

OKRs

Why they sometimes miss the mark

1. LACK OF ALIGNMENT

OKRs should...

- directly align with the organisation goals and contribute to the strategy.
- align with other teams' OKRs vertically and horizontally to contribute to the organisation OKRs



2. INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION

- Lack of communication about OKRs can lead to misunderstandings.
- Poor or insufficient role modelling good OKR routines from leadership teams can lead to inconsistency.
- It is essential to be able to view the progress of other teams' OKRs.



3. FAILURE TO PRIORITISE

- Maximum 5 Objectives - ideally fewer! OKRs are not KPIs or business as usual.
- Fewer Objectives and Key Results that are outcome based (rather than output based) allow for a sharper focus.



4. UNREALISTIC GOALS

- Strike a balance between ambition and achievability.
- Begin with mostly committed OKRs and only one aspirational / moonshot OKR.
- Add more aspirational OKRs as the team become more confident in working with OKRs.



5. FAILURE TO CHECK-IN

- Check-ins are the lifeblood of OKRs.
- Success happens when individuals and teams regularly update their key result progress and meet (at least bi-weekly) to discuss the progress and flag up if help is needed.



6. NO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Use OKRs as a tool for continuous improvement.
- Reflect and learn during the period.
- During the end of period Retrospective use team reflection and learning to adjust and adapt for the upcoming period.



7. UNCLEAR OBJECTIVES

- Clarity is crucial for effective execution.
- Craft clear, specific objectives with measurable outcome based key results that leave no room for ambiguity.



8. LOW PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- Teams flourish, experiment with new ways of working and stretch themselves only when they feel secure.
- Individuals willingly take accountability when there is no blame or stigma attached to asking for help.

