

Promoting within your company

Introduction

{jcomments off} Promoting within your company

It's time you got promoted. At least, you are convinced it is or your boss is. Great. Promotions can be wonderful events in your life. New job, new responsibilities, more pay or better benefits. An office of your own. A (better) company car.

The list can be quite long depending on where you are and where you are promoting to. It can also mean a few more dollars for a lot more work. Promotions differ. Some can't even be called promotions even though they are treated or presented as such.

Generally, a job promotion should contain at least some of the following:

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More pay

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Better benefits

-

More responsibility - managing people

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More responsibility - work related

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More say about how things are done

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Possibilities for training or studies

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Improved workplace or conditions

Let's have a closer look at these and other benefits of a promotion. We are going to be very critical here because you need to be aware that what may be presented as a golden goose can be a live rat instead. And the company itself may not even know this.

More pay

One of the more pleasing effects of a job promotion is that you generally get more money to take home. How much can differ greatly depending on various factors:

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Your company works with wage scales

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Your job function is not clear - the amount of work is!

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Your company considers more pay irrelevant compared to the joy of working there.

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More pay will be deferred until later. Perhaps after a probationary period.

-

Unless you negotiate you get pennies rather than dollars.

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Your boss loves you.

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Your boss hates you but is forced to promote you.

These factors all decide in how much, if any, more pay you will get. But, in the spirit of assertiveness (standing up for yourself), you should try and go for the maximum. Don't just accept the offer you get, question it.

Negotiate

If you think you should not or are not in a position to make any questions or suggestions, think again. You want or are getting promoted. This means that someone higher up the ladder has evaluated your performance - or you have done so yourself - and has come to the conclusion you can do better and that you should be rewarded for your efforts and expertise.

This gives you an angle. And "Yes", you *should* be opportunistic and at least mildly ambitious. If not, don't read on, go to another section. There is really no point in wanting or accepting a promotion if you are already so perfectly happy in your job that it doesn't matter what you get.

But we believe that a promotion means you have got what it takes. At least a little. And that you want more. So we are going to use this opportunity to get what we want.

In order to have a basis for negotiation you need to have ammunition. Make up a list of

things you would change once in your new job. This list should include functional points as well as personal points. Consider the following:

Yes/No	I want to change for the better	
	The work can be done more efficiently if we change certain	procedures.
	The work can be done better if we change the working	environment.
	The work can be done better if we change working times.	
	I can do a better job if I have my own telephone, email,	voicemail, internet access, desk.
	We can do a better job with new equipment or software.	

Job promotions are nuggets of gold, worth a great deal but not easily found, and you should make the best of them. Whether you are being offered or looking for a promotion, you need to prove your worth to the company. You want to be worth your increased pay, so find ways to improve the work or work environment. Think about it.

Better benefits

Sometimes a promotion doesn't offer more pay but better or more benefits. The term "benefits" can mean any of the following:

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Better health insurance for you and your family.

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Stock options.

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End of Year bonuses.

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A (better) company car.

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More travel.

-

A company credit card or expense account.

Each of the above can be converted to a cash equivalent but the company may want to reward you benefits rather than pay. Of course, the best promotions include both pay and benefits.

But if you are not getting a pay raise but one of the above you need to be cautious. Any or all of them can have consequences on your current pay or position. For example, a (better) company car may mean that your part of the costs has risen too. You may need to pay your own fuel or a higher insurance premium.

Health coverage and stock options

The same goes for health insurance packages. While you may get better coverage, your premium can also be higher.

With stock options you need to be particularly careful. It sounds great. You get a part of the company and your good work will convert to a higher stock price, increasing your funds. Great.

But many companies have severe limitations on their stock options. Find out if any of the following are true and see whether you are happy with it. For example:

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When you leave the company, you get the same value for them as when you got them rather than the current value. This could be considerably less!

-

You are not allowed to sell your stock.

-

Your stock is being held in a savings fund and you really have no ownership at all.

-

You are not allowed to purchase (more) stock yourself.

Bonuses, cars and credit cards

As far as End of Year Bonuses are concerned just make sure you know what you get after taxes. These bonus amounts are generally before taxes and you'd be surprised how little can be left after all the taxes have been paid on them. So don't be overjoyed - consider that generally 60% will be tax. Still happy? Great.

Being allowed to travel more also means that you will be away from home more and that you will be working in other places than behind your desk. In a hotel room (or bar) for example or at a client's company. It also means driving or flying a lot with all the negative effects that can have on a person.

The company credit card is another great benefit which has had many executives burst down in tears once they find out how much of the bill is actually theirs to pay and not the company's.

Company credit cards and expense accounts are severely limited. The glorious days of "Spend, spend, spend" are gone. Unless you are at a high executive level. And even then it has limits.

The company will have a list of expenses which are covered and which are not. Generally, all expenses will have their maximum charge. For example, hotel rooms. Lunches are not always chargeable and neither are dinners. After all, when at home you pay for your own lunch and dinner too. Fuel costs are usually covered but are more often than not checked against "necessary" distance.

Buying goods on company credit cards is generally not allowed. You will have to clarify and justify your expenses if you do charge goods. Best is to check with your department first before you pass that card through the reader.

In the end it is obvious that additional benefits are not always what they seem and that it is important not to let your initial enthusiasm get you carried away.

More responsibility - managing people

Many promotions include, or are based on, more responsibility. This too can come in different ways.

Do you have it in you?

Some people have it in them to motivate others, some don't. Other people are what is called a "natural leader". Most aren't. Some people just have a big mouth and get themselves in positions they shouldn't be. Other people are very capable of leading a team but are too meek to speak up and get these positions.

The one thing they all have in common is that they are in a position of responsibility. Responsible position are often taken too lightly. Sometimes they are taken too seriously. Both of these attitudes are extremes of something which should be in balance. Be ready for difficulty.

Are you liked or disliked?

Many management methods have been defined over the years. But we are not going to list them here. What we will mention are the foundations of management, regardless of scientific method. And one of those basics is how your colleagues see you.

Consider the following:

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Do people listen to you when you talk about the work?

-

Do people ask your advice about work related matters?

-

Do people trust you with their errors?

-

Do people ask you to put forward a petition or request on their behalf?

-

Do you get a cheerful "good morning" when you arrive?

-

Are people patient and helpful when you need something?

-

Do they accept you correcting them?

Or:

-

Do people avoid you when you have questions?

-

Do people walk away when you talk about work related matters?

-

Does no one say goodbye at the end of the day? Do they say "good morning" to you?

-

Are you being corrected a lot in work matters?

-

Does the mood change whenever you are present?

-

Do they tell you to go away whenever you need their help?

Not very scientific, you say? Maybe. However, these are simple signals from your colleagues. They can tell you quite a lot about who you are and how other people see you. Which one of these people would they accept easier as their new superior? Think about it.

Culture can make a great difference in the workplace depending on where you are. In some countries authority alone will guarantee cooperation, for example. However, even when bound by duty or culture, having someone you like to work for is still more enjoyable and motivates much more than working for someone you dislike or fear.

Interpersonal relationships make a difference

After all, we are talking here about promoting within your company. This means the people you work with have had ample time to assess you. And they did. There is no place so critical as the work place when it comes to interpersonal relationships.

Now you can argue that interpersonal relationships do not matter. It's not important whether people like you or not but that they accept you in charge. Strictly speaking, this is true. But job attitudes have changed a lot over the past decades and so have people in the work place. You cannot disregard it so easily any more.

Not just that but people who work well together because they enjoy to work as a team are much more productive and capable than a group of people who all have the right qualifications but severely dislike each other.

So if you fall into the latter category then it is high time you do something about your attitude so that you can work well in your new job. Part of your new responsibility is to keep the people that work for you satisfied so they do their job well. This reflects directly on you and your capacity to lead them. Disregarding their happiness is asking for trouble down the road.

Work related responsibility

Responsibility comes in two main varieties. One is toward your fellow employees and the other is toward your work.

In a lateral promotion - one where you do not get to lead people but where your job responsibilities increase - the pressure is on your personal performance and not on that of other people.

You obviously do your job so well that your employer has decided to give you more important work to do. You should still get more pay or benefits (see above) so make sure you negotiate before accepting.

A change of work responsibility can mean any of the following:

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You need to learn something new.

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You will work later or do overtime.

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You will need to work with other people than you did before.

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You may change your location within the company.

If you are bored with your work than an increase in job responsibility can be enough to get you motivated again. Since we are talking about promotion here you need to assess whether this change in work is just a change in work or an increase in difficulty of work. In the latter case you should not accept it without a reward in one form or another.

If you need to learn or do training, it would seem logical that the company pays, not you. Find out. Taking on more difficult work is beneficial to the company and they should pay for any training necessary. Not only that, try and do the training on company's time, not your own. Most companies should not have a problem with this.

If your new responsibilities mean working overtime this may be something you need to communicate to the home front. Or you may have hobbies or other free time interests which may suffer. You may need to reschedule some activities.

Working with other people than you are accustomed to can be an extra stress load in addition to that of your new responsibility. Take time to get to know your new colleagues. If they are not sure why you are there, explain it to them.

Changing your trusted desk for a new one elsewhere in the company may have effect on your feeling of security and that of others. Make sure your new work place is comfortable, well lit and has adequate ventilation. Have a look around before you accept it.

More say about how things are done

If your promotion gets you a seat on one or several meetings where company policies are discussed, use this time wisely. In general there are far too many unproductive meetings going on in companies. Don't waste your time sitting in on meetings where nothing happens. Better spend your time working.

In a way similar to on line discussion groups, chat forums and newsgroups, being the newcomer on a regular meeting can be unnerving. So don't be discouraged if you have a hard time following what goes on. Meetings are one of the places in a company where power structures become visible. You would do well to be quiet and observe until you are aware of this flow.

Unless you have been asked to prepare a presentation, report or other information to be discussed, learn if the meetings have any purpose - if not, find ways to excuse yourself for the next one! - and participate in a structured manner.

Your opinion will be appreciated and your ideas listened to once you are accepted into the group. Not before. Identify your foes and find your allies before you assert yourself and you will get a lot more done.

Meetings are only part of having a say in how things are done. Within your own department is where your calling lies to improve everything you can. Just don't go forcing yourself and your ideas on your "sheep". They'll stop bleating and start

barking if you do.

Make suggestions and ask them how they feel, what they want and what they think. Whether you decide to follow up or not is not as important as giving them a feeling of co-responsibility about their working life. Work with them!

Training or education

Promotions often necessitate extra training or even complete courses. Find out what is necessary and who is going to pay for it.

We have a complete section on Training and Education where you can find all the information on day and night courses, seminars, workshops and on the job training in the form of Computer and Internet Based Training.



I want to know more about training and education.

Your new work environment

Promotions can mean that you will be relocated. You may get a new desk or an office of your own.

Your new workplace is important. Make sure it is comfortable to work, well ventilated and has the right office furniture and equipment you need to get the job done. What is the point of getting promoted if your work environment stops you from working properly. Remember, efficiency is greatly reduced under cramped or uncomfortable working conditions.

Please check our Ergonomics section for information on work environments and related subjects. Other subjects of interest before you accept your promotion are also listed below.



I want to know if I am qualified for the job I want.



There are legal issues involved and I want to know more about how to handle them.



I want to know more about work environments because there may be health issues I should



I want to know more about rules and regulations.