

# 1:1 Meetings A-Z

26 ideas & insights to improve both sides of the conversation

Want better  
1:1 meetings?  
Here's how.

At Jostle, we prefer regular conversations between employees and managers, instead of performance management rituals.

The 1:1 meeting is the most powerful line of connection and communication between two people in our organization.

Our Team Leads recently came together to share ideas to improve the 1:1 experience for both sides of the conversation.

This A-Z captures 26 best practices, attitudes, and lessons learned. May it inspire and enhance your 1:1 meetings—and your relationships at work!

You Trust Customize Variety  
Balance Introverts Learning  
Zero-in Opportunities Knowledge  
Share Questions Works-both-ways  
Growth Documentation Regularly  
Believe Mistakes Expectations Prepare  
Needs Follow-up Human

# A Agenda

“Have a shared agenda for 1:1s. We use a tool called Hugo, you could probably use Google Calendar. But basically, myself and whoever I’m having a 1:1 with will go in and add agenda items in advance.”



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# B



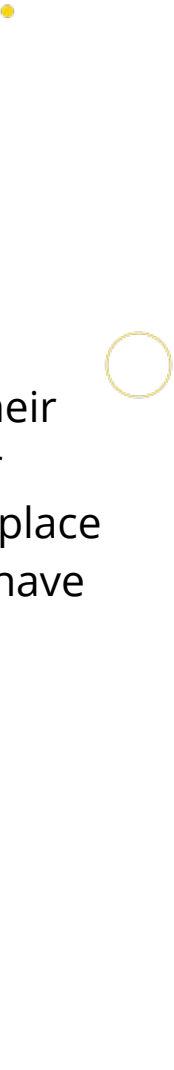
# Balance



“It’s a two-way street. It’s responsibility on both parties for sharing what’s happening. It’s really about finding what’s the right balance.”



# C Customize



“Tailoring 1:1s to where a person is in their career is clearly an important thing. For example, co-ops are at a very different place than say the senior developers. They’ll have different requirements.”

D


## Documentation

"I encourage people to post the notes after the meeting because the benefit of that isn't only that it brings up the agenda, but what they typed gives me a good idea of what they actually heard.

Because it's not unusual for what was said and what was heard to be very different. Plus it reinforces it as they type out some of the key points and it's usually a very positive thing."



# E Expectations



“We discuss what the expectations are for the meeting. So rather than just have a standard agenda we expand upon that. And so each member of the team has slightly different things on there that they’d like to discuss on a regular basis.”





**F**

## Follow-up


“Identify opportunities for action and follow-up. Have constructive feedback and also work together on how to either improve something or recognize them and help them spread what’s working.”







# G



# Growth



“Sometimes part of growth is being able to jump onto tasks that are a little tangential to your normal daily work and spotting opportunities in the team for that growth is something you can do during 1:1s.”



H

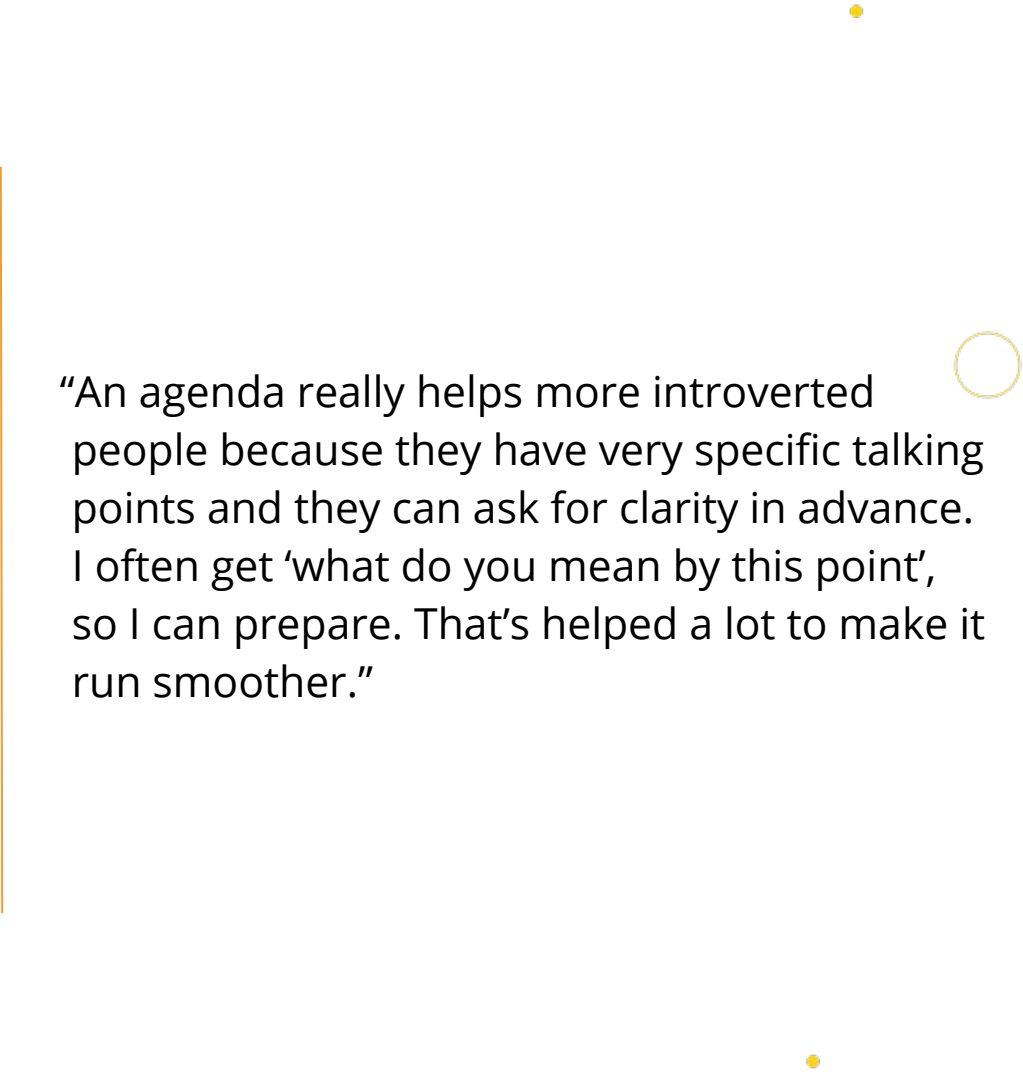
Human

“Think about the person as a whole, not only as the work person. We all have families. We all have things going on, and we have a pandemic going on at the moment.

So there’s a lot of things happening. It’s worth recognizing all the parts of a person and showing the human side, showing the work side of support and being there for them.”



# Introverts




“An agenda really helps more introverted people because they have very specific talking points and they can ask for clarity in advance. I often get ‘what do you mean by this point’, so I can prepare. That’s helped a lot to make it run smoother.”

# J Job

“1:1s are a critical part of our job in helping the growth of the team.”




  
  

# Knowledge



“To get to know the person better I find that talking only about work related stuff all the time is actually counterproductive. It limits us to only that subject.

I like to talk about all sorts of stuff like side projects, their family, how they're feeling, hobbies, whatever they like to do during their spare time. It helps them open up more often and also to create this bond with between us.”



L

Learning

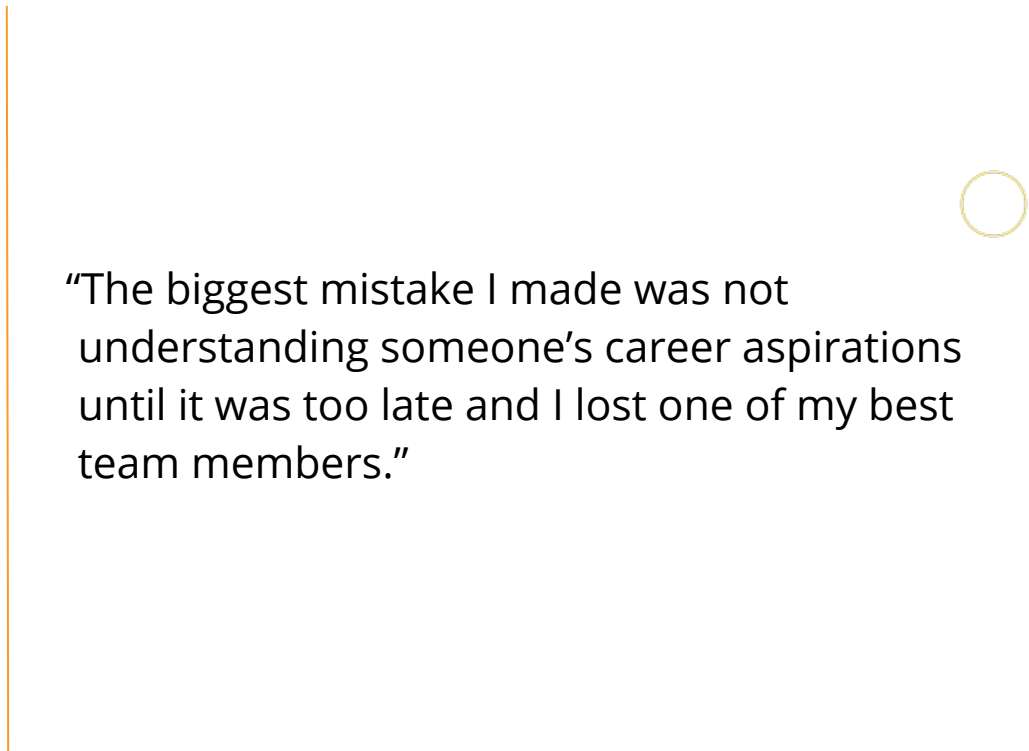
“One of the things you’re aiming to do is help people discover their strengths and their weaknesses. Believe it or not, we don’t actually always know what those are. It’s an ongoing learning experience.”

“It’s trying to learn what value I can bring to someone.”



# M

# Mistakes



“The biggest mistake I made was not understanding someone’s career aspirations until it was too late and I lost one of my best team members.”







N

Needs

“Use your 1:1 time to try to surface how people are doing emotionally and family-wise —and make sure that there aren’t supports that they need from us as we’re part of their community of support.”



# Opportunities



“Spot opportunities, help people understand where they are. Spotting where people have strengths, working with them to understand where those strengths might be applied in the context of Jostle and where that might lead them in the future is clearly the fun part.”

P

Prepare

“If I prepare a lot better for my meetings we’re gonna have a much better conversation.”



# Q



# Questions

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“Ask and answer questions. It’s not a review meeting, it’s a conversation.”







**R**  
**Regularly**




“There’s a huge benefit to a regular schedule. There are a lot of things that you want to talk to your team lead or to your report about that you wouldn’t schedule a meeting for. The 1:1 gives you that placeholder in the calendar that allows those conversations to happen on top of everything else.”



**Share**



“In advance of 1:1s I try to think of the thing that I want to share and not make it so it’s always a check in and addressing issues that those people are facing, but make sure that I’m also sharing something myself.”



**T**

**Trust**

“My 1:1s have been really getting good because my team member trusts me more. And I know him a bit better, but it really took a long time to get there.”

U

Unexpected

“One of the things that always stands out to me is how many unexpected things surface in 1:1s. And without these meetings, you’d never discover them.”



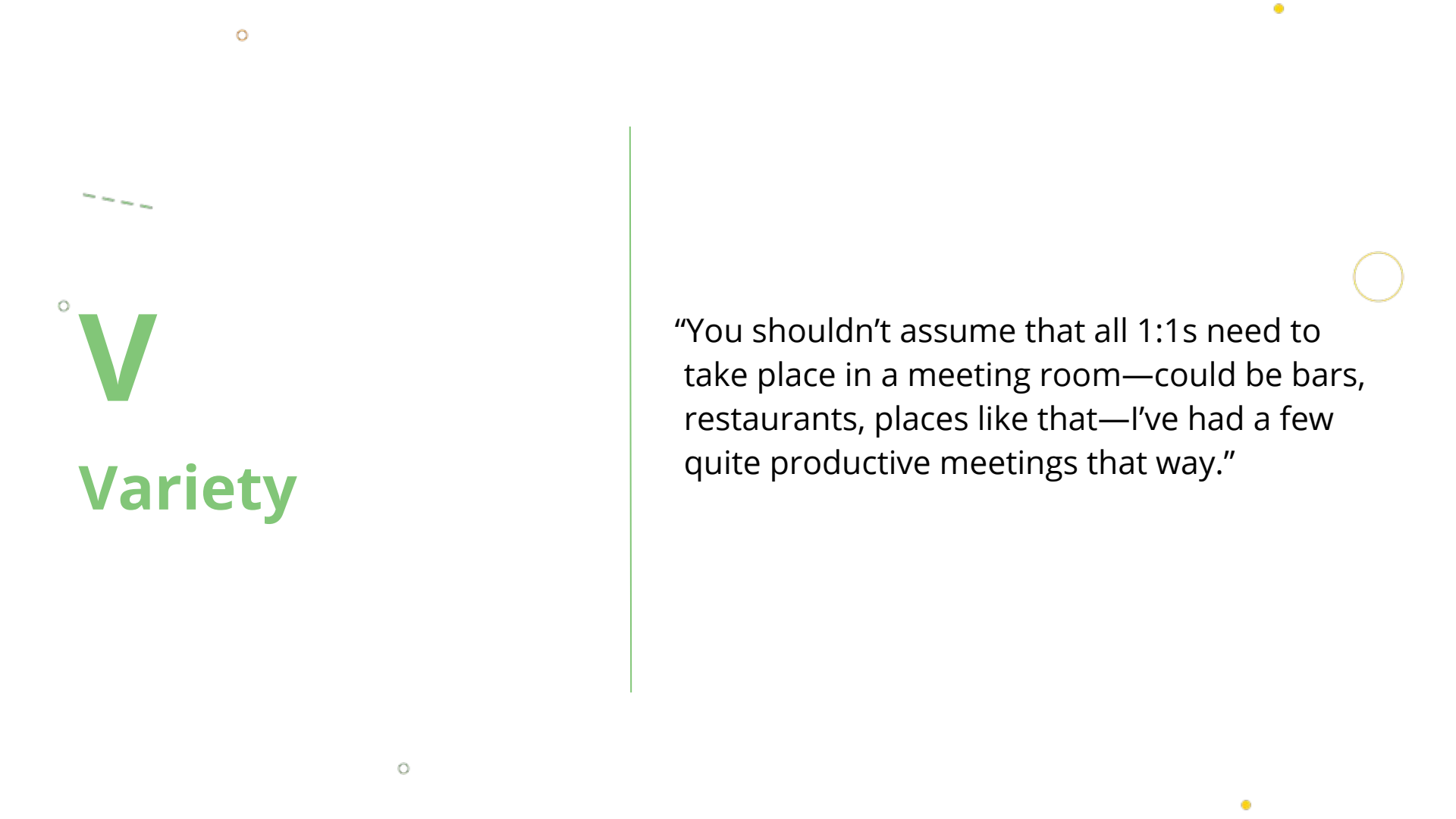


V

Variety

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“You shouldn’t assume that all 1:1s need to take place in a meeting room—could be bars, restaurants, places like that—I’ve had a few quite productive meetings that way.”






W

Works-both-  
ways

“It’s about getting to know the full person—that’s a key ingredient of the relationship and in both directions.”




# **(e)Xplore**



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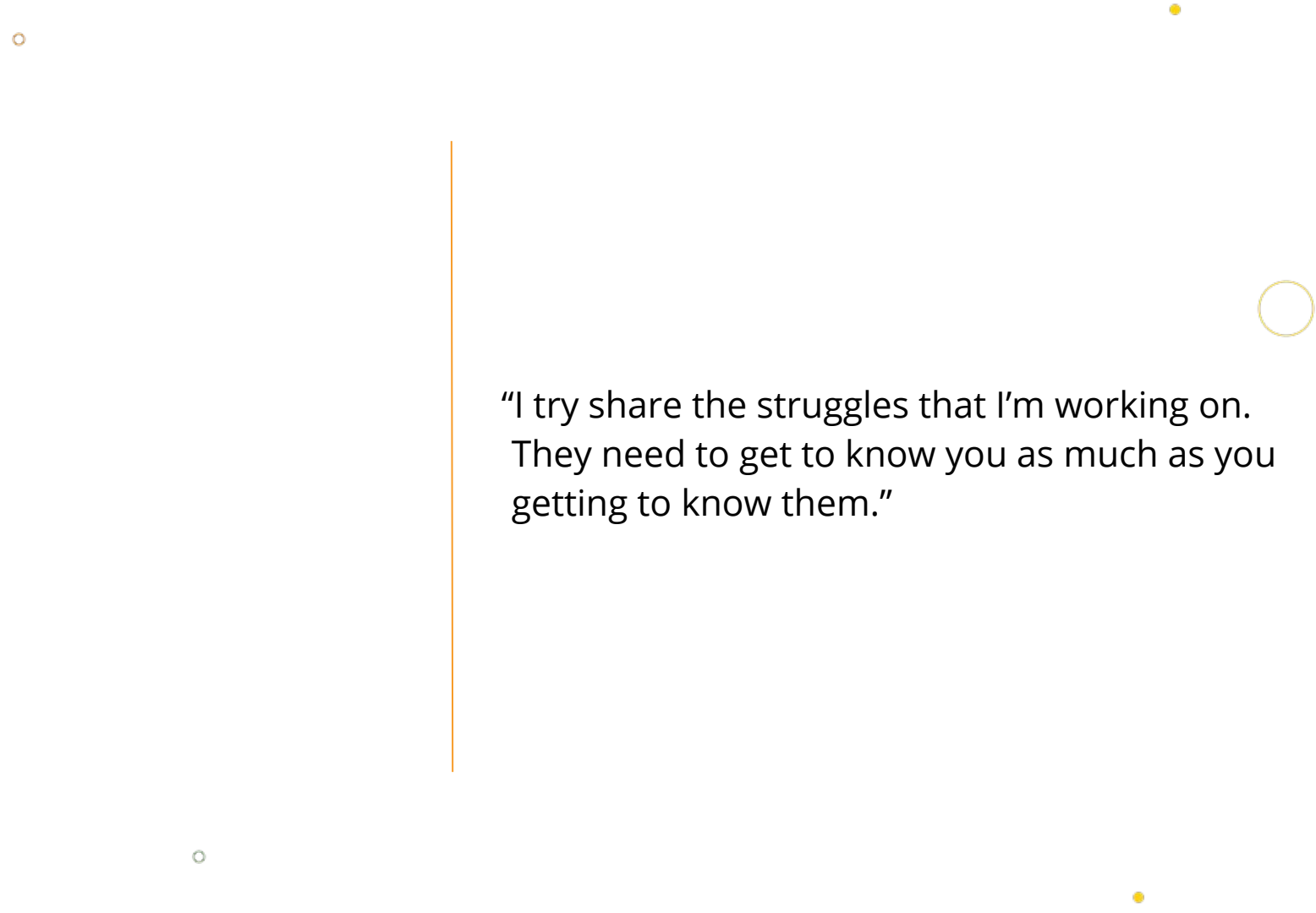
“It’s easy for us to explore both projects and status updates, but it’s important for us to go deeper than that and talk about how they’re doing. Talk about their career. And a lot of the other things that we don’t really accommodate space for in the day-to-day.”





Y

You



“I try share the struggles that I’m working on.  
They need to get to know you as much as you  
getting to know them.”

Z

Zero-in



“It’s easier to start with the light status update and then really dive into conversations from there.

So, things like, what are the challenges, what things are working with things they’re working on? What are the problems?

Ask what their preferences are to try and get an idea of like what they want to learn, what their career goals are, and then try and transition into stuff about family and how people are doing personally.”



**Want to know  
more about  
Jostle?**

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