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*The archtoolbox.com WORKBOOK for*

# Negotiating a Salary Increase

Get a Raise Now...and then Keep Them Coming

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[Archtoolbox.com](#) is a website dedicated to helping architects do their jobs better and more efficiently. We have a growing catalog of technical articles, a list of product manufacturers at [archimat.archtoolbox.com](#), and we are starting to create a series of digital tools including:

Archtoolbox Bluebeam Tools and Templates

The [archtoolbox.com](#) Guide to Developing a Fee for Architectural Services

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## Introduction

According to [payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com), fewer than 50% of people have asked for a pay raise in their current field.<sup>1</sup> Their data cited a few reasons people don't negotiate an increase:

- Uncomfortable talking about money
- Didn't want to seem pushy or greedy
- Afraid of losing their job or annoying their boss

An important thing to understand about the reasons above, which you may also be feeling, are that they are usually perceived fears. In a professional environment, like an architecture or design firm, your supervisor will not hold salary negotiation against you if you go about it in a calm and responsible way.

Unfortunately, once your salary falls behind you'll have a very hard time getting back to where you belong. It is especially important early in your career, when you are probably least comfortable asking for an increase. This is due of the compounding nature of salary increases where this year's percentage increase is on top of all previous year's increases.

The good news is that the same [payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com) survey cited above indicated that 75% of people who asked for a raise received an increase. If you go about it the right way, you have a great shot at increasing your salary.

## Why Write This Guide?

Simple. There is so much unnecessary anxiety surrounding asking for a raise. This workbook will give you the tools you need to calm those fears so you can confidently ask your boss for more money. The number

one goal of this guide is to give you the confidence to ask for a raise. The number two goal is to arm you with the skills necessary to get the raise you ask for.

In addition to giving you the confidence, the guide will also help you develop a good strategy for making the ask. So many people go about salary negotiations in the wrong way – they make demands or ultimatums, or they simply use the wrong reasons – so their employers are less likely to give a raise and they may even lose respect for the employee. There are plenty of horror stories out there from both employers and employees, but they are easy to avoid if you plan correctly and take the right action.

This guide is setup as a workbook. Each section includes a detailed discussion of each section followed by relevant worksheets that will help you decide how much money to ask for and prepare you for the discussion. The chapters, or steps, are as follows:

1. Understand your position – know where you stand
2. Understand your firm's position – the pressures they are under relative to salaries
3. Establish a target salary – where you should be based on the market conditions
4. Set up a conversation
5. Make the ask – notice the word *conversation* in the previous step
6. Prepare for the future, whether you get a raise or not

## Who is it for?

This guide is written for architects and interior designers so there are references to design firms and the different management structures employed by those firms. Other people who may benefit are engineers

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1 <http://www.payscale.com/salary-negotiation-guide/consequences-not-negotiating-salary>, retrieved May 2017.

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working in the construction fields, building design consultants, and perhaps product or graphic designers. However, the advice applies to virtually any profession and field – you’ll just have to make some small adjustments when reading so that the terms are more applicable.

The strategies and advice included here are applicable to employees at virtually every level in a company, whether you are about to ask for your first raise, have worked for many years, have received mediocre raises, or even haven’t had success getting pay increases. This guide will give you the knowledge and confidence to make a request and will provide tips that will lead to a productive conversation between you and your employer. And in the event that you aren’t successful getting the increase you desire, this guide will set you up for a successful follow-up request sometime in the future.

## About the Author

My name is Michael Noll and I am an architect with over 15 years of experience. I’ve asked for raises, advocated to firm leaders for other colleagues, and worked closely with people who made salary decisions. I’ve heard the horror stories about poorly executed salary discussions from people on both sides of the table. I’ve offered some of the advice contained in this guide to friends and colleagues. More importantly, I’ve received much of this advice from other successful architects and firm leaders.

## Important Instructions

A lot of you will skim through this workbook and absorb much of the advice, then you’ll head off to the office to ask your boss for a raise. Hopefully the text in this book offers enough value that you will be successful.

However, to get the most out of this workbook and to set yourself up for the most success, **please take the time to fill out the worksheets and do the exercises.** It is important that you think carefully about where you are in your career and you have to do the research that will help you understand the market for your skills. This can’t be overstated: **please fill out the worksheets and do the exercises.**

Let’s get started with the first very simple exercise. You will be asked to collect a lot of information that will help you prepare for making the request for a salary increase and you will need a place to keep all of this information, whether that be a digital folder on your computer or a three-ring binder. This will be a valuable tool over the course of your career so you always have the data at hand and also so you can monitor your progress over the years.

### EXERCISE: RECORD KEEPING

Establish a filing system for all of your career and salary records - either digital on your computer/in the cloud, or with an analog three-ring binder.

From now on, keep any career information in this folder, including:

1. Lists of accomplishments
2. Performance reviews
3. Salary history and reviews
4. Positive comments from colleagues, consultants, and clients
5. Recent market research on salaries
6. Anything else you may find helpful relative to career advancement