



Optimize Your Team with One-on-One Meetings

Optimize Your Team with One-on-One Meetings

- Holding regular one-on-ones with your employees offers many benefits:
 - It helps managers build stronger, more trusting relationships with employees.
 - It improves communication between managers and their employees, which increases productivity and minimizes mistakes.
 - It helps workers feel more engaged as they can understand their goals, grow within their role, and better deal with workplace challenges.
- Follow these tips to make one-on-ones work for you and your employees:
 - Explain the objective of the meetings and how they will work.
 - Specify from the start that the goal is to have an open exchange of thoughts and concerns that the employee wants to discuss and that your role is to actively listen to and understand their perspective.
 - Clarify that one-on-ones aren't performance reviews or project updates—they're meetings where employees are free to discuss anything.
 - Employees should understand that one-on-ones are a safe space where both parties can feel at ease talking about a range of topics—even sensitive ones.
 - Set a regular schedule.
 - The frequency and duration of meetings depend on the size of your team, the work environment, and the logistics.
 - You can start with weekly 30- to 60-minute meetings and adjust from there.
 - Make sure you meet *at least* once a month so meetings aren't too spaced out.
 - Once you set a schedule, stick to it.
 - Follow a basic agenda.
 - Start with a simple question like, "How's it going?"
 - Build rapport by asking the employee about their family or personal interests.
 - Transition to what the employee wants to discuss by asking open-ended questions designed to uncover issues and concerns from the employee's perspective.
 - Don't be afraid to discuss personal issues professionally and empathetically.
 - When there are job-related problems, don't defend plans and policies; instead, ask more questions to fully understand the situation, then work with the employee to clarify direction or remove obstacles.



Optimize Your Team with One-on-One Meetings

- End one-on-ones by thanking the employee for their honesty, summarizing action items, reinforcing insights, and asking if there's anything else the employee needs.
- Make sure you do what you say and agree to discuss actions at the next meeting.
- Facilitate candor and trust.
 - Don't assume employees will be candid and open at the first meeting.
 - Over time, draw employees out and earn their trust by actively listening to them and addressing issues.
 - Validate employees' ideas and, if appropriate, implement their suggestions.
 - Reinforce that one-on-one discussions are confidential.
- Evaluate your effectiveness.
 - Continuously develop your one-on-one skills by asking yourself how effective you were in creating a safe environment after each meeting.
 - You can assess your effectiveness by considering how employees enter and leave the room—are they energized, open, and motivated, or are they quiet, avoidant, and restless?

This video lesson provides a framework for conducting meaningful and effective one-on-ones with employees. How do you think one-on-ones can make a positive difference for your team?