

Dealing with a shrewd negotiator

Q. I'm up for my annual review soon. Last year, I came in determined to get a 10 percent raise. But before I could say a word, my boss talked about how he pulled strings to get me a 6 percent raise, which was way above what everyone else was getting. He acted like he really extended himself, and I didn't want to sound ungrateful so I accepted. If he does this again, what should I do?

A. Don't roll over so easily. Your boss is a shrewd negotiator. By acting like he's a hero for getting you a smaller raise than you want, he shuts down any dickering. This time, speak up after he gives his spiel. Say, "While I appreciate all your great efforts on my behalf, I was aiming for a bit more." He may look crestfallen, but press ahead. Present your case for whatever raise you deem fair, providing plenty of evidence and precedent to support your point. But don't lecture. Let him object or discuss the reality of how much of a raise he can offer. By listening, you can propose a solution that alleviates his concerns and satisfies your goals.