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The Manager 1:1 Meeting  
Why and How



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# The Manager 1:1 Meeting

## What is it?

The Manager 1:1 is a regularly scheduled meeting between the employee and their direct leader that goes far beyond project updates.

## Why use it?

01

### To establish and build trust

Nothing is more important as a leader as building connections with your employees. Building trust allows you to...

- **Foster Collaboration:** Trust encourages collaboration among team members. When people trust their leader, they're more likely to work together effectively, share ideas openly, and support each other, leading to increased productivity and innovation.
- **Enhance Communication:** Trust facilitates open and honest communication. Team members feel comfortable expressing their opinions, concerns, and feedback when they trust their leader, which leads to better decision-making and problem-solving.
- **Increase Loyalty and Commitment:** Trust strengthens loyalty and commitment to the team and the organization. When employees trust their leader, they're more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and dedicated to achieving common goals.

- **Build Confidence:** Trust boosts confidence in the leader's abilities and decisions. When team members trust their leader to make sound judgments and act in their best interests, they feel more confident in following their direction and taking risks.
- **Resolve Conflicts:** Trust helps in resolving conflicts constructively. When trust exists within a team, conflicts are more likely to be addressed openly and resolved collaboratively, without damaging relationships or productivity.
- **Promote Adaptability:** Trust encourages flexibility and adaptability. In an environment of trust, team members are more willing to embrace change and take on new challenges, knowing that their leader has their best interests in mind.
- **Improve Retention:** Trust contributes to employee retention. When employees trust their leader and feel valued and respected, they're more likely to stay with the organization long-term, reducing turnover costs and maintaining continuity.

## 02

### **Provide Clarity on Sense of Purpose and Sense of Accomplishment**

Employees are highly motivated by sense of purpose and they feel great and inspired when they feel a sense of accomplishment.

These meetings are a great opportunity for the leader to connect the dots for the employee on how their work contributes to the organization's mission. By providing the employee with clear, stretch goals gives them something to inspire them - and when they hit their goals, they get that "adrenaline rush" that comes with winning.

## 03

### **Keep your ear open for opportunities for recognition.**

Waiting for a "review" meeting once, twice a year or even quarterly is simply too far out to provide your employee with feedback - good and bad. Feedback is far more impactful when it is as close to in the moment as possible.

Sometimes, you won't necessarily see or witness the achievements of your employees. But if you make it a point to ask them what accomplishments they are proud of - you will find opportunities for recognition - which is key to making employees feel valued.

### **04**

#### **Identify any roadblocks .**

What is getting in their way? Taking the time to pause and ask this question will give the employee an opening and may make them feel more comfortable raising issues. Don't assume they will otherwise.

### **05**

#### **Solicit their feedback and ideas on their work/tasks.**

No one is closer to the work than the people doing it. They may have some great ideas for continuous improvements or new ways of doing things. Give them the opportunity by asking the question.

### **06**

#### **Get feedback on you as a manager and on the organization as the employer.**

Once you've established trust and connection with your employees, they will be far more open with providing you with feedback about you as a leader, and also the organization. Feedback is necessary for your own personal growth and development and employees will help you identify your blind spots. When you action their feedback, trust builds even more.

### **07**

#### **Find out how/if they want to grow and develop**

Growth is high priority for most employees. So taking time to schedule an intentional career development conversation goes a long way. The employee ultimately owns their own career progression, but as their leader, you play an important role. To support you to set you up for success, check out this guide to having successful career discussions.

([Click here to access the career conversation guide](#)).

### 08

#### **Allow you to regularly check in on your team's morale and wellbeing.**

Meeting regularly and connecting with your employees means you will be far more in tune with their mood, and morale. It can identify problems before they get too far. Keep an eye out for changes that may indicate they are at risk of burnout or stress. Signs can include...

- Assignments coming in late.
- Work not up to their normal quality.
- Attendance or punctuality issues.
- Mood changes.
- Team relationships more tense.
- Disengagement

### 09

#### **Provide candid feedback on any areas of improvement.**

Much like recognition, constructive feedback is most meaningful when it is done in the moment and not in some annual or bi-annual review. By providing your employee with candid feedback (coming from a place of caring) in the moment, you can help them identify problems before they get to far, and come up with opportunities to develop any gaps.

### 10

#### **Early identification of potentially difficult team relationships.**

Sometimes, team members have personality conflicts. Regular meetings with employees who feel comfortable with you will give them opportunities to raise any issues they may be having with a colleague. As you identify tensions, you can manage them. Side note...coaching employees to have empathy for different preferences in working styles can be really effective in improving team dynamics. Consider doing a team assessment with DISC ([www.everythingdisc.com](http://www.everythingdisc.com)) or Insights ([www.insights.com](http://www.insights.com)).

# The Do's and Don'ts of an Effective Manager 1:1

## 01

### **Set the Stage.**

Set the tone - this should be relaxed and informal - you want the employee to feel comfortable. You can have a agenda - especially if there is something the employee wants to discuss. But you don't want things to feel scripted. Be prepared with what you want to ask, but keep it laid back. Be willing to bend if the employee leads the conversation in a different direction.

## 02

### **Don't Skip!**

Nothing makes a person feel less valued than having their meetings moved around or cancelled. Be on time. If you absolutely must cancel, reschedule it promptly and let the employee know why.

## 03

### **Be Prepared**

Go in ready to listen. If there were follow up items from the last meeting - make sure you have investigated and found the answers for anything you promised.

## 04

### **Pre-Schedule at a Regular Frequency**

Ideally, these session happen once a week for 30 minutes. Frequency is important for establishing trust - and less frequent means slower to identify issues (they come up quickly!). New employees should have more check ins as they onboard for the first 3 months of the job.

### 05

#### **Be Open-Minded. Do not be Dismissive.**

The key here is to have an open mind and actively listen to everything your team members have to say. Empathy is key. Do not negate or dismiss their feelings. It takes courage for someone to admit struggles or concerns, so don't punish them for it or it will dismantle trust. You should be speaking only about 10% of the time, unless you are providing feedback. Ask lots of open ended questions.

Since we are setting the tone for a safe space, the employee should feel comfortable bringing up anything. Be mindful of your body language and resist the temptation to argue. Instead, seek to understand and be curious instead of judgemental.

### 06

#### **Keep them Private.**

Do these meetings in a private, casual setting. If you don't have an office, go for a walk, head out for a coffee, etc. Never do them where people can't feel secure/safe speaking.

### 07

#### **Be Present**

Be engaged. Put your phone away, and don't look at your computer or your watch. Really be mindful of body language (yawns, eye rolls, etc.). Maintain eye contact and demonstrate interest. Your employee will pick up on your cues.

### 08.

#### **Don't Forget to Connect Personally**

Get to know your people. Build a strong connection with your employees to create an environment of trust, respect and honesty. Don't be afraid to share personal stuff to make an atmosphere more relaxed and less tied to actual work. This takes time so be ready to invest in this. When you get to know your people, it'll be a lot easier to recognize them and motivate them.

09

**Express Gratitude, Take Notes, and Be Ready for Next Time.**

Be sure to thank the employee for their time and if they open-up, their transparency. Make notes about the discussion points after they leave and keep your notes centralized somewhere you can refer to them. Make note of any follow up actions you committed to - document constructive feedback and recognition. Great place to make note of things like the name of their dog, their favorite restaurant, or their beverage of choice - these come in handy for recognition, and also, just to connect. This centralized document will be a great help come time for annual reviews so that you don't forget accomplishments and feedback - it helps you avoid any kind of recency bias.

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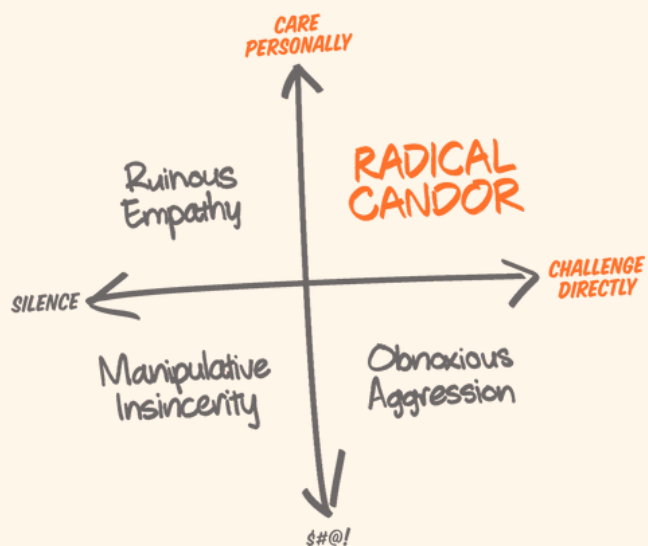
**Recognition**

This may seem counter intuitive, but we recommend you don't use this forum for recognition itself - more to fish for opportunities to recognize. Recognition is best done as a stand-alone item and mixing it with a meeting or other conversation waters down the impact.

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**Practice Radical Candor**

This model is based on the book by Kim Scott. Be clear and direct in your feedback - do not be wishy washy. Be the awesome boss who cares deeply for their people so that when you need to be frank with them, they'll know it comes from a good place. It's your moral obligation to be direct and to care. Show you can do both.





### **Some questions you can consider for your next 1:1...**

- How are you? How is your life outside of work?
- How are you feeling about your work/life balance right now?
- If you had a million dollars, what would you do every day?
- Do you think you have any superpowers?
- Are you feeling challenged at work?
- What motivates you?
- If you were CEO, what's the first thing you'd change?
- Do you think our company is loyal to its employees? Why or why not?
- How could we become more innovative as a company?
- Is your job what you expected it to be when you accepted it?
- When was the time you enjoyed working here most?
- Are you happy with your recent work? Why? Why not?
- What would make you leave this job for another?
- What do you love most about working here?
- Are you comfortable giving your peers constructive criticism? Why/Why not?
- Do you think everyone on the team is pulling their weight?
- Who would you like to work with more often?
- How can we make our team meetings more effective?
- What job would you be terrible at?
- What skill would you most like to master?
- What takes up too much of your time?
- What are you interested in that most people have never heard of?
- Best book you've ever read?
- What could you give a 40 minute presentation about with no preparation?
- Why did you decide to do the work you're doing now?
- How do you like to spend your down time?
- What risks are worth taking?
- What gets you fired up?
- What was the most memorable gift you've ever received?
- What are three interesting facts about you?
- How do you like to spend your free time?
- What drives you? What motivates you to come to work every day?
- As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- How do you like to receive feedback?
- Do you think you're getting enough feedback?
- How can I better support you?
- What would you like to know about me?
- Do you feel productive?
- What is something I could do better?
- What's a recent situation you wish you'd handled differently?
- Is there a situation you'd like my help with?
- What have your past managers done that you'd like me to also do - or not do?
- What's your favorite thing I do as a manager that I should keep doing?
- What do you like/dislike about my management style?
- Are there any aspects about our culture that you wish you could change?
- How well do you feel like you relate to your coworkers?