

## 4 easy ways to make every 1-on-1 more valuable

You spend too much time in 1-on-1s to just coast through them. FranklinCovey leadership expert Loren Mooney gives some simple ways to make every meeting count. **Video transcript:**

It's easy for an exhausted manager to occasionally coast through a direct report's 1-on-1. I've done it.

Maybe the person starts by saying, "I don't have much to cover this week." And I think, *Whew — I can relax*. And the meeting is mostly chit-chat. Or the person reads their to-do list. But that's not a good use of this valuable time. It's important to make every 1-on-1 count.

Here are some approaches that have worked for me:

**Work with your direct report to create a shared running agenda.** You've heard the advice to make agendas for 1-on-1s — but who actually does it? It can feel like too much trouble. Instead, consider a running agenda. I have one direct report who started a shared doc for our 1-on-1s.

We each put in items throughout the week. Some are small questions — and we handle them in notes without discussing. Then, for larger items, we can both be thinking about them — so once we get to our 1-on-1, we're ready to have a bigger, better discussion.

**You can also take time to share high-level information with your direct report.** It's true that managers shouldn't talk too much in their direct reports' 1-on-1s. But when you do talk, a good thing to share is details that your direct report doesn't have access to — like what you learned about next quarter's goals in a leadership meeting.

Or maybe you get their perspective on things that were presented in an all-hands meeting — and answer their questions by sharing additional context you have. This kind of information can help your direct report do their job *much* better.

**And, if you're in a 1-on-1 that's limping along, ask the person to share their views on something important.** You might ask:

*“How do you think the team is doing with our new scheduling process?”* or

*“How are you feeling about your workload overall — what's most interesting to you right now?”*

Or even, *“I'd love to get your input on how I'm running team meetings — I think they could be better. What do think?”*

**Then, end each meeting by identifying what you'll both do before the next one.** Too often, the 1-on-1 is over and everyone's just happy they got through it. Then ... nothing happens.

So, it's important at the end of each meeting to determine — who is doing what? Or, at least what will you each *think* more about, so that you can come to the next meeting ready to go deeper on that topic?

You spend too much time in 1-on-1s to just coast through them. But with a little extra thought and care, you can make the most of them every time.