

100-Day Feedback Check-In: A Cheat Sheet with guiding questions for a feedback check-in assessing the first 100 days on the job¹

Introduction

Regular check-ins and feedback play a substantive role in the successful integration, motivation, and performance of new think tankers. Whether you have weekly or monthly check-ins, or schedule them as needed, open lines of communications are crucial. A particular milestone is after 100 days, which equates to the midway point of the customary six-month probationary period.

Having a 100-day feedback check-in is useful for a variety of reasons. It provides an opportunity to

- get better acquainted,
- look back, gauge the progress made and the extent to which the new think tanker has integrated in the organization,
- give praise and encouragement as well as constructive feedback,
- consider what needs improvement from both sides (employee and employer)
- offer coaching and/or assistance in case of need,
- gain feedback useful for the organization to improve onboarding and other internal processes.

Given the importance of good onboarding processes, the [Think Tank Lab](#) launched a 4-month Community Challenge, which developed a guiding document on how to conduct a 100-day feedback check-in with new think tankers. The following provides some preparatory points, conversation starters as well as draft questions that can be used to make the most of a 100-day check-in.

Before the meeting

Make sure there is enough time for the feedback check-in and prepare accordingly. This is a moment to reflect, take stock and convey appreciation to the new think tanker.

Points to consider are:

- Find a mutually convenient time for the meeting and make sure you schedule sufficient time for the meeting (e.g. 1 hour). Organize the meeting with enough advance time and try not to postpone it short notice, as it could signal a lack of interest or importance.
- Plan enough time ahead of the meeting to prepare sufficiently. And also plan time after the meeting to take notes and review how the meeting went.
- Consider whether to talk to other colleagues in advance of the meeting to gain broader input.

¹ This is a living document and guidance drafted in the context of the Think Tank Lab's Community Challenge on Onboarding, which ran from September - December 2021. It will be updated in line with further insights and good practices.

- Make sure the meeting takes place in quiet and calm (if possible also neutral) surroundings.
- Unplug from other activities (close e-mails, put phone on silent, etc.) and show that the new think tanker has your complete focus.

During the meeting

The most important part during the meeting is to establish a constructive, friendly, and engaging atmosphere that allows the new think tanker to talk. In that context, it might be useful to start with informal conversation and positive aspects.

Generally, the 100-day Feedback Check-In can be divided into five phases:

1. Conversation starting
2. Analysis and Feedback
3. Planning and Goals
4. Future perspectives, development and learning
5. Wrap-up and end of conversation

Further pointers would be:

- Give the new employee the opportunity to get talking and start sharing his impressions of his/her performance in the first 100 days. In case of difficulties, use some open-ended conversation starters such as
 - Tell me about your week/month – what’s it been like?
 - Tell me about what you’ve been working on.
 - What have you learned about this area of responsibility or project?
 - What didn’t go as you had hoped? Why?
- After the new think tanker shares his/her impressions, it is your turn to give your assessment and constructive feedback.
 - Make sure you always start with the positive aspects (acknowledge accomplishments, what has been achieved, what went particularly well, etc.)
 - Describe your assessment in neutral terms and avoid value judgements.
 - Articulate your feedback clearly and understandably. Make sure you give specific examples.
 - Make sure your feedback considers the interests and views of the new think tanker.
 - Stay authentic.
 - Discuss work goals and targets.
- Give the new staffer enough time to respond to your feedback and share his views. In case the conversation is stalling, and the new think tanker isn’t comfortable enough to talk, try using conversation promoters such as: “Go on...”, “What do you mean by that?”, “Can you give me an example...”, “What else....”
- Move forward and look to the time ahead: Discuss what the next months might look like, set targets and milestones, what work plans there are, how these should be successfully achieved, what challenges might come up and how they might be overcome.

- Offer support and ask if any support is needed. Ask if the employee feels they are getting enough feedback. Ask if the employee is learning from peers/mentors or if they would like to.
- Before the end of the meeting make sure to summarize the key discussion points. This will help remind everyone of what was discussed and agreed. Make sure to also ask the new think tanker if anything was missed and remind them of when the next meeting will be.

After the meeting

Take a couple of minutes to ensure you have your notes sorted and recorded the key points of discussion. This will help you for the next meeting and acts also as a useful tool to track progress.

And last but not least, make sure you take a few moments to evaluate your own performance. How did you do? Are you happy with your performance and communication skills during the meeting?

Here are a number of questions you might want to ask yourself:

- Did you discuss all important points?
- Were you distracted during the meeting?
- What could you do to improve the next time?
- Did you talk too much or not enough?
- Did you actively listen?

Draft 100-Day Feedback Check-In Support Sheet with possible Questions to Ask:

Employee's Name	
Position	
Starting date	
Supervisor	
Date of the Feedback Check-In	

General Impression:

- Do your expectations of our organization meet your initial experience with us?

- How do you evaluate your experience of the onboarding process?

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

- Do you have a good understanding of your role in our organization?
- Can you name the three biggest challenges during your first 100 days working with us?
- What three things do you enjoy most about your work?
- How do you evaluate your interaction with other colleagues?

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

Work description and looking forward

- What do you think can be improved in relation to your job description?
- What do you want to achieve in your first year in our think tank?
- How can we help you achieve your professional targets? for e.g. still a need for qualification/training/, more repeating on induction program, more support from your mentor etc.
- How can we help you in better integrating socially into our organization?