

How should readers try to tackle the following common workplace difficulties?

Inadequate salary

Salary is a trade-off of your time for cash. You get paid for the value your work represents and how easily you can be replaced. You need to be rare and indispensable. Reinvent who you are. Look for companies that will pay you more money, and then ask for it. You need to be ready to give notice if your company calls your bluff.

Difficult co-workers

It is always about communication and leverage. Talk to your manager and maybe even the co-worker. This IS a management issue, not just yours. It can be dangerous for you to take action by yourself, but it's also natural to do so. Tread carefully.

Difficult line manager

Can you reframe the problem internally by becoming emotionally detached? Can you speak about it, as if you are discussing a third person suffering from your problem, and ask for advice? This allows your boss to address your problem without being in the actual spotlight. Failing these options, go higher or sideways for advice. Be prepared to leave if you don't get what you need. Life is too short to endure behaviour that can turn your job into a nightmare.

Boredom

Are you getting enough challenges? Maybe you need a new job description or job, but if you like the job and the wages, you should consider more stimulating hobbies and pastimes so that your work-life balance is better. It might not be the job but what you are doing in it.

No room for progression/promotion

With smaller companies, this is a problem. If the money is tolerable, but growth is limited, ask for opportunities to move sideways and take on new skills by transferring to another department or a change in core responsibilities. Failing that, look at outside courses that will challenge you. Some employers will pay for this, just to keep you happy. Explore online courses and training opportunities, and be prepared to invest in yourself too. Eventually, you will have to move on or up, but it doesn't have to be as immediate as you may think.

Lack of basic training or equipment

Talk to your organisation about what is needed. If the company isn't willing to pay, consider whether you truly need the knowledge or items and if they are worth paying for yourself. If you are not satisfied, maybe, it's not the job or company for you after all.

Feeling unappreciated

Decide whether this is a personal slight or a business oversight. Often managers find it difficult to give praise, and this can result in employees feeling taken for granted; sometimes it's political. Appraisals typically ignore successes and concentrate on 'areas for improvement'. This is wrong. Growth comes from improving your strengths and all but ignoring your weaknesses. Keep a log of successes, and maybe, ask for testimonials from customers, your manager or even colleagues stating how important your input was to the end result. This might seem egotistical, but it could end up being the only evidence in an internal enquiry that you were a model employee.

