Doodle



RESEARCH STUDY SEPTEMBER 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Employees are an organization's lifeline. They bring talent, ideas, collaboration and innovation - elements vital to building and growing successful businesses. The data supports this. According to Deloitte's Talent Edge 2020 report, more than four in ten executives (41 percent) rate competing for global talent as one of their most pressing concerns.

Now consider this: Three million employees have left their job voluntarily every month since June 2017, according to data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. This speaks to the larger employee retention problem that has plagued organizations for decades.

But the retention challenge has grown far worse in 2020 since the coronavirus pandemic has normalized remote work and virtual meetings in the workplace. Employees can no longer sit in a room next to their manager to discuss important subjects. And managers have had to up the ante on their frequency and methods of communication with their teams.

On top of the ongoing problem of employee retention, organizations now face the added challenge of supporting and empowering employees to reach their full potential and advance in their careers. In many organizations this would fall under the remit of career development, mentorship and coaching programs. Doing so will not only tackle the retention problem, but it will also help organizations set themselves up for long-term growth and success.

But career development, mentorship and coaching in the workplace look very different now, compared to the beginning of the year. Since in-person meetings are no longer an option, it's now harder for employees to connect one-to-one with their managers to get guidance on their responsibilities, feedback on projects and support on their larger professional development goals. In this report, we'll examine the ways in which employees and managers communicate with one another, how organizations currently approach career development and employee expectations for mentorship and career development.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY & OBJECTIVES

We surveyed more than 1,000 full-time and part-time employees in the United States to better understand their opportunities for career development during the pandemic. Additionally, we were keen to understand the ways in which employees communicate, engage and meet with their managers - and how these interactions impact their engagement and potential for long-term career growth. The surveyed employees were in the following career levels: entry-level, intermediate and middle management. The survey was fielded in August 2020.





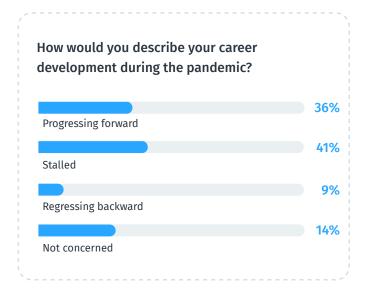
KEY FINDINGS & TRENDS

Is COVID-19 Derailing Career Plans?

Layoffs and unemployment have become an unfortunate reality of the coronavirus pandemic, as evidenced by data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, the U.S. unemployment rate shot up from 3.8 percent in February 2020 - among the lowest on record in the post-World War II era - to 13 percent in May 2020. It's also estimated that 42 percent of pandemic-induced layoffs will result in permanent job loss. These statistics paint a rather grim picture.

For employees who are still employed, the fear of being made redundant still lurks in the background. The demands of meeting performance goals and hitting KPIs is heightened. And the pressure to keep clients engaged, happy and loyal is overwhelming. It's no wonder then that 41 percent of the respondents said their career development has stalled during the pandemic and 9 percent said the crisis has actually caused their careers to regress.

But what's more surprising is that 36 percent of the respondents said their careers have progressed during the pandemic. This would indicate that it's not all gloom and doom for employees. It also lines up with the trend of lockdown restrictions being lifted and businesses in the food, retail, beauty and travel industries slowly reopening. According to Indeed.com, Amazon currently has 167,500 job postings in various states across the United States. The Home Depot, meanwhile, is urgently hiring and has 24,500 job postings for roles in retail sales, customer service, warehouse management and shipping.



Coronavirus Crisis Is a Mentorship Opportunity, Unfulfilled

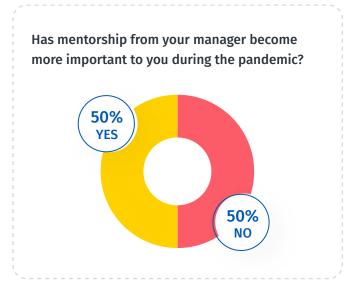
Research shows that active mentorship helps employees form stronger emotional bonds to the organization, feel more satisfied in their roles and perceive greater support from the organization. Mentorship is also an effective way to help employees reach their professional development goals, become contenders for promotions and advance in their careers.

While employees benefit from mentorship in many ways, organizations can also improve their reputation and chip away at their growing employee turnover rates. So, it's understandable that 50 percent of the surveyed employees said mentorship from their manager has become more important to them during the pandemic.

Despite the many benefits of - and demand for - mentorship in organizations, our study uncovered a big gap in what is currently being offered. For instance, more than half (56 percent) of the respondents said they don't currently receive any



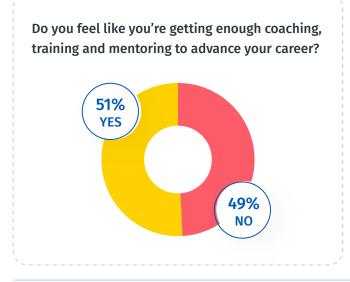
form of mentorship or coaching from their manager. In addition, 49 percent said they don't feel they're getting enough coaching or mentoring to advance their careers.



Do you currently receive any mentorship or coaching from your manager?

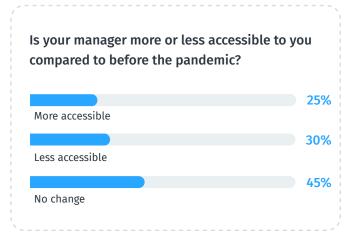
44%
YES

56%
NO



As an employee, one-to-one meetings are a great way to drive positive outcomes in your career. These meetings can help both the employee and the manager get to know each other better, establish a regular communication cadence and build mutual trust. But both parties - the employee and the manager - have a joint responsibility to stick to a regular schedule of one-to-one meetings.

However, 30 percent of the respondents said their boss is less accessible to them, compared to before the pandemic. Uncertainty breeds fear among people. If employees aren't able to quell those fears by asking for direct feedback and clarity from their bosses on a one-to-one basis, then those fears will evolve into panic and frustration. This will certainly impact employees' confidence, energy, motivation, performance and job satisfaction.



As a manager and mentor, one of your responsibilities is to have recurring one-to-one meetings with your employees (and mentees). We recommend that you keep these meetings to a monthly cadence and limit them to 30 minutes in duration. That will allow the discussion to be laser-focused on mentorship and coaching, rather than digressing into other topics related to ongoing work and projects. There are other meetings where those topics can be discussed.

Will Normalization of Remote Work Make Zoom Fatigue a Thing of the Past?

Since the spread of the coronavirus and the global lockdowns, in-person meetings simply haven't been an option. That has left virtual meetings as the only way to connect, interact and engage with colleagues, team members, candidates, clients and partners. As a result, employees have been sitting in more online meetings than ever before, which has left many feeling exhausted and drained. In Q2 2020, for example, the number of virtual one-to-one meetings jumped 136 percent compared to the previous quarter.

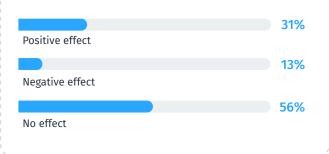
It's not just the increase in the number of virtual meetings. Using the video conferencing format can be incredibly draining. It's certainly not as natural as meeting with someone in-person. For example, employees wouldn't normally look at themselves while speaking to their teams and colleagues. But thanks to video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet, this is a challenge employees face right now. On top of this, there's a lot of pressure to be dynamic and engaging during video meetings. When you add all these factors together, you have large numbers of employees feeling the effects of Zoom fatigue.

Six months into the pandemic, though, many organizations have fully embraced the shift to remote work. In recent months, companies like Facebook and Uber announced that they will allow their entire workforces to work from home until July 2021. According to a Gartner survey, nearly three in four CFOs and finance leaders intend to shift at least 5 percent of previously on-site staff to permanent work-from-home setups after the pandemic. At the same time, many organizations have surprisingly realized productivity has increased during the pandemic. In fact, 75 percent of the employees surveyed by Boston Consulting Group said that during the first few months of the crisis, they have been able to maintain or improve their perceived productivity on individual tasks, such as analyzing data, writing presentations or executing administrative tasks.

So, the more organizations have become accustomed to the shift to remote work, and the more productive their remote workforces are during the pandemic, then the more normal it will all feel in the long-run. This may explain why 56 percent of the respondents said video conferencing has had no effect on the one-to-one meetings with their boss, compared to in-person meetings. Meanwhile, 31 percent of the respondents said video conferencing has actually had a positive impact.

Interestingly, when we asked the respondents what they like least about their one-to-one meetings with their boss, 35 percent said "nothing." That was the highest response and a positive sign that employees are taking the necessary steps to banish unproductive, unfocused meetings. The longer the pandemic continues and the longer remote work is the norm, the more likely it is that Zoom fatigue will begin to normalize.

Has video conferencing had a positive or negative effect on the 1:1 meetings with your boss, compared to in-person meetings?







Email Is a Crutch for Career Growth

Email has long been a vital channel for work communications - internally with teams and colleagues as well as externally with customers, candidates and partners. However, email alternatives like Slack and Microsoft Teams have popped up over recent years, allowing organizations to streamline workplace communications and productivity.

So when we asked the respondents to confirm the primary method they use to communicate with their boss during the pandemic, we assumed that the top two communication methods would be employee communication tools (i.e. Slack and Microsoft Teams) and video conferencing tools (i.e. Zoom, Google Meet, Skype). But the data proved us wrong.

Despite the increased use of Zoom, Slack and Microsoft Teams in workplaces, email still reigns supreme (42 percent) when it comes to the primary method of communication between employees and their bosses. Phone (26 percent) falls in second place. This is surprising because miscommunication and conflict have been known to arise when employees express their needs or opinions in email. Tone can also be tough to decipher and cause someone to think ill intent was involved, when it wasn't.



Filtering through the hundreds, even thousands, of new emails that come into employees' inboxes daily can require its own to-do list. So, employees can be overwhelmed with catching up on the many emails arriving in their inboxes. Plus, sending multiple rounds of document edits can cause confusion about which version is correct and approved for use, thus increasing the likelihood of errors.

Let's not forget the delays caused by emails. Emails can also lead to excessive delays in getting feedback from managers, lack of clarity about responsibilities and missed deadlines. For employees looking to prove their worth and advance in their careers, delays or errors caused by a heavy reliance on email could do serious damage to their career development and growth.

What really surprised us is how both email (42 percent) and phone (26 percent) were chosen over employee communication tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams (21 percent) and video conferencing tools like Zoom, Google Meet and Skype (10 percent). Given that Slack has more than 10 million users and the rise of video conferencing in the last five months, we expected the responses to be very different.

One reason for this could simply be habit. Employees may just be accustomed to using email as their primary communication method. It's all they've known and all they've ever done in their previous and current



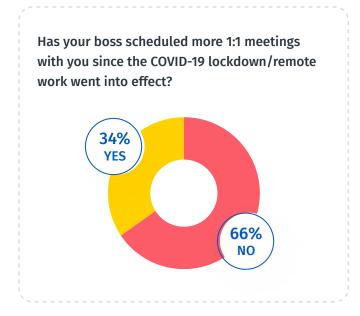
roles. This habit could be further perpetuated if their employers don't provide digital communications and collaboration tools. If email is how everyone in the organization communicates with each other, then most employees will follow the same routine - simply out of habit. Habits can be hard to break. They become ingrained in our everyday routines so much so that we often don't even realize we are doing something until after the fact. But remember, just because something has always been done a certain way doesn't mean it's the most effective, scalable method.

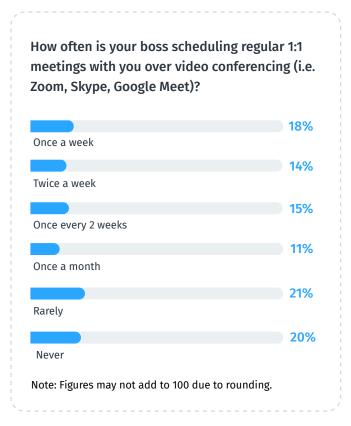
Capturing the Boss's Attention Is Tricky Business

With the pandemic still in full swing, being able to engage in quality conversations at work has become especially important. On the one hand, you have millions of remote workers who have been shut off from the daily interactions and experiences they once enjoyed, resulting in social isolation, loneliness and disconnection. On the other hand, employees now find themselves being invited to and participating in more meetings than ever. In Q2 2020, for example, the number of virtual one-to-one meetings grew by 136 percent from the previous quarter. More meetings means being present and 'on' more, which just adds to the pressures employees are already feeling and facing. It's all incredibly exhausting and draining.

However, the pandemic seems to have made it even tougher for employees to capture their boss's attention. The data from our study supports this: 66 percent of the respondents said their bosses have not scheduled more one-to-one meetings with them since the pandemic and lockdowns went into effect. As if that statistic isn't troubling enough on its own, only 18 percent of the respondents said their boss schedules weekly one-to-one meetings over video with them. Twice weekly one-to-one meetings, meanwhile, are even less common (14 percent). But what's especially disconcerting is that 20 percent of employees said their bosses never schedule regular 1:1 time over video with them. Just imagine what that means. Employees who are feeling confused, stressed

and unsure about their job stability (and long-term growth) don't have a viable, safe outlet to discuss their needs and gauge expectations that will help them reach their professional development goals.





One-to-one meetings are an essential part of an employee's career development. These meetings provide employees with direction on their role and responsibilities, guidance on their professional goals, feedback on projects and overall support. These



meetings are also essential for managers to build and maintain highly engaged and satisfied teams.

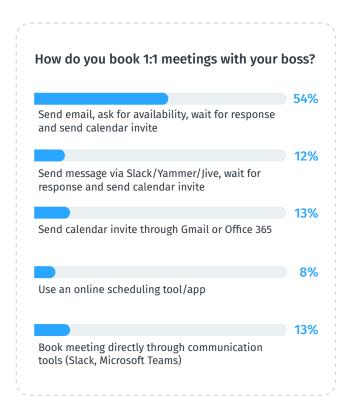
One-to-one time with the boss is especially important when a new hire joins the organization. This is their first official introduction to your organization - the policies, the mission, the values, the culture and the expectations for success. If bosses are too busy or distracted to provide one-to-one attention to their direct reports, it can give new hires the wrong, or bad, impression of the company. That could easily influence their level of excitement, motivation and commitment to their role and the organization.

It's not just one-to-one meetings between employees and managers. Many employees will look to outside sources, such as coaches and mentors (from previous roles/organizations). Because these individuals don't work in the organization alongside the employee, they offer psychological safety, unbiased feedback and the ability to listen without judgment. The one-to-one time employees spend with these individuals can be just as valuable and influential in shaping their career growth. Organizations that care about and invest in their employees will find ways to connect their employees to coaches and mentors. And if organizations really understand the long-term effects of poor employee development, they will establish an internal mentorship program, which connects employees with individuals with emotional intelligence, empathy and servant leadership attributes.



Scheduling Meetings the Wrong Way Could Limit Growth Potential

When we asked the respondents how they book one-to-one meetings with their boss, a whopping 66 percent said they send a note (via email or via communications tools like Slack, Yammer and Jive), ask for availability, wait for a response and then send a calendar invite. This is a very slow and outdated process that typically requires an average of 30 emails and costs the meeting organizer, at the very least, 30 minutes of their time.



Imagine this scenario: an employee needs to get his boss's feedback urgently on a roadblock that's delaying a project. If this employee uses the same scheduling method as the majority of the respondents in our study, he could end up waiting around for hours or even days before the meeting actually gets booked.

In reality, business professionals spend an average of five hours per week waiting to speak to colleagues who have the unique knowledge or skills required to move ahead on a project. This is an obstacle that can be easily overcome through smart solutions. In fact, 92 percent of employees report

that using technology helps them to do their job more efficiently and, as a result, increases their work satisfaction.

Despite the increasing popularity of workplace collaboration tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams, only 13 percent of the respondents said they use those communication tools to book one-to-one meetings with their boss. Additionally, just 8 percent said they use an online scheduling tool.

These findings are surprising for two reasons. First, online scheduling tools have been lauded repeatedly in the news for helping remote teams make better use of their time. Second, many scheduling tools, including Doodle, have been integrated into the Slack platform to make scheduling effortless and seamless. For example, employees can use the Doodle Bot within Slack, which is available in Slack's shortcuts menu, to take care of all their scheduling needs - from creating polls to adding time options to sharing the poll with others and booking the meeting in a matter of a seconds.

According to Lorilyn McCue, Product Manager for Slack, "Doodle Bot was a natural fit for Shortcuts, as it's a smart, intuitive solution to schedule meetings that already saves users time (and frustration). Now people can simplify, automate and speed up their scheduling by clicking on the shortcuts lightning bolt in Slack. It's as easy as selecting a poll," filling out an easy form and voila: a poll to coordinate the best meeting time amongst teams and even external stakeholders."

Constantly switching between tasks, like checking schedules and sending emails about availability while trying to achieve professional goals, can make employees 80 percent less productive. Being unproductive and dealing with frustratingly repetitive or time-consuming tasks like scheduling are two of the leading causes of employee disengagement. Disengaged employees are not only a drain on your finances and morale, but they're more likely to take time off sick and leave your firm.

How Managers Can Schedule 1:1s With Employees the Right Way

- Use scheduling software to book one-to-one meetings so you can shave off hours from the time spent sending back-and-forth emails.
- Give your team more control over the scheduling process by allowing them to select the best meeting day and time.
- Create a personalized meeting link for each member of your team, set the meeting rules and then share the link with each of them so they can book their one-to-one time instantly.
- If you and your team use Slack for day-to-day communication, use the Doodle-Slack integration. This will cut down on the time spent switching between apps/tools and will get your meetings booked into your calendar faster.

Limited Calendar Visibility Keeps Managers Walled Off & Inaccessible

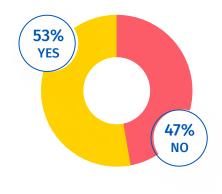
Something as simple as sharing a calendar can be beneficial to both employees and their managers. It can break down the walls and barriers that often make it difficult for employees to connect with their managers.

However, almost half (47 percent) of the respondents said they don't have access to their manager's calendar in case they need to schedule a quick touch base with them. At a time when employees are stressed, exhausted and uncertain about their job stability, it's puzzling that managers are restricting access to their calendar.



By making their calendars visible and accessible to their teams, managers will be able to strengthen the trust and engagement with their teams. That will, in turn, help employees feel more comfortable with having career-related conversations that might have seemed difficult in the past.

Do you have full access to your manager's calendar in case you need to schedule a quick touch base with them?



By making their calendars visible and accessible to their teams, managers can:

- Make sure their availability is clear, easy to access and 100% accurate.
- Forget about getting stuck in email limbo with their team, which can lead to confusion and miscommunication.
- Eliminate delays in having important discussions with their team.
- Reduce the likelihood of offering up already-booked time slots.
- Be readily available for impromptu check-ins with their team.

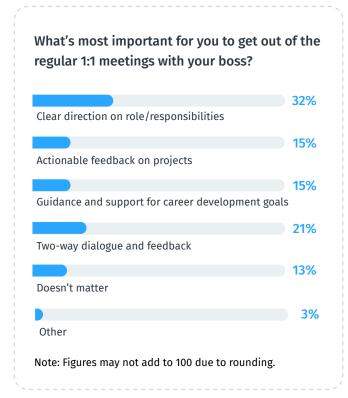
Employees Value Boss's Role in Individual Growth

Given how important career development is right now for employees (and how much it's lacking at the moment), it's more important than ever to make every meeting count. There's no room for torturous meetings that are unproductive, lack focus and are a waste of time. That could negatively impact employee engagement, motivation to do great work, fulfillment in their role and, ultimately, loyalty. This is particularly true for one-to-one meetings where the entire purpose is to guide, support and empower employees to be their best selves, reach their goals and advance in their careers.

To better understand what makes 1:1s beneficial to employees seeking to grow personally and professionally, we asked the respondents what they liked most about the one-to-one meetings with their bosses. The number one response was "boss asks for my opinions and feedback" (21 percent). As our study indicates, there's value in feeling valued. Rather than having a one-sided discussion, managers should ask their employees for their opinions and feedback - then actually take it into consideration. This appreciation can go a long way in forging a trusting relationship between managers and their teams.

Following this, 19 percent of the respondents said they like when different topics are raised in each meeting. If one-to-one meetings become monotonous and cover the same topics every single time, the meeting itself can feel stale and boring. And it likely won't have the impact on career growth that employees want. For example, an employee who is relatively new may want to focus one of his first one-to-one meetings with his manager on what's expected of him in his role and what metrics would be indicative of success. On the other hand, an employee who is nearing her one-year work anniversary would likely tailor her one-to-one meeting as a pitch for a promotion or raise.





When it comes to what employees like best about their one-to-one meetings, 32 percent want clear direction on their role and responsibilities and 15 percent want guidance and support for their career development goals. This means 47 percent of the respondents value the role their boss plays in their individual growth. Career growth isn't a one-way street. It requires the participation of both the employee and their manager. The more transparent

and trusting the relationship between employee and manager becomes, the more likely it is that the employee will gain the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that's crucial to driving career growth.

If managers don't provide clear direction to their employees on the expectations for their role and the core responsibilities they will perform on a daily basis, that can lead to a myriad of problems. For one, employees could end up doing work incorrectly, which then must be redone. Not only does that hinder the employee's overall productivity, but it can also lead to longer working hours, more stress and eventual burnout. Plus, a lack of role clarity can affect employees' confidence levels and motivation, which could then cause them to pull back and disengage from their managers, teams and colleagues. None of these are desirable effects.

How to Run Effective 1:1s Focused on Career Development

- Show your employees you value their opinions and feedback.
- Create a safe space for employees to discuss their career aspirations and growth plans.
- Be on time (show them that you respect their time).
- Don't reschedule.
- Do your homework and prep discussion topics ahead of time.
- Don't talk about the same thing in every one-to-one meeting.



Managers, HR & Senior Management: Career Growth Friend or Foe?

It's one thing for employees to have honed in on their own career development goals. But discussing those aspirations in the workplace can be tricky, especially during times of crisis when job security is unstable and the pressure to perform is high.

On the one hand, employees want and need to feel a sense of fulfilment and that their work has a greater impact on the business. But on the other hand, employees may feel terrified to bring up the discussion with their managers, HR and senior management because they're afraid to jeopardize their job stability during uncertain times.



The good news is that 34 percent of the respondents said they feel comfortable speaking to their direct supervisor about their career development goals. Plus, 28 percent are comfortable sharing their goals with colleagues. However, our study found that it's much tougher to bring up the topic of career development with HR and senior management. For example, only 13 percent of the respondents said they feel comfortable talking to HR about their career development goals. We found a similar scenario with senior management (13 percent).

This proves that people trust the team they work with much more than the HR teams and senior leaders they occasionally see. This also indicates that managers understand the role and value of supporting and empowering their teams to grow personally and professionally. And they understand the link between professional development and employee retention. So, they are making it easier for their teams to bring up the conversation of career development and advancement with them.

Organizations should take note of these findings. If HR teams and senior management don't show their employees that career development is a top priority, even during the pandemic, it's highly likely that their employees will lose their motivation to do great work, become disengaged from the organization and be more inclined to leave to work for another company that values and supports their career development plans.

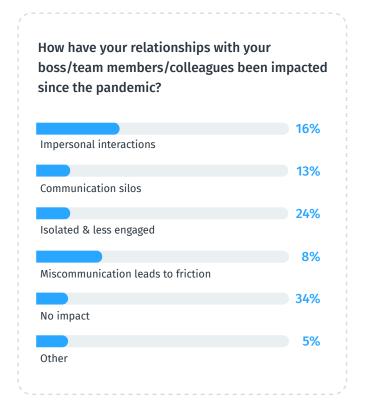
Social Isolation & Icy Workplace Interactions Are Unfortunate Consequences of the Pandemic

Research has shown that when employees have friends at work, they are more engaged, happier in their jobs and perform better. But this dynamic has changed in light of the coronavirus pandemic - and employees are now relying on technology and online environments to connect and interact with coworkers. For example, employees can no longer go to happy hours at their local bar after work. Catching up at the water cooler is also not an option anymore.



As we mentioned earlier, the number of virtual meetings has increased exponentially in the last few months. So with more meetings being crammed into employees' calendars, it's likely that employees will be more protective of their time and only meet with their colleagues and teams when they absolutely need to. That just contributes to the further

isolation and disengagement of employees. This might explain why 24 percent of the respondents in our study said the pandemic has made them feel more isolated and less engaged. Meanwhile, 16 percent said the pandemic has resulted in more impersonal interactions in the workplace.







CONCLUSION

The current pandemic has thrown a huge monkey wrench into employees' career growth plans. Many employees find their careers stalled (or even regressing backward). Amidst these stressful times, the need for mentorship, coaching and training stands out as a critical way forward - both for employees and organizations. Not only can mentorship empower employees to reach their full potential and achieve their long-term career goals, it can also help organizations combat that always-looming challenge of employee turnover.

Despite the benefits and the growing demand for career development opportunities, our study proves that career development, mentorship and coaching are severely lacking at the moment. Beyond that, the communication and collaboration methods and tools being used in organizations is making matters worse. It's keeping managers walled off and inaccessible to their teams and making it harder for employees to raise the flag about their career development goals and priorities.

This is unfortunate because, as our study indicates, employees actually care about and want their bosses to play an active role in their individual growth. But it also highlights a massive opportunity.

For managers, it's an opportunity to adapt how they communicate, engage, guide and empower their teams to be their best selves, even now during the pandemic. It's also an opportunity for managers to rethink how they handle their 1:1s with their teams. Rather than discuss the same topics over and over, each employee-to-manager meeting should be personalized and laser-focused on a few key topics (keep it under three topics, at most). It's also an opportunity for managers to use their one-to-one time with direct reports in a more meaningful way. Instead of going through the employee's tasks or getting project updates, use the time to really get to know each other and create a safe space for the employee to raise questions about their own career path within the organization.

ABOUT DOODLE

Doodle is the leading enterprise scheduling technology helping the world's largest brands instantly set meetings with clients, colleagues and teams. Tapping into the unique nature of smart scheduling with AI and chatbots, Doodle simplifies the planning of 1:1 and group meetings for professionals. As the world's most trusted online scheduling platform, Doodle has more than 30 million monthly active users. Part of the Swiss media group TX Group, Doodle AG is headquartered in Zurich, with offices in Berlin, Atlanta, New York City and Belgrade.

CONTACT US

To learn how Doodle can help you get meetings scheduled quickly and effortlessly, contact our sales team for a product demonstration.

If you would like to test out Doodle before committing long-term, you can get started with a free 14-day trial.

If you're a journalist or analyst and would like to request more information about this report or speak with Doodle CEO Renato Profico, please contact our corporate communications/PR team at press@doodle.com.