



One-On-One Quick Start Guide



The Power of Structured Weekly Conversations

Manager Tools One-On-Ones are **30-minute, weekly conversations** that build trust, improve communication, and drive team performance. Used by 175,000+ managers worldwide, this proven approach creates a reliable rhythm for relationship building and problem-solving.

Get Started In Four Steps

1. Prepare Your Team (Week 1)

- Schedule a brief team meeting to introduce One-On-Ones
- Explain the purpose: "To build stronger working relationships and improve our communication"
- Describe the format: 30 minutes weekly, split between their agenda and yours
- Share the email template with scheduling options (see resources folder)
- Address questions directly and honestly

2. Set Up Your Schedule (Week 2)

- Block multiple time slots (1.5x the number of your direct reports)
- Allow your team to choose their preferred times
- Schedule for the same time each week to build consistency
- Avoid scheduling on Friday afternoons or Monday mornings
- Mark as "busy" in your calendar to prevent conflicts

3. Prepare Your System (Week 3)

- Choose your note-taking method (we recommend paper forms)
- Select your consistent opening question (e.g., "How's it going?")
- Gather any materials you'll need for first meetings
- Practice the 10/10/10 format (their time, your time, future)
- Remember: consistency matters more than perfection

4. Start Your First Meetings (Week 4)

- Begin with your standard question every time
- Take detailed notes during their portion
- Don't interrupt or try to control their agenda
- End with a future-focused question if time permits
- Follow up on at least one item before the next meeting



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The 10/10/10 Format

First 10 minutes: Their time

- They talk about whatever they want
- You listen and take notes
- This builds trust and surfaces issues

Middle 10 minutes: Your time

- Share updates, priorities, and context
- Ask for what you need
- Provide guidance on current work

Final 10 minutes:

- Future focus
- Discuss career development
- Provide coaching on skills
- Address longer-term goals

Pro Tip:

In practice, many One-On-Ones follow a 15/15 pattern, with no time for the future portion. That's normal and acceptable, especially in the beginning.

Common Questions

Q: What if my direct doesn't have much to say?

A: Be patient. Ask "What else?" and wait. Most people open up after 3-4 consistent meetings.

Q: What if a meeting needs to be rescheduled?

A: Always reschedule, never cancel. Do it immediately when the conflict arises.

Q: Should I use my laptop during One-On-Ones?

A: We strongly recommend handwritten notes to show focus and attention.



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Success Metrics

After 90 days of implementation, you should achieve:

- 85%+ completion rate of scheduled One-On-Ones
- Noticeable increase in proactive communication
- Earlier detection of potential problems
- Stronger relationships with your team members

Next Steps

- Review the included email templates
- Download our One-On-One note-taking forms
- Listen to our recommended podcasts for deeper understanding

For additional resources, including note-taking templates, podcast recommendations, and frequently asked questions, see the other files included in this package.