

THE thought of going into your boss's office to ask for a raise is a little scary, even in good times, so now that everyone is feeling the pinch it is even more daunting. But if you believe that you deserve more, you owe it to yourself to state your case.

Martin Westcott, MD of P-E Corporate Services, says asking for a raise is always tricky, but especially so at this time. "More and more companies have had to economise and have waived increases this year."

David Conradie, director of human capital at Deloitte, says: "Many companies have decided not to give increases or to give lower increases. If you are planning to approach your boss for an increase, you will need to show that you are going beyond what is expected."

He says that, when asking for a raise, you need to communicate clearly with your boss and not work off assumptions. It is also important, he says, to take responsibility for your career and make the business case for why you should get a raise, making it clear why you are an asset to the organisation even, or especially, in these tough times.

Though it may seem easier for those in sales, where their performance has a clear financial value, Conradie says that everyone can sit down with their boss and show them what they have delivered.

Westcott says there are three areas to consider when wanting to discuss a raise:

- Your key objectives according to your performance appraisal — what you have achieved and where you have exceeded your objectives;

- If you are in a position that is classified as a scarce skill — for example IT, telecoms, or engineering — this will put you in a more influential position; and

- You can also discuss with your boss what you would need to do in terms of development to be considered for promotion.

Westcott says that ideally you should have the type of relationship with your boss that means you can always go in and discuss your job prospects, but an increase can also be discussed as part of your performance appraisal. However, if this

Asking for more money

There's no harm in approaching the boss, even in a recession, writes **Margaret Harris**

happens only once a year, you may want to make a separate appointment with your boss. He says that if your request is part of the performance appraisal, it can help to give the discussion more structure.

In some cases, says Westcott, the boss may say that the company has a six-month strategy to get out of the financial hole, and then you will be offered a raise.

You are then in a position to decide whether you can wait or should move on.

However, he says, it is risky to go to another company when people are still retrenching. In your new company you will fit into the precarious "last-in" category and will not have had enough time to prove

your worth when the hatchet falls.

Sandra Burmeister, CEO of the Landelahn Recruitment Group, has a word of warning, especially for young professionals looking for increases: "Over the halcyon growth years, young professionals became used to earning enormous salaries. In South Africa, that has been exacerbated by gender and equity premiums. It was an age of abundance for employees, and salary expectations rose dramatically. Employees now need to set realistic remuneration targets for themselves as South Africa readies itself to step out of recession."

"While leading economic indicators may



MOTIVATING FOR MORE: Make sure you're properly prepared when you ask for a salary increase

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show that, technically, the recession is easing, it will be months, if not years, before South Africa sees the kind of growth it requires as a developing economy.

"Moreover, global realignment may well

be balanced by better corporate governance to mitigate the effects of greed, and that may hold salaries in check."

Whatever you decide to do, remember that each boss is different, and you will

know the best way to approach him or her on this sensitive issue.

However, most bosses will be more amenable to the request if you take the time and effort to prepare your request.

