

OKR Quick Start

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This material is based upon work funded and supported by the Department of Defense under Contract No. FA8702-15-D-0002 with Carnegie Mellon University for the operation of the Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center.

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DM22-0714

Why OKRs?

Objectives and Key Results clarifies the work by establishing...

FOCUS

Defines what matters most
(by choosing what *not* to do)

ALIGNMENT

Communicates priorities across the organization;
everyone understands what they contribute

ACCOUNTABILITY

Drives accountability to achieve outcomes and
promotes a deliberate dialogue on what can be
accomplished

Output vs. Outcome



Objectives & Key Results Definition

Objective

WHAT you plan to achieve

3-5 statements describing what you plan to achieve across the year

- Inspires greater achievement, yet realistic
- Unambiguous
- **Duration: up to 1 year**
- **Syntax: Goal statement “xxx has been achieved”**

Key Result

HOW you plan to achieve it

3-5 measurable outcomes describing how you plan to achieve each objective

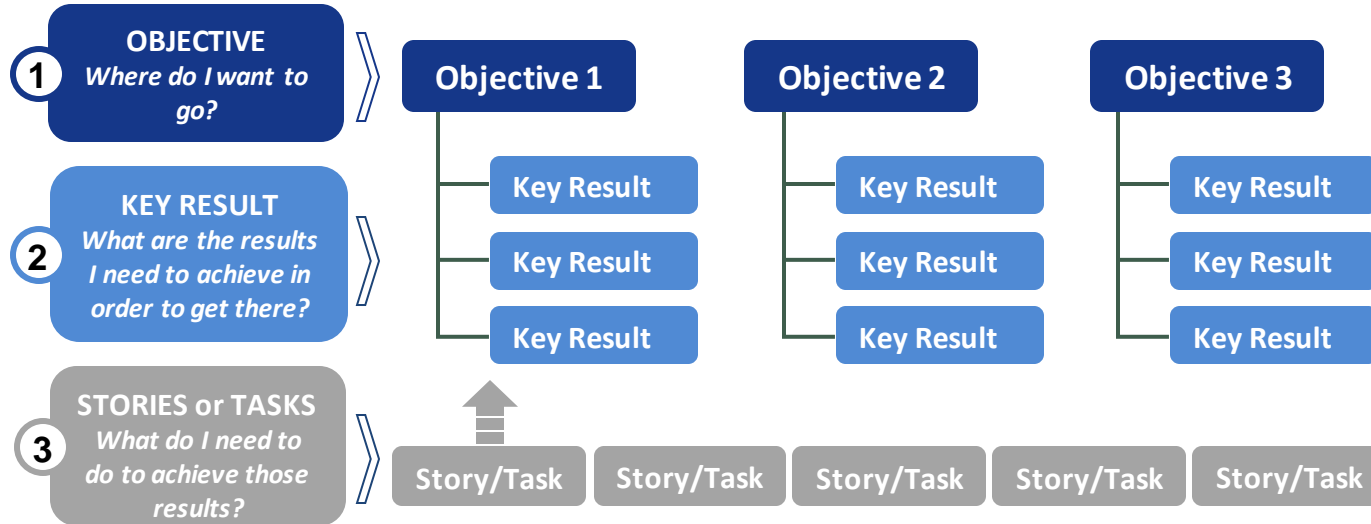
- Measurable *outcomes*, not outputs or activities
- Time-bound & specific
- Includes evidence of completion that is available, credible, and discoverable
- **Duration: 1 quarter (90 days)**
- **Syntax: Result statement: “xxx has been done at <metric> level”**

Establish no more than 3-5 OKRs that generate the greatest impact to you/your team
OKRs should not encompass *all* work—only priorities—is this your team’s norm? or all work?

Defining Objectives vs. Key Results vs. Tasks

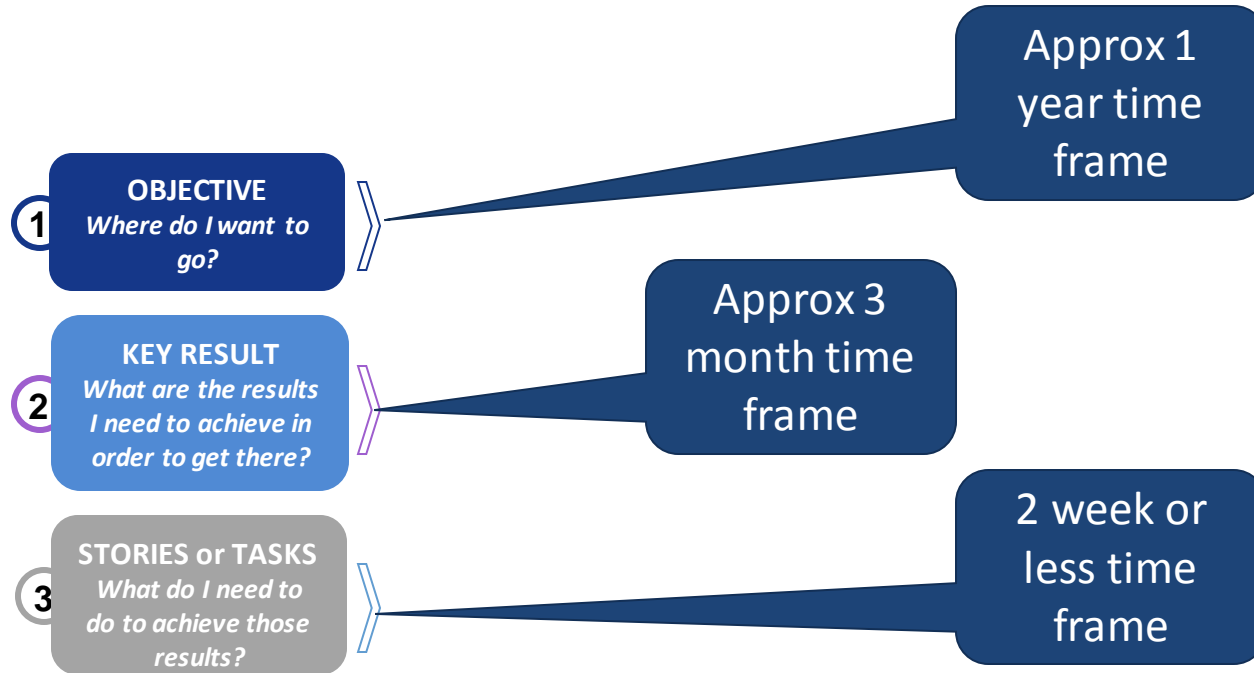
OKRs help you define what tasks align to the outcomes of your Key Results

Developing OKRs requires you to begin with *the end* in mind



Sizing Objectives vs. Key Results vs. Tasks

OKRs are defined with a time boxed cadence in mind



Developing Strong Key Results

Original Key Result

Produce repeatable trainings and processes

Revised Key Result

A finalized list of prioritized Program Management training courses and supplementary materials validated by leadership by 31 Dec

Why is the revised Key Result preferable?

- ✓ Identifies the type of trainings that will be produced (*i.e., Program Management training courses*)
- ✓ Specifies the level of completion/quality of the deliverable (*i.e., finalized*)
- ✓ Labels *who* will be required to validate the list of trainings (*i.e., leadership*)
- ✓ Defines *when* the Key Result will be completed (*i.e., by 31 Dec*)

These metrics inform a binary (yes or no) decision on whether or not the Key Result was accomplished

OKR Writing Mistakes and Traps

Failing to differentiate between committed and aspirational OKRs

Marking a committed OKR as aspirational increases the chance of failure. Teams may not take it seriously and may not change their other priorities to focus on delivering the OKR.

Business-as-usual OKRs

OKRs are often written principally based on what the team believes it can achieve without changing anything they're currently doing, as opposed to what the team or its customers really want.

Timid aspirational OKRs

Aspirational OKRs very often start from the current state and effectively ask, "What could we do if we had extra staff and got a bit lucky?" An alternative and better approach is to start with, "What could my [or my customers] world look like in several years if we were freed from most constraints?"

Adapted from Doerr (2018) Measure what Matters

OKR Writing Mistakes and Traps (Cont'd)

Low Value Objectives (aka the "Who cares?" OKR)

OKRs must promise clear business value-otherwise, there's no reason to expend resources doing them. Low Value Objectives (LVOs) are those for which, even if the Objective is completed, no one will notice or care.

Sandbagging

A team's committed OKRs should credibly consume most but not all of their available resources

Insufficient KR's for committed Os

A common error is writing key results that are necessary but not sufficient to collectively complete the objective. The error is tempting because it allows a team to avoid the difficult (resource/priority/risk) commitments needed to deliver "hard" key results.

Tips for effective OKRs

These tips help to create more effective OKRs

- *Less is more*
Limiting of three to five OKRs per cycle leads to choosing what matters most
- *Set goals from the bottom up*
Encouraging teams & individuals to create roughly half of their own OKRs, in consultation with managers
- *No dictating*
Creating OKRs is a collaborative social contract to establish priorities & progress measurement
- *Stay flexible*
Modifying objectives and Key Results if the climate has changed and is no longer practical/relevant as written. Key results can be modified or discarded mid-cycle.

Adapted from Doerr (2018) Measure what Matters

Tips for effective OKRs (Cont'd)

These tips help to create more effective OKRs

- *Dare to fail*
Creating “Stretch Goals” energizes the organization. While certain operational objectives must be met in full, aspirational OKRs should be uncomfortable and possibly unattainable.
- *A tool, not a weapon*
Establishing OKRs establish focus, alignment and accountability not intended to create a base for performance reviews
- *Be patient*
Adopting a processes requires time to integrate and practice new ways of working

Adapted from Doerr (2018) Measure what Matters

Activity: Action or Outcome?

Review the sample Key Results below and identify which are actions and which are outcomes

Action or Outcome?

1. Conduct meeting with staff
2. 85% of processes are captured in handbooks
3. Engine tests have a 99% success rate
4. Conduct assessment of the Directorate's technology tools