

OPS Leadership Focus Deck™

Instruction Guide and 90-Day Practice Manual

QR-linked reference for leaders and employees

Use this guide to run a 30–60 minute card sort and select one behavior to practice for 90 days.

1. Purpose

The OPS Leadership Focus Deck™ turns leadership expectations into observable behaviors you can discuss, practice, and improve. It is designed for supervisors, managers, superintendents, directors, and anyone leading people or cross-functional work.

2. What Success Looks Like

The selected focus shows up in real situations at least weekly.

The leader and employee can describe specific examples (not general opinions).

Actions are small enough to repeat, but strong enough to change outcomes.

Progress is tracked with simple signals, not scores.

After 90 days, the behavior is stronger and the work is easier to run.

3. Roles and Active Participation

This tool works when both people are active. The leader's job is not to grade. The leader's job is to create clarity, remove fear, and coach practice.

4. Run the Card Sort (30–60 Minutes)

4.1 Step-by-step

Set the tone (2–3 minutes).

Employee sorts the 15 cards into three rows (8–10 minutes).

Walk the layout and discuss examples (15–25 minutes).

Choose one focus card for the next 90 days (5–10 minutes).

Draft a simple 90-day plan and schedule weekly check-ins (5–10 minutes).

4.2 What to say (Leader scripts)

Use your own voice. The goal is clarity and safety, not perfect wording.

Opening: "This is for development. We are choosing one behavior to practice for the next 90 days. It is not a score."

During the walk: "Tell me about a recent time this showed up."

When a card feels 'too strong': "What does it look like on your toughest days, not your best days?"

When selecting focus: “Which behavior will help the work most in the next 90 days?”

Closing: “We will keep this simple: one goal, one or two weekly actions, a few signals, and a short weekly check-in.”

4.3 Sorting instructions (Employee)

Top row: Very much like me.

Middle row: Sometimes like me.

Bottom row: Rarely like me.

Within each row, rank left to right from stronger to weaker based on the last 3–6 months.

5. Choosing the 90-Day Focus

Primary rule: choose the behavior most important to current business priorities (safety, quality, reliability, cost, flow, team health).

Override rule: if any bottom-row card touches safety, ethics, compliance, or critical reliability, it becomes the first priority.

If stuck: choose between two cards by selecting the one with more real practice opportunities in the next 90 days.

6. The 90-Day Practice Plan

Most leadership tools fail because good intentions do not turn into repeated behavior. A 90-day plan succeeds when it is small, scheduled, and reinforced weekly.

6.1 90-day plan template

Copy and fill this in during your session.

6.2 Weekly check-in (10 minutes)

What did you practice since last time?

What happened when you practiced it?

What got in the way?

What will you adjust this week?

What support do you need from me?

7. Common Failure Points and How to Prevent Them

Use this section to keep the deck practical. These are the most common breakdowns and simple countermeasures.

8. 90-Day Practice Examples (by role)

Use these to envision what practice looks like. Keep actions small, scheduled, and visible.

8.1 Supervisor example

Focus card: Create Conditions for Problem Solving

Behavior goal: Protect time weekly so one recurring issue is solved, not managed.

Weekly actions: Block 45 minutes weekly for one problem; remove one low-value task to free capacity.

Signals: One problem advances weekly; team can name the problem and next step.

Leader support: Protect the time and remove one recurring interruption.

8.2 Manager example

Focus card: Align Across Boundaries

Behavior goal: Reduce rework caused by unclear handoffs.

Weekly actions: Weekly 20-minute handoff check with partner team; define and review one shared measure.

Signals: Reduced rework; fewer escalations due to missing information.

Leader support: Align priorities with the partner manager and resolve conflicts quickly.

8.3 Director / superintendent example

Focus card: Keep Your Commitments

Behavior goal: Build trust through visible follow-through.

Weekly actions: Maintain a visible commitments list; communicate early when commitments change.

Signals: Fewer repeat asks; direct reports report clearer status and next steps.

Leader support: Protect time to close loops and model the behavior publicly.

9. 90-Day Idea Bank (all 15 cards)

Each row provides starter actions and signals. Customize to your role and priorities.

10. Quick Reference (one page)

Run the sort quarterly.

Choose one focus tied to business priorities.

Write a simple 90-day plan: goal, 1–2 weekly actions, signals, support.

Hold a 10-minute weekly check-in.

Prove improvement through visible behavior and better work flow.