

One-to-one meeting framework

Purpose: create a recurring leadership rhythm that surfaces alignment issues before they become disengagement, conflict, or resignation risk.

Use this framework monthly or every 4 to 6 weeks. Use the long-term alignment questions quarterly or biannually.

Employee name: _____	Date: _____
Manager name: _____	Role/team: _____

1. Reflect on the recent period

- How have things gone since our last conversation?
- What went well?
- What felt harder than expected?
- What could have gone better?
- Where would feedback from me be most useful?
- Leader prompt: Here is what I noticed and appreciated since our last conversation.

2. Plan for the next period

- What would make the next period successful for you?
- What support would be most useful?
- What should we clarify, change, or stop doing?
- Are there priorities, deadlines, or expectations that feel unclear?
- Where could friction with stakeholders, customers, or team members slow execution?

3. Revisit longer-term alignment

Use this section quarterly or biannually. It is designed to catch misalignment before a strong employee quietly detaches from the role or environment.

- How would you like your role to evolve over the next year or two?
- Which parts of your work feel most energizing right now?
- Which parts feel least aligned with where you want to grow?
- How do your goals connect to team or company goals?
- What would make staying and growing here feel like the right next step?

One-to-one manager guide

The value of the meeting is not the checklist. The value is the pattern it helps a leader detect over time.

What to listen for

Safety and certainty	Confusion, repeated uncertainty, fear of mistakes, shifting expectations, or unclear priorities.
Contribution and purpose	Work feels invisible, recognition is missing, or the person questions whether the work matters.
Growth and significance	The person feels stalled, underused, overlooked, or unclear about future opportunity.
Connection and belonging	Friction with the manager, key team members, stakeholders, or the broader environment.

What to do after the conversation

- **Clarify one expectation.** Do not leave the meeting with vague alignment. Name what success looks like.
- **Remove one source of friction.** Look for the smallest practical action that reduces confusion, delay, or relationship strain.
- **Recognize one contribution.** Make the recognition specific, recent, and connected to impact.
- **Create one follow-up.** If an issue matters enough to discuss, it matters enough to revisit.
- **Escalate early when needed.** If manager-employee relationship, team friction, workload, or role misalignment is substantial, do not wait for visible damage.

Manager-blame trap to avoid

Many people frame employee retention risk as a manager failure. That is simply not accurate. The more precise frame is relationship fit. A manager can work well with one person and have friction with another. That distinction creates a better path to action.