

# How To Run Brilliant One-on-One Meetings

Create the absolute most value from each One-on-One Meeting for each party



For the manager, the one-on-one meeting is an amazing opportunity to build relationships, find out exactly what is happening in the team and to help, support and develop.

For the team member, the one-on-one meeting is vital to update the boss on what has been achieved, progress of current work and to get vital feedback to improve

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# General

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## Frequency

### Weekly

I suggest having one-on-one meeting weekly with your direct reports.

Every other week is the minimum.

## How Long?

### 1 Hour

How long you need depends on what you both want to cover.

An hour per week works well for most people.

## Where?

### In Private

Always have your one-on-one meeting in private where others can't hear what is being discussed.

A meeting room is best, or a quiet corner of a coffee shop or hotel lobby

## How

### Face to Face

Try to meet in person. This is so much better for build relationships, sharing ideas and information, problem solving etc.

Online video calling is the next best option

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## Agenda

Next I cover the 7 main components of one-on-one meetings. Don't give equal time or weight to each one. Flex the meeting depending on your's and your team member's needs.

Cover 1-3 main components in detail plus intros and action in each meeting. Sample agendas with timing are included on page 9 and onwards

# The Components

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## Intros

Start with **Relationship Building** / being empathetic / demonstrating interest in the other person etc

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## Information Sharing

Both parties learn what is happening, the issues, progress towards goals etc

[Improves teamwork and co-ordination]

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## Expectation Setting / Feedback

Vital for Team Member to understand what is expected, what they are doing well, what they need to improve

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## Mentoring / Coaching / Development

Used to improve the knowledge, skills and approach of team member. Help them be the best they can be!

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## Problem Solving

Both parties help the other solve pressing problems or issues.  
Also a key coaching opportunity for manager

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## Decision Making

Manager or joint decision making

Another key coaching opportunity for manager

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## Actions

Always Finish by **Agreeing Actions** - for both Manager and Team Member

# 1 - Introductions

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Get to know your team member on a personal level as well as a professional level. Build and maintain an enjoyable friendly relationship with them. Be interested in them!

## Introductions

### Ideas / Example Topics

What they did  
last night?

Hobbies &  
Interests

Family

Travelling Plans

Ambitions  
(work & play)

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Find out

- What makes them tick,
- What communication styles they prefer,
- What they love, what they hate,
- About their character and passions

etc

Be friendly, be considerate, be diplomatic, be empathetic

## 2 - Information Sharing

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Share information that affects either individual or the team. The idea is to improve teamwork, co-ordination, collaboration and communication

### Information Sharing

#### Ideas / Example Topics

What is being worked on

Progress against goals

Team member issues & challenges

Team news / issues / challenges

What is happening in the wider business

Future plans

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Openly and honestly share any information that will help the individual do a better job, have a better understanding of what is going on around their job (in the team and company).

## 3 - Expectations & Feedback

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Communicate your expectations as clearly and frequently as you can. Then personally live your expectations.

Then you can fairly and with lots of credibility provide feedback against those expectations

### Expectation Setting / Feedback

#### Expectation Setting

Goals

Standards

Behaviours

Activities

#### Feedback

What they are doing  
well and why

What they need to  
improve, why and  
how to do this

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You cannot fairly assess performance without being clear on expectations first. Feedback gives the other person a chance to improve or encouragement to take more great decisions, actions etc

# 4 - Developing Staff

Developing staff is a core component of increasing team morale, motivation and performance plus speeding up team member career progress (and yours).

Helping others be better is a key enabler of team performance improve and therefore a must do for every manager

**Mentoring /  
Coaching /  
Development**

Teaching /  
Mentoring

Tasks

Activities

Projects

Any else useful to  
team member

Coaching

Skills

Problem Solving

Decision Making

Managing People

Communication

Behaviours

# 5 - Problem Solving & Decision Making

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Using one-on-one meetings for problem solving and decision making is usually for one or more:

1. Sharing the burden (two minds better than one)
2. Getting team member buy-in and ownership
3. Developing team members

## Problem Solving

Manager Only

Try to do this outside of one-on-one meeting

Manager & Team Member

Should be a discussion and sharing of ideas i.e. two way

Team Member

Should be manager coaching and team member problem solving

## Decision Making

Manager Only

For decisions involving team member and are getting input prior to making decision

Manager & Team Member

Coaching sessions discussing the pros and cons of options and then jointly agreeing decision

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Problem solving and decision making in one-on-ones are high value add activities, makes implementation faster and often gets better results compared to team member or managers undertaking these on their own



# 7 - Actions

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Always ensure that both parties leave the one-on-one meeting with actions. This further increases the value created during the meeting and creates clear expectations of what is happening next.

## Actions

### Team Member

Will usually have the most actions. Actions should be aligned to team member and team goals.

### Manager

Usually focused on helping remove problems, getting resources in place and developing team members

# A - Information Sharing Focus

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Even in meeting where information is the main focus, you should aim to cover other areas too.

I would try to ensure that feedback and development always feature in some way during your one-on-one meetings.

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Intros</b>                      | 5 mins  |
| <b>Information Sharing</b>         | 30 mins |
| Expectation Setting / Feedback     | 10 mins |
| Mentoring / Coaching / Development | 10 mins |
| <b>Actions</b>                     | 5 mins  |

## B - Development Focus

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Expectations and feedback are a really important part of developing team members.

Problem solving and decision making can also be very value development activities when using a collaborative or coaching approach.

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| <b>Intros</b>                             | 5 mins  |
| Information Sharing                       | 5 mins  |
| Expectation Setting / Feedback            | 10 mins |
| <b>Mentoring / Coaching / Development</b> | 20 mins |
| Problem Solving                           | 10 mins |
| Decision Making                           | 5 mins  |
| <b>Actions</b>                            | 5 mins  |

## C - Problem Solving Focus

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When problem solving, define the problem clearly first so both parties have the same understanding. Then you can explore option, discuss pros and cons and come to a conclusion.

**Intros**

5 mins

Information  
Sharing

5 mins

Expectation  
Setting /  
Feedback

10 mins

**Problem  
Solving**

30 mins

Decision Making

5 mins

**Actions**

5 mins

# In Summary

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Structure your one-on-one meeting to meet your needs and the team members needs. Each meeting is likely to be a bit different in terms of how you use the time.

Agreeing an agenda before the meeting is useful so both parties can come prepared, with some of the thinking already done.

Make the best use of your one-on-one meeting you can.