

2. The purpose of a 1-on-1 is not to check progress.



Talented employees need great managers...how long an employee stays and is productive is determined by the relationship with the immediate supervisor.

— Marcus Buckingham

A common mindset is that leaders hold 1-on-1 meetings to monitor people's progress. But if our main interaction with our team members is to check that they've hit benchmarks, we drain their energy, zap their creativity, and drive them to do the minimum.

When done properly, 1-on-1s can be one of your most powerful levers to engage your people. In regular 1-on-1s, you can draw out issues, head off problems, test new ideas, celebrate successes, and encourage growth.

Insight Exercise

Although we recommend holding 1-on-1s weekly, your cadence will be based on your day job, your number of direct reports, your other commitments, and how demanding your manager is. With simple thoughtfulness, you can determine the best approach for you and your team.

Answer the questions below to determine what will work for you.

- How often can you realistically hold 1-on-1s with your team members? Weekly, biweekly, or monthly?
- What challenges will you face in honoring the time commitment? How can you prevent or overcome those challenges?
- When is the best time for 1-on-1s for you and your team members, given your schedules, existing commitments, and energy levels?

Now put those 1-on-1 meetings on your calendars.