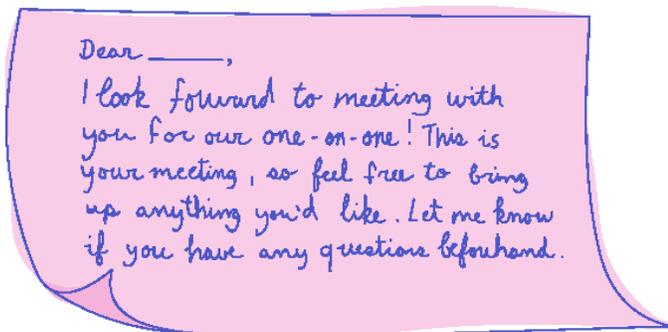


The Before, During & After Guide for a ONE-ON-ONE

One-on-one meetings are among the most important tools a manager has. They're a time to build trust, earn respect as a leader and set important goals for employees to grow, but they aren't always easy to get right.

That's why we prepared this simple before, during & after plan with the most important one-on-one tips for managers to follow.

BEFORE THE ONE-ON-ONE Optimize Your Meeting Invitation



This sets the tone for the whole meeting. An invitation with a subject line reading “one-on-one meeting” and no note attached is impersonal and can be fear-inducing. Why not use the email as an opportunity to prime trust and positivity.

A quick note goes a long way!

It's also important to send a recurring meeting invitation for your regular one-on-ones to promote continuity and let employees know that you are committed to their growth.

Consistency is key to solidifying relationships with your employees and realizing goals. And, it's one less thing to remember to set up!

SEND THE INVITATION AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE SO YOUR EMPLOYEE CAN MENTALLY PREPARE AND ORGANIZE NOTES.

Come Well-Prepared

Showing up to a meeting with last minute ideas is not efficient, and it will make your employees feel as though they're an afterthought.

Come prepared with notes that you'd like to discuss including:

- Recognition for their hard work (when employees feel valued their productivity increases)
- Constructive feedback
- General observations about their contribution to the team
- Questions - professional or other - to show interest in them as people

Question ideas for when your one-on-one is in a rut:

- Would you like to walk today, or go somewhere outside of the office?
- What would you like to see change about these discussions to make them more useful for you?

Ask Employees to Think Ahead

Just as you should prepare, it's important to ask employees to come prepared with specific things to discuss as well.

1. Retrospective thoughts on the past month
2. What they would like to work on going forward
3. What they need from you as a manager to help them achieve their goals
4. A roadmap consisting of things they would like to accomplish on a professional or personal level

IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE MEETING FOR WHATEVER REASON, SEND A NEW MEETING INVITATION RIGHT AWAY WITH A QUICK NOTE. CANCELLING LAST MINUTE WITHOUT RESCHEDULING CAN BE HURTFUL AS YOUR EMPLOYEE TOOK THE TIME TO PREPARE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DISCUSS.

DURING THE ONE-ON-ONE

Start with the Positive

Avoid the compliment sandwich! It's overdone and predictable. Be genuine and authentic with your opening positive feedback so that when you move into areas of criticism your employee already feels safe in the conversation. But you don't have to end on a forced positive note - it makes the whole session seem forged. The point is to have open and honest communication, not follow a rigid formula.

One of the most important things to remember when you give positive feedback is to make it specific. Blanket compliments like "you are doing a great job" is impersonal. Tailor the feedback to them so they know you are aware of their efforts.

ALL CRITICISM SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE. OFFER ACTIONABLE WAYS IN WHICH THE EMPLOYEE CAN FIX.

Focus on Behavior

People are not their actions, so when you offer criticism be sure to discuss their behavior, not their personality. It is easier to change what you do than who you are.



DON'T SAY: You are very disorganized.



DO SAY: It seems that you had some trouble managing your time for the last project.

Be sure to have these sensitive conversations in a private, confidential place where employees feel safe to express themselves

Actively Listen

Like in any relationship, communication is at the core. Part of good communication is not speaking but listening. Employees want to feel heard.

How to actively listen:

- Maintain eye contact
- Offer gestures such as a head nod to show your engagement
- Put devices away to avoid distraction
- Before jumping into your answer, recap what they've said

Don't be afraid of silence in the meeting. It allows time for the employee time to reflect.

AFTER THE ONE-ON-ONE

Ask for Feedback

One of the most important parts of being a manager is being relatable and human. You hope to be able to connect with employees on a real level, and the best way to do this is to humble yourself, be vulnerable and let them know that you too could always use improvement.

After the session, send employees a follow-up question as simple as:



Thanks for sharing and for listening to my feedback. I hope it will be helpful for you to become the best you can be. I would also like to improve my performance as a manager, as well and optimize our one-on-ones. Do you have any feedback to offer me? I would be very grateful for your insights.

Send a Written Recap of the Meeting

Within one day of the meeting, send your employee a recap of what you discussed and the goals that you have set together. This creates a sort of contract holding both yourself and your employees accountable for the next steps.

And, after an hour-long discussion it's helpful to extract the main points and clarify the key takeaways to keep the important things at top of mind.

When you send the recap and outline the goals, be sure your employee is aligned. Simply ask whether your recap is representative of your discussion and ensure that they are comfortable with the next steps.



Here's a quick recap of our meeting and the goals we set for next time. Let me know if you have any questions or something you would like to add:

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

I look forward to our next one-on-one, but don't hesitate to reach out in the meantime if you need anything.

Put Action to Intention

Most importantly, be sure to put action to your intention. If you promised to send a list of helpful books to read on a certain topic, be sure to send the list. If you offered to help them reach a goal by coaching them once a week, be sure to make the time for them.

A promise made and broken is worse than not making one at all. To remain credible and trustworthy in the eyes of your employee, be true to your word. This is why it's so important to take notes during the meeting and keep organized afterwards.