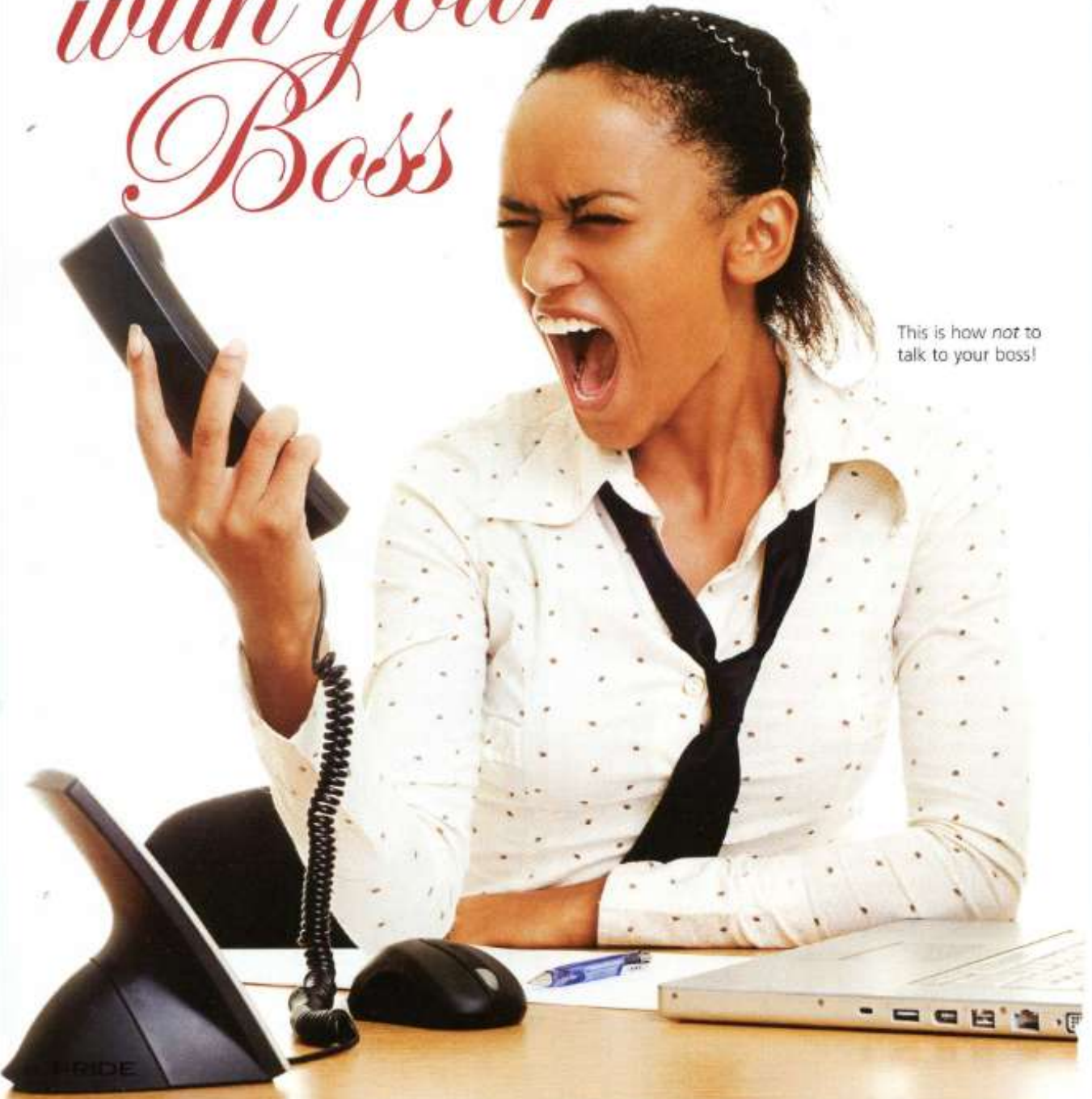


# PRIDE

CAREERS

## HOW TO HAVE THOSE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

*with your  
Boss*



This is how *not* to  
talk to your boss!



Elizabeth Kuhnke is Managing Director of Kuhnke Communication, and has over 20 years experience working with FTSE 100 companies. Her international best selling book *Body Language for Dummies* is the brand's number two bestseller in the UK. She tells *Pride* how to have those difficult conversations you dread with your boss.

**B**efore any discussion, make an appointment, be prepared, and remain objective. Jumping in with no warning puts your boss on the back foot and on the defensive. Being emotional creates upset and is unprofessional. Say that you'd like to meet to discuss an issue of importance and ask when would be convenient for them to speak. Keep your emotions out of the conversation. Think through your situation and how your boss might respond. Be prepared, direct and polite. At the end of all conversations, smile, shake hands and thank your boss. Remember: your reputation relies on how you manage these conversations. Burn no bridges. Be careful and considerate. Be positive and generous. Be a class act.

### I'M LEAVING

Without having a plan in place you risk harming your boss' position, your team and your career. Think through your reasons for leaving. Look at the big picture and act from a plan. Reflect on your situation, the big picture you have for your life and where the job fits in. NEVER leave in a huff. Doing so harms the company and damages your reputation. Take your boss' position into account and how your decision might impact them. Define and agree upon a reasonable notice period. Often this can be stipulated by your contract so it's

a good idea to check what you are obligated to, sometimes it can be four weeks, sometimes 12. If this isn't mentioned in your contract then no less than two weeks and no more than six is reasonable. Offer to help interview and train your replacement. Offer to work overtime to document your current projects and ask colleagues to review your documents for thoroughness. Agree how your boss will announce the transition and live by the plan. Better to have a formal announcement than to leak the news around the water cooler.

### I'M PREGNANT

As long as you're confident that your boss will handle the news in a professional manner, announce the pregnancy as early as possible in order to take advantage of any employer-provided services that can help make your pregnancy healthier and less stressful. If you're concerned about your employer's reaction, proceed with caution. You are not required to let your employer know you're pregnant until your 25th week. If you need to take time off for antenatal appointments you may want to announce your pregnancy before then. Don't say anything until you've passed your first trimester. Advise your boss that you want to receive statutory maternity pay and when you will start your leave (this can't be earlier than 11 weeks before your baby's due). Your employer has 28 days in which to reply, including advising you the date the company expects you to return if you decide to take your full leave entitlement. Keep yourself well informed about your rights, stay calm, and treat the issue as you would any other professional matter. Be open, honest, and non-apologetic.

### I WANT A PAY RISE

Research what's appropriate for your job in the market. Find out what your employer's pay practices are. If the standard practice is to offer salary increases once a year after your annual review, you probably won't get a rise any other time. If the company offers more frequent rises, you'll have more luck asking for one. Read your employee handbook to find out the process of pay raises. If a policy exists, follow it exactly. Ask others in similar jobs in similar industries what a competitive salary would be.

You can also go to professional associations for salary surveys. Once you've done your research, you should have a good idea of how competitive your salary is within your industry. Your next step is to look at your work contributions to determine how you'll present your request. Ask yourself why you believe you deserve a raise in order to support your request. If you can't justify a salary raise now, ask your boss what you need to do to qualify for the highest possible pay raises in the future. Make a list of what you've accomplished for the company and how your contribution has helped the organisation. If possible, document cost savings, productivity improvement, projects achieved, superior customer service, and ways you've surpassed expectations.

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List any additional responsibilities you have undertaken. Have a pay increase goal in mind that rewards your contributions and duties. ☺