

# Turning Objectives into Results

*Smarter Methods for  
Team Collaboration*

*Küllli Koort*



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# Do you manage or do you lead?

*“You manage things; you lead people.”*

*- Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper*

Leadership and management are a mix of art and science. Gut feeling and emotions are definitely important. Having good tools,

organized processes, and methodologies is still an immense help to any leader who is eager to build successful teams.

How to align your team to work as one towards the goals? How to create efficiently collaborating, more successful teams? Which methodologies and processes have proven to work successfully?

These questions are in the focus of this eBook. Drawing from the feedback from the clients of Weekdone who use our team management platform and research performed across the globe, we aim to provide practical suggestions that you can implement today.

Eliminate distractions and take 20 minutes off to get a glimpse into smart techniques and processes that will help you lead your people towards the goals.

## The Situation Has Changed, Here Is How

For years, spending long hours at work has been held in high regard. Times are changing and many leaders now question,

could we instead get more things done in less time? And it's about time to question the archaic leadership methods.

The situation today is very different from 10 years ago. The type of leadership that drove past success is no longer sufficient. The needs, processes, and methods have changed and the growing expectations are making it increasingly difficult.

What kind of changes are we talking about?

- There is a growing dissatisfaction over a lack of feedback. 79% of those who quit their jobs cite the lack of appreciation as the main reason.
- Employees want more meaningful tasks in order to give a significant input. According to the American Psychological Association's survey\*, less than a half (47%) of employers regularly seek information from their employees.
- Leaders need to be more strategic. 12% of the companies with a strategic plan are more successful, but 90% of the employees don't have a clear understanding about their objectives at work.
- Employee engagement keeps dropping. According to the 2012 Global Workforce Study\*\*, only 35% of the overall workforce is truly engaged.
- Effective internal communications plays a bigger role in success. 29% of the rise in a company's market value can be achieved by improvement of internal communication effectiveness.
- Employees want granular real-time updates and they want it on the go. The most common mistake in management is the lack of communication between staff and leaders.

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\* <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2013/03/employee-needs.aspx>

\*\* <http://www.towerswatson.com/en/Insights/IC-Types/Survey-Research-Results/2012/07/2012-Towers-Watson-Global-Workforce-Study>

The situation today is very different from 10 years ago. The type of leadership that drove past success is no longer sufficient. The needs, processes, and methods have changed and the growing expectations are making it increasingly difficult.

## Common Challenges Leaders across the Globe Face

Inside the organization you need to lead a diversified group of people, work across organizational boundaries. You constantly need to improve efficiency and achieve the necessary

growth. Externally, you also need to keep up with competitors, manage stakeholders' expectations and operate in a complex globalized environment.

A research by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®)\*\*\* points out 6 most common challenges leaders across the world face:

- **Developing Managerial Effectiveness** - How to be more effective at work and develop skills such as time management, prioritization, strategic thinking, and decision-making?
- **Inspiring Others** - How to motivate the workforce to work smarter?
- **Developing Employees** - How to develop others with mentoring and coaching?
- **Leading a Team** - How to tackle the challenge of team-building, team development, and management?
- **Guiding Change** - How to manage, understand, and lead a change?
- **Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics** - How to gain managerial support, manage relationships and politics?

These challenges place a heavy burden on your shoulders. Although they might vary by country and by organisation, the most common ones are related to efficient team management. After all, team members need to work together for a company to be profitable.

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\*\*\* <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/ChallengesLeadersFace.pdf>

Rank	China (% mention)	Egypt (% mention)	India (% mention)	Singapore (% mention)	Spain (% mention)	UK (% mention)	US (% mention)
1	Developing Managerial Effectiveness (26.3%)	Developing Employees (20.8%)	Developing Managerial Effectiveness (23.0%)	Inspiring Others (23.2%)	Leading a Team (40.4%)	Guiding Change (33.0%)	Developing Managerial Effectiveness (26.0%)
2	Inspiring Others (22.2%)	Developing Managerial Effectiveness (18.9%)	Developing Employees (19.0%)	Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics (20.5%)	Inspiring Others (20.2%)	Leading a Team (20.8%)	Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics (24.0%)
3	Developing Employees (20.2%)	Guiding Change (17.0%)	Guiding Change (17.0%)	Developing Employees (18.8%)	Achieving Results (17%)	Developing Managerial Effectiveness (20.8%)	Guiding Change (22.6%)
4	Mobilizing Collaboration (18.2%)	Leading a Team (17.0%)	Managing Process (16.0%)	Managing Retention and Selection (18.8%)	Communicating Effectively (17.0%)	Developing Employees (17.0%)	Developing Employees (15.1%)
5	Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics (17.2%)	Inspiring Others (16.0%)	Inspiring Others (15.0%)	Leading a Team (17.9%)	Guiding Change (17.0%)	Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics (16.0%)	Inspiring Others (15.1%)

Table 1. Top Leadership Challenges in Different Countries. Author: Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®)\*\*\*\*

*“Today, a leader has to be a strong communicator. It is vital that leaders understand the two-way nature of communication so they are able to nurture good ideas from employees on an ongoing basis and have a way to capitalize on those knowledge assets.”*

*- Mark Grimm, Public Speaker, Trainer of the Year, Author, Radio Host*

One of our goals at Weekdone.com has always been to help leaders build better, more successful teams through efficient processes. In the course of the years when we have been developing the progress reporting platform, we have searched and tested a lot of different management techniques. What we have learned is that in order to overcome these challenges, you need to manage people and their expectations efficiently through working processes and methods.

\*\*\*\* <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/ChallengesLeadersFace.pdf>

## Do You Know What Your Employees Really Think?

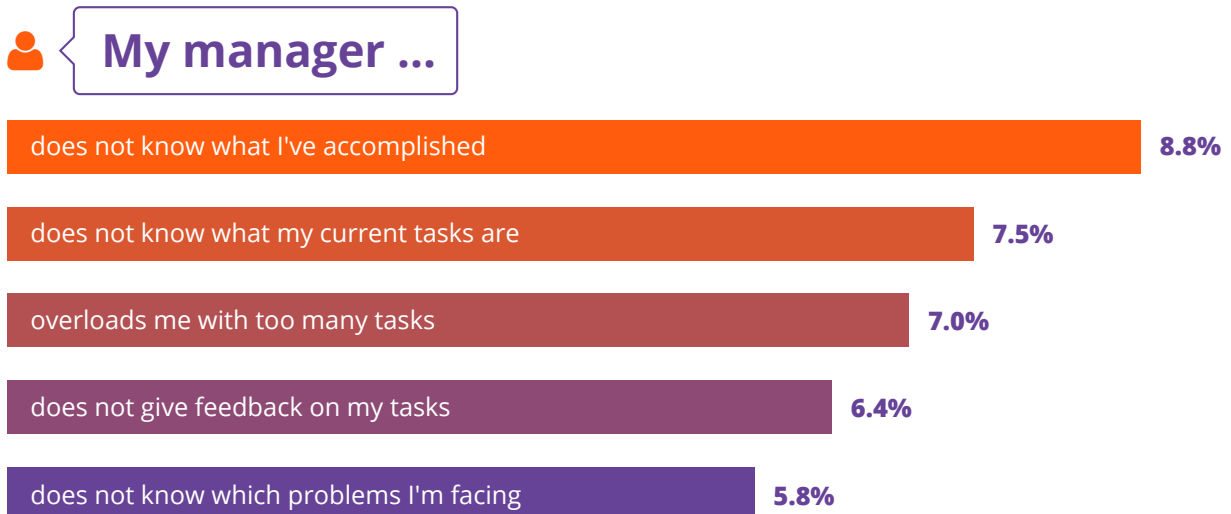
As a leader or manager, you always have some kind of an opinion of what your team thinks and expects. You act based on your gut feeling.

What might surprise you is that quite often your opinion is wrong. Your team might have a completely different mind-set on the business, the company, even on you as a person.

People change their minds and opinions fast, so, as a leader, your task is to be in continuous contact with your employees.

In an ideal world, we as managers believe we know quite clearly what our employees do and think, what their plans, progress, and problems are. Often, that assumption is formed without much real communication or feedback, be it online or offline.

At Weekdone.com we've set the task to understand what employees really think of their managers. Are managers and employees on same wavelengths like psychics? We went out to the streets and asked the people – a whole 1000 of them – to find out. Here are the most common answers:



Question: **What do you mostly dislike about your manager's practices towards you at work?**

Survey by **Weekdone.com**



## Here Is What People Expect from You

Teams nowadays **expect more freedom**. They want to be involved in important decision-making processes and with every right. Your people have amazing ideas and insights, you just need to ask for them.

Another immensely important thing that employees want at work is **more feedback** and they need it continuously, not just bi-annually. They also expect **more recognition** for a job well done and concern for their personal well-being. You can't limit yourself to knowing only about your team's progress but also need an **overview of their happiness** and satisfaction.

They expect **clear objectives and goals**, because results are only as strong as the objectives you set. Giving guidance based on the past is no longer vital. You also need to study the future and **know your team-members' plans**.

They **expect an open and honest culture**, where two-way communication is celebrated and ideas flow freely. Most of all, they are willing to put in more hours if they feel their time is not wasted. They expect you to provide the necessary tools for the work that run smoothly and efficiently.

## Attacking the Challenging Situation

How can we then be better managers and make teams happier? How can we overcome these challenges and guide our people's expectations?

In the following sections, we will give practical tips and proven techniques that will help you overcome these challenges. Believe it or not, the answer is actually easier than you think and we are going to cover it step by step.

It starts from correct processes that inspire to act. From setting clear objectives to making sure you have a regular feedback mechanism, you will find the best

practices such as Google, Skype, and LinkedIn use to manage their teams. Processes that put a great emphasize on two-way communication and help you gain necessary information wherever you are.

All of this is strongly guided by what you need and what your people want.

## Here Is What You Can Expect

What are the benefits you and your team can expect? As a leader you would like to have a more productive team that gets things done. You want people who are happy at work. You imagine a team that shares information openly and helps each other. The guidelines, processes, and tools found in this eBook will help you:

- **Quickly know what is happening in your team**
- **Increase productivity**
- **Make better, more informed decisions**
- **Guide your people more efficiently**
- **Measure what matters**

For your team, we have one goal in mind. It is for them to love and enjoy every single work day, so that they will be able to:

- **Do more by doing less**
- **Be heard by their leader**
- **Get praise and hear from co-workers**

How is all of that possible? Well, we encourage you to read further.

# The foundation of success - Proper objectives

*“A goal properly set is halfway reached.”*

*- Zig Ziglar*

Although there is nothing more basic in management than setting goals, it is also one part that is often overlooked and dealt without a systematic approach.

Which goal is a great goal? How to communicate goals to your team? Which process helps you keep an eye on the results? Find answers in the chapters below.

## Which Is a Great Goal?

*“You’re able to focus relentlessly on the one goal, the thing that really matters. To get the company down to its simplest possible state, I asked everyone to make a list of all the work they do, identify what was most impactful, and then cut, optimize or simplify everything else.”*

*- Jess Lee, CEO of the growing fashion e-commerce site Polyvore*

Employees want clarity from their managers on which directions they should be moving, while at the same time have freedom to choose the details of their personal path. Leaders want to set their goals based on larger department and company goals.

People often fail not for lack of ability or courage, but simply because they have not organized their energies around a goal that is smart. A great objective is:

1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Attainable
4. Realistic
5. Time-limited

A successful goal is a goal that works well with the organization's priorities and is set for helping the company. Setting up objectives goes hand in hand with communicating them to your team.

## How Do Google, LinkedIn, and Sears Set Objectives?

Do you know what the one thing that Google, LinkedIn, Intel, Zynga, Oracle, Twitter, and Sears have in common is? What is behind the success of aligning their people and teams to work as one towards goals?

It is the magical acronym OKRs – Objectives and Key Results. All of them use it and love it.

Implemented initially in the 1970s by the President of Intel, Andy Grove, it later spread across many tech companies. Nowadays, it is used by teams and whole companies from SMEs to the Fortune 500.

*“We put the whole company on that, so everyone knows their OKRs and that is a good, simple organizing principle that keeps people focused on the three things that matter - not the 10.”*

*- Marc Pincus, CEO of Zynga*

## What are OKRs?

OKRs are one of the best methods in the field of setting and monitoring team and personal goals. Introduced to Google by

their VC John Doerr, OKRs became a cornerstone of making Google's management successful.

Objectives and Key Results connect company, team, and personal objectives to measurable results, making people move together in the right direction. A big part of OKRs is making sure that each individual knows, what is expected of them at work. OKRs are kept public to everyone, so teams move in one direction and know what others are focusing on.

## How Does It Work?

OKRs consist of a list of objectives. Under each objective, there are usually 3-4 key measurable results. Each key result has a progress indicator or score of 0-100% or 0 to 1.0 that shows its achievement. As you achieve those results, the whole objective is marked "done".

Read more about OKRs on Weekdone's Objectives and Key Results (<https://weekdone.com/resources/objectives-key-results>) tutorial and examples page.

## The Best Practices to Keep in Mind

For the best results, follow these guidelines for best practices:

- Set ambitious objectives, but do not have more than 2-4 goals at any time.
- Set 2-4 measurable key results per objective. Remember, they should be easy to grade with a number. (Google uses a 0 – 1.0 scale to grade each key result at the

end of each quarter.)

- Make OKRs public and put them online for all employees to see. Everyone in the company should be able to see what everyone else is working on.
- The “sweet spot” for an OKR grade is .6 – .7; if someone consistently gets 1.0, their objectives are not ambitious enough.
- Review your OKRs on a monthly or even weekly basis.

### Company objectives example

- **Company Objective One**  
**Progress xyz %**
  - Measurable key result 1
  - Progress: n1 %
  - Measurable key result 2
  - Progress: n2 %
  - ....

where Objective Progress xyz % = average % (n1, n2, n3, ...)
- **Company Objective Two**
  - Measurable key result 1
  - ....
- ...

### ACME Corporation Objectives

- **Increase recurring revenues**  
**Progress: 50%**
  - Increase average subscription size to at least \$295 per month
  - Progress: 50%
- **Improve internal employee engagement - Progress: 61%**
  - Internal weekly satisfaction score of at least 4.8 points  
Progress: 63%
  - Start using OKR's in all teams and departments  
Progress: 59 %

## Here Is What You Can Expect

OKRs allow you to set company, team, and personal goals and attach measurable results to them, which need to be achieved and measured. By doing that, you build stronger, more successful teams that are focused on their goals and work as one.

For team members, personal objectives allow them to have a daily guideline and decision-making mechanism to choose the most important tasks to work on.

As a manager, it is a great way for future performance appraisals, to see how well a

person's progress is connected to their main goals. Or even better, instead of long-term performance appraisals, use weekly employee reporting and long-term goals to get away without the long-term appraisal process.

## Implementing This in Your Team is Easy

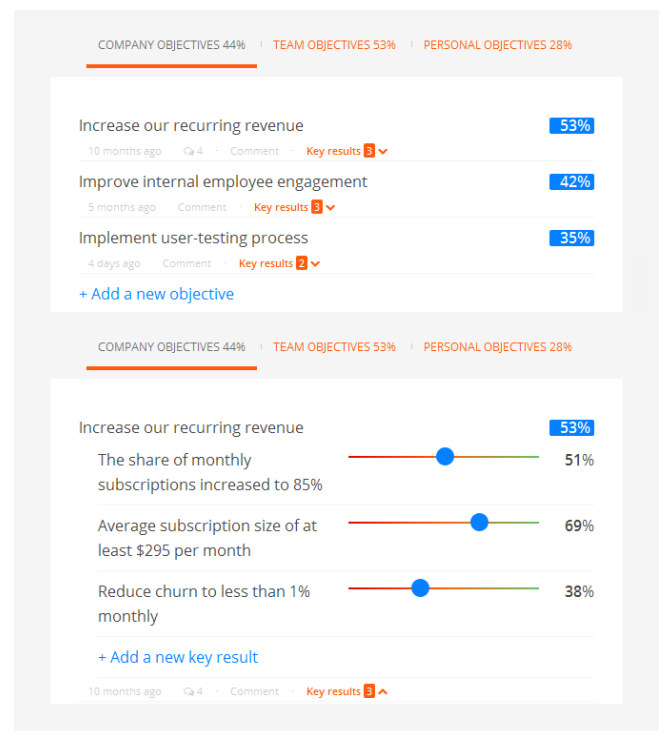
Implementing OKRs in your team is easy. Just follow these 6 steps:

1. List 2-4 objectives you want to strive for on each level.
2. For each objective, list 3-4 key results to be achieved.
3. Communicate the objectives and key results to everyone.
4. Make sure people regularly update each result on a 0-100% scale.
5. When an objective's result reaches 70-80%, consider it done.
6. Review OKRs regularly and set new ones.

The easiest way to implement OKRs in your team right now is to sign up for a trial of Weekdone.com.

Implementing OKRs in your company is the best thing you can do today. You will have a focused team moving forward towards important goals and measurable results. All visible in front of everyone.

OKRs are a part of the regular planning and progress reporting process. Find out in the next chapter what this progress reporting process should look like.



# How to lead your team towards the objectives

*“1 hour of planning will save 10 hours of doing.”*

Successful teams do not magically happen, they are created. The creation process depends partly on powerful tools and methods. Keeping up with your team and keeping them happy should be on top of your priority list.

As the ever-rising tidal wave of information has grown over our heads, it is hard to keep up with all the data you receive on a regular basis. To remain steering towards these business objectives, leaders need solutions that are reliable, easy to implement, and enjoyable.

How to make sure that team members' plans reflect future goals? Which processes are most effective for monitoring whether these plans have been achieved? How to collaborate efficiently and lead your team to success? You do not have to look further for the answers, just keep reading.

## This is How You Should Plan Your Week

Your teams' each and every step should reflect the overall objective. Therefore, it is important to focus on key items and tasks. At the beginning of each week, list just 5 key plans you definitely want to achieve. Make these the big, hairy goals. Forget everything else. Sure, you will still have smaller tasks to handle, but make sure you focus on the important ones first.

You can try out [Weekdone.com](https://weekdone.com) to manage your week. List the 5-7 key "Plans" right now. Then, as you achieve each of them, move them to "Progress". Keep your potential task ideas under "Plans on hold" and move them to "Plans" only when the



latter is beginning to get empty.

By having these 5 or so tasks for the week, you will be much happier on Monday morning. 5 seems to be a limit that is always achievable. Just 1 item per day.

So, plan like this:

1. Focus on things you can control.
2. Write down ideas to get them out of your head.
3. Shun perfectionism in favor of doing-somethingism.

**Case study:** “Belfor, the worldwide leader in disaster recovery and property restoration, faced a serious challenge to help people learn to plan out their week, instead of just do the next thing in front of them. So, they developed Team Objectives out of their monthly reviews, and then kept those in front of their teams, and then they realized that people are aiming for those objectives and working towards those goals, instead of it being something that is talked about and forgotten.”

*Read more: <https://blog.weekdone.com/belfor-recovers-disasters-with-the-help-of-progress-report/>*

## How Leaders at Skype and Facebook Know Their Teams' Achievements?

Do you know what processes are used at Skype, eBay, and Facebook in order to understand their teams' progress?

They all have used simple management technique called the 3 Ps, or in other words, the Progress, Plans, Problems technique. It is used successfully at eBay and Skype to set and communicate weekly plans in their team. Emi Gal from Brainient uses it for investor updates.

*“Each Friday, every member of the team sends out PPPs to inform their team leader what they’ve been up to, what they’re planning to do and what problems they have. It works great because it keeps everyone in the team informed.”*

*- Emi Gal, Founder & CEO of Brainient*

## What Exactly Is the PPP Process?

Progress, Plans, Problems (PPP) is a management technique for regular (daily, weekly, or monthly) status reporting. Each person usually reports 3-5 key achievements, goals, and challenges - called progress, plans, and problems - from the reporting period.

It is used in situations like employee to manager, team member to team, or CEO to board, investors and advisors reporting. The goal of PPP reports is to bring everyone on the same page regarding what is happening in your team.

**Case study:** “A team from The Whole Foods Market struggled with staying connected. Their team supported 10,000 Team Members and 43 Stores across 7 states in the USA. So, they found the act of stopping and writing down key accomplishments for the week was a healthy task—it is easy to get caught up in all the work you did not get done. It has been rewarding for the Team to stop and see what each of them accomplished. And of course, publicly committing to clear, specific goals gives some incentive for really sticking to it and getting them done.”

*Read more: <https://blog.weekdone.com/whole-foods-market-improved-meetings-by-weekly-progress-report/>*

## The Three Most Important Questions to Ask Your Team

The PPP process is really simple. It requires you to ask three essential questions reflecting each of the Ps:

- Progress. Employee's accomplishments, finished items, and closed tasks for the ending period. Question to ask: **What have you done?**
- Plans. Goals and objectives for the next reporting period. These should become Progress next week. Question to ask: **What are you going to do next?**
- Problems. Challenges. Items that are stuck and cannot be finished. Problems often need help from someone else, not just the employee. Question to ask: **Any problems you are facing?**

## The Best Practices to Keep in Mind

One of the biggest problems when your team members report to you or fill in various employee performance reports is the feeling that data is being sucked into a black hole. There is no response from you, the manager. The times of annual employee performance appraisals are over. You have to do it constantly. And remember, it is a 2-way communication between you and your people.

Here are some tips how a good progress reporting process should look like:

- Seek input from your employees and give them feedback.
- Automate the process of weekly status report reminders, so you as the manager do not have to chase people.
- Make it fast and simple to review and comment each person's plans, progress, and problems weekly.
- Make each item understandable by others, not just you. Keep the items short, but rich in information.
- If needed, make sure your team uses facts, numbers, and background information. External web links can be helpful.
- Encourage people to have a maximum of 5-7 items in each category, not more.

To get started with improvements in your team quickly, have a look at Weekdone's team feedback and employee reporting tool. It can help you automate the process of 2-way feedback, save managerial time, and be much more systematic.

## The Benefits of Weekly Progress Reports

Using the PPP process is seamless and takes just a few minutes per week from everyone, even less by using a tool like Weekdone. Progress reporting can be a magic process to increase employee engagement. It can improve internal communications, productivity, and team happiness. Using progress reports in your team includes some amazing benefits:

- They are easy to read and write.
- Having weekly or monthly progress reports at hand can save hours of time spent in useless meetings.
- Leaders and managers as well as team members often love to find out how their co-workers are doing.
- These techniques make remote working possible.
- At the end of the day you will get a stronger team that focuses on what is important.

Learn more from Weekdone's Academy Progress, Plans and Problems (<https://weekdone.com/resources/plans-progress-problems>) section.

**Case study:** "AgoraPulse, a global startup, was struggling with working remote. Before the status reports, we were using Google Docs to keep up with each other. That was just painful. But now, the progress reports have allowed us to go remote and be very efficient in doing so." Read more:

*<https://blog.weekdone.com/status-reports-agorapulse-go-remote/>*

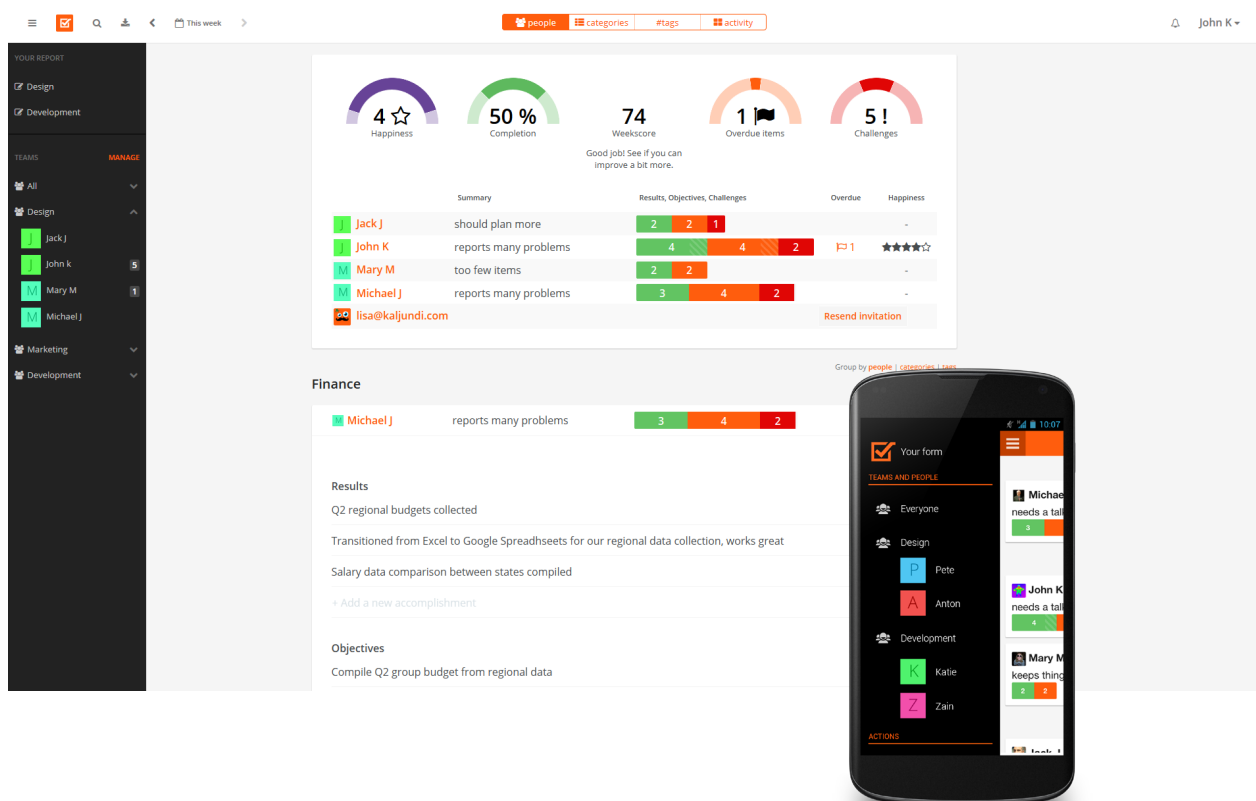
## Implementing This Technique in Your Team

Implementing progress reports in your team can sound boring and annoying. Actually, it is the complete opposite – when implemented right and in a modern way. The world of business and work has changed and so has reporting.

It is up to you, the leader, to make your employees love the benefits of it. Based on talking to countless customers of Weekdone's progress reporting service, here are the best practices to make progress reporting rock:

- Explain employee benefits and get a buy-in.
- Turn it into two-way communications.
- Spend less time on meetings.
- Give weekly reviews - online one-on-ones.

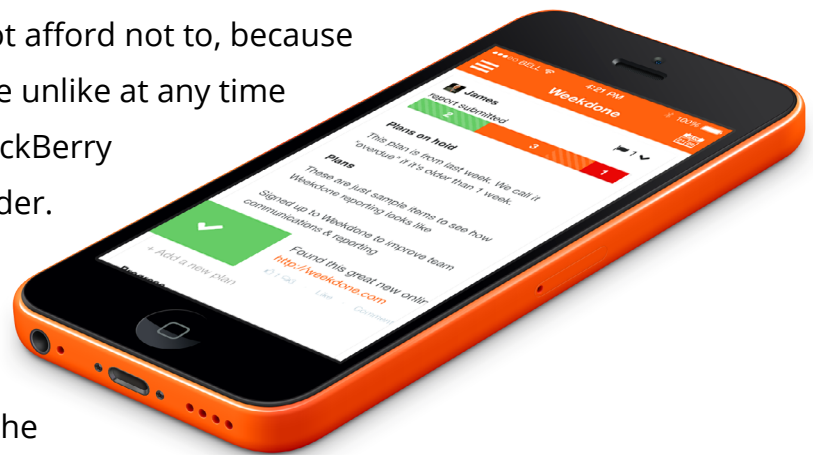
Weekdone is the simplest way to set up and automate the PPP process in your team. Get weekly team reports in a beautiful, visual way on the web, e-mail, and mobile.



# Time to put the words into action

Now, the ball is on your court. Leadership challenges are not going to disappear, but you have the processes and methods to find the solutions. Why should you choose and implement new technologies, processes, methods?

The answer is simple. You cannot afford not to, because innovations are moving at a pace unlike at any time in history. Just a decade ago, BlackBerry was the smartphone market leader. Now, smartphone innovation has changed the way we communicate and collaborate and put endless information at the fingertips of people.



Start leading your team efficiently by experimenting with new technology, implementing established processes, and empowering people on the way.

# weekdone.com

Weekdone is a progress reporting and a team management software based on popular management methodologies like PPP and OKR.

Implementing Weekdone is instant. Just sign up for our free trial at [weekdone.com](http://weekdone.com), invite employees and you're all done. In less than a week, you will get your first structured employee progress report via e-mail from your people, one that you can quickly give feedback on. Go and make your people valued at work.



Get our app to be always up-to-date with your team status wherever you are. On iPhone, iPad, and Android. Learn more at [weekdone.com/mobile](http://weekdone.com/mobile).

