

7 Keys for Successful OKRs Cheat Sheet



Implementing **objectives and key results (OKRs)** can transform how your HR team operates, drives strategic initiatives, and measures impact. Here are seven golden rules to help you make OKRs work for you.

1 Align smart, not hard

Focus: Alignment

Expect to spend time upfront aligning on objectives. This builds critical buy-in. As you grow, balance speed with input.

- 💡 For HR, host a dedicated workshop with key stakeholders to define your top two to three HR objectives for the quarter, ensuring they link directly to company goals.

2 Avoid “too many cooks” syndrome

Focus: Efficient decision-making

Centralize the drafting of initial OKRs to prevent slowdowns. Then, present drafts for feedback to a wider leadership team.

- 💡 Have your head of people draft initial OKRs, then get focused feedback from HR business partners before finalizing them.

3 OKRs are a tool, not the goal

Focus: Adaptability over perfection

Don't get fixated on following the framework "by the book." The real value is in the clarity, focus, and conversations they create.

- 💡 If your HR OKRs clearly define measurable outcomes and strategic direction, you're on the right track, even if they don't perfectly conform to a template.

4 Don't hesitate to bring in expert help

Focus: Accelerating learning and validation

External consultants can provide invaluable guidance, educate your team, and validate your processes. Even a few sessions can save time and prevent misalignment.

- 💡 Invest in a short, focused OKR training session for your HR leadership team to build foundational knowledge and address specific HR challenges.

5 Scale your OKR approach with growth

Focus: Evolving structure

Start simple. For small teams, focus on Objectives and Key Results. As you grow, add Initiatives and adjust your review cadence (e.g., monthly for larger teams).

- 💡 If you're a small HR team, aim for three to five key results max. As you grow, introduce initiatives but limit them to three to five per key result to maintain focus.

6 Foster shared responsibility (with clear ownership)

Focus: Accountability and collaboration

Company objectives are shared, but each Key Result and Initiative needs a clear owner to drive it forward.

- 💡 For an HR Key Result like "Improve Employee Engagement Score," assign a lead owner (e.g., HR Director) who then coordinates with individual owners for supporting initiatives (e.g., L&D for training, Internal Comms for surveys).

7 Separate OKRs from business as usual (BAU)

Focus: Strategic impact

OKRs are for strategic goals that "move the needle," driving change. Don't include routine operational tasks.

- 💡 When defining HR OKRs, ask: "Does this activity drive significant change or improvement, or is it core operational work?" Only include the former in your OKRs.

Key takeaway: Make OKRs your own!

Don't strive for theoretical perfection. Adapt OKRs to your organization's unique culture and maturity. It's a journey of learning, but OKRs will become an intuitive part of how your HR team drives real impact.

