

# Inspiration

## OKR Forum Amsterdam<sup>2019</sup>

Go OKR, Stockholm - London,  
www.go-okr.com per@go-okr.com +46(0)739 845 392

### INSIDE THIS INSPIRATION

1. Summary
2. Highlights
3. My talk “Visualisation to boost OKR results”
4. Top learnings from an HR Manager
5. So what?

**Inspiration from the world leading OKR conference – OKR Forum Amsterdam, 2019.**

*by Per Lundqvist, October 12, 2019*

### Summary

OKR Forum in Amsterdam kicked off on October 3 with a day full of sharing and learning. 200 attendees got inspiration from OKR experts and several organisations that have implemented OKRs - the modern framework for goal management. We also used a fantastic networking app to schedule speed meetings where people got help from each other and shared experiences.

Some sessions were about the basic skills how to write good OKRs, inspiring Objectives and measurable Key Results. Listening to the different sessions it is evident that other factors are necessary to get the full effect. For example there were some really interesting talks about culture, change management, OKR dialogue and how to implement and scale up OKRs to actually achieve more focus and outcomes on what really matters. I gave a talk on visualization being the missing link in OKRs to boost your results.

At Go OKR we have defined this as the OKR Success Areas; Dialogue, Structure and Process. You need all three playing together and also focusing on developing a culture where people feel psychological safety. This will help in achieving more transparency, experimenting, boost curiosity and saying what is on your mind.

## Highlights

OKR guru Felipe Castro gave a keynote speech emphasizing having less OKRs, the ability to say no and the benefits of shared OKRs. Netflix served as an example, looking at the strategy as a hypothesis about the future that needs to be tested. Apparently, half of the Netflix strategies have failed and look at them today...

**“Shared OKRs is the secret sauce of OKRs”**

The founder of Perdoo, Henrik-Jan van der Pol, stressed the importance of management owning the process (not only HR), to be adaptable in how to implement OKRs and not too rigid. He questioned having too much of stretch goals and came up with a useful metaphor; “OKRs are like vegetables for children, they may not taste good at first, but you still have to eat them because they are good for you. Eventually you will probably enjoy them.”

According to Bart den Haak, in his session *‘The power of OKR check-ins’*, the OKR cycle is the system for achieving your OKRs, and there are many variants available. Without it, the whole framework is just a house of cards. The OKR cycle is the starting point for many organisations and getting it right is a critical success factor. Something we could confirm at Go OKR: having Dialogue and Process as key success areas. Bart illustrated the power of a good “check in” to have an ongoing dialogue about initiatives and their outcomes. The check ins will be your engine to find what gives you the outcomes you are aiming for.



## Visualisation to boost OKR results

**My talk at one of the breakout sessions dived into the missing link when working with OKRs - visualisation. Copywriting inspirational Objectives is not enough!**

When using OKRs one usually aims for a transformation, getting people geared up to start and then keep on going into unfamiliar areas, setting new habits and overcoming the daily distractions. To do this and at the same time overcome frustration that sometimes will surface, we need to get people to power up their motivation and focus through involving them in dialogue.

At Go OKR we have developed a tool-set with effective OKR dialogue to be used in key situations where visualisation is one of key tools to embed in the OKR process to get momentum going.

### Memory of the future and RAS

I talked about the brain that in some aspects is not able to tell the difference between now and the future. That means we could develop “memories of the future” through visualising the future success of an objective. When people are involved in visualising a wanted future a positive memory is created, as if we already did it.

Further more, mental pictures of the success will effect a part of the brain called the Reticular Activating System (RAS). This system is our personal filter deciding what we take in and RAS actually filters out 95% of all incoming signals to us in daily life to avoid overload.

Through visualisation we could actually reprogram the RAS and get people to even subconsciously start looking for solutions that will take us to the visualised future success. It can be compared using a vaccine on people, helping them to stay focused on what matters the most.

Since creating positive memories and affecting the RAS works with images and not only words, we need to do more than copywriting fantastic Objectives - Go visualise!

Shoot me an e-mail if you have more questions on how to use visualisation and implementing OKRs to boost your results!



*OKR Dialogue to boost motivation and focus.*



*Examples of dialogue tools to visualise.*

**“Visualising the future is the missing link between the Objective and the Key Results”**

## Top learnings from an HR Manager

I held a speed coaching with Charlotte Mercadié, an HR Manager who wanted to know all about OKRs and how to implement it back home. It is really interesting to look at OKRs from her perspective and I am really glad that Charlotte is letting me share her top learnings from the OKR Forum. So here they are:

1. OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) are becoming increasingly hot and not just in small tech companies.
2. The secret of modern, agile companies is the balance between focus and flexibility.
3. If everything is a priority than nothing is. A small team should have a single OKR per quarter.
4. Key Results should stand the “so-what” test.
5. Good metrics should change the way you behave.
6. Everyone fails the first time.
7. Even if you only get to decrease the time by 5 days that would still be a major achievement.
8. OKRs are like vegetables for children, they may not taste good at first, but you still have to eat them because they are good for you. Eventually you will probably enjoy them.
9. A culture of transparency, collaboration and accountability is needed for the OKR methodology to rock.
10. Eat your own dog food. Use OKRs to help your own OKR program succeed.

## So What?

One important perspective about OKRs is to measure value, not effort: What's the real impact of your work? Felipe Castro proposed that Key Results should be able to pass the "So what?" test:

"We are going to publish 10 blogs"

> So what?

"We are going to get 10% more website visits"

> So what?

"We are going to get 100 Marketing Qualified Leads"

> So what?

"We are going to get 50 SQL leads"

> So what?

We are interested in what the 10 blogs will lead to, what difference will they make to how our customers look at us, what behaviour would we like to see triggered?

When crafting OKRs I have found it useful for clients to use these questions when they describe what they plan to do:

- What will this lead to?
- What will be the difference for the customer?
- What is the measurable value for us?

## So what is next?

### Get 30 minutes free coaching!

During this autumn I have offered free "speed OKR coaching" to numerous organisations curious on OKRs. I met with a range of clients, from startups to multinationals and apparently it has been very valuable 30 minutes for everyone. I will continue with this, so just shoot me an e-mail and we will set it up to get you going for 2020!

### Webinars to spread the word

We already had 200 people curious about OKRs attending our OKR webinars this autumn. Keep a look out for our coming webinars on our blog at: [www.go-okr.com](http://www.go-okr.com)

### OKR coaching on all continents

We are cooperating with the leading OKR coaches in the world to be able to support clients with a multinational operation. It also helps us to stay on top of what makes OKRs tick. Stay tuned for more exciting news on this!

### Gear up for 2020

For all of you thinking about implementing OKRs in 2020, or even wanting to level up your OKR initiative - get in touch with us to get inspiration for your next steps.



*Per Lundqvist, OKR Coach and founder of Go OKR.*

Go OKR, Stockholm - London,  
[www.go-okr.com](http://www.go-okr.com) [per@go-okr.com](mailto:per@go-okr.com)  
+46(0)739 845 392