

# When your colleagues earn more than you

When you find out a colleague is earning more than you it can feel demotivating.

It's natural to want to stand up for yourself - especially if you feel that you work harder or have achieved more than your colleagues. But before you take action and storm into the boss's office read these dos and don'ts.

- **Do:** work out why this has happened. Ask yourself first, says Roman Rogers, executive general manager at Hudson if your colleague really is earning what he or she claims. Then factor in:
  - if the market forces were different when your colleague was employed?
  - is he/she better at negotiation?
  - does your colleague have a higher education level or more experience? and
  - has he/she performed well on critical projects?
- **Don't:** act in haste. "Take time to calm your jets," says Rogers. "You want to go in with credibility." You're more likely to lose face by losing your cool than gain a salary rise.
- **Do:** be calm. We know you probably feel angry and hurt. But conflict is always best handled when you've had time to cool down. [Emotional intelligence](#) goes a long way in the workplace.
- **Don't:** get angry with your colleague. It's not his or her fault. If you're seething it could affect your work and the vibe in your workplace. That won't further your case for being worth more.
- **Do:** research. Facts and figures are more compelling than emotions, so find out what your job is worth in the marketplace. Make sure you know what "good" looks like in your role and that you can demonstrate that your performance meets those expectations, says Rogers. "In all challenging conversations, preparation is the key."

- **Don't:** tell your boss that he or she can pay you more or stick the job. If pushed into a corner your employer may choose to let you move on. What's more, [sometimes there are benefits to staying in a job you hate](#).
- **Do:** talk to trusted professionals. A recruiter can help you determine your worth in the marketplace. A career coach can assist you in putting this information into the context of your career and to build a case to ask for a [pay rise](#).
- **Don't:** diss your colleague. This is about why you're worth more, not how bad or undeserving your colleague is.
- **Do:** be professional when asking for a raise. Make an appointment and forewarn your boss about the purpose of the meeting. Present your research and make a solid case for your pay rise. Have alternatives to salary lined up if your boss accepts that you're worth more, but doesn't have the cash to give. Could the organisation, for example, pay for continuing education or other perks?
- **Don't:** be disheartened. Show your worth and ask again in six months' time.

Finally: the positive "can do" employee is valued in every workplace. However hard-done-by you feel, look for ways to step above what's happened.

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