

## 3 Mistakes Managers Make During One-on-One Meetings

Meetings are a part of getting work done, even if they often feel like an interruption of our *real* work.

No matter what you think of meetings in general, having regular, focused, and productive one-on-one conversations between a manager and their direct reports are vitally important. These meetings are an opportunity to:

- Provide context for the work being delegated
- Offer guidance on how to get the work done
- Share the impact that the direct report is having on you and others
- Provide updates -- in both directions
- Share your vision of the future
- Motivate and inspire
- Teach critical skills
- Coach on development areas
- Offer empathy
- Have career-path conversations
- Generate buy-in
- Really listen
- Brainstorm and problem-solve
- Clean up loose ends
- Share personal-life updates
- Build rapport
- Give and ask for feedback

Nevertheless, supervision meetings are often held with unclear expectations, minimal planning, and even less enthusiasm. If you'd like to transform these conversations from boring and unproductive into meetings that really matter and make a positive difference, here are three things to stop doing:

### 1. Delivering a monologue

One of the best ways to make sure that your conversations are indeed a two-way street is to let your direct report know *in advance* that you expect them to contribute to the agenda. The next best way to make sure that you're having a dialogue rather than a monologue is to really listen (rather than planning your response) while your colleague is talking.

## **2. Gossiping or complaining about other people**

If you're using the time in your one-to-one meeting to complain that your boss is too busy to approve your budget but not too busy to take two-hour lunches, you're gossiping. Likewise, if your direct report brings an outside person into the conversation to complain about, and you join in on the bashing, you're gossiping. You may think of this as a bonding experience, but it won't be too long before the bonds of trust between you and your direct report start to fray as they wonder to themselves, "Is my boss also talking about *me*?"

## **3. Rushing or canceling the meeting**

It might seem like your one-one-one supervision meetings are "nice to have" rather than "need to have." It might seem like these conversations are important but not urgent. It might seem like taking care of your external stakeholders is more critical than attending to your internal stakeholders. Yes, it might seem that way, but those mindsets, more often than not, are a mistake.

Rushing through, frequently postponing, or just canceling these meetings gets noticed, and not in a good way. Commit to making these internal conversations as high a priority as any client-facing engagement.

One-on-one meetings can be an opportunity to show how invested you are in the growth, learning, and engagement of your employees. Maximize your impact by not minimizing these conversations.