

REFOUND'S GUIDE TO

Great One-on-One Meetings

Most one-on-one meetings get bogged down by check-ins and updates on tasks and projects. By shifting your mindset from taskmaster to personal growth facilitator, you'll give your employees the accountability and mentoring they're craving.

Timing & Location

- Meet for 30 minutes each week. Create a recurring calendar event.
- Choose a private space. An office or conference room is ideal, but anyplace where others can't listen in.
- Meet whether things are good or bad. Consistency is key to establish trust for the tough conversation and gives space for employees to offer feedback as well.

Questions to Ask

- Keep your focus on longer term themes rather than short term tasks. Who they are and how you can help them grow is more important than today's mini-crisis.
- Try to avoid generic and superficial questions like "How are you doing?" or "How can I help?" Instead, ask questions that turn your one-on-one into high-value terrain:

"What's something you heard a customer say this week that concerns you?"

"Which of our company values are we most struggling to embody right now?"

"What's one conversation with a teammate you've been avoiding this week?"

"What is the task you do during the day where you think 'there must be a better way'?"

Topics to Cover

You'll get traction in your one-on-ones when you give performance feedback that inspires personal growth. Here are five common themes to focus on:

- **Time management.** Is there a pattern of lateness, or showing up flustered or disengaged? Name the pattern and use it as the beginning of a deeper conversation.
- **Keeping agreements.** Do they say "Yes" even when overwhelmed and then have to backtrack or miss deadlines?



Great One-on-One Meetings

- **Naming challenges.** Do they pretend to have skills that they don't? Guide them to see how that undermines other's confidence in them and how asking for help builds trust.
- **Embracing mistakes.** Do they play the victim or blame the system when something goes wrong? Invite them to take 100% ownership for their contribution.
- **Taking creative risks.** Do they keep their head down in meetings with execs? Do work that is good-enough but not great? Do they always have to have a better idea? Give them examples of how their style pushes others away, and role-play a new way to show up!

Additional Tips

- **Locate the Conversation.** Is this week's meeting a conversation where you need to push them a bit out of their comfort zone? Or have they been stretching lately and need some extra acknowledgement for taking a big step?
- **Be Transparent With Your Authority.** It's very confusing for employees when they feel their boss needs to be their friend, and it clouds your judgment as a professional. Honor their career and your responsibility by staying real about the power imbalance and the limits that puts on personal relationships (socializing outside of work, being friends on Facebook, etc.)
- **Share Your Struggles, Own Your Contribution.** If you held onto a piece of feedback too long, apologize and let them know you'll try and be more timely next time. If you see in hindsight that your expectations weren't clear, or you were too harsh or too soft with them, let them know you know. They'll appreciate it!

Remember, the most effective one-on-one conversation is one that builds over time. It's where your employee has the *consistent experience* that you are invested in their personal growth and professional development. It's easier than you think and you don't have to be anybody's therapist! Just keep work at the center of the conversation, hold people accountable for looking at their contributions, and ask questions that invite people to look inward rather than blame the system.

Stay curious and have fun!

Learn more about our feedback and one-on-one skills training programs at refund.com