

10 Tips for a High-Impact Observation and Coaching Program

Implementing an **Observation and Performance Coaching Program** leads to immediate and measurable productivity improvements. By helping lower performers adopt better work methods and reinforcing effective behaviors, organizations can drive performance, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and strengthen communication between management and associates.

At its core, this approach uses focused **observations**—a real-time “snapshot” of how work is being done—to identify opportunities, provide feedback, and guide coaching. As the old saying goes, “*a picture is worth a thousand words*.” In today’s fast-paced environments, that couldn’t be more true.

Below are **10 essential tips** for creating a high-impact Observation and Coaching Program:

1. Use the Observation Process

Many industries—from healthcare and education to warehousing and manufacturing—successfully use structured observation in tandem with coaching to identify opportunities, improve productivity, and raise quality standards.

2. Really Listen (by Watching)

Observation is more than just watching—it’s about truly *seeing* what’s happening. Think of it as non-verbal listening. It requires focus, patience, and a willingness to understand the associate’s process before offering feedback.

3. Gain Trust

Observations can make associates feel like they're being “spied on.” Trust is earned through respectful, supportive interactions. After a few well-run sessions, associates come to see observation as a tool for *support*, not scrutiny.

The two primary goals of coaching:

- Improve productivity, quality, and safety at the individual level
 - Identify broader opportunities that benefit entire teams or departments
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4. Conduct a Coaching Session

Right after the observation, conduct a **one-on-one coaching session**. Highlight:

- What the associate is doing well
- Specific opportunities for improvement
- Actionable steps they can take to improve

This creates immediate feedback loops and reinforces learning.

5. Document Results

Effective programs record observations and coaching insights. A robust **Labor Management System (LMS)** like **VantageRPM** helps track these sessions, store feedback, and monitor associate development over time.

6. Initially Focus on Low Performers

Start by working with associates who show the most room for improvement. The fastest productivity gains often come from helping low performers adopt better methods and eliminating inefficient behaviors.

7. Learn from the Process

Observations aren't just for feedback—they're also a chance for supervisors to:

- Learn from top performers
 - Identify common challenges
 - Facilitate two-way communication on safety, productivity, and morale
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8. Conduct Regularly Scheduled Sessions

Consistency is key. Schedule observations for all associates—not just low performers. However, adjust frequency based on need: low performers may require more frequent follow-ups than high performers.

9. Use Time Effectively

Each observation should last **30–60 minutes** and be conducted **one-on-one**. Use this time not only to observe performance, but also to:

- Validate current methods
 - Look for coaching opportunities
 - Reinforce operational goals
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10. Implement Best Practices

Long-term productivity gains come from identifying **Best Practices** through repeated observations—then standardizing, teaching, and reinforcing them across the team.

Final Thoughts

An effective Observation and Coaching Program does more than boost numbers—it builds trust, promotes engagement, and drives sustainable improvement. With the right tools, such as **Argent's VantageRPM** and a commitment to consistent coaching, organizations can unlock the full potential of their workforce.