

REMUNERATION

Get more money from your work

In these hard times, not many companies are keen on increasing salaries. Here are tips on how to brand yourself and negotiate for more money. By WINFRED KAGWE

The boss walks to his office and you get nervous thinking about a lingering issue: that pay rise you believe is long overdue.

Some people demand a raise firmly, others threaten to resign, while others will want to send a job application elsewhere and spread the gossip in the office with the hope that the boss will get wind of it, and in persuading them to stay give a pay rise.

The chances of all these backfiring are very high. Mr Wainaina Wanjiku, a human resource consultant with Corporate Staffing Services, a Nairobi-based HR consulting and training company, says even when these methods work, it is short-term or, at worst, may cause animosity.

"It needs to be a win-win situation," he says. "The company should not feel you are pushing it to the wall; while you also need not to feel like you were short-changed."

Time tested ways are there to get you that well-deserved pay rise. Financial and HR experts advise that if you think you deserve more money be prepared for the labour. In short, it is a process. It is always advisable to approach the boss with a list of your specific achievements and accomplishments. Mr Wainaina says for every task you accomplish, make a note of it and you can always bring it up when discussing the pay rise with the boss.

In these times of financial stress, companies are looking for performers, so make yourself one, says Mr Wainaina, whose company offers career coaching services to both job seekers as well employed people. "Career coaching helps individuals discover what they want with their careers, and establish a strategy," he says. The company offers coaching sessions on salary negotiations, hunting for job opportunities and relevant skills, interview preparation, cover letter and CV writing, among others.

"The time you get the offer letter for the job is when you should start thinking about a pay rise. Deliverability and pay should always go together, and anytime you are going below or above, logic dictates that you need to negotiate an accord," says Mr Wainaina.

Going back to school is always advisable. And when making that pay rise request, mention if your responsibilities have expanded over the period of employment. If they have, then you deserve it. "One of the worst mistakes you can do is bringing up your personal financial status in the discussion. If you moved houses, or your child is joining college next month, it is not the company's business," says Mr Wainaina.

He says the company already has set standards on how much they should pay



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you. "Salaries are based on deliverables not your personal needs."

Always have a set amount in mind whenever asking for a pay rise. Know the market rate by being well networked, or belonging to professional organisations - where you can learn what others of your level are earning. You should also consider negotiating for benefits instead of a salary. Training sponsorships, leave days or medical cover are some of the options.

"The pay doesn't have to come in shillings and cents; the benefits at the end of the day also have a monetary aspect," says Mr Wainaina.

Ms Primrose Mukami, a HR officer with Corporate Staffing Services, who also offers soft skills training, says knowing your personal strengths helps one to market themselves. "As more people get qualified, being equipped with soft skills makes you competitive."

She says one can approach the pay rise discussions during performance reviews; or after a successful project or taking on added responsibilities, such as after working overtime for a year. "It is good timing when

Inset: Corporate Staffing Services HR officer Primrose Mukami. PHOTO: COURTESY/PHOTOS.COM

the boss still has a good taste in his mouth about your work. You don't want him to forget that you are an asset," he said.

Always approach the subject professionally. A face-to-face meeting, e-mail or letter might do, but make the discussion more about your salary than performance. Always anticipate a negative response and, of course, have a plan B.

"Never threaten to quit unless you mean it," says Mr Wainaina. "It may very well happen." A plan B could include asking for a job title commensurate with your roles, which may eventually force the company to pay you the market rates. Besides, the job title makes you more marketable. You could also always broach the pay rise subject a few months later. The extreme decision would be to look for a job with a pay you think you deserve.

To prove yourself an asset to the company, equip yourself with special skills - for instance, an IT professional could master a unique software programme, or you could learn a second language - thereby establishing a niche, or becoming proficient in many duties.

All this means more value to the employer. "Doing something great once is fine, several times even better; doing something well all the time or most of the time is best," says Mr Wainaina.

net worth



INSURANCE & YOU

The essence of compulsory insurance

When the Work Injury Benefits Act (Wiba) was made inoperative by a court decision, the issue of compulsory insurance came under the spotlight. But we still have Cap 405, which makes road accident third party injury insurance compulsory. Please comment on the subject of compulsory insurance. — C.A.J., Malindi.

The matter concerning Wiba is not yet settled because the Attorney-General filed an appeal against the court decision that negated nine provisions of the Act, thus rendering it inoperative as you rightly put it. Therefore, we cannot discuss its pros and cons without running the risk of *sub judice*. We can, however, talk about compulsory insurance in general.

It is not inimical for government to make some classes of insurance compulsory. Starting from the premise that the purpose of government is the happiness of the common man, then it can be seen why it is ethical and moral for it to enact legislation that it deems beneficial to the greatest number of people. As a result, compulsory insurance is a universal phenomenon, the most common forms being cover for certain types of injury and damage following road accidents, as well as insurance for certain injuries at work.

For example, in the UK, both motor insurance and employers' liability insurance are compulsory by law. The road traffic legislation makes cover for death of, or bodily injury to, any person and damage to third party property mandatory. Note that, unlike in Kenya where only insurance against third party injury is compulsory, in the UK third party property damage is also covered compulsorily. Then, the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 made insurance against "liability for bodily injury or disease sustained by employees and arising from their employment" mandatory. Practically all countries around the world have these and other forms of compulsory insurance.

Financial responsibility laws, explicit and implied, underpin the essence of compulsory insurance. Its law requires filing with the state authorities evidence of financial responsibility for losses or damages to third parties, following road accidents or injury at work. In some jurisdictions, motorists involved in accidents must also furnish proof of future financial responsibility for, say, three years.

Why, then, are certain forms of insurance compulsory?

■ Provision of funds: There would be no point awarding damages to someone if there was no money to meet the award. The insurance is for liability against injury mainly, emphasising the importance placed on injury in the eyes of the law. Compulsory insurance ensures, as far as possible, that funds will be available when damages are awarded.

■ Eases society's burden: It is immoral that any society or its government would allow people injured at work, or in similar accidents, to go without compensation entirely. If the responsible party did not have the funds to provide this, the likelihood is that the State, and certainly society, would come forward with some money. The existence of insurance eliminates this possibility.

■ Response to national concern: The areas where insurance is made compulsory normally represent areas of national concern. If development of, for example, motor and employers' liability insurance were to be traced, a change in public attitude would be seen. Concern over accidents became so high that it became necessary to introduce legislation to ensure provision of insurance.

— ISAAC NGARU

Questions on any aspect of insurance will be answered here. Please write to e-mail: isaacngaru@yahoo.com



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