

7 things you wish you could tell your boss (and how to do it)

Some topics are hard to bring up at work. Whether you're wanting more money, feeling overworked or otherwise, there can be things you're itching to tell your boss, but don't know how to.

Certain things you just can't bring up as you pass your boss in the hallway. And if you're working remotely, it can feel even trickier to set up the right way to talk. But if there's something bothering you, it's worth trying to resolve.

We asked members of the SEEK community across a range of industries to share what they wished they could say to their bosses.

Here, career coach Nicole Grainger-Marsh shares her tips on how to tackle these conversations.

1. **“Just let me do my job remotely. I don't need to physically be here.”**

COVID-19 forced many people to take up remote work and for some, it's a change they'd like to continue – at least some of the time. If you want to speak to your boss about this, you need to focus on the benefits for your boss and your organisation, not why it suits you, Grainger-Marsh says. “Think about how working remotely will deliver improved outcomes – maybe you will be more productive without the interruptions of a busy office.”

If your boss is reluctant, suggest a trial. “During this time, keep track of benefits, productivity and any other improvements to sell to your boss at check-in time.”

Rethinking the way you work because of COVID-19? [Here are more tips on how to tell your boss you want to work differently now.](#)

2. **“The new staff you hired aren't up to scratch.”**

Approach this conversation with caution, as questioning your boss's decision can make them feel undermined, says Grainger-Marsh. Instead of criticising, ask your boss how you can help.

“Suggest ways that you could support the new hire in improving skills, learning processes or developing in certain areas. This way your boss is aware of what's going on, feels that you can be relied on to help, and is in a position to take action with the new hire if your shared plan doesn't pay off.”

3. **“Lead by example. Don't just quote the company values.”**

Many larger organisations have values – for example ‘honesty’ or ‘innovation’ – written

into a statement. Smaller businesses may not have them formally recorded. Either way, if you feel there's a mismatch between values and how things are done in your team, there are ways you can encourage your boss to define values and help to bring them into the way you work.

Grainger-Marsh recommends suggesting that your team creates its own mission statement. "This is a great way to create a sense of shared meaning, values and goals amongst the team, providing more fulfilling working relationships, increased motivation and a sense of fun."

4. **"Tell us what's happening in the business. Don't set a meeting and not show up!"**

Feel like your boss is barely around, or that they're always unavailable? It's possible that they're so busy they don't realise the negative impact their absence is having on you, Grainger-Marsh says. Rather than finger-pointing, it's better to have an upfront and honest conversation with them.

"Explain to them the value that you get from your meeting time together, for example getting their input means you can keep momentum going on projects, and that having an understanding of the wider organisation helps you operate more effectively."

5. **"I love my job, but I feel overworked and undervalued and I'm looking elsewhere."**

Hard-working employees can sometimes find themselves with hands-off managers, as they have complete confidence in their ability to do their job, says Grainger-Marsh.

Unfortunately, this can lead to the employees burning out.

If you're feeling overworked or undervalued, it's best to tell your boss why you feel this way and talk through the changes that need to be made to turn this around. "Agree to some tangible actions that you can both put in place and check in regularly to discuss progress. If your boss isn't open to this approach, it's time to look elsewhere."

You might also want to check out these tips on [how to say 'no' and set boundaries at work](#) and [how to recognise burnout](#).

6. **"Pay me more money."**

Asking for a pay rise can be especially daunting, but the right preparation can help. It's important to consider pay in your industry, plus your timing and the broader environment – especially in tough economic times.

You'll also need to prepare your case about why you deserve a pay rise and back this up

with examples, says Grainger-Marsh. “Maybe it’s that your duties have expanded, or you’ve started to manage people. Whatever the reason, go into the discussion with it clearly documented, along with your pay expectations.”

If they can’t give you a pay rise immediately, discuss a timeline for when and how it could happen. “You could even discuss other ways the organisation could recognise you, such as flexible working hours or a new title.”

It’s also important to schedule pay rise conversations in advance. [Check out these pay rise tips](#) for more help, plus [what you can say when you ask for a pay rise](#).

7. **“I wish you’d value people over money when times get tough.”**

The coronavirus pandemic has made times particularly tough for people and businesses. If you’re worried about losing your job, struggling to balance work and home life or need tips on coping, there is [advice and resources to help you through COVID-19](#).

“When organisations go through difficult times it’s not uncommon for leaders to retreat; sharing little information and seemingly focusing on the bottom line,” says Grainger-Marsh.

To deal with this, focus on what you can do for yourself and those around you to feel more valued. “Recognise your own input and the input of others, provide support to teammates, and let your boss know when a job has been done well.”

These conversations can feel harder if you’re working remotely, but setting up a dedicated time for a video or phone call with your boss can help. If you don’t have a regular remote catch up, send a meeting request saying you’d like to check in to talk through your current work or some concerns (it’s important to be specific if you’re talking about a pay rise, however).

Bringing up these sorts of questions with your boss can be daunting, but letting issues go unresolved can often make things worse in the long run. Approaching these topics thoughtfully and openly can help you to work through them, and help your boss to see things from your perspective.