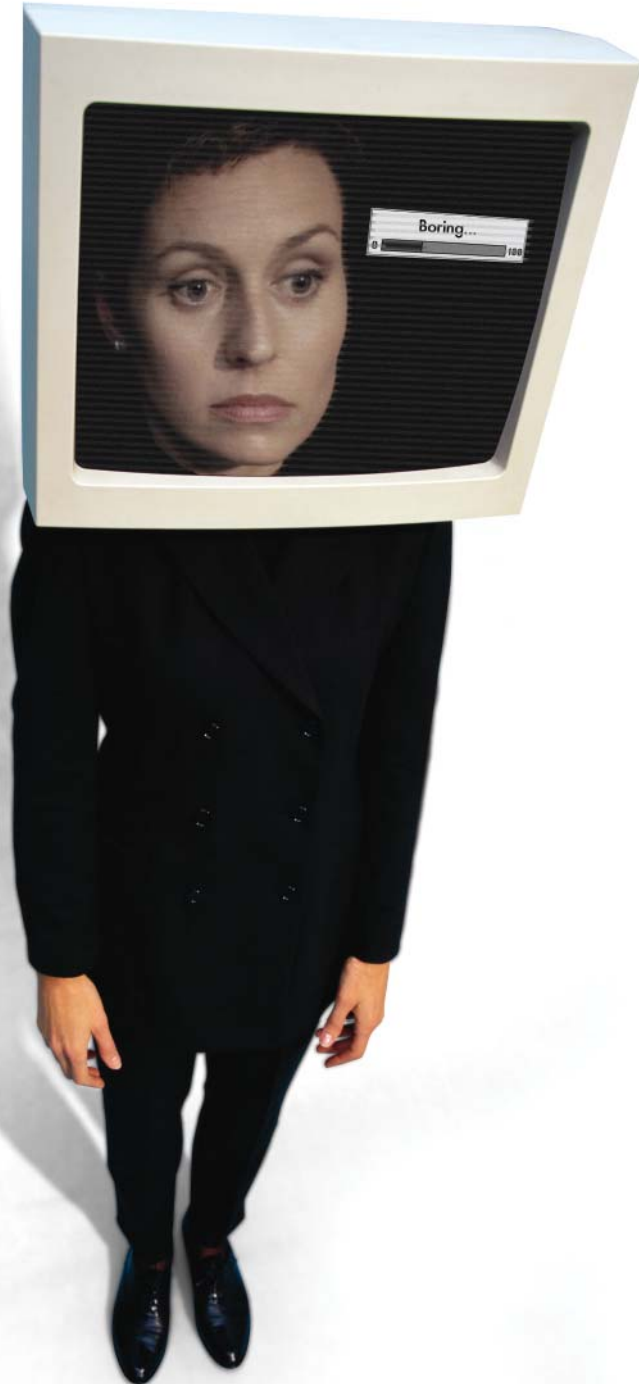
If you find yourself struggling to energise a presentation, take a step back and consider a different approach.

It's easy for speakers, especially if they're nervous, to pay too little attention to their audience. Are people looking directly at you and leaning forward in their seats, nodding their heads in appreciation? Or are they looking down at their watches or out the window? The scary thing is, some presenters don't even notice how their audience is responding. If your audience doesn't seem to know you're in the room, it may be time to change tack.

Making a connection

First, re-engage. If your group is small enough, it might be worthwhile to pause and find out if they know what you're talking about. "Simple, direct questions to the audience don't make presenters look bad – they usually engage the audience, which is what you want," says Oliver Love, senior consultant with Active Communication, a firm that provides communication training to managers in Hong Kong.

"It will also help you check that they're not only listening, but understanding what you're saying. Often people continue to talk, even though the group is looking confused. Taking time to read





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MANAGEMENT

body language and the messages being sent, is important. Understand the signs and act on them, and you'll increase your ability to meet their needs, which will then help you attain your own goals."

When you're losing your audience, you must change gear – and that requires a bit of drama. Consider the situation. If people are feeling the effects of lunch or have been sitting at their desks all day and are nodding off, simply suggest that everyone stand up and have a stretch. A gesture like this may be all that's needed to shake off lethargy. But be prepared to re-energise your presentation after the stretch is done, otherwise your audience will go back to sleep as soon as they sit down. Which leads to the next point.

Power up

PowerPoint is the accepted standard for making presentations. But all too often, managers will let



PowerPoint do the talking, and there's no better way to put people to sleep. As Love points out, "The presenter is the most important visual aid, PowerPoint helps to reinforce key ideas. Too often people hide behind PowerPoint, losing audience focus and the impact of their message. PowerPoint is a good tool, but like any tool used incorrectly, it can have a devastating effect."

"It's amazing how some people ignore their audience to talk to a non-responsive screen."

If you are well prepared, it may be time to turn off the laptop. Doing the rest of the presentation without PowerPoint may be much easier than you think. And the dynamics of such a gesture – first changing the standard, then the tone – are sure to leave an impression. "We focus on getting people to have control of their presentations, not being controlled by PowerPoint," says Love. "It's amazing how some people ignore their audience to talk to a non-responsive screen. We help people to have an impact by remaining audience-focused."

Talking directly to the audience and boiling down the message to key points, is all there is to an effective presentation. "Often a presentation only needs to deliver a handful of key messages," says Love. "People often fall into the trap of putting too much information into their slides, which can lead to 'death by PowerPoint'. At some point the presenters start losing their natural style and personality altogether.

"The biggest mistake I see people make is forgetting that a presentation is about the audience and their needs," says Love. "You are the Power, your message is the Point." In other words be power-pointed, not pointless.

Quick link

► Active Communication:

www.activecommunication.net



Creating value from IT assets

By Frank Yam

Information technology has the potential to transform enterprises and increase stakeholder value. But getting it right requires planning and imagination.

Effective and imaginative use of IT has the potential to transform enterprises and create value, as we have seen over the past two decades. Equally, badly chosen or poorly implemented IT investments will lead to value erosion and competitive disadvantage.

Driven by assertive stakeholders, aggressive competition and emerging regulations, there are many issues that occupy a CEO's time and affect overall enterprise governance. At the board level, IT governance must compete with other issues for priority. IT issues are often poorly understood and therefore given lower priority, even as companies rely more and more on those systems.



“Ensuring that value is obtained from investment in information technology is an essential component of IT governance.”

In many enterprises, IT costs are the second highest expenditure after staffing, yet the value it delivers can be uncertain. While complexity and pervasiveness make it difficult to track costs and value, it should not take management's focus away from what could be one of the most significant value drivers within an enterprise.

If your company has not made an adequate assessment of IT infrastructure, you could be missing opportunities to enhance shareholder value and market capitalisation, while exposing your business to significant financial and reputational risks.

The right steps

The IT Governance Institute recommends the following steps to maximise the alignment between IT and the business:

- Ensure that board members and senior managers are educated on the risks associated with IT and how business value arises from IT
- Ensure that IT is a regular item on the board agenda – not just a part of the annual budgeting process
- Ensure the CIO is a full or ex officio member of the board, participating in all business discussions and decisions. At minimum, the CIO must report directly to a board member
 - Establish an IT-related committee with active representation from senior business leaders and board members

- Establish active IT investment portfolio management using agreed-upon metrics and regular, reliable reporting

Measuring and evaluating the true business significance of IT remains a challenge. When deciding on IT investment priorities, you need to ask fundamental questions about the intangible nature of many of the expected returns before applying return on investment (ROI) techniques. These questions include:

- Does the initiative fit strategically?
- Does it support functional requirements of the business?
- Are you creating opportunities for process improvement or synergies across the business?
- Does the underlying technology fit the enterprise infrastructure?
- Are the resources and skills available to achieve success?

Only when you have satisfied your expectations of the final result (the ‘what’), should you consider the ROI

calculations, focusing on expenditures, risk-adjusted value and returned benefits (the ‘how’). It is important to base your figures on reasonable assumptions, and express intangible returns in a verifiable manner.

Boards and executives need to provide strategic direction and ensure that value reporting is reliable. Everyone involved needs to agree on how to verify the benefits and accept responsibility for the results.

Ensuring that value is obtained from investment in information technology is an essential component of IT governance. Expected returns should always be related to risk as, given the higher likelihood of failure, high-risk projects should always have an anticipation of a higher return. Ensuring that the right projects are approved in the first place implies a need for accurate predictive costing of the total project across its lifetime and robust predictions of the potential return, including quantification of the direct and indirect benefits. To ensure that the total process works and becomes part of the culture of the organisation, it is essential to establish proper tracking mechanisms to determine accountability and the actual value delivered.

Given the volatility of a portfolio of IT-related business projects, it is essential to embed active portfolio management into the organisation to maximise value creation and minimise the risk of value destruction. As with any aspect of IT governance, to be successful, the process needs visibility, leadership and commitment from the top.



Frank Yam is international vice president of the IT Governance Institute and past president of the Hong Kong Chapter of the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA).