

# Are you really worth the money you think you are?

**Q:** “Even though I am a top performer, my pay is low based on market comparisons. To be smart about my career, I believe that I should refuse to accept this mediocre salary. My performance review is coming up, so I plan to make my case for receiving market-level compensation.

“I made this request last year, but nothing ever happened. It seems weird that management won’t work to keep me, because I add value in so many ways. If I’m offered a standard 5% raise, how do I say, ‘Thanks, but I’m worth more than that. What can you do to bring my pay up to market level?’” *Underpaid*

**A:** You certainly have no shortage of confidence. However, justifying a raise requires more than confidence and compensation data.

Salary decisions are based not only on market comparisons, but also on internal factors. For example, how does your pay compare with that of other employees? How close are you to the top of your pay scale? Did your company have a good year financially?

You must also assess how much leverage you have. Do you possess unique knowledge or hard-to-find skills? If you left, would it be difficult to replace you?

Most importantly, however, you need to find out why your previous request was rejected. That would seem to be the obvious starting point for planning your next approach.

*If you plan to ask for a raise, be smart about it! Here are some helpful guidelines: [How to Ask for a Raise](#).*

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