

One on One Meetings

One on One Meetings are a useful tool for managers to use to connect with their employees. They provide a multitude of benefits and there are a variety of ways to run them effectively.

Value of one on ones:

- Employees who regularly meet with managers for a one on one are three times more likely to be engaged.
- Companies with highly engaged employees are more likely to utilize one on one meetings. 86% of highly engaged companies use one on ones compared to 50% of disengaged companies failing to use one on ones.
- Evidence shows the use of one on ones can improve employee retention.

How to Run a One on One

- First, it's important to understand there is no magical one size fits all approach to one on ones.
 - You may even want a different structure with each employee
- It's recommended you speak with your employee, and together, come to an agreement on what format is going to work best for both of you.
 - If you as the manager, don't take the employee's preferences into consideration, the value of a one on one will not be achieved.
- Questions to consider when structuring the one on one:
 - How long do you both feel the 1:1 needs to last?
 - With what frequency should the 1:1s occur?
 - How do you want to ensure both parties are prepared for the 1:1s? Running agenda?
 - Will the supervisor or the employee lead the 1:1?
 - Who should take notes during the 1:1?
 - Are there any topics that you want discussed in every single 1:1, such as goal progress, professional development, mental health check-ins, etc.?
 - Where should the 1:1s occur?
 - How formally structured will the 1:1s be?

**Don't be afraid to adjust/make changes to the one on one if you and the employee recognize something isn't working or could be improved.*

Create the Right Atmosphere for a One on One

- To ensure employees find one on ones helpful, there are a few tips managers should utilize:
 1. Create an environment for employees where psychological safety is high. Employees need to feel the one on one is a safe space to share how they feel, otherwise they won't be honest with their supervisor. Managers can achieve this environment by being vulnerable themselves and sharing things about themselves.
 2. Create an environment where employees benefit from the one on one. By having the employee direct part or all of the meeting, making time for the employee, and being directly engaged, the employee will feel the meeting was important to them as they get the answers/direction/help they were looking for.

3. Create a one on one environment where effort is low for the employee. If they're providing feedback, listen to them, don't argue. Employees don't want to feel like their navigating an emotional minefield when they are attending a one on one.
4. Ensure that both sides set expectations for the one on ones. This will allow both sides to feel like their expectations are being met.
5. Be attentive during the meeting. If you're responding to emails or chatting with other co-workers, it sends the message that the employee isn't a priority.
6. Listen. When receiving feedback, listen to it, ask clarifying questions, and take action. If you regularly request feedback but never take action on it, it sends the message to the employee that their feedback isn't being heard and isn't worth providing.

Potential Topics for a One on One:

- Professional Development/Growth
- Goals
- Feedback/coaching
- Project Updates
- Questions/clarifications
- Issues/concerns
- Career aspirations
- Supports/resources needed/preferences
- Team dynamics/co-workers
- Personal check-ins

**Not every topic needs to be discussed at each 1 on 1, nor are these the only topics that can be discussed.*

Below is a Simple Example of a One on One Format:

- Manager and employee meet every other week for up to 1 hour. At the end of each one on one, they work together to find a mutual time to schedule their next one on one.
- They use a running agenda that they update between one on ones, so that as questions/situations arise, they can remember to address them in next one on one.
- Below are the questions prepared for their next one on one:
 - Manager's Discussion Topics
 - How is your current workload?
 - Is there anything you need me to start doing or stop doing as your supervisor?
 - Are you running into any roadblocks in completing your work that I can try to clear the path for you?
 - You mentioned wanting to become a school counselor as your career aspiration, what steps are you taking to achieve that goal?
 - Are there any professional development opportunities you want to take advantage of?
 - Employee's Discussion Topics
 - Feedback on recent department event
 - Team Dynamics/Issues with John Doe
 - Talk through idea for upcoming event

References:

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