

YOUR GUIDE TO HOLDING AMAZING ONE-ON-ONES



THINKHUMAN
UNLEASHING THE SOUL OF YOUR BUSINESS

YOUR GUIDE TO HOLDING AMAZING ONE-ON-ONES

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25 min
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THE PURPOSE

One-on-One Meetings are a Key Ingredient to Creating a Thriving Culture.

One-on-one meetings are a critical business ritual. And the reason is obvious: Investing time in coaching, championing and listening to your people leads to collective value.

In the digital age, though, we too often communicate with direct reports via email, Slack, and text. But nothing quite beats a face-to-face one-on-one meeting [or voice-to-voice for the remote teams].

A ONE-ON-ONE SERVES MANY PURPOSES

UNBLOCK: Remove obstacles and unleash your people to get high-yield things done.

DEVELOP: Support them over time so that they can develop and grow to their fullest potential.

DEEPEN TRUST: Deepen personal emotional connection and allow your direct reports to bring up concerns or frustrations--yes, even uncomfortable stuff like team dynamics or truths you need to hear about your own leadership style.

One-on-ones can be the difference between high functioning teams and low functioning ones, between happy people and disenfranchised ones, and between low turnover and employee churn.



THE BASICS

RECURRING + SACRED

You should plan a recurring time to meet with each member of your team every one or two weeks.

It's up to you, the manager, to schedule and keep each one-on-one. Honoring this commitment indicates to each person on your team that you prioritize them. It shows you're invested in their development and success.

GREAT MANAGERS RARELY
MISS THEIR ONE-ON-ONES

It is important that you schedule one-on-ones on your calendar as a repeating event, and to show up on time. Arriving 10 minutes late or canceling at the last minute sends a very strong message--and not a good one.

FOR HOW LONG

25 – 60 minutes (depending on how often you meet)

WHERE

One-on-ones are best held in private

- Ideally, in an office or meeting room with the door closed
- Or, be creative and try an awesome out-of-office spot
- And for remote teams, phone and video gets the job done



THE STRUCTURE

Communicating can be unwieldy, you say? We know, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some guideposts to support these important, needle-moving conversations.

MAKE IT THEIR MEETING

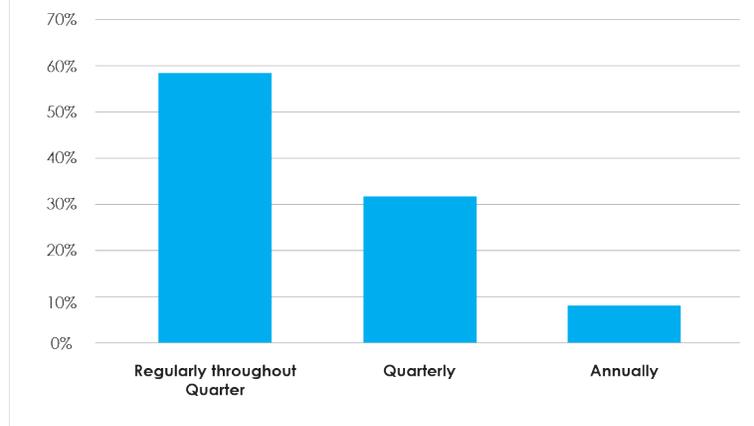
Your direct report will lead the meetings, which are more effective when the two of you are in “co-creative mode.” While you both may have topics you want to cover, decide together what you'll reasonably accomplish in the time allotted. When you kick off the meeting, do some loose time boxing based on the topics you each bring. Avoid a meeting full of status updates. Of course, a few minutes of update exchange is predictable at the daily pace of business, but if more than that is needed, set aside time for that in a separate meeting. Sing along: “regular one-on-one meetings are not status updates.” To reinforce that it's their meeting, generally it makes sense to let their topics go first.

Some topics to cover:

- Goals
- Feedback, stretch assignments, growth + development
- Team dynamics
- Company effectiveness + upward feedback for you

How often people want feedback from their managers

Source SAP



Remember to give feedback. Believe it or not, your entire team wants feedback--not just the Millennials. When giving feedback, it's important to cite specific examples that you can talk through without bias (i.e., no finger-pointing). And don't forget the positive feedback!

STARTER AGENDA

Especially when you're just getting started with one-on-ones, it can be helpful to have a basic structure. But don't stick to it rigidly – this is a time for the people you lead to get what they need, and they may have a different agenda in mind. Here's the framework we most often use:

UNBLOCK | DEVELOP | DEEPEN TRUST

#1 = CONNECTION + SETUP

- How are you? What's happening in your world?
- Agenda review + loose time boxing

#2 = UNBLOCK

Regular "one-on-one meetings are not status updates." Unleash and support your people in getting high-yield things done

- What do you need most from this meeting?
- What worked really well last week? On a scale of 0-10, are you feeling successful? What's the gap between where you are and a 10?
- What are you finding challenging? What clarity or support do you need so you can be successful?

#3 = DEVELOP

Support them over time so they can develop and grow to their fullest potential

- What specific positive feedback do I have? What adjusting feedback or coaching do I have?
- What do my follow-up notes say to follow up on [personal and professional]?
- What areas do I want to support them to grow and develop? What ways I can tailor their current responsibilities to maximize their strengths?

#4 = NEXT STEPS

Wrap up each meeting and set expectations for the next



THE PREPARATION

PREPARATION = IMPACT

Spend a few minutes preparing for the meeting. Let your team members know in advance to do the same. Even 3 minutes can make all the difference between a scattered meeting and one that is high value.

THREE MINUTE PREP

Here are some questions you can add right into the recurring meeting invitation as a possible guide. Address those that are relevant for that meeting.

Employee Prep

- What do they need most from this meeting?
- What worked really well last week?
- On a scale of 0-10, are they feeling successful? What's the gap between where they are and a 10?
- What are they finding challenging? What clarity or support do they need so they can be successful?

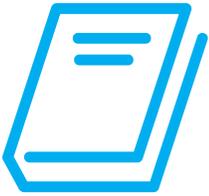
While one-on-ones are their meeting, it doesn't mean you don't have any work to do. You have to develop the skill of probing deeper so there are no elephants left in the room. You need to do your part to prepare and, especially, bring good open-ended questions and valuable feedback. You can use these questions to as a guide.

Manager Prep

- What areas do I want to support them to grow and develop? What ways I can tailor their current responsibilities to maximize their strengths?
- What specific positive feedback do I have?
- What adjusting feedback or coaching do I have?
- What do my follow-up notes say to follow up on [personal and professional]?

HERE ARE SOME OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS CAN YOU ASK EACH WEEK THAT MIGHT HELP THEM THINK DEEPLY AND GROW?

- What feedback do they have for me so I can be most effective supporting them?
- In what ways are you most interested in developing and how can I support that?
- What were your biggest time wasters last week or the week before and what can we do about that?
- What do you do when you get stuck on something? What is your process of getting unstuck? Who is the team member you turn to for help?



TIPS FOR THE MANAGER

That's you.

It's time to do a little thinking about how your demeanor and mindset can bring things even further. Read on for a few tips.

COACHING BASICS

At the foundation, have their best interests in mind as you consider feedback to share and how to support them to grow. Remember this is their meeting. Rather than you doing all the talking, ask questions that'll help your team members come to their own solutions. Help your team explore options and learn how to resolve issues on their own.

HELP THEM PROBLEM SOLVE VS. GIVE ANSWERS

- **Probe Deeper:** Can you tell me more? What is your primary concern?
- **Context Test:** Could there be another interpretation?
- **Expand:** What are your options? What are your instincts telling you?

LISTEN

- Listen to their reasoning or thought process.
- Listen for what went wrong, not who was wrong.
- Don't just listen to what is being said, also to what is not being said.
- Be curious

CLEAR PLAN ON ACTION + ACCOUNTABILITY

- Elicit feedback on what the person is getting from coaching.
- Agree on clear follow-up, next steps and accountability methods.

TAKE NOTES

- Taking notes allows you to capture key take-aways and recall the previous conversations. It helps you focus on what the other person is saying (as opposed to waiting your turn to talk). And it allows you to focus on moving a development conversation forward over time.



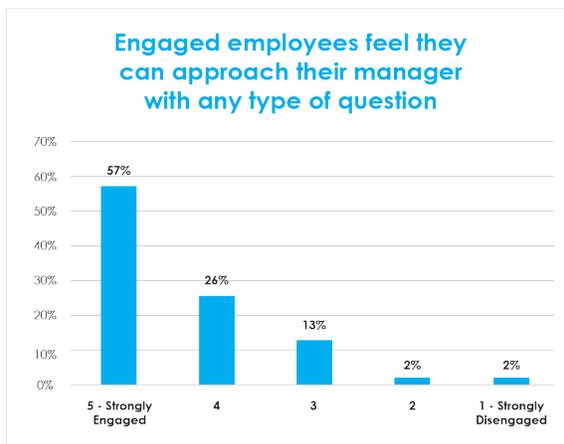
FINAL THOUGHTS

So why do one-on-ones make such a difference?

FOR YOUR TEAM + THE BUSINESS OVERALL

- **UNBLOCK:** Provide space for you and your people to resolve team issues before they become big, messy problems
- **DEVELOP:** Create a venue for people to contextualize how their work is impacting the company and grow in their capability to deliver what matters
- **DEEPEN TRUST:** Allow for clear communication and transparency. Bonus points: They also allow your people to provide honest feedback, which helps the company understand the sentiment and honest voice of the people in it and react appropriately.

FOR EACH DIRECT REPORT



- **UNBLOCK:** Give your people a thought partner on issues and roadblocks; provide a space for them to talk through issues and come to solutions.
- **DEVELOP:** Provide opportunities for your people to get clarity on their roles, get rich feedback and coaching and to collaborate with you on their career development.

● **DEEPEN TRUST:** Create an environment for you to build trust with each person on your team, which is necessary for a high functioning team. Creating trust lays the foundation to open communication, high intensity motivation and kick-ass performance.

EMPLOYEES WHOSE MANAGERS HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THEM ARE ALMOST THREE TIMES AS LIKELY TO BE ENGAGED - GALLUP

FOR YOU

- When you remove roadblocks for your team, they're freed up to exceed expectations and bring problem-solving innovation to the team and the organization.
- The more you develop the capacities of individuals in your team, the more YOU are freed up to do meaningful work that you're uniquely suited to do.
- When you've invested in building trust with each person on your team, you can have confidence in how aligned you are and that you can count on them to deliver.

And ultimately... **You succeed when your team succeeds.**

GO OUT AND MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ONE-ON-ONES--AND HELP YOUR TEAM CRUSH THEIR GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THEMSELVES!

THANK YOU



USE THIS SIMPLE “25 MINUTE COACH CHEAT SHEET”



Recurring 25 Minute Meeting Every Other Week

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OTHER HELPFUL QUESTIONS YOU CAN SLOT IN:

What feedback do they have for me so I can be most effective supporting them?

What were your biggest time wasters last week or the week before and what can we do about that?

What do you do when you get stuck on something?

What is your process of getting unstuck?

HELP THEM PROBLEM SOLVE VS. GIVE ANSWERS

BE CURIOUS: Listen to what is being said and to what is not being said

PROBE DEEPER: Can you tell me more? What is your primary concern?

EXPAND: What are your options? What are your instincts telling you