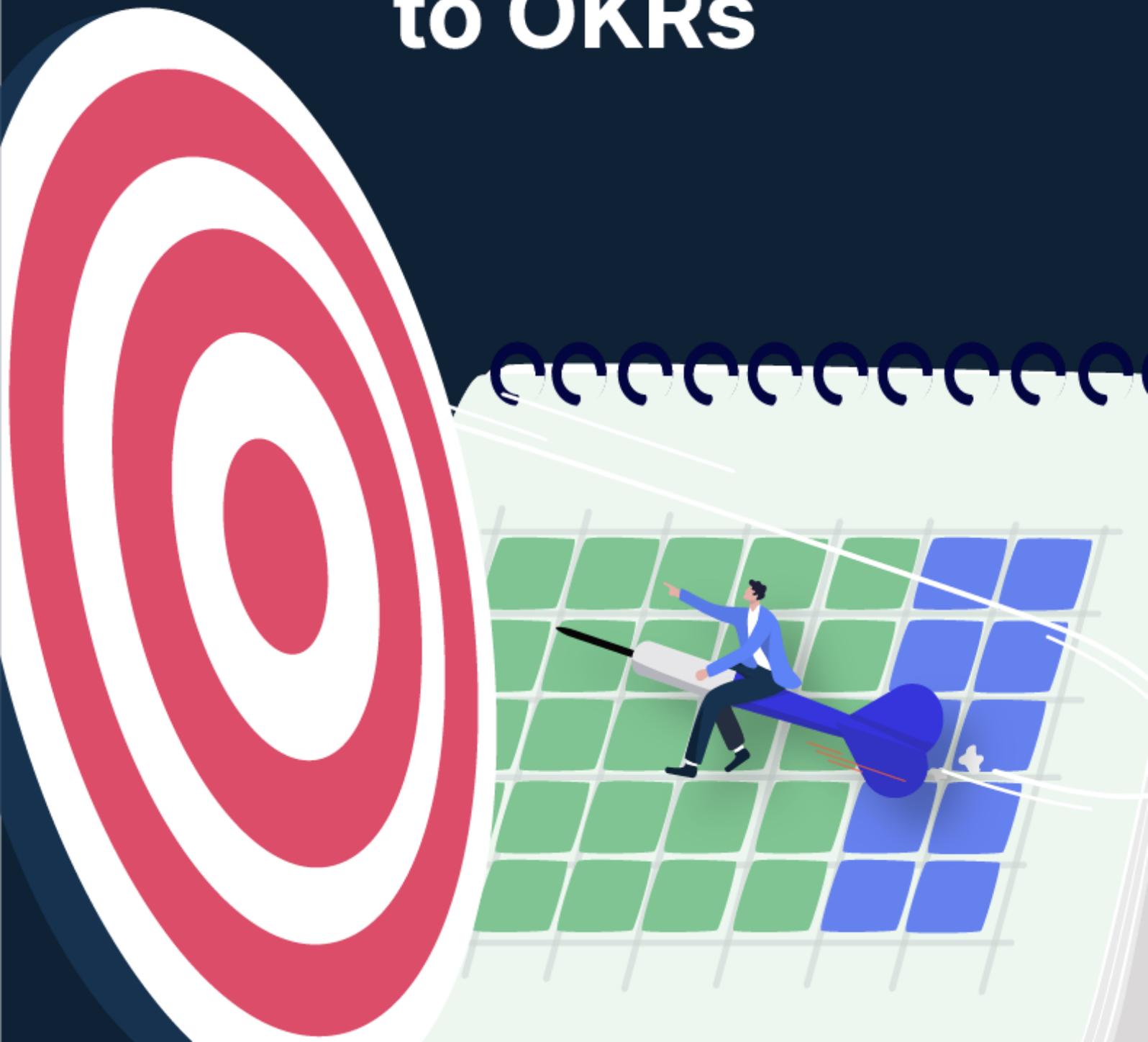


fitbots  
OKRs

  
WILL GROUP

# Transitioning from Annual Goal Setting to OKRs





**WILL GROUP**

## About

Will Group is a leading total talent solutions provider servicing global clients on recruitment, total talent management, HR tech and transformative data-driven insights. The group stands by its vision of creating a strong brand with high expected value and becoming No. 1 in the business fields of “working,” “interesting,” “learning” and “living.” Will International is the international organization of the Japanese-listed Will Group and it adopted OKRs in 2021.

In March 2021, they completed a well-thought-through and neatly crafted Annual Goal setting exercise, which was aligned to the 4 lenses of Balanced Scorecard. With the eye on these 4 lenses, the Senior Leadership team and Matthew Beath, CEO at Will decided to embrace OKRs to help them prioritize their business goals.

Inspired by John Doerr’s bestseller ‘Measure What Matters,’ the drive for OKRs came from the need for a common language to help teams move from an output to an outcome-based way of management, and be more intentional in conveying key metrics that would bring business velocity.

## Establishing the ‘Why’ for OKRs

Will International’s vision is to be a Technology enabled-Total Workforce Solutions provider by 2023. Borrowing from an in-depth executive exercise of creating a strategy map, the leadership team identified the Enterprise Value drivers, around the perspectives of:

- People
- Internal processes (Technology and Operational Excellence)
- Customers
- Finance

Each strategic lens was given a long-term view, of 2-year aspirational goals, and broad action plans and outputs. Ownership was also tagged to each Goal and Output, and a status ‘Red Amber Green’ on where they are. The Status updates were made on Powerpoint, and shared during board meetings.

**We asked Caleb Baker, Group Managing Director- Strategic Growth, Technology, and Talent Solutions on ‘Why OKRs and Why now?’**

In the context of Will, there are 9 assets on which we needed to achieve Strategic Alignment. The Why for us was really about bringing OKRs and having everyone focus on the right number of things for the group. Prior to this, we had a number of projects, which were not being measured either.

Our strategy is to create Enterprise Value. The 3 objectives followed by KR's which we selected, are all pointing toward creating Enterprise Value. For instance, some of the fundamental metrics were Gross Profit Growth or Gross Profit Margin Growth.



## Finding the Right OKR partner

The Leadership at Will had to identify the right OKR partner to kickstart the journey. OKRs being new, required a guided approach for the first 90 days, to help teams understand the strategy execution framework better.

Fitbots being an integrated OKRs provider with our Software, expert onboarding and certifications, became the preferred partner in strategically introducing OKRs.

**During a conversation with Matthew Beath, the litmus test for OKRs was to bring a 12-page strategy document to be neatly prioritized into an executable framework that fits into a page!**

The first step before introducing OKRs, was to communicate **Why OKRs** and **Why now?** The SLT (Senior Leadership Team) identified Rebecca Hatten, Program Manager- Will International as the Internal OKR champion, alongside team champions who could be trained as internal coaches.



## Setting the Context

To establish a common language and to avoid inconsistencies, the Fitbots team conducted a 'Learn OKRs' session which covered the ABCs of OKRs, the OKR fundamentals, and an overview of how to write outcome-driven metrics aligned to inspirational objectives. This was followed by a facilitated coach-led conversation on Company OKRs.

The Leadership team set the North Star by crafting Company OKRs, for next-level teams/Departments to connect and align their execution of strategy.

All Key Results had metrics, were outcome-focused, and sharply aligned to the Objective statements which were inspirational and with clarity stated 'What exactly are we trying to accomplish' in the next 12 months?

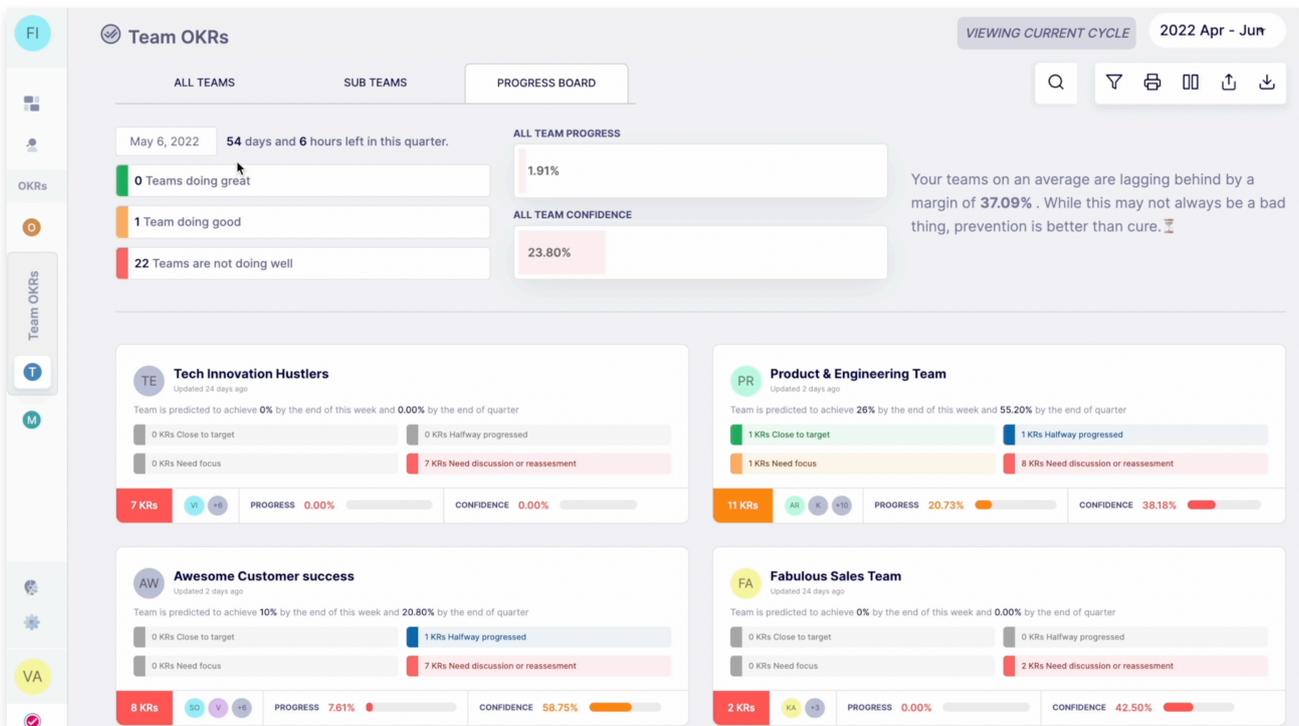
Once the OKRs were finalized and signed off, they used Fitbots OKRs software to connect and align Key Results, showing allegiance of team OKRs to company OKRs which were set for 90 days. The core intent was to keep the OKRs agile and reboot Team/ Department OKRs at the end of the quarter.

## Internal Capability Building

Managing OKRs requires expertise, in order to discern 'what is above and below the iceberg.' OKR rollouts require muscle to sustain. **Certified Internal OKR Champions** add immense value in coaching teams on writing high-quality OKRs, and facilitating check-in meetings to sustain an outcome-driven culture.

Will International identified a team of internal champions who got certified by Fitbots to drive an OKRs culture. The champions went on to anchor bi-monthly check-in meetings and facilitate the Leadership retro reboot, a quarter-end ritual to manage OKRs.

Each quarter, OKR updates were shared with the Will HQ taking insights from the Fitbots dashboards, giving clarity around outcomes and progress by teams and how they contribute to company success.



You can try the feature for free [here](#).

**In a conversation with Caleb Baker, he shared his learnings on how the teams sustained OKRs quarter on quarter.**

“Sustaining OKRs was very important, and hence it was necessary that we had a fortnightly check-in, with metrics progress updated on the Fitbots platform. Teams would come prepared with what actions they had taken, and movement on the needle on the KR. This cadence of running the checks-ins was key to ensuring that OKRs are sustained. Let me take an example of something we are proud of achieving. One of the KRs which we took was on the Technology transformation program. While this was a Milestone/programmatic KR, this was a difficult one to achieve, but we did!”



**We asked Caleb whether there were any traps to watch out for?**

“One of the important traps to watch out for is to make the KRs measurable. If these are not measurable, then it becomes difficult to manage them. So, watch out for that trap!”

## **Sustaining OKRs With Tools**



The Fitbots OKRs software helped Leadership teams and Internal champions track and manage OKRs progress. Each week, teams could see KRs at risk, the ones that were steady plodders and those making great progress.

OKR alignment boards showed the allegiance of teams to company OKRs, tracking contribution to outcome metrics.



Week-on-week conversations, feedback, and appreciation were exchanged against Key Results, capturing the progress in real-time.

Having experienced the benefits of using OKRs on managing their strategic priorities quarter-on-quarter, driving accountability and progress, Will is expanding OKRs to other Sub Cos in a lighter way/pilots to drive consistency in strategy execution.