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One on One Meeting Health Check

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Are Your Meetings Moving You Forward or Holding You Back?

Your one on one meeting is a way to stay connected with your employees. As we move out of the Age of Information and into the Age of the Customer, deep human connections matter more than ever. This is

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true of our external customers and also our internal customers.

"Have richer conversations that go beyond performance reviews."— HR Director Emily Charlton

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connections with your employees means having richer conversations that go beyond performance reviews and, “Hi, how was your weekend?” That means getting to know your employees on a deeper

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level, both professionally and personally. When you do so, you build trust and a deeper working relationship. This helps you get more done, and it makes your jobs more enjoyable. Think about the people you buy from, hire, and enjoy working with: It's people you share connections with.

Your one on one meeting is the place to build this bond. Here's how to do it.

The Human Side of Your One on One

What makes your employees tick? Do you know? As a project or resource manager, it's important to know your individual team members' career goals. It's equally important to know their personal situations.

Once you establish a working relationship with your employees, you can have an open communication

environment that lets them let you know what's going on in their lives. That helps you set them up for [success in the office](#).

*"Meet at least once a month,
and meet weekly if your
company moves fast." — HR
Director Emily Charlton*

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Scheduling Your One on One

Finding the right cadence for your one on ones is a function of the size and agility of your team. If you

have a bigger team, such as more than five people, you might meet with one person a day. That could mean your one on one meeting with each person recurs every two weeks. In addition, how fast you move contributes to how frequently you should meet. At a very fast moving company, once a week is ideal. As a manager, you have to find the cadence that sets yourself up for success. Here are a few suggestions:

- Meet weekly if you move fast
- Meeting once a month is as infrequently as I would advise
- Avoid scheduling more than one person for a one on one each day

By following these guidelines, you let yourself focus on each individual as part of the bigger team.

Once you find your cadence, add your meetings to

your calendar. This lets your employee know he or she is a priority. It also makes sure the meeting happens and doesn't get shifted due to putting out fires. It's important to prioritize the meeting and not let it get shifted unless as a last resort. You don't have to meet for the full time. If something urgent comes up and you have to reschedule, do so immediately.

"When the meetings don't add a lot of value, it will be easier to avoid having them." — HR Director Emily Charlton

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Having an Agenda

Come
into
each
meeting
with a

prepared set of topics. You and your employee should get into the habit of taking five minutes to prepare about three things to discuss. Without preparing, your meetings may seem unorganized. When the meetings don't add a lot of value, it will be easier to avoid having them, and the whole value of the one on one is lost.

End each meeting with an action item. Here's a dialogue sample:

“You and I talked about this report. I will do this part for you. Can you do this part by next week?”

Remember that when you schedule multiple people per day, you will have multiple action items due on the same day the following week. This is one of the

reasons I advise spreading out your one on one meetings.

"Your one on one is not a place to discuss employee performance issues." — HR Director Emily Charlton

A Note on

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Performance

Your one on one is not a place to discuss employee performance issues. Set up another meeting for that. Nor is this the proper venue to discuss disciplinary

action. In fact, the one on one should be kept to an informal meeting with pen, paper, and the couple of topics you decided to bring to the meeting. It's your chance to give your employee your full attention, without checking email or getting other work done. If your employee brings up something that needs to be documented, such as a legal or HR issue, do that immediately when you get back to your desk, and use your notepad to make a reminder. I keep one notebook specifically for one on ones.

Key takeaways

There's been a mindshift in [how we do business](#). We are now working on deeper relationship levels with both our external and internal customers.

Connections are key, more than ever. And your one on one meeting is the place to build this connection.

Set yourself up for success by finding the appropriate cadence. Weekly or biweekly are often the best choices.

Finally, lead by example. The more valuable you make these meetings for your employees, the more valuable their own one on one meetings will be as your company grows, and your teams expand.

Read more about managing your growing team of resources

- [Employee Onboarding for Project Managers: Give New Hires the Full Picture](#)
- [Monday Blues? Research Reveals 9 Ways to Get Better Sleep](#)
- [What Does a Project Manager Do? 5 Signs You Need a PM](#)

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