

# The 8 Questions You Should Ask in Every 1:1

A Gallup survey on employee engagement found that workers are nearly three times more likely to feel engaged at work when they have regular 1:1 meetings with their manager.<sup>1</sup>

Employee engagement is key to everything from productivity to loyalty, making 1:1s essential for your success. But what you ask in these meetings also matters. Research conducted by Cisco shows that the most productive 1:1s revolve around two basic topics: What are you working on, and How can I help?.<sup>2</sup>

## Here are 8 more in-depth questions to ask in every 1:1

### **01. When did you recently have the chance to grow and develop in your work, and how can we create more of those opportunities?**

Everyone wants to learn and evolve. This question shows your team members that you care about their individual development. It also allows you to identify a pipeline for management positions, which can help you promote from within.

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<sup>1</sup> Should Managers Focus on Performance or Engagement?, Gallup.

<sup>2</sup> Cisco Studied More Than 15,000 Teams and Found One Simple Practice Consistently Improves Engagement, Inc.

**02. Have you seen someone else do something recently that worked well, and can you describe it to me?**

This question serves two important purposes. It shows that you trust and value the person's opinions. It also allows you to assess the person's leadership skills.

**03. What can you tell me about yourself personally that would help me better support you?**

Everyone has their unique strengths and weaknesses; those differences are what makes a great team. Finding out that your team member has a health concern, is caring for aging parents, or simply isn't a morning person gives you a path to provide individualized support to help that worker to perform at their best. It also shows you're empathetic and understanding to their unique situation.

**04. Which of your current projects are most in line with your strengths and interests, and which do you feel are holding you back?**

Individuals are the most engaged when working on projects that provide just the right level of challenge while zeroing in on what they enjoy. If something is completely outside their wheelhouse, they may be afraid to give it their all. Yet if something is too easy and familiar, they may tend to find the project mundane. This question will help you better match your team with projects moving forward and identify career directions they might explore.

**05. What challenges are you facing in doing your best work, and what changes can we make to set you up for success?**

There are innumerable things in the average workspace that could hold your team back, from an uncomfortable workstation to a chronically broken copy machine to a breakdown in communication. Many of these fixes can be simple, relatively inexpensive and could lead to a whole new level of productivity.

**06. What would you like to know about me to improve how we work together?**

Not all personalities automatically mesh, and communication can be fraught with misunderstandings. Talking about your differences can help bridge the gap, leading to a better working relationship.

**07. Is there an area of the company that you want to learn more about or feel like you have something to contribute to?**

Your team members likely have skills and talents in areas that aren't being tapped in their current role. Asking this question helps you learn their goals and desires, as well as identify previously hidden skills that could be useful to your organization.

**08. How do you feel overall about coming to work, and is there anything you need from us right now?**

Particularly tough days aside, it's important to get a pulse on how your team members feel about their work. Asking this question every time will help you get ahead of any emerging issues that could lead to major problems down the road. Meeting with your employees can help boost engagement, but you need to ask the right questions. Focusing on their short-term and long-term needs, goals and desires is the best way to earn their trust and loyalty, which can lead to a highly functioning team.

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