

Using OKRs to evaluate progress

In this lesson, you are learning to define a project's **success criteria**, the measurable attributes project managers use to determine whether or not a project was successful as a whole. This reading will focus on using **OKRs** to evaluate a project's progress.

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

You have learned that OKRs—Objectives and Key Results--combine a goal and a metric to determine a measurable outcome. Setting OKRs is a technique that can help project teams define, communicate, and measure shared success criteria.



Objectives	Key results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defines what needs to be achieved• Describes a desired outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The measurable outcomes that objectively define when the objective has been met

Objectives: Defines what needs to be achieved; describes a desired outcome. Key results: The measurable outcomes that objectively define when the objective has been met

Communicating and tracking OKRs

Conducting regular check-ins and actively tracking progress with your team can help ensure that objectives are being met and that any issues are resolved as soon as possible.

Share your OKRs with your team. Once you've created OKRs for your project, it's important to communicate them to your team so that everyone knows how to focus and align their efforts. You can do this by sharing a digital document, presenting them in a meeting, or adding them to an internal website. OKRs can help your project team stick to

its goals, monitor which are falling short, and be continuously motivated to meet project objectives.

Assign owners. Assign an owner to every key result so that everybody knows who's responsible for what. This helps add clarity and increases accountability.

Measuring progress

Measuring your OKRs is an important part of tracking and sharing your progress. One shortcut to determining the status of a project is to score or grade your OKRs. While scores or grades don't provide a complete assessment of a project's success, they're helpful tools for determining how close you came to achieving your objectives. You can then share your OKR scores with project stakeholders and team members as part of your overall project updates.

Determine how you will score your OKRs. OKRs can be scored in different ways. You can score based on a percentage of the objective completed, the completion of certain milestones, or a scale of 1 to 10, for example. You can also use a "traffic light" scoring approach, where red means you didn't make any progress, yellow means you made some progress, and green means you completed your objective. The simplest approach to scoring OKRs is the "yes/no" method, with "yes" meaning you achieved your objective and "no" meaning you didn't. Using this approach, a key result such as "Launch a new widget marketing campaign" might be graded a 1 or 0 depending on whether it was launched (1) or not (0). A more advanced scoring approach is to grade your key results on a scale. With this method, if a key result was to "Launch six new features" and only three new features were launched, the OKR might be graded 0.5. Generally, if the KR helped you achieve the objective, your OKR should receive a higher score; if it didn't, your OKR should receive a lower score. At Google, OKRs are usually graded on a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, with 1.0 meaning the objective was fully achieved. Each individual key result is graded and then the grades are averaged to determine the score for that OKR. **Set your scoring expectations.** With Google's 0.0–1.0 scale, the expectation is to set ambitious OKRs and aim to achieve an average of at least 0.6 to 0.7 across all OKRs. For OKRs graded according to percentage achieved, the sweet spot is somewhere in the 60–70% range. Scoring lower may mean the team is not achieving what it could be. Scoring higher may mean the aspirational goals are not being set high enough.

Schedule checkpoints. It's important to regularly communicate the status of project OKRs with your team and senior managers. For example, it can be helpful to have monthly check-ins on the progress of OKRs to give both individuals and your team a sense of where

they are. Typically, at the end of the quarter, you'll grade each of your OKRs to evaluate how well the team did to achieve its goals.

Key takeaway

OKRs can help you define and measure your project's success criteria. In order for OKRs to be used to effectively meet your project's success criteria, it's important to share them with your team, assign owners to each key result to ensure accountability, measure your OKRs' progress by scoring them, and track your OKRs' progress by scheduling regular check-ins with your team.