

BUILD YOUR CASE CHECKLIST

Presenting the market value pay gap builds your case in the short term for a Competitive Pay Raise. Your documented job achievements as presented in the Pre-Meeting Memo primes you for a near-term Merit Raise.

You also need to build your case in the long term for *future* Merit Raises. In fact, getting a Merit Raise is a year-round strategic process in which you demonstrate and communicate your value.

I've combined some of my tips with the adapted advice of others^{1,2,3} to compile a checklist of Build Your Case activities. This is a career development tool to use all year round that will prime you to request and get the best possible Merit Raise every year.

PERFORMANCE: I add value to the organization with the right performance priorities.

- ☐ I do my core job *and* look for ways to add value from my manager's perspective.
- ☐ I observe and ask about my manager's priorities, and align my job activities accordingly.
- ☐ I make my manager look good, making me important to him/her and difficult to replace.
- ☐ I work hard and smart; I do a first-rate job in my required responsibilities and more.
- ☐ I can be consistently relied upon when something important needs to get done.
- ☐ I learn new skills or attain new certifications that are needed by my employer.
- ☐ I seek out highly-visible projects which showcase my strengths because this increases my value in the eyes of others which influences how my manager perceives my value.
- ☐ Wherever feasible, I seek ways to expand my job responsibilities, which is a solid basis for higher compensation, a promotion, or both.

PERFORMANCE AND DOCUMENTATION: I regularly document job achievements which show my value.

Relying on memory—mine or my manager's—to recall my job accomplishments is a costly career misstep. So...

- ☐ I track my job progress and accomplishments and translate them into results that resonate in my manager's mind to prime the path to my next pay raise.
- ☐ I regularly maintain a job journal or log of my accomplishments throughout the year, focusing on those which best align with management priorities.
- ☐ Wherever feasible, I track my accomplishments in terms that can be quantified and verified, measuring my results in language that my manager understands and values.
- ☐ I use a job journal to prepare a job performance summary and my Pre-Meeting Memo.
- ☐ I keep solicited and unsolicited thank you emails, letters of recognition, and other such communications in a file as support documentation for my next Performance Review.

SELF-PROMOTION: I communicate my career brand and my value throughout the year.

- ☐ Key influencers where I work are aware of who I am and the work I do through casual updates, visible projects, and verbal and written comments from influential supporters.
- ☐ I share the credit for my accomplishments through emails, employer Intranets and bulletins, and other forms of recognition that shine a positive light on both my co-workers and me.
- ☐ I send my manager a job performance summary (similar in content to the Pre-Meeting Memo) about three months before my Performance Review is due to be scheduled.
- ☐ I am a likable team player with a positive attitude.
- ☐ I market myself outside my job by staying visible and active professionally.

SELF-ASSESSMENT and SELF-PROMOTION: I'm aware of my market value; I periodically test the market.

- ☐ I monitor how marketable I am and what other employers would pay me as a gauge of what I should be earning where I work now.
- ☐ I compare my compensation with the latest salary survey data I can surface.
- ☐ I stay visible, connected and active within my local professional association to keep abreast of job opportunities and current salaries.
- ☐ I discreetly respond to recruiters who contact me; I talk with other employers that show an interest in me.
- ☐ I let my manager know when another employer approaches me so as to strengthen his/her view of me as a valued and sought-after professional. I carefully assess my circumstances before deciding whether or not to use the other employer's overture to negotiate a raise with my current employer.

NOTES**REFERENCE NOTES**

1. Lee E. Miller, *Get More Money on Your Next Job* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 168-172
2. Jack Chapman, *Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1000 a Minute* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2006), 145-148
3. Lee E. Miller and Jessica Miller, *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiating: How to Convince, Collaborate, & Create Your Way to Agreement* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 194-196