

A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, taken during the "blue hour" of dusk. The bridge's iconic orange-red towers and suspension cables are silhouetted against a deep blue sky with wispy white clouds. The water of the bay is visible in the lower left, and the dark silhouette of a hillside is in the lower right.

5 steps to drive OKR adoption within your team

Ensure OKRs are embraced by all levels of your organization.

RESEARCH

DETECON
CONSULTING

5 STEPS TO DRIVE OKR ADOPTION WITHIN YOUR TEAM

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BACKGROUND

Driving adoption of OKRs, with all their power and might, can sometimes be inherently challenging for organizations. We often see great excitement for OKRs when they are first rolled out, but teams are quick to fall into the trap of 'set and forget'. Teams set great OKRs, but then other priorities arise that stray their attention away from making their OKRs front and center.

You shouldn't blame yourself or your team for falling into the 'set and forget' trap. It's important to acknowledge that OKRs are sometimes harder than they initially seem. We've found that it takes time to build the muscle memory to maintain momentum with OKRs, usually 3 to 9 months. So how can leaders and managers reverberate a positive OKR attitude and drive adoption through teams and organizations. Well, it comes down to 5 key buckets.



Let's look into each of these 5 buckets a little further...

1

COACHING

Don't play the blame game – a sense of psychological safety needs to be instilled in your team members that it is ok not to achieve 100% of a KR every time. We set OKRs as 'stretch' as we can, so any sort of progress should be encouraged.

Use your 1on1s – add an agenda item for your 1on1 to give the employee you are meeting with some level of praise

Lead by example – you as a manager need to update your KRs every week and celebrate when OKRs are achieved. Your actions will set the precedent for how your team manages their OKRs

Re-educate constantly – The shift in mindset from output to outcome usually takes several quarters. That is why it's extremely important to constantly re-educate all team members on OKR best practices, how to use them, and their underlying value. Similarly, a quarterly retrospective should be conducted to learn from previous quarter mistakes.

Remove roadblocks – Your role as the manager is to support your team members in achieving their OKRs by removing as many obstacles or blockers as you can. These should be identified in your regular OKR meeting [see next section].

CONSISTENCY

2

Weekly meeting – The benefit of OKRs is realized when they are made front and center every week. So, once per week, update your OKRs, and talk about them in your team meetings. Even if nothing has changed on that OKR, it is still good practice to update them for the sake of consistency. The agenda for your weekly meeting should be derived from your OKRs, and it only needs to be around 15-20 mins. In it, you and your team should discuss:

- Which OKRs did you make progress on last week
- Which OKRs do you want to make progress on this week
- What is stopping you from making progress on your OKRs

The team meeting shouldn't be a status update. Rather, the team should come to the meeting excited to get their blockers removed and receive further clarity and alignment.

Reminders – Use the tools available to you to set yourself reminders to constantly check and update your OKRs. This could be setting a reminder in your calendar, setting a group reminder in your team's calendar, or setting an automated reminder in your regular communication channel e.g. slack. We have even seen clients put a post-it note on the side of their laptop to remind them to constantly update their OKRs, as well as to remind them to give more feedback and praise to team members in their e-mails and regular communications.

3

DISTRIBUTION

Assign KR to team members – We don't recommend having individual OKRs, only team-based OKRs. For your team OKRs, the OKRs should be distributed across multiple owners. That means that they are responsible for driving this KR, and it reduces the burden for you as a leader to worry about updating all your team OKRs.

Keep people accountable – Remember those regular team meetings from the previous section? Well, because the owners of each OKR are now distributed across members in the team, every Monday morning when that meeting comes around I as a KR owner will be held accountable if I don't update or am making progress towards my KR. It should be noted that team members should not be shunned or blamed for not focusing on their OKRs, rather they will naturally observe the benefit of updating their OKRs prior to the meeting so that they can contribute actively to the conversation.

CELEBRATION

Celebrate frequently – Greg Pryor, SVP of People & Performance at Workday, talks about how team's gather round one person's computer for the ceremonious moment when animated confetti flies around the screen when an Objective is achieved in WorkBoard. To put it in his words, "it's a little geeky, but people love that." Therefore, it's important to celebrate frequently to keep up the morale and positive attitude towards making progress on OKRs.

Rewards/gifts – When someone meets and exceeds a standard you want to reinforce, given them a small but meaningful reward, and tell them why they earned it. It can be something like a meaningful trinket, a bag of candy, or some other inexpensive item

Positive reinforcement – When someone delivers a key project, or makes considerable progress towards their OKRs, remind yourself to always say something to them about it. This can be something as small as a positive reaction emoji (like a thumbs up, hands raised or heart) in your communication tool (like slack). It's true that a little goes a long way.

5

SIMPLIFY

Make it easy – It must be as effortless as possible for your team to manage their OKRs. Otherwise, it will seem like a burden. That's why you can't manage your OKRs with excel or PowerPoint, because you can't manage, scale and create alignment in 2020 with an early 2000s tool. They don't go far enough to create the level of seamless transparency and OKR management that you need. That is why using a dynamic software tool that can integrate to your existing tools to limit redundant data inputs is so important.

Clear instructions – The process of updating OKRs should be published and accessible by all, whether that's on your company intranet, or a confluence page. It should be as clear as day for a team member to be able to manage and update their OKRs.

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Philipp leads Detecon's global OKR practice with more than 20 experienced OKR consultants in America, Asia and Europe. As an expert in strategy execution, he and his team help leaders around the globe to fulfill their vision, align their organization around their strategic priorities and enable team members in every level of the organization to make entrepreneurial, autonomous decisions. Originally from Germany, he moved to San Francisco in 2014. He holds a M Sc. from Humboldt University Berlin and a Diploma in Economics from University of Kassel.

ABOUT DETECON

Detecon USA provides innovation, growth and digital technology advice to a range of clients from startups to global enterprises. Our core expertise includes growth advisory based on OKRs, innovation empowerment and connectivity services. We assist our clients to harness the latest technologies, agile frameworks and business models to drive step change performance improvements. Detecon Inc. is part of the Detecon Group.

The **Detecon Group** is a 1,100 person strong innovation-consulting powerhouse of Deutsche Telekom and T-Mobile and pioneer in digital strategy advisory. Detecon supports companies from all domains to adapt their business models and operational processes to the competitive conditions and customer requirements of the digitalized, globalized economy with state-of-the-art communication and information technology.

OKR ADVISORY

Detecon initially adopted OKRs as a way to drive better project outcomes in the innovation initiatives that Telekom and T-Mobile undertakes. Detecon also understood that to drive OKR success, we needed to select an OKR software platform.

From this experience, Detecon was approached by several of its existing external clients, which required OKR advice for their innovation initiatives, and Detecon founded its own OKRs practice, specifically dedicated to clients seeking to grow and transform their businesses.

We have now established Detecon's OKR Advisory Offerings in all of Detecon's global offices, where dedicated Detecon's Certified OKR Consultants regularly advise on OKR initiatives.

Our strength is particularly strong in rolling out OKR initiatives in global enterprises where they require global co-ordination of the rollout. However, we are able to develop solutions tailored for all organizations.

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