



ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction
- 4 Four Steps to Conducting an Effective One-on-One
- 6 Common Mistakes to Avoid
- 7 Frequently Asked Questions



An Overview

Managers are an essential aspect of any organization and beneficial to their employees. When employees and managers can intercommunicate effectively, they are more likely to engage in their work. The art of intercommunicating effectively and engaging employees begins with managers having effective one-on-one meetings.

This document intends to guide managers on the value of one-on-one meetings and how to approach them and make them more effective.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of one-on-ones

What is a one-on-one meeting?

One-on-one meetings are frequent discussions, or check-ins, between employees and their manager or supervisor. The structure of one-to-one meetings provides helpful insight into each other's experiences, well-being, professional development, and life outside work.

One-on-one meetings are more than scheduling a meeting and catching up. They take thought, good preparation, active engagement, and commitment to ensure the employee and manager have a conducive and valuable conversation.

Why are one-on-one meetings important?

The purpose of one-on-one meetings is to devote time for managers to learn more about their team members. They provide coaching opportunities, help align priorities and goals, remove bottlenecks, solve issues, and offer guidance and support. Here are four advantages to conducting regular one-to-one meetings:

Boosts Employee Engagement

One-on-one meetings can increase employees' productivity and quality of work.

Establishes Trust & Confidence

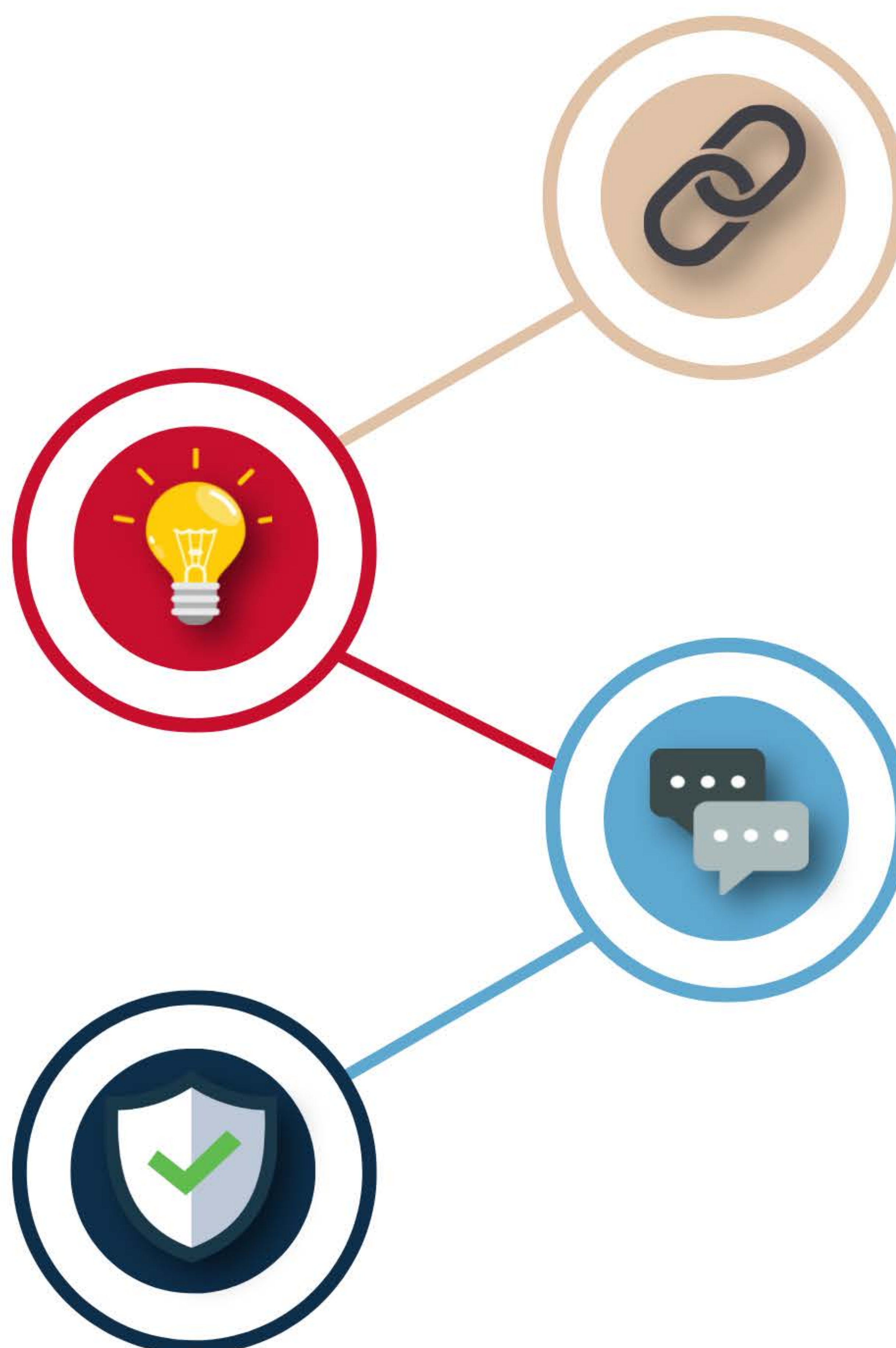
Ultimately, building connections, and creating a safe place to communicate establish trust and confidence.

Fosters Personal Connection

Regular meetings provide opportunities for building positive relationships.

Creates the Ideal Environment

Regular meetings create a safe space to ask essential questions, discuss important issues, and exchange feedback.



4 STEPS TO CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE ONE-ON-ONE MEETING

One-on-one meetings are frequent discussions between managers and their team members. While there is not a one size fits all approach to conducting a one-on-one, they all share the same goal: establishing and developing the relationship. Here are four steps to conducting an effective one-on-one meeting:

1. SCHEDULE A RECURRING MEETING

Find a time that *works best* for you and your team member, and set up a recurring meeting.

3. LISTEN CAREFULLY & TAKE NOTES

During the meeting, be active, *listen carefully* to what your team member is sharing, and take diligent notes.

2. PREPARE AN AGENDA IN ADVANCE

Before the meeting, create a *shared agenda* with your employee on valuable information to be discussed.

4. MAKE COMMITMENTS & KEEP THEM

After the meeting, review your notes, create an *action plan*, and follow up regularly.





01

SCHEDULE A RECURRING MEETING

One-to-one meetings should be scheduled regularly, which is essential to their effectiveness. The frequency of the meetings reaffirms their purpose and creates more opportunities to build connections. One-to-one meetings should occur at least once a month, but weekly or bi-weekly are preferable. Remember to find a time that works best for you and your team members, put it on a recurring schedule, and stick to it.

02

PREPARE AN AGENDA IN ADVANCE

Preparing an agenda in advance is imperative to have a more effective meeting. While one-to-one meetings can cover various topics quickly, a structured outline can help the meeting stay on track and create opportunities for more effective discussion. Start by determining what you and your team members want to get out of the meeting and set expectations. Then create a schedule and share it with your team members for valuable input on key topics such as current results/performance, career development, and feedback (from the employee). This way, you and your team members are prepared for the meeting.

03

LISTEN CAREFULLY & TAKE NOTES

Be optimistic; be active; be present. This time is for you and your team member, so ensure there are no distractions and give your undivided attention. Active listening is another critical aspect of having a practical one-on-one and promotes more engagement. Begin by listening carefully to what your team member is sharing and the feedback you are receiving. Remember, you are there to support your team member in the best way possible. Also, take notes and document the conversation. Jot down critical points, topics, or items you want to refer to for future meetings. Note-taking shows you actively listen, and what your team members say is valuable.

04

MAKE COMMITMENTS & KEEP THEM

After the meeting, compile your notes, ask for feedback, and create an action plan moving forward. Consider creating a list of action items, adding due dates, and sharing this with your team member. After creating a plan, commit to your team member by regularly following up, checking in on their progress, and supporting them fully. If you offer to review a piece of their project each week, make time for it. Remember, this commitment encourages your team member and strengthens your relationship.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

One-to-one meetings are invaluable for employees and managers regarding personal and professional growth. However, they can have the opposite effect if they are not approached correctly. According to [Zavvy](#), these are six common mistakes managers make when conducting one-on-one meetings with their team members:



Frequent Rescheduling or Cancelling

This can convey that you may not care about your employees. Cancel meetings only if you are on vacation or busy with an unplanned urgency.



Not Taking Notes

A lot can happen during a one-on-one meeting. Making a priority to take notes helps document the conversation, create follow-up plans, and demonstrates that you are listening to your employee.



Unclear Agenda or Expectations

If you are meeting with an employee and do not know why, it could be awkward and unproductive. Establish a clear agenda and goal before the meeting.



Not Following up

This can convey that you are not committed to your employees' growth, and they are not of importance. Following up reaffirms a previous meeting's discussion and the established action plan you both put in place.



Overly Authoritative

Providing positive feedback and constructive criticism is essential; however, you do not want it to turn into a dictating session. Remember to listen carefully, be empathetic, and ask open-ended questions.



Keeping the Meeting Strictly Professional

While being respectful during meetings is essential, you do not want it to be strictly business. Foster that connection by sharing personal experiences so that you can provide more guidance and support.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS



Q: Why is it preferable to schedule weekly rather than monthly meetings?

Frequency is critical regarding one-on-one sessions. The more often you meet, the more opportunities for growth and development. Frequency will vary from person to person but it is good practice to meet weekly or biweekly with your team members for at least 30 minutes.



Q: What should we discuss in a one-to-one meeting?

There are many topics to discuss during one-on-one sessions. It is important to remember that this is a designated time for you and your employee to discuss many topics openly. Common topics include challenges, concerns, successes, performance goals, professional development, and feedback.



Q: What is the best way to prepare for one-to-one meetings?

There are several approaches to preparing for one-on-one sessions. You may use a pre-made template or create your own with focal topics. It is important to note that the plan needs to be shared and filled out between the employee and manager so that both parties are on the same page going into the meeting.



Q: What challenges may I face?

While there are many ways to run an effective one-on-one session, sometimes you may face the inevitable of running into a series of obstacles, such as having a problematic employee or conversations becoming awkward. Start by reviewing *Common Mistakes to Avoid*. You may discover that you need to develop more of a connection with your employee or better prepare for the meeting in advance. Remember, communication is critical in overcoming challenges and developing relationships.