

One-on-One Meetings

To be an effective manager who successfully leads others, you need to engage in frequent and open communication with your individual team members. You can accomplish this with one-on-one meetings that you hold regularly and consistently, on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

Why It Matters

One-on-one meetings with your individual team members provide an opportunity for you to connect and drive the action forward for individual development and company objectives. It's a personal approach that cultivates engagement, ownership, and job satisfaction.

How It's Done

Ultimately, you set the direction for the team, however, it's best to approach one-on-ones as *the team member's time*, letting them lead the conversation.

Best Practices for One-on-Ones

Research has pointed us towards best practices for conducting one-on-ones. These are not rules or absolutes, only guidelines.

- Weekly meetings are optimal; bi-weekly at least. Aim for regularity and consistency.
- Keep meetings short – 30 minutes; 20-45 minutes is the typical range.
- The team member owns the agenda. As a manager, you have 20% ownership for questions, feedback, updates, etc.
- Let your team member do most of the talking. Limit your talking time to 20% or less of the meeting. That may involve asking “what” questions, coaching, offering support. It's about empowering them to take ownership.
- You know 100% of the names of their immediate family members. This is not a rule, but it speaks to the idea that it's important to know each team member as a whole person, beyond simply seeing them as the role they play at work. It's about making meaningful connections.
- You know what drives/motivates each one of your direct reports; you understand their values. This important information helps you to leverage their strengths, and to guide and support them. Notice their values that come up in your conversations. Consider doing a values activity as a team, in which you all share your values and interests (yours included).

Tone and spirit of the one-on-one

- Both the team member and the manager should state their intentions at the beginning of the meeting.
- Energize the meeting by being engaged and caring.
- Listen with curiosity.
- Acknowledge and appreciate the team member and their contribution(s). When you point out things you appreciate, they will do them more often.
- Use “what” questions to go deeper, and if needed, restate what the team member is saying to make sure you understand.
- Brainstorm new ideas, with both you and your team members on equal footing.
- Remember that all people are creative and resourceful. Look for the bright spots.
- While you should respect your boundaries as a manager and team member, allow for a relationship that is caring and meaningful.
- Create a common ground of personal connection through mutually sharing about who you are and life outside of work.
- Offer feedback and coaching to help team members grow personally and professionally.

PRACTICE

Coaching questions for a simple one-on-one:

- What’s on your mind?
- What do you want to take away from this meeting today?

If the meeting feels stuck, try a few of these questions to encourage dialogue with your team member:

- What’s been your biggest success in the last 2 weeks?
- What’s been your biggest challenge?
- What’s the one rock in the road that you feel you have to keep stepping over?
- Where are you taking your foot off the gas in the business?
- For you to become more effective in your role, what’s one thing you could change?
- What’s the most important thing to you about your job?
- How can I support you?
- What are you most proud of this week?
- What is causing you stress this week?
- What can I do to help?

RESOURCES

[The Secret To Effective One-On-One Meetings with Direct Reports](#) Forbes

[How to Make Your One-On-Ones with Employees More Productive](#) HBR

[www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/08/04/coaching-is-the-new-managing-how-to-hold-one-on-one-meetings/\\$5b4ff7e826c4](http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/08/04/coaching-is-the-new-managing-how-to-hold-one-on-one-meetings/$5b4ff7e826c4)

www.radicalcandor.com/effective-one-on-ones

www.lattice.com/library/10-questions-to-ask-employees-during-remote-one-on-ones