

Quora fitbots
OKRs

Volume 1



Pre Onboarding Questions

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“How do I know what I do really matters?”

Does this statement resonate with you?

It definitely resonates with hundreds of Quora users who have this thought on a daily basis. At Fitbots, we aim to connect missions to metrics by increasing awareness around OKRs and best practices. Users like you post questions on our profile and we respond within a week. [You'll get immediate responses when you [book a coaching session](#) 😊]

These are more than just FAQs - these questions came from **you** and many others like you who want to learn more about OKRs.

This volume is the perfect handbook for anyone who wants to get started with OKRs the right way. There are examples for start-ups, midsize, and enterprise-level companies that have been linked to useful (and free) resources curated by our experts. Everything you need to know before an OKR rollout - whether you're in the deciding phase, or you just want to stay ahead of the game by setting the right context - you'll find it here.

Enjoy your copy, [shoot us your questions](#) on Quora, and if you like our content, follow us on Quora and [LinkedIn](#) for daily updates!

You can keep our [Glossary](#) handy for the upcoming OKR-related lingo.

What are OKRs?

OKRs are a critical-thinking framework that optimize the bridge between strategy to execution, by helping teams cherry pick the metrics which are most important to move the needle on business. OKRs stand for Objectives and Key Results. Many companies across the world have onboarded OKRs and seen meteoric growth at a sustained rate.

O - Objectives: This is the 'Big What and Why' - where the key question is: What do we need to achieve and why do we need to achieve it?

KR - Key Result: These are the metrics you choose to measure progress towards, where the question is: How do we measure success?

Tasks/Initiatives: Although not a part of the phrase 'OKR', these are equally important. These are the actions towards achieving your goal, the question being: What do we need to do to get there?

1. What companies have adopted OKRs and what were the impacts?

The list of companies that have adopted OKRs is ever-growing. Of course, we know that OKRs have been adopted successfully by companies like **Intel, Oracle, Google, GoPro, Zynga, Spotify**. However, we have heard these stories across forums, platforms, books, etc.

But what about stories of startups and high-growth companies that adopted OKRs recently, what challenges did they face and what were the impacts they experienced? Some of the common outcomes and impacts we have seen companies experiencing are **increased alignment** between teams and also bi-directionally, **greater collaboration** due to cadence of check-ins, **sharper focus** due to prioritization of what matters most, and much higher connectedness and **visibility to organizational outcomes**. Here are a few stories we would like to share on what impact OKRs brought about to different organizations that adopted them.

Hear from 21K School's CEO, Santosh



fitbots OKR Shorts!
FAQs on OKRs answered.

How do OKRs connect all teams to a common outcome?

#GetOKRsRight with Fitbots

Santosh Kumar AV
CEO, 21k School

Here's what the founder of Thrive, has to say about OKRs



fitbots OKR Shorts!
FAQs on OKRs answered.

Does customer focus and excellence improve with OKRs?

#GetOKRsRight with Fitbots

THRIVE

Krishi Fagwani
Co-Founder & CEO, Thrive

2. Which management philosophies (like OKRs) succeeded in your startup?

You might have heard about the success stories of **Google, Intel, LinkedIn**, and more. Any online search will show you the results of their wonderful journeys with OKRs. Well, we offer OKRs platform and coaching services, and we wouldn't have made it big without *walking the talk*. Yes, we use the OKRs framework!

Our story began [here](#) and we're growing even today. But how about another example that we can personally account for? **We're talking about Talview!** [Here's](#) their case study on how they implemented OKRs as remote work became the need of the hour. The story is a clear example of the power of good OKR implementation, especially in uncertain times.

3. What are some effective strategies to keep a startup business team aligned, focused and at a high velocity?

You might have heard of OKRs, the goal-setting strategy-execution framework used by Google and Intel to scale and grow at a phenomenal rate.

It was popularized by *Measure What Matters: OKRs: The Simple Idea that Drives 10x Growth - the #1 New York Times Bestseller* book written by John Doerr. More than 80% of Silicon Valley startups have adopted OKRs and experienced a meteoric rise in their growth, by just being thoughtful about the metrics they measure.

Employing OKRs is an effective way of

- Tracking the big-picture business goals
- Keeping your teams and team members aligned
- Building leadership effectiveness, and
- Growing at a quick pace.

4. What is the best book on OKRs?

OKRs were made popular by venture capitalist John Doerr in his New York Times bestselling book. It is arguably the best book on OKRs.



Or if you're just looking to find out how to accelerate startup growth using OKRs, this [short read](#) will be of help!

5. Why is Andy Grove considered the 'Father of OKRs'?

"You either achieve it or you don't, there is no midway." - Andy Grove

Andy Grove was a visionary and a thought leader who used the concept of Management by Objectives (MBO) introduced by Peter Drucker. When Andy moved to Intel, he realized that, although there was a lot of expertise, the challenge lay in executing in the right way with a focus on achieving the outcomes.

Under his leadership, Intel grew from \$1.9 billion to \$26 billion. It would be unfair to leave OKRs out of the credit because it developed radical focus amongst teams making them collaborate and focus on a shared vision. In a world where ideas were priceless, he created an ecosystem

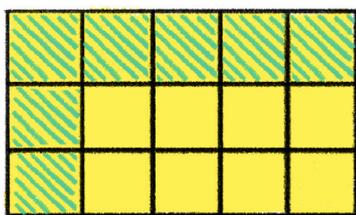
where correct execution was King. He believed that without execution, ideas are mere concepts and theories. A maverick who believed that every employee should create and own their goal because every member of the company is significant to the success of the organization, Andy is undoubtedly the father of OKRs.

6. How should OKRs be measured?

A lot of thought goes behind setting the OKRs, be it at an individual, team, or company level. This is why OKRs are a critical thinking framework.

Ideally, the **3x5 rule** should be used to set OKRs: **No more than 3 objectives, and no more than 5 key results per objective.** This helps you/your team/your company prioritize and focus on what matters most. 5 Key Results are enough to really see progress in a transparent way.

• THE GOLDEN RULE OF OKRS •



3 Objectives
X
5 Key Results

You measure OKRs by setting concise Objectives and Key Results, then reviewing progress with your team once a week during Check-ins. Each week, you should sit with your team and see if/how your tasks moved the needle towards your goal. You can celebrate good progress, review

what worked and didn't, sometimes you may have to review the OKR itself (especially if you made it too aspirational/easy).

7. What are some examples of OKR outcomes?

Let's start by defining an **OKR Outcome** -

"Outcomes are the velocity metrics that define the progress for a business. OKRs focus on Outcomes rather than outputs or inputs."

In short, an Outcome is the result of your team's efforts. Outcomes should not be confused with Objectives. Objective is the vision, outcome is the result.

Above is an **example** of an OKR Outcome - This is a glimpse of the **Marketing Cheers team's OKRs.**

Their objective is to - **Build memories in order to build a strong**

brand. Two KR's have been assigned to this Objective.

KR1 has reached 20% completion.

KR2 has reached 71.62% completion.

These are the final outcomes, as noted at the end of the quarter.

Outcomes are always noted at the end of the OKR cycle (usually a quarter). During the cycle, this data shows the progress towards the desired outcome, and not the outcome itself.

8. What is the ideal timeframe for OKRs?



OKRs should be defined half-yearly/annually for companies, and quarterly or half-yearly for teams. The more critical element is to have the cadence of regular weekly or bi-monthly [check-ins](#). These help teams take control of the outcome right from the start.

Don't **set and forget OKRs**, as this can be the deadliest killer of a successful OKR implementation. Regular cadence builds the much-needed momentum and agility your teams need to deliver on the outcomes.

Most importantly, **OKRs are best set as a team**. So discuss timelines with your team so that the choice is optimal.

You can use 'milestones' to further define your metrics and the time taken to achieve them under a single KR or Objective.

Practicing OKRs for a week or a few may not change much for your team or organization. Give the framework at least a quarter, when implemented well.

9. What are quarterly OKRs? How do you pick good OKRs?

Quarterly OKRs are OKRs that need to be achieved in one business quarter: 3 months.

OKR cycles are usually quarterly and long-term goals are broken down into shorter Objectives.

Picking the right OKRs is a critical step, as OKRs focus on the **vital few** rather than the **trivial many**.

Here's how you do it:

1. Look at the strategic priorities for an organization and identify the business value.
2. Discern which metrics are the Value Add vs the Vanity Metrics before selecting a Key Result.
3. Watch out for tasks that charade as Key Results.
4. Audit your OKRs during check-in meetings if they are really adding value.

Still have questions? Try our [free OKRs course for beginners](#) to get familiar with OKR jargon and implementation traps.



10. Do any companies do OKRs at a cadence faster than quarterly?

OKRs are best executed in quarterly cycles. Each Objective is achievable within one business quarter, and long-term outcomes are broken down into shorter goals. By doing so, OKRs incorporate long-term strategic goals that allow adjusting to change and trying new methods, while reducing the consequences of risks.

However, we often see that some companies prefer customizing OKR implementation specific to their business cycles and priorities. Some like to keep the cycle for 2 months, while some insist on a 6-month cycle given the nature of their business. Anything less than 2 months is generally a very short time period for teams to work on from a prioritization and execution perspective.

While the cycle can be customized to your company culture, the weekly check-in cadence is non-negotiable to ensure that teams never lose sight of the progress, and together, work towards achieving the critical priorities and expected outcomes of the OKR cycle.

11. What methods help decide whether an OKR is realistic or not?

OKRs are not meant to be easy to achieve; however, some might make the mistake of making them too aspirational.

It's a good idea to look at the progress of the last quarter/year and take a calculated risk. If the same OKR keeps getting carried into the next quarter, then it definitely requires a review. Setting the right OKRs comes with practice.

12. Are OKRs networks, not hierarchies?

It's true - this is the reason why OKRs are so popular. As opposed to cascade or peck orders, OKRs encourage alignment where both bottom-up and top-down culture come together. It is without question that OKRs are definitely networks. We're not talking about every department setting OKRs in silos, but rather Pods and Squads - which are essentially deep connections within the company - coming together to move the needle on the company-level key result.

Let's take an example, that a certain company wants to **Increase partnership sign-ups from 1,000 to 20,000**, which is a very aspirational target. A network or pod or squad can be formed which moves the needle on increasing partnership sign-ups. Each pod or squad has representation from various teams such as Sales, Marketing, Operations, Partnerships team. All hands on deck to move this key result forward!

13. Are individual OKRs effective, and should they be used by companies?

Our experts don't recommend individual OKRs because they tend to be a lot more *task-y*.

For example, here's [why Spotify moved away from Individual OKRs](#).

To keep a sharp eye on outcomes, the best practice is to **set OKRs as teams** — especially cross-functional teams coming together to solve a high-velocity business problem.

OKRs measure the performance of the business and how teams contribute to it, but they do not measure the performance of individuals. Learn how and why [OKRs differ from performance reviews](#) and how the two frameworks can co-exist.

14. How do you set, and then specifically cascade OKRs down a company?

OKRs are not a cascade-it-down framework. Instead, OKRs allow teams to **connect and align** their OKRs to organizational and department-level OKRs based on the outcomes they can influence.

We often see companies trying to force fit company OKRs to team/individual levels and that can be counterproductive to the culture

OKRs want to bring about within teams, which is accountability, outcome-oriented-focus, and critical thinking.

When OKRs are cascaded, teams equate it to the older frameworks of KPI or similar frameworks like Management by Objectives, which indicates that they are given a set of goals and priorities to pursue and they need to work towards achieving those.

However, with OKRs, when teams look at the company's Key Results, they work together to identify how they can influence those metrics, what experiments do they need to work on to create outcomes, and also prioritize their work in alignment with the organizational outcomes and focus. When teams pick their OKRs in alignment with org priorities, **accountability and engagement amongst team members are automatically high** because teams see how their work connects with the big picture.

15. Is it ok just to break down a project done in the waterfall logic into OKRs and use them as goals?

Doing this is not the recommended practice.

OKRs work best when you have both top-down and bottom up alignment, rather than cascade or waterfall. Cascading KR leads to less creativity on the next-level teams, which is what the OKR framework tries to

avoid. OKRs are best written when teams come together and bottom-up connect and align to the company-level KR.

Understand the fundamentals of OKRs within 6 minutes using this [eBook](#):



16. Do people slow down to aim for around 75% completion of OKRs to avoid their objectives being deemed unchallenging?

What you have described does not happen in a well-implemented OKR framework. However, **it can definitely happen when OKRs are linked to compensation and bonuses.**

OKRs shift the focus from 'me' to 'we.' OKRs are not about employee evaluation. Achieving 100% of a stretch OKR should be recognized as

a remarkable feat, and any kind of “failure” should be recognized as an opportunity to learn and grow. This is why OKRs are backed by CFRs (Conversations, Recognitions, and Feedback).

The OKR framework is built on transparency, connection, and alignment. The reason why OKRs are set as teams with the input of each and every member is so that the team feels motivated to connect to the larger organizational growth through measurable outcomes - i.e. connect to the bigger picture. All consequences should be borne by the company/organization itself so that

the teams are motivated to stretch, experiment, learn and get creative to boost company growth.

Otherwise, yes, they will slow down/fudge the numbers/not even attempt moonshot OKRs because of the fear of consequences.



17. Would you also recommend OKRs to a rather conservative SMB company with clear hierarchy and less available data?

Before planning your OKR rollout, you must ensure that your company is suitable for OKRs. Once you have a green light on these precursors, you can kickstart your rollout.

If you've read the ['Founder's Guide to Strategy Execution'](#), there is a vital stage to ensure the success of the OKR rollout. Two powerful questions are asked at this stage:

a) Is the Sponsor on board?

Weak sponsorship is one of the most dangerous traps in OKR implementation. There is a need for a strong buy-in from the key executive team members who can communicate the importance of OKRs and the thought process behind the OKR adoption. (Read more on [OKR traps](#).)

b) What are the real pain points of introducing OKRs?

The preexisting company culture should be suitable for OKRs as this is a cultural shift from task-based to outcome-based thinking. For example, in the case of a hierarchical company, one would need to consider if the teams and leadership are open to these changes:

- OKRs would be a silo-buster
- OKRs would need cross-functional alignment
- There would be lesser approvals and more bottom-up accountability by next-level team members

OKRs need such an environment to thrive. Hence, successful OKR adoption depends highly on company culture and the commitment of the sponsor and leadership teams. OKR adoption becomes easier with the guidance of an OKR Coach.

If you have less available data, **are you measuring the metrics that matter most?** Because that's what OKRs do - narrow down on business priorities and align teams to metrics that matter most.

18. How do medium-sized companies track OKRs/goals without building something in-house?

I've looked at the standard software companies: 7Geese, BetterWorks, etc. But they don't seem to do well for larger companies. Any suggestions?

Scaling with OKRs is only possible with the right resources. Fitbots offers a platform that has been used by larger enterprises. The trick lies in making sure that your OKR rituals are actually benefiting your company and that you're not falling into well-known traps.

One of our clients – [Thrive Now](#) – has had an inspirational journey as a larger organization. We collected their learnings along with the experiences of other clients into a quick handbook. Give it a read, you will definitely find some useful tips to making OKRs work for big enterprises. Get the handbook here: [Scaling with OKRs](#).

19. Do you work in a company that uses OKRs? What is your experience of it?

Good, no good? I recently read 'Measure What Matters' by John Doerr and was fascinated by it.

Yes, we do! We use OKRs at Fitbots OKRs and it brings great alignment and focuses on the most important priorities.

OKRs are written at the company and team levels. Everyone comes together to write them for complete alignment. For example, when a start-up needs to **Increase Free Trial signups from X to Y**, here's how everyone comes together - the Product & Engineering team works on the onboarding experience while the Sales and Marketing teams work together on how to nurture Free Trial to conversions. All the activity lists are aligned, with the eye on the prize being a shared commitment: **Increase Free Trials from X to Y in one quarter.**

Once OKRs are set at the beginning of the quarter, teams will meet every week during [check-in meetings](#) to update progress, call out dependencies and blockers, and share insights. Upon updating metrics on the [OKR software](#), they get a predictability score and act accordingly. The process of strategy execution becomes smoother when everyone has visibility of the direction that the company is headed, why the direction is, how far they are from getting there, and what steps need to be taken to get those desired results.



Check out our [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Quora](#), [Twitter](#), [OKR blogs](#), [eBooks](#) and [Templates](#)!

We hope you found these resources helpful. Stay tuned for upcoming volumes and **upvote our answers** to let us know which ones you found most interesting - and to keep us motivated :)