



In the spirit of empowerment and shared responsibility, I came up with what I thought at the time was a brilliant system for my one-on-ones.

Instead of always asking my staff to come to me and instead of me always going to my multiple staff all of whom worked off-site, I came up with the system where we would alternate.

On paper it was great.

In practice, it was a bit of a mess.

The best laid plans right?

Because whenever it was our time to meet we could never figure out whose turn it was to go where. Very often one of us would be sitting in an office waiting for the other person who was doing the exact same thing.

In one particular instance, we both got it wrong and we were both sitting and opposite offices waiting for the other person.

My system wasn't great and one of the reasons it wasn't great is it wasn't consistent.

When it comes to your one-on-ones you want to make sure that they are happening on a consistent basis. To do that you need to make sure that your logistics are in place.

That's what we're going to talk about today.

When we talk about logistics, we're talking about the really basic foundational ones. Where are you going to meet?

When meeting, what day and what time?

What's the duration of the meetings?

How frequently are you going to meet? And what are those meetings going to look like in practice?

The first thing you want to do is to be consistent. You want to make sure first and foremost that you are consistently meeting. The easiest way to do that is to set a day and time for when you will be meeting.

Do not leave it up to having to schedule every single time you meet.

*How's Monday this week?*

*That doesn't work for me.*



*How about Tuesday?*

*Three o'clock.*

*No, I'm busy then.*

Nobody wants to go through all that.

Sit down with each of your staff and come up with a day and a time that in most cases is going to work for both of you.

You can't plan for everything of course, but you want to find a day and a time that's going to work most often for the both of you.

My asterisk here is to be flexible. Life happens. Vacations happen. Sickness happens. Big meetings from the higher-ups that you can't get out of happen.

There are going to be instances when you can't hold that meeting. but as much as is in your power you want to make sure you're not scheduling over those meetings. You want to show that they're valuable. That you want to meet consistently and unless you absolutely have to you're not going to reschedule those meetings.

You also want to be personal. There is another video that focuses just on this.

But like with everything you do with your staff you want to make sure that what you're doing works for them. Every staff you ever supervise is their own person. Adjust accordingly as best you can.

The asterisk here is to be conscious not to play favorites. You don't want to spend too much time with one staff and neglect another staff.

You don't want to- if you decide to meet for lunch- take one staff to some fancy restaurant and another staff to some fast food restaurant, right?

You don't want to have any optics of favoritism. Be conscious as you're trying to personalize and individualize your one-on-ones that you're also being consistent across the team.

Where are you going to meet?

There are a lot of options depending on where you work. I would caution you against the tradition of having your staff come into your office where you're sitting behind a desk and they're sitting across from you.

You might not mean anything by this but there is a message being sent that there's a barrier there literally and also figuratively and there is an inherent power dynamic between you in your staff.



You want to make these meetings comfortable and on equal footing so I caution you against sitting across from your desk as you're having these sorts of meetings.

Where else can you have them?

Maybe like one of the offices I worked in we had a little table in the office where we could sit next to each other. You might consider going to where your staff is.

If they're offsite and you're doing virtual meetings, you might not have much of a choice of where you're meeting in that case.

Is there a conference room or somewhere that is sort of neutral territory?

Not that you're on opposing sides, but just to show that you're in a space that works for both of you and you're not always expecting your staff to cater to you.

Is it possible to meet off-site?

Is there a park nearby?

Does your staff like to be outdoors?

Do they like to walk and talk?

How about a coffee shop or maybe a place where you can have lunch where you both bring your lunch with you?

You don't ever want to ask your staff to spend their own money on work-related things, so if you are doing a coffee make sure you're conscious of that.

Wherever works for you and more importantly wherever works for your staff, you want to accommodate them as best you can. It might not be your ideal, but if it's something you're really uncomfortable with or does not work for you at all, of course, you want to honor that.

When are you going to meet?

This is also something you want to make sure works for both of you and you want to schedule based on both of your schedules. Not just yours.

Some people really like to meet first thing in the morning. Others prefer to meet at the end of the day. Some people like Mondays, some people like Fridays.

It all depends on what your staff needs. But be conscious of what's working.

If you schedule for a certain time and something is always getting scheduled over it or



someone's always has back to back meetings and is running late, it might not be the best time to meet.

I worked at a place once where we would have staff meetings first thing in the morning (not a great idea) and there was one staff member who was late almost every single time.

Our boss would get so frustrated by that and finally, thankfully they decided to bump the meeting back an hour, so when the staff was late it didn't disrupt the meeting.

Be conscious of those things that are coming into play with the schedule that you've set.

How long you're going to meet- like everything else- is going to depend on your staff. You're going to have staff who are a little more long-winded. You're going to have other staff who prefer to get right to the point. Adjust accordingly.

For some you're going to default to that hour. For others, it might be a little bit shorter- 30 or 45 minutes. For others, they might want a little more than that hour. So maybe an hour 15, maybe 90 minutes. You don't want to go too much longer than that.

You want to adjust based on what's going on. There might be some seasons during your work where things are just so busy and time is so precious. You don't want to eliminate the meetings, but you might consider reducing them from an hour to 30 minutes or whatever the case may be.

On the flip side there might be situations where something really delicate is happening or serious and you need more time to sit down one on one.

For that period of time instead of meeting for 60 minutes you bump it up to 90 or whatever the case may be. Be flexible and respond to what's going on around you.

I also encourage you if you are new to the position or you have a staff who is new to meet pretty frequently and for longer periods of time until you get to your baseline of really understanding how you work best together.

When it comes to how often, keep in mind again when you're new or your staff is new, I would suggest meeting pretty frequently certainly at least once a week, but probably in the first few weeks, meeting multiple times a week because they're going to have a lot of questions and need a lot of support as they're getting adjusted to their new role or if you're getting adjusted to your new role.

Some of your staff are really going to want to meet with you every week, other staff would prefer to meet every two weeks. I wouldn't go much longer than that, even for staff who are on top of everything and they really stay on task and they're doing such a great job.

It doesn't mean they still don't need to meet with you.



You still want to have an opportunity to celebrate them and support them and coach them and give and receive feedback. Don't go any longer than every two weeks.

You might want to go every week for staff who prefer that and how you run the meetings.

You are the leader of the meeting but you shouldn't be the sole leader of the meeting.

You want to share ownership of the meeting and make sure your staff has a voice as well into what is being discussed and what goes on during those meetings. Come up with a way for both of you to share that responsibility of what is happening in that meeting.

When you schedule the time again, make sure you protect it.

You're sending the message to your staff that you're not going to schedule over this time barring some external emergency circumstances, but also that you're protecting the time when you're in the meeting so that you're not distracted. You're not looking at your phone or your watch all the time. You're showing your staff that you are fully present to this meeting.

Also make sure you both have responsibility with what goes on the agenda and who's leading the conversations. You can come up with a system better than mine, so it's clearer about who's doing what but you might want to have a shared document somewhere where you can both add items onto the agenda as you see fit.

Some weeks, you might be doing more of the leading, other weeks that might be them, but you certainly don't want it to be a hundred percent. You want to make sure your staff has a voice during that meeting as well.

As you start to establish a rhythm about once a quarter, you want to check in on how your one-on-ones are going.

What's working? What's not? Do you want to try something different in terms of day, time, duration, location?

Check in with your team. See what they want to adjust if anything and then give yourself some space and some time to get into that new rhythm.

About a quarter later check back in again. Make sure all of these logistics are intentional and make sure they're mutual.

That you're not making the decisions on your own but you're doing them with the support and benefit and voice of your staff as well.