think

Quick Start Guide to OKRs
Measure What Matters!

What are OKRs?

OKRs are a collaborative goal-setting tool used by teams and individuals to set challenging, ambitious goals with measurable results. OKRs are how you track progress, create alignment, and encourage engagement around measurable goals. They are in practice at Google, Spotify, Uber, Twitter, Airbnb and more. OKRs are not a new fad; they've been around since the 70's or 80's depending on how you define their beginning.

Head Coach

OBJECTIVE
Win Super Bowl

KEY RESULTS
1. Passing attack amasses 300+ yards per game.
2. Defense allows fewer than 17 points per game.
3. Special teams unit ranks in top 3 punt return coverage.

Offensive Coach

OBJECTIVE
Generate 300 yds. per game passing attack

KEY RESULTS
1. Achieve 65% pass completion rate.
2. Cut interceptions to fewer than 1 per game.
3. Hire new quarterbacks coach.

Defensive Coach

OBJECTIVE
Give up fewer than 17 pts. per game

KEY RESULTS
1. Allow fewer than 100 rushing yards per game.
2. Increase number of sacks to 3+ per game.
3. Develop a Pro Bowl cornerback.

Special Teams Coach

OBJECTIVE
Improve to top 3 punt coverage team

KEY RESULTS
1. Allow fewer than 10 yards per punt return.
2. Block 4+ punts over the season.

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Example from Measure What Matters, Doerr, Apr 24, 2018

This easy to understand example from Doerr's book shows Objectives and Key Results in action. In the real world, things are rarely so conveniently broken-down and connected but it still functions well to demonstrate the concept.

- The 3 key results at the top objective level become objectives at the next level down.
- There is a level of speculation as to whether or not achieving KRs will result in actually satisfying their objectives.
- Second-tier KRs can become Objectives for other personnel working in that unit.
- There is a one-to-one relationship between the Objectives and the KRs (not necessarily real-world).

First Steps to Implementing OKRs

1. Read Measure What Matters – there is a lot to this framework and it has proven itself many times over for many decades over. This quick start is only intended to show how to test your interest and ability to implement OKRs

2. Read handout: Objectives and Key Results Think's Key Findings – this is a small collection of things Think has noticed as we have implemented OKRs for our clients and for ourselves. Learn from our experience!

3. Are you ready? Try it!
   Regardless of your level in your organization, you are the top node in this exercise. Initially think **narrow** and **test deep** (very hard for executives who are intimate with the complexities of their business).

✓ Answer this question, "If I could only change one thing about my business in the next 6 months, what would it be?

✓ Document that as an Objective and take first crack at defining Key Results that you think could help you satisfy that Objective.

- The KRs need to be measurable; its better if you can track them over time. An implied count of one is sometimes used, but hard to track and monitor.

- You'll Typically develop KRs that you can assign to functional leads in your organization. For this reason, OKRs hierarchies often parallel an org chart.

- Don't get lost in tool decisions. Go low-tech if it works for you. Nothing wrong with Post-it notes or index cards at this stage.

✓ Don't stop there! Now have a conversation with your functional leads and collect their feedback on whether these KRs could help you reach your objective. Ask them if they have other ideas that might make it more likely to reach your objective. This must be a collaboration. This is where strategic alignment is born. It's not an assignment, it's a discussion that should go well beyond the KR itself.

✓ Challenge your KR owners to do the same thing, one level down. Make sure this process will work in your organization and that it provides alignment in strategic vision.

✓ Validate that progress can be measured and that incremental progress can be monitored.

Decision Point

Should you attempt a rollout of OKRs? This is a value-based decision. If you think it's a GO, build a plan to operationalize OKRs into your culture. This is likely to feel more like an Organizational Change Management initiative if it is done right, so treat it seriously. Get help if needed.

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