

Leading an Effective One-to-One

Why do we do them?

One-to-ones are part of the responsibility to support staff members. They also provide an excellent opportunity to maintain an open relationship with each of them.

As one organisation's policy says...

"The main purpose of the one-to-one is to provide is to discuss, review, reflect on and analyse people's work practises. This will ensure that they achieve optimum outcomes for our customers and meet the aims and objectives of both the Organisation and its customers thereby meeting the standards required.

One-to-ones will also provide opportunities to discuss individuals' needs for support, development and learning so that they can continue to improve their performance".

What skills are needed?

Planning

Key to anything we do. Planning can save around 40% of the implementation time. Plan the meeting and take time to prepare ourselves. In any meeting with staff members we should aim to do no more than 20% of the talking. Take this into account when planning

Questioning & listening

Vital to success are our own communication skills. Asking the right question, pausing and then really listening to the answers are key to success. It's so easy to hear what we think the person has said. We should probe all answers to ensure we are not making assumptions.

Giving & receiving feedback

Giving and receiving feedback are two distinct skills. Giving feedback includes praising at the right time and in the right way as well as giving developmental feedback. Receiving feedback is one of the best ways of keeping in touch with what is happening within the Team and being able to manage people effectively

Agreeing objectives

One-to-ones provide an ideal forum for agreeing objectives and monitoring progress on a regular basis. Objectives need to be SMART

Establishing Development Plans

Development Plans can be reviewed to see what is going well and how this is being achieved. They are also used to identify where skills, knowledge and experience need to be gained. There are over fifty ways to learn and many of them are on-the-job, where we do 90% of our learning. When establishing plans we need to remember the variety of solutions available.

Coaching

Bearing in mind 90% of our learning is done on-the-job Managers can play a vital part in helping team members embed new skills and knowledge. Good coaches draw information from team members and encourage them to put their skills into practice.

Note taking and record keeping

Part of an effective one-to-one is ensuring records are kept. Records provide confirmation of what was discussed and agreed. They are also a part of supporting the team member to complete actions, objectives and development plans as they have a record of the things agreed to refer to after the meeting.

Structuring an Effective One-to-one

There is no set time for a one-to-one. It is more about covering the things you need and should cover. Each session will have...

- a beginning for introductions, setting agendas and agreeing priorities and outcomes
- a middle where the contents are worked through
- an end where the meeting is summarised, decisions taken and actions agreed

Common agenda items are:

- Review of work schedules and workloads, and associated performance.
- Discussion and review of any specific roles and responsibilities,
- Discussion of development and training issues and progress.
- Discussion of working relationships and personal support issues.