



# Adjusting Your 1-on-1 Meeting Style Based On The Employee

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**One-size leadership does not fit all. The same goes for how you have one-on-one meetings with employees. Adjusting your 1-on-1 meeting style to meet your employee's needs – especially for those that you don't connect with as easily — can pay big dividends.**

## Personal Experience

I remember working for a leader early in my career who was very different than I. We had meetings that went way over the allotted time, spent a lot of time brainstorming and collaborating. I would often leave those meetings and ask a colleague – are we supposed to do something?

I liked the agendas, structure, and plans. I learned over time how to work more effectively with this leader and eventually built a great relationship. It was rough at first, though.

We need to remember our job as leaders is not to be mind-readers.

Let's ask, *What's working for them, what's not working?*

At first, they may not know but over time you can both realize when you are able to have great dialogue discussing both work issues and also building relationships.

We also know it is not the same with everyone. Strong leaders know that even those we don't "click" with initially can be some of the people we need to hear from the most because they challenging our thinking and bring new perspectives.

After many years of working with all different types of leaders and employees and using some great tools, here are a few ways I have found to connect better in your touch-base meetings:

## With An Extrovert:

- Be willing to talk things out and go off the agenda.
- Be open to new topics.
- Recognize that just because something is said, that does not mean the employee has made a decision. Talking it out is a way of thinking so it is common for extroverts to say things as a way to think about it.

## With An Intravert:

- If possible, send them meeting prompts and/or agenda ahead of time.
- Be ok with pauses, silence, or coming back to a topic in your next session.
- Realize that if a point is made, it is something they have thought about and decided. Take it seriously.

## With A Big Picture Person:

- Be willing to share strategy. The "Why" behind decisions is always important but especially with your big picture employees.
- Recognize that they will be ok with not having all the details, a general overview of the plan is typically sufficient.
- Be clear about action items.

## With A More Sensitive Person:

- Spend more time upfront checking in with them and asking about their life outside of work.
- Listen and pay attention to reactions. If you realize you have said something that hurt their feelings, circle back and explain.
- Don't avoid feedback.
- Provide coaching if their emotions are impacting your ability to provide feedback.

## When You Are More Sensitive And They Are More Blunt:

- Recognize you can jump right into the topic without a lot of checking in or small talk, they prefer to get more to the point.



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## When You Are More Sensitive And They Are More Blunt:

- Don't overthink what you say. Be clear and let them know you care but recognize you are more concerned about each word you say than they are.
- Ask them to recap the end of the meeting to make sure your communication was clear. You will likely use more words than they do so you don't want your key message to be lost.

## When Your Employee Is Very Structured:

- Delegating work at the last minute is very stressful to them. Discuss in your one-on-one session any situations where this has happened recently and how you can work together better in the future.
- Use an agenda – yours or theirs for your meeting. They will appreciate being prepared.
- Close your session with reviewing key decisions and action items. Clarity will support their ability to do their best work.
- Coach them on times when flexibility is needed in their work.

## If Your Employee Likes To “Go With The Flow”:

- For both structured and go with the flow “types” it is important not to judge, see the value both work styles bring to the work environment.
- Agree on check-in times or milestones along the way to provide assurance to you and to keep them on track with work assignments.
- Discuss what a deadline or due date means to both of you and/or the team. Sometimes we really need it before the deadline for review or collaboration. As this type will be less likely to turn it in early, let them know when you really need it.

The key to adapting our style is to use our emotional intelligence to listen to our employees and be able to value the unique strengths they bring. Use transparency to talk openly about how you notice your work style being different and see if they agree. For example, “I’ve noticed you like structure and plan really well, you have probably noticed I am not as structured. Would you agree with these differences and how is that affecting your work?”

Some leaders have said, I don't have time to adjust to every employee. They work for me, they should adapt to my style. Ideally you both are adapting. If things are going well with the employee from your standpoint and from theirs, adapting may not be needed. With those who you struggle to communicate or find you have issues aligning, it is worth it to consider how you communicate with them and make some changes.

I use the analogy of sending flowers to someone you care about. If you love roses and they love carnations; you would send them carnations, not roses, right? Communicate in a way that shows you understand them and see the results you gain in trust and engagement.

## Keep connecting!

### For more information on improving relationships and results through one-on-ones,

- Check Out [Nodus1.com](https://www.nodus1.com)
- Follow Nodus on [LinkedIn](#)
- Read [The Connection Blueprint](#)

Interested in creating stronger connections to improve engagement, retention, and performance?

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