



Pratik's story: How one conversation led to lasting motivation

“Following a family bereavement, and despite really enjoying my job, I was struggling at work. OpenBlend enabled me to bring that conversation to the table and talk about it with my manager for the first time. That led to the support I needed, but it also inspired an intrinsic – and lasting – motivation.”

We recently spoke to Dr. Martens' Global Lead Security Engineer, Pratik Tailor, as part of our ongoing people series. Having heard that Pratik is a vocal OpenBlend advocate, we wanted to find out how effective 1:1s have improved his experience of work. As it turns out, we learned that OpenBlend has not only helped Pratik in his working life, but in a broader context too.

Q Hi Pratik – thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us. Could you begin by telling us about your role at Dr. Martens?

A “I've been with Dr. Martens for four years now, starting on a short-term contract that evolved into a permanent role in January 2020. In my current role as Global Lead Security Engineer, I work remotely and oversee a team of direct and dotted line reports.”



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Pratik Tailor, Global Lead Security Engineer, Dr. Martens

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Q ...and how would you describe the culture at Dr. Martens?

A “Our culture has evolved massively in recent years due to the growth and recruitment that followed our listing on the London Stock Exchange. There's been a huge focus on developing company culture and if I were to describe that culture today, I'd say that it's very welcoming and nurturing. There's a strong emphasis on L&D and employee recognition, and you genuinely feel part of a team.”

Q Let's talk about OpenBlend... How long have you been using the platform, and what were your first impressions?

A “OpenBlend was introduced in mid-2021 to help people navigate both the effects of the pandemic and the company's fast growth. Before that, we had a basic tool to support appraisals but it wasn't very engaging. OpenBlend felt like a breath of fresh air in comparison because it's all about the conversation and it's employee-led. I love that it enables individuals to create their own mould and shape their working lives in a way that works best for them.”

Q What else makes OpenBlend different?

A “The platform supports a broader type of manager-employee conversation, which makes it a great vehicle for change. In previous companies, my 1:1s were heavily focused on performance, targets, and goals... topics such as wellbeing weren't really up for discussion. That's not the case with OpenBlend. It's much more rounded and there's a key focus on motivation, wellbeing, and development. That's certainly true of the monthly 1:1s that I have with my own manager.”

Q Can you give an example of how OpenBlend has helped you?

A “I have a great example, actually... Back in 2021, and although I was enjoying my role at Dr. Martens, I was feeling burned out due to a family bereavement and the ongoing effects of the pandemic. It was around that time that I had my first OpenBlend session. I'd put



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in my drivers and blend in advance, and from those, it was obvious that my work-life balance was suffering. That sparked a good conversation with my manager who was very understanding and who hadn't previously been aware of my personal situation. Had it not been for OpenBlend, I don't think that conversation would have happened because I wouldn't have known how to initiate that kind of discussion.

Ultimately, that one conversation led to the support I needed – but it also fostered a renewed motivation that is still very much present two years on."

Q That's fantastic – a great story that speaks to the importance of open and effective conversations...

A "Exactly. And those conversations have always been important but especially now due to remote work and the physical distance that separates managers and employees. It's so much harder for managers to gauge an employee's mood or general welfare now because they're not sitting next to them. Broader and more regular 1:1s present a critical means of compensating for this, and ultimately helping people like me to stay happier and healthier – at work and in life."

Q You've also been using OpenBlend as a manager for a few months now... how is the platform helping you in that capacity?

A "OpenBlend encourages employees to regularly update their unique blend and drivers, which means that, as a manager, I not only see what that looks

like, but can understand how it changes over time. If an employee were scoring low for wellbeing, for example, I would be able to see that and schedule a conversation with that person. Even if they didn't want to talk about the issue, it's still valuable for me just to be aware of it as their manager."

Q ...and what do you like most about OpenBlend?

A "The thing I like most is that it enables managers to get to know their people on a deeper level. During my 15+ years as a people manager, I can think of instances in which I've managed someone and later learned something about them that, had I been aware of earlier, would have led me to change my approach. I wish I'd had a tool like OpenBlend earlier in my career... it's a huge driver for positive change."

Q That's great to hear, Pratik. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A "I'd also mention the newly launched 'Priorities' section... I really like that it allows me to set my own training, growth, and personal development goals. Having visibility of those targets enables me to have more direct conversations with my manager about taking time to work on my own development – and I'm very fortunate to have a manager who fully supports and actively encourages that."

To learn how OpenBlend can support regular and effective conversations in your organisation, get in touch with our team

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