

Manager guide: How to have impactful conversations with your employees, as individuals and teams



Managers have many tools for helping team members succeed, like regular one-on-one meetings. However, this meeting can provide a great deal of value for both the team member and the manager.



Structuring your one-on-one meeting

Effective one-on-ones circulate through a variety of topics over time – this could be in alignment with the goal setting rhythm of the organisation.

The frequency depends on the organisation, the individual and the type of work they do. Ideally don't go longer than two weeks without checking in, even if this is just a quick catch-up paired with a more in-depth monthly check in.

Below is a great rhythm to follow:

Quarterly Check In: Focus is on setting up the quarter.

- Set goals, initiatives, define what success looks like.
- What resources are needed to achieve the goals?
- What could get in the way and how you might plan for that.
- What support is required from the manager for the team member to achieve their goals.

Monthly Check In: Focus is reviewing the previous month and setting up the next month.

- Review achievements and celebrate.
- What is your team member loving about their experience in your organisation?
- What is concerning them or keeping them up at night?
- Discuss any key priorities for the coming month.
- What support do they need from you, their manager?
- Provide and seek feedback.

Fortnightly Check In: Focus is on checking in on progress towards goals, wellbeing and providing alignment if required.

- How are you? How are you REALLY?
- What is fuelling and sucking your energy?
- What tasks/ initiatives are on/ off track? What are your priorities this week?
- What support do you need to get any tasks/ initiatives back on track?
- If there's one action, I can take to progress a task or remove a blocker for you, what would that be?



Some more questions you can ask:

- Last time we spoken you mentioned X was a challenge, how is that going?
- What's one thing that you learned this week?
- Do you feel confident in how you/ your team are progressing?
- How is everything going with the people you work with?

Structuring your team meetings



Like one-on-ones there are elements to team meetings which need to be task focused. Creating visibility for the whole team is critical to performance and alignment.

However, these are also great opportunities for teams to connect.

Consider including some of the below in your team meetings:

1. At the start of your meeting doing a 10 second connection check in – ‘How are you feeling right in this moment? Anything getting in the way of you being present?’
2. If your meeting is virtual, consider ending the meeting with this connection question, ‘I want to know what you would be sharing with us if we were sitting in the kitchen having a coffee together, something you might not think is important to share virtually but if we were together, we would know about it happening in your life?’
3. End your meeting with a one week check out – ‘How are you feeling after this meeting? What are you excited about this week?’



A team conversation: Preparing your team for unexpected moments.

Being prepared for unexpected moments is what allows teams to navigate change and uncertainty. If your team know what to do, they can just get on with it, rather than having to move into crisis mode.

At your next team meeting, have a conversation about what your team plan is for when unexpected moments hit – because we all know that is life!

Here are some questions to work through as a team:

1. If we have to redistribute work across the team, how do we approach this?
2. How might we respect boundaries and ensure if team members don't have capacity, they feel safe to say no without guilt?
3. What does flexibility mean to us as a team? How we do respect and honour this when dealing with unexpected moments?
4. What will our rhythm be to check in on each other during these times?
5. Do we need a code word to signal we are struggling? (Think: banana) Make it easy for your team to signal they are struggling.

Remember, as a manager you need to show up in these conversations in the way in which you would want your manager showing up for you – empathy is KING!