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How To Start One-on-One Meetings

I got a lot of emails (and comments) about my [series on one-on-one meetings](#).

I know that it can be daunting at first, especially if you are a new leader. When do I start them? How do I start them? How do I introduce them?

That last question (how do I introduce them) is one I wrestled with for weeks. I had introduced them so poorly the first time I tried that I was afraid. I did a ton of research on the subject, talked to friends and family, and finally decided that I had to get over my fears and just do them. If my team didn't like them, so be it, but I knew they would be an important part of my leadership.

Here is how I started the process of one-on-one meetings the second time I did them.

The 4 Steps to Starting One-on-One Meetings

1. I sent an email to my team introducing them to one-on-one meetings.

I told them in advance about the 15-10-5 format, tried to address any fears or questions they might have, and told them I would like to start this week.

I created a [downloadable Word Doc](#) of the actual text that I sent to my team, with names taken out, so that you can easily take it and edit it and use it for your own team. Feel free to literally copy the email as it is. Just make sure to change the few parts in brackets!

[Download One-on-One Meeting Introduction Email](#) (and get the one-on-one meeting agenda form as well).

2. We started meeting.

The first meeting was mostly about the meetings. It did not follow the normal 15-10-5 format at all ([see part three](#)). It was more like 27-3. They asked a lot of questions and I answered them.

At the very end, I used a few minutes to address anything else I felt was relevant. The second week followed the normal format almost perfectly.

3. Stay consistent, especially early on.

I picked a time when I absolutely, with no exceptions, was able to meet with them at a consistent time for six straight weeks.

As I mentioned [post #3](#) in the series, things come up. Meetings have to be rescheduled. *Not in the first six weeks though.* I wanted to get into a rhythm first and show them my commitment. This meant I delayed starting them for almost four weeks due to a planned vacation.

If you travel a lot, that does not mean you can never start one-on-ones. It might just mean that all of your meetings are on a Monday or Friday or that you cannot commit to a consistent time each week. If that truly is the case, break rule #1 (Pick and Stick to a Time) and do them anyway. While a specific, consistent time is important, not having one is not an excuse to not do them at all.

4. I communicated point #3 to my boss.

This way he knew not to schedule anything with my team during those times. I gave him my meeting calendar and told him that rescheduling those was off limits. He was impressed and helped me stick with those times.

Follow those four steps and you are on your way to some great one-on-one meetings. Make one-on-one meetings the pillar of your leadership too and watch your team's performance soar!

Now, go get started.

Have you started doing one-on-ones? If not, what is your biggest hold up?

This is a part of my series on one-on-one meetings. For all posts in the series and free downloads to help you start and run the meetings go here: [One-on-One Meetings for Leaders](#)