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Yerbo's 4-step guide to successful 1:1 meetings for managers of top-notch tech teams.



ABOUT US

Yerbo is becoming the leader player startup in humanizing relationships at work to raise people's happiness. We're igniting wellbeing as a response to burnout, through an ecosystem with tech and behavioral-science products at its core.

1:1 TUTORIALS GALORE

The internet is flooded with an array of end-all be-all guides to 1:1 meetings, but we've come to realize that a one-size-fits-all solution simply does not exist. Why? Because people and organizations are unique.

What we *can* tell you is what worked for us, and that's no small feat, because on top of being a bilingual company fluent in English and in Spanish, we also *speak* emotions. **Having 1:1s and not discussing emotional issues, motivation, happiness, self-value, means that you're wasting an opportunity to connect with your report, to really check-in, to create emotional safety for your team** to go to you in times of happiness as well as in times of trouble.

ARE 1:1 MEETINGS WORKING?

According to a 2019 report on [State of One-on-ones done by Soapbox](#) based on 200+ managers across more than 30 different industries, managing almost 1k of direct reports, only 47% of them speak about connection to people and/or work in their 1:1s, and **only 49% speak about employee motivation**. That roughly leaves the other half not talking about these very important emotional foundations that have a direct repercussion on employee's work engagement.

4 STAGES OF SUCCESSFUL 1:1 MEETINGS

Like we said before, we understand that there are plenty of options to choose from when it comes to lists of questions to use in your 1:1, but what we really want to convey is that no matter what you use, you need to focus on emotions, and the rest of the also necessary pieces will fall into place. We developed 4 flexible stages that our own managers use to lead their 1:1 meetings with their reports. **Questions vary depending on the person and what the manager sees that the report needs. Even if you choose to use only one of the stages properly, you're already ahead of the game!**

1- ICE BREAKER- WATERCOOLER STAGE.

This portion is unstructured in conversation topics and in time, though time should not be excessive, so as to not perceive it as a "waste", but more of a bonding opportunity. It's about getting to know each other, but it's mainly for the manager to gauge the emotional state that the report is at when walking into the room. Are they excited about work and are ready to jump in? Are they preoccupied with non-work related issues? This is an opportunity to see if they're dealing with their emotions in the correct manner.

Question examples:

- How are you? Did you use [Talkit](#) today? *Using tools for emotional growth allows everybody on the team to speak in a common vocabulary and, when there's enough emotional safety, even be able to share results of these tools.*
- I've noticed your mood change over the past few weeks. Have you checked your [burnout risk](#) this month?

2- EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT STAGE

After the manager assessed how to approach the meeting based on the initial emotions that the collaborator brought to the table in the first stage, it's time to move on to what their needs are. This stage is to focus on the collaborator as an individual at work and what value can be extracted from having these meetings: can they improve their emotional well-being? Do they end up enhancing their [positive emotions](#)?

Question examples:

- Are you finding [remote work](#) challenging? *This, for example, will depend on whether the person had been working remotely before social distancing policies.*
- Do you find that the tasks keep you enticed and entertained, or do you feel a lull and would rather move on to something else?

3- MANAGER SPOTLIGHT STAGE

This stage focuses on [how the manager can deliver the best of them](#) to the collaborator. After hearing and gauging their emotional state, hearing about what's keeping the employee motivated, their needs, their general outlook towards the job, it's time to deliver the knowledge, tools, help, ideas and support that only a proper manager can bring to the table.

Question examples:

- Are you connecting with other team members correctly while working remotely? *This is particularly useful for workers that are not used to remote work and with everybody having different setups, schedules, distraction, communication may prove to be more difficult and even frustrating at times.*
- Do you feel you have enough participation in team activities? Would you like for that to increase/decrease?

4 - NEXT STEPS STAGE

This last stage is about communicating that there's a broader objective for these meetings, that it's not just about talking, but about getting something out of it. This is where either just the manager or both manager/collaborator choose to pledge commitments for the future. It can be something achievable in the time between these meetings, or something long term, as long as expectations are set and abided by.

Question examples:

- Is there something you'd like to talk about in our next meeting that you feel this one did not cover?
- Would you like to follow up during the week on the training for the new tools and see where you're at?

We hope you find this useful and can adapt it to your own needs and collaborators. The point is to increase overall happiness at work, because a happier environment makes or breaks a company.

DO YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO BUILD EMOTIONAL CONNECTIVITY?

A successful 1:1 meeting will not come from exact science, but it's quite helpful to have tools like Talkit to help you pave the way to emotional self-awareness for you and your team.

[Request a Talkit demo for your team](#)

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO DIVE DEEPER INTO?

We're always open to talk things out and see what we can do to make your work environment a happier one, to avoid burnout and to overall be a place where you'd like to stick around. You can email us here, and follow us on our social media outlets, we love to share news about our products but also useful content for everyone.

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