

One on One's *that* Don't Suck:

SKIP THE SMALL TALK,
DRIVE IMPACT



Conducting One-On-Ones

One on One meetings are where you dive into business metrics, personal goals, and keep everyone on track. By using a standard template and scheduling bi-weekly meetings, you create a space for real talk and growth. It's not just about ticking a box; it's about building a kickass team and showing you care about their success. So, don't just do meetings — do them right.

One-On-One Meeting

TEMPLATE

EMPLOYEE NAME

DEPARTMENT

MANAGER NAME

DATE

ACTIONS TAKEN

What actions have you taken since our last 1:1?

METRICS

How am I performing relative to my metrics?

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What actions have you taken based on your performance review?

UPDATES AND IDEAS (What areas need to be addressed? What ideas do you have? Rank in order of priority and urgency.)	RESPONSIBILITY (Who is responsible for achieving these actions?)	NOTES

PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL,
AND FINANCIAL GOALS

Updates and challenges.

	PERSONAL	PROFESSIONAL	FINANCIAL
1 Year			
3 Years			
5 Years			

ACTION PLAN

What are the next steps and actions I will take after this meeting?

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:

What's the deal with one-on-ones?

Regularly meeting with your direct reports, when done the right way, is the key to their success and yours.

One-on-one meetings. Sure, it's not the sexiest topic, but it is a serious one. How serious? Well, at my company, we take one-on-one meetings so seriously that no one on our leadership team is eligible to receive incentive compensation unless they're conducting one-on-one meetings twice a month with every single one of their direct reports. That's right. Even if they're hitting all of their targets. There are no exceptions. That's how seriously we take one-on-one meetings.

Now, I understand that some of you might think that this policy in practice is a bit extreme, but I can assure you that it's not, and I'll tell you why. Without these twice monthly one-on-ones, you've drastically increased the potential for everything to fall apart.

As a people manager, there is so much crucial cultural and operational information to be gleaned from these conversations, from important business metrics pertaining

to their specific role, to their personal professional, and financial goals, their development plan, and so much more.

Isn't it worth your time to develop a bond and support their growth if it means that you're creating a high-performing team in the process? You don't just want anyone doing this job, right? You want your employees to be the best, because ultimately their performance in their respective roles is what creates people's perception of your brand.

Your goal should be to build a team that is unstoppable, and conducting one-on-one ones, believe it or not, is one key way of achieving positive brand recognition. But what is more important than simply conducting these meetings is conducting them in the right way.

HOW TO

No matter what size your business currently is, you should be conducting these meetings (as you are other aspects of the business) with your vision statement in mind. Where do you intend to be ten years from now? Conduct and document your one-on-one meetings with that business in mind.

These are the essential areas you should cover in your one-on-one - shamelessly steal my template. You're welcome.

HEADING

Include the employee's name, their department, their manager's name, and the date. Only have two departments? Doesn't matter. Ultimately, your HR department will be organizing and storing this information for everyone's accountability. Don't skip this step.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Before moving on to new items, I start every one-on-one with reviewing the work that's taken place since our last meeting. It's incredibly frustrating to have a meeting where clear action items were established yet no progress was made afterwards to complete them. This section should tie out to the previous one-on-ones "Action Plan" items. This is one way that I reinforce our Core Values of discipline and accountability. If a team member says they will do something and don't, I have to address it in this meeting. One of my favorite definitions of leadership is: one's ability to give and enforce orders. That can come across harshly, especially to new managers, but it's critical that you create

ONE-ON-ONES THAT DON'T SUCK: SKIP THE SMALL TALK, DRIVE IMPACT

One-On-One Meeting TEMPLATE

EMPLOYEE NAME	DEPARTMENT
MANAGER NAME	DATE

ACTIONS TAKEN:
What actions have you taken since our last 1:1?

METRICS:
How am I performing relative to my metrics?

DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
What actions have you taken based on your performance review?

a culture where leaders can establish what needs to get done and enforce that it actually happens. Without enforcing it, the environment becomes relaxed and you'll sit back wondering why goals aren't being achieved.

METRICS

It's not by accident that the first order of business is reviewing each team member's metrics. Effort is great but I need to know how each person is performing relative to already established expectations. If they're falling short, what actions are they taking to rectify that? This brings up 2 scenarios: What if the role doesn't have metrics? Create them! There is no time like the present to button up the Metrics of every role inside your organization. You are paying hourly for each contributor in your business and when you hired them, there were specific business needs that drove you to make the post and find talent to help you. Every role should have clearly defined metrics that they have visibility

into. The second scenario is If they have metrics but are under performing. How do you handle this? Do you let them off the hook? Do you get frustrated? Ideally you are able to give them documented training to teach them how to function as a top performer in their role so that when performance issues take place, you can reference the documentation and provide the team member coaching in the area of struggle. By implementing this one-on-one process, you're making the commitment to your team and yourself that you're going to get the business organized and provide clarity to each team member so they can create success. You will be amazed at how quickly this transforms your culture.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATES

This is how you create focus on long term behavior development and change. This should include four to six areas where they can improve their professional performance over the course of the year. Many team members I've worked with have the desire to become better at public speaking because they recognize that their lack of confidence in this area holds them back from leadership opportunities. Well... something like public speaking skills don't just happen overnight. It requires intentionality over a period of time to improve. These areas are addressed here. The team member uses this portion of their one-on-one to share with their manager what steps they are taking and where there's improvement. If they aren't taking any steps in these areas, it's the manager's job to call attention to this and frame why it's important to continue to chip away at these areas.

ONE-ON-ONES THAT DON'T SUCK: SKIP THE SMALL TALK, DRIVE IMPACT

One-On-One Meeting TEMPLATE

EMPLOYEE NAME	DEPARTMENT
MANAGER NAME	DATE

ACTIONS TAKEN:
What actions have you taken since our last 1:1?

METRICS:
How am I performing relative to my metrics?

DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
What actions have you taken based on your performance review?

UPDATES AND IDEAS

This is one of my favorite sections of the one-on-one because it tells you a lot about where the employee's head is at. If they don't have any ideas, this is a problem. Like all businesses, I'm certain that your business has growth opportunities. I've never worked with a perfectly dialed business where everything worked flawlessly. There are always areas that can be improved. This spot in the form is the employee's chance to identify these areas that pertain to their role/department. This section should be more informal, but request that they prioritize these ideas and make certain that these ideas about organizational improvement actually pertain to their department — otherwise, you're just throwing work into someone else's lap! I used to have these meetings and by the end of them, I had a laundry list of items the team member put on my plate. This no longer happens — sure, there are items that come up in this section that I end up needing to follow up on but the majority of the time is spent with me approving new ideas and giving feedback on existing projects that are in the works. It's critically important for you to view yourself as a coach here. A coach doesn't run laps with the team. A coach is responsible for looking at the big picture, understanding the competition, and leveraging their experience to call the play. With this in mind, stay focused on this as you go through this section.

ONE-ON-ONES THAT DON'T SUCK: SKIP THE SMALL TALK, DRIVE IMPACT

UPDATES AND IDEAS (What areas need to be addressed? What ideas do you have? Rank in order of priority and urgency.)	RESPONSIBILITY (Who is responsible for achieving these actions?)	NOTES

PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND FINANCIAL GOALS:
Updates and challenges.

	PERSONAL	PROFESSIONAL	FINANCIAL
1 Year			
3 Years			
5 Years			

PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND FINANCIAL GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

The one-on-one is the place where the team member is sharing updates on their goals. They might not have an update for every meeting but there should be areas where they are identifying wins or setbacks across their goals. This conversation should be led by the team member and guided by the manager. This space creates the opportunity to continue the conversation as goals change, developments are made, and wins occur. It's important to have visibility into these areas with your top performers as they will need specific coaching on how to get to the next level.

ACTION PLAN

This section is a takeaway for them to work on before your next meeting. They need to answer the question, “What are the steps and actions I will take after this meeting?” These are all the things that the team member documents and commits to so that when you next meet, they can then answer the question, “What actions have you taken since our last one-on-one?”

ONE-ON-ONES THAT DON'T SUCK: SKIP THE SMALL TALK, DRIVE IMPACT

ACTION PLAN:
What are the next steps and actions I will take after this meeting?

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:

Hot Takes

01. _____

One-on-ones should be scheduled bi-weekly. I like to batch mine in 30 minute increments on Thursday afternoons. Having them back to back allows me to block off that time to solely focus on my primary role with my team: being a coach. When they are sprinkled throughout the week, it's easy to become transactional in your communication. I want these meetings to be fruitful and the best way to set this up for success is batching them together.

02. _____

Your direct team members are responsible for updating this document and sending it to you before your next meeting. You both deserve the opportunity to prepare for this. No surprises. This is why we don't do these weekly at Cardone Ventures. It gives everyone a chance to take feedback, work to create a new result, and then report back on progress made.

03. _____

Though I have been able to have a successful 17-minute one-on-one meeting, I recommend 30 minutes as a standard. Be very intentional about your time. It can go quickly. And these folks have chosen your organization to grow their careers. Be focused and be constructive in your feedback. Hold them accountable to their word. And make tough decisions if they aren't.

04. _____

Use the template. From an HR standpoint, this template allows you to document when you're working with an employee who is missing one of their metrics so that if a termination does need to occur, you have this series of events in black and white. This protects the organization. And it's not all for negative circumstances. Documentation is equally important for positive business and performance outcomes. In fact, it reinforces the kind of culture that you want to create.

05. _____

The day before, I place a recurring reminder on my direct reports calendars to send me their completed one-on-one form. This gives me time to review it the following morning and get prepared for the conversation. I spend about 30 minutes reviewing them and making my own notes for areas I'd like to address. Earlier in my career, I didn't have this structure in place and the one-on-ones were all over the place. They became more of a social function with an emphasis on "catching up." I never knew how to redirect the conversation to the business initiatives but that changed as soon as I introduced these forms. I've used this template for over 5 years now and have helped tens of thousands of businesses roll out this same structure for their meetings: it works like magic.

WHO IS Natalie Dawson?

My name is Natalie, and I am the Co-Founder and President of Cardone Ventures, a company that has generated over \$500 million in revenue since its inception in 2019 — without any startup capital or external funding. Over the past decade, I've dedicated myself to studying businesses and learning exactly what it takes to ensure sustainable growth. By combining this deep understanding with hands-on experience, I've helped countless companies scale successfully. Now, I'm passionate about sharing these proven strategies with other business owners, so they can grow and achieve the same level of success.



I HELP BUSINESS OWNERS BUILD BETTER BUSINESSES



I've helped **THOUSANDS** of business owners increase their revenue by implementing proven frameworks that allow them to scale through attracting, aligning, and developing top talent. These are not generic, one-size-fits-all solutions — they're tailored, actionable strategies that have consistently delivered real results for businesses just like yours.

If you're serious about scaling your business, I'll reveal the insider secrets that top-performing companies use to **FIND** the best talent in their industry, and how to **DEVELOP** your team into a revenue growth machine. From crafting compelling job descriptions that attract high-caliber professionals to building a culture that retains them, I'll guide you step by step.

Don't let a lack of the right people hold back your growth — let me help you build the team that will drive your business.



*From **\$3.5M IN REVENUE** on track to hit **\$9M THIS YEAR.***

“Before working with Natalie and Cardone Ventures, we were at \$3.5M in revenue, but now we’re on track to hit \$9M this year, and a huge part of that growth came from implementing 1:1 meetings. These meetings have completely transformed how we communicate within our team. By creating a space where each team member feels heard, valued, and supported, we’ve built deeper trust and stronger relationships. The accountability from these check-ins has led to improved performance across the board. It’s not just about business — understanding our people’s personal and professional goals has aligned our team more closely with the company’s vision. Natalie taught me that great leadership starts with genuinely investing in your people, and those 1:1s became the foundation for that. As a result, our team is more motivated, more engaged, and more committed to helping the business succeed. The growth we’ve seen is proof that when you prioritize your people, they’ll help take your company to the next level.”

– ALYSSA ROGERS



*From **\$1.5M IN REVENUE** on track to hit **\$9M THIS YEAR.***

“Rocky Mountain Outdoor Living was at \$1.5M in revenue, but we’re now on track to hit \$9M this year. One of the critical elements of getting our team aligned during our growth was the implementation of consistent 1:1s. They’ve given us the ability to show our employees that we genuinely care about their personal and professional growth, not just the bottom line. This has built incredible loyalty, motivation, and engagement within the team. These conversations have led to a higher level of trust and accountability, which directly impacts how hard our people work for the company. By regularly checking in with each person, we’ve aligned individual goals with the business’s mission, and the results speak for themselves. Thanks to these 1:1s, we’ve been able to duplicate top performer success, which freed me up to focus on growing the business instead of getting stuck in the day-to-day grind. Natalie has shown me that investing in your people is the ultimate key to scaling, and these 1:1s have been at the heart of our explosive growth.”

– RACHEL LIPUT

*From **\$15M IN REVENUE** on track to hit **\$22M THIS YEAR.***

“Before working with Natalie, we were generating \$15M, but thanks to Natalie’s guidance and the implementation of 1:1 meetings, we’re on track to hit \$22M this year. The 1:1 process that Natalie introduced has completely transformed how we lead our team. These regular check-ins have allowed us to truly connect with our employees, ensuring they feel heard and valued while aligning their personal goals with the company’s mission. It’s not just about business performance — these meetings have created a culture of accountability, open communication, and growth. Natalie has been an incredible mentor to me. She has such a practical approach to people and operations and she is able to teach it in a way that leaves me feeling empowered and capable to go and implement. Sometimes as a female leader I struggle with balancing being assertive but not too assertive, taking charge but not being overbearing, holding people accountable while still being empathetic...all of these stigmas that women in leadership have, but Natalie handles all of this with such grace and poise and authenticity that it has really given me a compass on how to apply this in my own leadership. I truly appreciate Natalie and her leadership.”

– SARAH CARD





Binge my
**BUSINESS
SCALING VIDEOS**

[YOUTUBE.COM/@THENATALIEDAWSON](https://www.youtube.com/@thenataliedawson)