



It's About People, Not Process
oa.mo.gov/engage

Why Regular ENGAGE Conversations Matter

ENGAGE is about conversations to help each other improve as individuals and as teams.

You let us know through surveys, focus groups, and other conversations that you want more direct engagement with your supervisors and more ways to learn and grow.

You also said you want to understand better where your organization is heading and how you contribute to this mission.

ENGAGE conversations help us do all these things.

Some of you have asked, though, why should we have ENGAGE conversations every month? Colleagues ask this question for different reasons. Let's address each of these points and explain why monthly conversations are important.

Why should we have ENGAGE conversations every month?

We are starting with monthly conversations to help build new skills and develop new habits to achieve our professional development goals.

Remember when you learned a new skill in the past. Consider learning a sport like baseball, basketball, or tennis; a hobby like fishing, sewing, or cooking. Building new skills and habits takes regular practice.

Regular feedback helps us learn and grow faster. Course corrections are much easier when you receive more frequent feedback. And if when you master a new skill, you want to know when it is time to move to the next challenge.

And more frequent conversations help focus on a few things at a time and also build understanding among team mates.

But we talk to each other every day...

Of course, conversations amongst colleagues happen every day. They are essential. However, ENGAGE is different from most other work conversations.

Think about your recent conversations with your supervisor or team members related to your work. Most of focus on specific tasks that need to get done throughout the day – people to see, calls to make, deadlines, memos...ENGAGE is about structured conversations focused on professional development. They help us step back from the day-to-day and check to see how we are making progress toward of our goals.

If you don't set aside a few minutes every month for such conversations, you oftentimes find that the day-to-day crowds out time for thoughtful feedback.

You have heard the saying before: the urgent drives out the important. Scheduling regular ENGAGE conversations helps ensure that you have time for the important.

For Additional information, go to <https://oa.mo.gov/engage>



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But a month may not be enough time to make progress...

Building a new skill takes time and sometimes you may not make huge progress in one month.

Consider something like improving your communication skills; that can take a lot of work over months to get to a new level of performance. Nevertheless, ENGAGE conversations help when you are building in new skills over months like this.

More frequent guidance helps accelerate your development. And if you have not had an opportunity to exercise your new muscles in the past, then it is important to identify specific opportunities to work on your goals in the coming month.

Remember that supervisors and team members should work together to find these opportunities. So even if you have not made significant progress during a month, it is still important to spend a few minutes checking in and finding opportunities in the next month to work toward your goals.

But my conversations are taking longer than 20-30 minutes...

Some of you have reported your first ENGAGE conversations are going so well – and that you are digging so deep into development goals – that they have taken an hour or more. This shows pent up demand for such development conversations.

You will want to make time for these development conversations early in the process, although it does require a bit more effort in the first few months. Making the time now means that supervisors and team members can identify meaningful goals and create plans to achieve them.

Investing time consistently in the first few months will help you get to where shorter conversations are possible and add value.

Don't professionals already know what to do...

Dedicated, committed professionals fill the ranks of our State of Missouri team. Many have decades of experience. Many have proven skills. That being said, how many colleagues have you met who couldn't be more effective in some way?

Do you believe there is nothing more you can do to improve? Every State of Missouri team member – regardless of experience and training – can learn and grow professionally. The more experienced should set the example for others to follow.

And if you know a colleague who is so good that you can't think of another development goal for them, then he or she should have a development goal to transfer knowledge and experience to other colleagues.

Helping each other get better is a top priority. It is also a mutual responsibility between supervisors and team members. As we learn to ENGAGE, let's make the time every month to help others and to make Missouri stronger.

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