

1:1 Meeting Template: A Structured Approach to Meaningful Conversations



Why 1:1 Meetings Matter

As an introverted engineering manager, leading a team can feel overwhelming—especially when it comes to initiating and maintaining meaningful connections with your team members. Unlike larger meetings where discussions can be broad and high-level, one-on-one meetings are your best opportunity to build trust, provide guidance, and truly understand what your team needs.

However, many introverted leaders find these meetings draining or difficult to navigate. What if the conversation feels forced? What if I don't know what to say next? What if I don't provide enough value? These concerns are completely normal, and that's why having a structured approach is so valuable.

This template is designed to give you a clear, repeatable framework to ensure your 1:1s are productive, impactful, and engaging—without feeling overwhelming.

How This Template Helps You Succeed

This template is designed to give you a clear, repeatable framework to ensure your 1:1s are productive, impactful, and engaging—without feeling overwhelming.

By using this template, you will:

- ✓ **Foster deeper trust and engagement** with your team.
- ✓ **Stay organized and ensure meaningful conversations** happen regularly.
- ✓ **Reduce decision fatigue** by following a structured but flexible approach.
- ✓ **Create a safe space** where your team members feel heard, valued, and supported.

5 Key Principles for Successful 1:1 Meetings

1. **Be Prepared**

- a. Set an agenda in advance – A clear structure keeps the conversation focused and purposeful.
- b. Review previous notes and action items – Shows that you value progress and continuity.

2. **Be Present**

- a. Eliminate distractions – Put away your phone and avoid multitasking to give full attention.
- b. Listen actively – Summarize key points and ask clarifying questions to show engagement.

3. **Be Consistent**

- a. Hold regular 1:1 meetings – Consistency builds trust and reliability.
- b. Follow up on action items – Reinforces accountability and continuous improvement.

4. **Be Supportive**

- a. Show empathy – Acknowledge challenges, and celebrate wins, both big and small.
- b. Offer guidance and resources – Help remove blockers and provide opportunities for growth.

5. **Be Open-Minded**

- a. Encourage new ideas – Foster innovation by welcoming different perspectives.
- b. Invite feedback – Allow your team to share thoughts on your leadership and work environment.

1:1 Meeting Structure

Step 1

Step 1: Quick Check-In & Follow-Up (5 minutes)

✓ Goal: Start the conversation in a natural, engaging way while revisiting past discussions.

- Greet the team member & open with a friendly question:
 - “How’s your week going so far?”
 - “Anything exciting or challenging happening lately?”
 - Review previous action items & updates
 - “Last time, we discussed [X]. How’s that going?”
 - “Were there any blockers or unexpected changes?”
- ◆ Tip Applied: Be Prepared & Be Consistent – Tracking past action items ensures continuity and accountability.

1:1 Meeting Structure

Step 2

Step 2: Team Member's Agenda (10 minutes)

✓ Goal: Give the team member space to share their thoughts, concerns, and wins.

- Ask open-ended questions to guide the conversation:
 - “What’s the most important thing on your mind today?”
 - “Are there any blockers or challenges I can help with?”
 - “Is there anything you’re excited about or struggling with?”
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- ◆ Tip Applied: Be Present & Be Open-Minded – Actively listening to their priorities builds trust and engagement.

1:1 Meeting Structure

Step 3

Step 3: Manager's Input & Coaching (10 minutes)

✓ Goal: Provide valuable feedback, guidance, and coaching to help them grow.

- Project & Performance Feedback:
 - "Here's something you've done really well lately..."
 - "I'd like to see you grow in this area—how can I support you?"
- Career Growth & Development:
 - "What skills or areas would you like to develop further?"
 - "How do you feel about your current role and responsibilities?"
- Coaching Moments:
 - Ask reflective questions: "What do you think you could do differently next time?"
 - Encourage alternative approaches: "Have you considered trying [X] instead?"

◆ Tip Applied: Be Supportive & Be Open-Minded – Offer guidance while respecting their perspective.

1:1 Meeting Structure

Step 4

Step 4: Decisions & Action Items (3 minutes)

✓ Goal: Clarify next steps and ensure follow-through.

- Summarize key decisions made during the meeting
- Outline new action items with deadlines
 - “So our action items are [X] and [Y], due by [date]. Does that sound good?”

◆ Tip Applied: Be Prepared – Ending with clear takeaways ensures progress.

1:1 Meeting Structure

Step 5

Step 5: Closing & Next Steps (2 minutes)

✓ *Goal:* Wrap up positively and reinforce consistency.

- *Ask: "Is there anything else you'd like to discuss before we close?"*
 - Encourage them to share ideas or feedback
 - Confirm the next meeting date
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- ◆ *Tip Applied: Be Consistent & Be Supportive –*
Ensuring a next check-in builds trust and accountability.

Additional Best Practices

- ◆ **Document Each Meeting:** Keep a shared document for each team member with key discussion points, feedback, and action items. This makes annual performance reviews significantly easier and reinforces accountability.
- ◆ **Manage Time Wisely:** If needed, use a timer to keep each section within its allocated time, ensuring balanced discussions.



Final Thoughts & Next Steps

As an introverted engineering manager, 1:1s don't have to feel draining or unstructured. With the right approach, these meetings become an opportunity to build trust, develop your team, and ensure smooth collaboration—all while keeping the conversations focused, effective, and natural.

- ✓ **Try this template in your next 1:1 meeting!**
 - Follow the structure outlined above.**
 - Use the open-ended questions to guide the conversation.**
 - Observe how a little structure makes meetings smoother and more valuable!**

The more you practice this method, the easier and more natural your 1:1s will become. Start small, stay consistent, and watch your leadership impact grow.