



# Evaluating OKR Framework as a Strategy Implementation Tool: A Case Study for an IT Company

Milka Lehto

Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu

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for an IT Company

Milka Lehto  
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Milka Lehto

**OKR-tavoitejohtamismallin arviointi strategian toteutustyökaluna: tapaustutkimus IT-yritykselle**

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66

Tässä opinnäytetyössä on tutkittu, miten strategian toteutusprosessi on onnistunut käyttämällä Objectives and Key Results (OKR, tavoitteet ja avaintulokset) tavoitejohtamisen menetelmää. Toimeksiantajana oli suomalainen IT-alan yritys, ja kehittämistyön tavoitteena oli muodostaa toimeksiantajayritykselle joukko suosituksia, joilla yritys voi parantaa OKR-tavoitejohtamismallin suorituskykyä.

Tietoperustan keskeisiä käsitteitä olivat yritysstrategian muodostaminen, strategian toteuttamisen haasteet, muutosjohtaminen, palkitseminen ja strategian toteuttamismallit Objectives and Key Results (OKR) sekä Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Tietoperustan teemat antoivat laajan ja kattavan pohjan käsitellä tutkimus- ja kehittämiskysymyksiä.

Kehittämistyössä yhdistettiin useita menetelmiä ja lähestymistapoja sekä materiaalin että tekniikoiden suhteen. Tämä on perusteltua, sillä tutkimuksella on sekä kuvailevia että selittäviä tarkoituksia ja tutkimuskysymyksiä. Kvantitatiivisessa tutkimuksessa hyödynnettiin kahden eri ajanjakson OKR-tuloksia. Aineisto tyypiteltiin siten, että lopputuloksena oli tiimien jaottelu kolmeen erilaiseen luokkaan sen mukaan, miten ne olivat onnistuneet OKR-tavoitteissa. Kuusi tiimienvetäjää, joiden tiimit olivat saaneet aikaan vaikuttavimpia tuloksia, haastateltiin puolistrukturoidusti. Haastattelulla haluttiin selvittää, mitä menestyvät tiimit tekevät paremmin verrattuna muihin tiimeihin ja mitä muut tiimit voivat näiltä oppia. Tuloksia verrattiin tietoperustaan ja analyysin perusteella muodostettiin joukko suosituksia.

Tulokset osoittivat, että molemmilla tutkituilla ajanjaksoilla kaikki tiimit olivat valinneet tehtäväkseen helppoja avaintuloksia kunnianhimoisimpien tavoitteiden sijaan. Keskeiset havainnot haastattelumateriaalin koodauksen ja luokittelun lopputuloksena olivat, että yrityksen strategiaan kaivattiin erottautumistekijää, yrityskulttuurin koettiin tukevan strategian toteuttamista, työn sisältö koettiin motivaatiotekijöistä tärkeimpänä, mutta palkka ja palkitseminen saivat myös painoarvoa. OKR-malli koettiin positiivisena ja helppona mallina, joskin myös ylimääräisenä työnä verrattuna asiakastyöhön.

Koska tavanomaisten avaintulosten valinta hidastaa yrityksen strategista muutosta, on huomion kiinnityttävä siihen perusasiaan, että tiimit valitsevat riittävän kunnianhimoisia tavoitteita ja että avaintulokset tähtäävät muutokseen eikä tuotokseen. Lisäksi, kuten missä tahansa muutosprosessissa, muutoksen tekevät ihmiset, ja siten on keskeistä luoda ja ylläpitää yksilöiden motivaatiotekijöitä, kuten palkitsemista, sekä positiivista ja avointa yrityskulttuuria. OKR-prosessia tulee ohjata ja tukea siihen tulee olla tarjolla. Tulokset ja suositukset ovat linjassa tietoperustan analyysin kanssa siitä, mikä auttaa työntekijöitä ja tiimejä yleisesti menestymään työssään.

Toimeksiantaja koki opinnäytetyön havainnot konkreettisina ja kehittämisehdotukset hyödyllisinä. Jatkotutkimusehdotukseksi nousi mm. OKR-tulosten ja strategian edistymisen välisen vaikuttavuuden todentaminen ja mittaaminen.

Asiasanat: OKR, tavoitteet ja avaintulokset, tavoitejohtamismalli, strategian toteuttaminen

Milka Lehto

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In this thesis, the effectiveness of the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework as a strategy implementation tool was examined. The study was conducted for a Finnish IT company, aiming to formulate recommendations to enhance the performance of the OKR goal management model.

Key concepts in the theoretical framework include formulating corporate strategy, challenges in strategy execution, change management, reward systems, and strategy implementation models such as Objectives and Key Results (OKR) and Balanced Scorecard (BSC). These theoretical themes provide a comprehensive foundation for addressing the research and development questions.

The development work involved integrating various methods and approaches concerning both materials and techniques. This approach was justified due to the study's dual descriptive and explanatory purposes and research questions. In the quantitative study, OKR results from two different periods were analyzed, categorizing teams into three groups based on their success in achieving OKR goals. Six team leaders, whose teams had achieved the most impactful results, were semi-structurally interviewed to understand what successful teams did better compared to others, and what other teams could learn from them. The results were compared with the theoretical framework, and a set of recommendations was formulated based on the analysis.

The findings indicated that, during both studied periods, all teams had chosen to pursue easy key results instead of ambitious goals. Key observations from the coding and classification of the interview material included the need for a distinctive factor in the company's strategy, and the corporate culture supporting the strategy implementation. Job content was a significant motivational factor, and the importance of salary and rewards was emphasized too. The OKR model was perceived as positive and easy, although requiring extra effort compared to customer work.

As the selection of conventional key results slows down the company's strategic change, attention should be focused on teams so that they will set sufficiently ambitious goals, and key results should aim for change rather than outputs. Additionally, as in any change process, individuals drive change, emphasizing the importance of creating and maintaining individual motivational factors, such as rewards, as well as a positive and open corporate culture. The OKR process should be guided and supported, and assistance should be available. The results and recommendations align with the analysis of the theoretical framework on factors that generally contribute to the success of employees and teams in their work.

The client found the observations of the thesis concrete and the development suggestions useful. As a suggestion for future research, the verification and measurement of the effectiveness between OKR results and progress in strategy implementation were proposed.

Keywords: OKR, objectives and key results, strategy execution, challenges in strategy execution, strategy execution framework

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## 1 Introduction

A company can have the best strategy in the world, but it will get nowhere if managers cannot translate the strategy into operational plans and then execute the plans and achieve the targets. Unlike crafting the strategy, the implementation phase is often less glamorous work. The substantial 30 - 70 % failure rate in strategy execution (Candido & Santos 2019, 39) or that more than half of strategies devised by organizations are never actually implemented (Atkinson 2006, 1443) further underscores the challenges in this realm. The significance and controversy surrounding this phenomenon make it an intriguing and pertinent topic for exploration.

In this thesis, I will examine how the strategy implementation process succeeded using the Objectives and Key Result (OKR) framework in an IT company case organization, which serves as the case study in the thesis. The objective of this development project is to assess the successful implementation of the OKR process: what were the key success factors that prevailed in certain teams and made them succeed in accomplishing the key results? Additionally, the thesis aims to spotlight the challenges linked to OKR implementation and explore potential solutions derived from the knowledge base.

The thesis is based on the understanding of business strategy management and its impact on successful strategy implementation. It introduces Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) frameworks to offer comprehensive insights into different strategy execution approaches.

The target organization is an IT service company with around four hundred employees. The company has adopted OKRs as a strategy implementation framework to support their continuous growth-focused strategy. The company aims at efficient and ambitious strategy execution while ensuring process alignment with employees' daily work. The use of OKRs also sought to promote collaboration among teams and empower every employee to grow and learn within the organization. In fall 2022, the OKR framework was tested with a few teams, and by the last quarter of that year, nearly all teams had adopted it. The first complete quarter for thorough measurement and analysis was tertial 2023.

It is now an opportune time to reflect on how the execution was initiated, gather feedback, and conduct an analysis to make recommendations on how to proceed with the strategy implementation process. The implementation of a strategy can prove to be a difficult task for the entire organization. While the OKR framework can aid in accomplishing this, the significance of change management and company culture cannot be overlooked, no matter how uncomplicated and dependable the OKR framework may be. Hence, in addition to discussing

the OKR framework in the knowledge base section, I will also place additional emphasis on strategy implementation in general and how change management and leadership are an integral part of that.

The thesis is structured as follows: first, Chapter 2 covers the knowledge base and opens the concept of strategy formulation following the challenges in strategy execution and ends up explaining the two main execution frameworks: Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) and Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Then the development setting is covered in Chapter 3, explaining in detail the development task, methodological choices, and the empirical part of the work. Results are presented in Chapter 4, followed by the conclusions and reflections in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 delves into the validity and reliability of the thesis, and Chapter 7 explores topics for further development. The final section addresses ethical aspects and data protection related to this work.

In this thesis, ChatGPT has been utilized for editing and refining the text's language and fluency.

## 2 Strategy formulation and execution

### 2.1 Significance of the strategy formulation in the success of companies

Strategy is the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities (Porter 1996, 68). Michael Porter has provided three key principles for strategic positioning. First, comparative strategy is about being different. The company can serve the few needs of many customers, serve the broad needs of a few customers, or serve the broad needs of many customers in a narrow market. It is not solely the strategic positioning in terms of customers but choosing to perform activities differently and to do different activities than rivals.

Second, Porter (1996, 69-70) further argued that companies must decide what to do and, just as importantly, what not to do: gains in one area can be achieved only at the expense of another area. A company known for delivering one kind of value may lack credibility and confuse customers if it delivers another kind of value or attempts to deliver two inconsistent things at the same time. Trade-offs arise also from activities themselves: the more a company configures its activities to a certain customer group, the less able it is to satisfy another customer group. Trade-offs arise from limits on internal coordination and control, too. Senior management needs to clarify organizational priorities by deliberately selecting approaches.

Third, the strategy must fit into company activities. The whole system of activities is important, not just a collection of parts. The competitive advantage comes from the way its

activities fit and reinforce one another. Fit locks out imitators. The competitive advantage arises from the overall system of fitting actions. When these activities are well-aligned and complement each other effectively, it results in significantly enhanced differentiation (Porter 1996, 73-74).

Concentrating on fundamental strengths leads managers to persist with what has worked well before, yet a significantly more crucial question pertains to the abilities and foresight that will be vital in the times ahead. Whereas Porter was interested in a product-based approach to business, Chesbrough (2011, 45) in his *Open Services Innovation* book stated, that services businesses must find a way to innovate more effectively to scale their business without losing the ability to give customers what they want. What the customer buys and considers value is never a product. It is always utility.

The ability to use tacit information, e.g. customer data and observation effectively, can create a competitive advantage and help companies to differentiate in the market (Chesbrough 2011, 55). However, learning more about the customers before the competitors is not enough to stay ahead. Turning the service business into a platforms business, co-creating with the customers and information sharing in the network are options to scale the business (Chesbrough 2011, 160-161).

The emerging disruptive technology is not the cause that disrupts incumbent firms. The root cause is the conflict between that and the business model of the established technology. The gross margins for the latter are typically on a good level and it is favored while the disruptive technology is starved for resources (Chesbrough 2011, 215).

In Mintzberg's (1994) article in *Harvard Business Review* he has stated that strategy formulation is a messy process. It needs intuition and creativity. Usually, the result is a not-too-precisely articulated vision of direction. Such strategies often cannot be developed on schedule and immaculately conceived. They must be free to appear at any time and at any place in the organization. Strategy making needs to be a function beyond the boxes. Informal learning produces new perspectives and new combinations.

Kotter (1995) in his article has gone through the phases of how to adapt to a demanding and altered market by altering business practices. According to Kotter, in each effective process of change, a leading group forms a clear and easily understandable vision of the future. This vision is designed to resonate with customers, shareholders, and workers. If there's no sensible vision, a transformation can turn into a bunch of mixed-up projects that lead the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere. In failed transformations, it is often found plenty of plans, directives, and programs, but no vision. In transformation initiatives that achieve higher levels of success, leaders utilize all available communication channels to widely share and promote the vision.

Peter Drucker (1994, 100-101) argued in his Theory of the Business article that to be successful every organization must work out what an organization is paid for, how it differentiates from competitors and in society at large and what are the core competencies of the company. A company's assumptions about the environment, mission, and core competencies must fit reality. Also, all of the abovementioned areas must fit one another. Organizations tend increasingly to take the Theory of the business for granted and become less conscious about it. The first reaction of an organization whose theory is becoming obsolete is almost always a defensive one. According to Drucker (1994), there are two main preventive measures. Every three years a company should challenge its every product, service, and distribution channel: If we were not in the business, would we be going it now? It forces the company to test the assumptions made earlier. The second measure is to study noncustomers.

Rapid growth is also a sign of crisis. If a company doubles or triples its size within a short period of time, it has obviously outgrown its theory. To continue, the company must ask itself again the questions about environment, mission, and core competencies. (Drucker 1994, 103.)

## 2.2 Challenges in strategy execution

The field of strategy implementation refers to the process of putting strategic plans into action within an organization. Despite its critical importance to the success of any business, it is often considered to be a less glamorous subject area than strategy formulation or other areas of business management. Strategy implementation is lacking in well-developed conceptual models that can be used to guide research and practice. This makes it challenging for practitioners to develop effective implementation plans, and for researchers to conduct rigorous studies that advance our understanding of this critical area of business management. (Atkinson 2006, 1441.)

Creating a plan for a business strategy is a challenging task but executing that plan successfully can be even more difficult. The problem persists still nowadays, failure rate varying between 30 to 70 percent (Candido & Santos 2019, 39). Without effective execution, no strategy can be successful. Strategy implementation is a process and successful integration takes time and attention. More than half of strategies devised by organizations are never actually implemented (Atkinson 2006, 1443).

Next, I will explain the viewpoints of both managers and employees, and then talk about incentives, and what motivates individual workers.

### 2.2.1 Challenges arising from leadership and company culture

Wharton professor Hrebiniak (2006, 12) stated that the biggest obstacle to strategy execution is that leaders and managers are usually trained to plan rather than implement plans. However, managers can learn the critical steps and factors that contribute to successful execution. Still in 2018 Oxford lecturer Galpin (2018, 35) stated that common issues in strategy execution are poor execution management and the lack of management attention to execution.

Additionally, according to Hrebiniak's (2006, 13) subjective experience, some top-level managers believe that strategy implementation is best left to lower-level employees, with the assumption that smart people develop the plans, and employees at lower levels just need to follow through and make it happen. In any organization, there exists a dichotomy between the planners and the doers, but this mindset can be detrimental to the company culture.

Further, Hrebiniak (2006, 13-14) stated that strategy formulation and implementation are distinct yet interdependent processes. Effective execution is more likely to occur when there is a high level of interaction between those responsible for planning and those responsible for execution. Leaders must consider the costs and future implications of the chosen strategy during the planning phase to ensure alignment with the organization's objectives.

Hrebiniak (2006, 15) identified scaling as a potential obstacle to successful strategy implementation. As more individuals become involved, the process becomes increasingly complex and communication becomes more challenging. Difficulties in vertical and horizontal communication is an overall recurring theme in the literature on strategy implementation (Atkinson 2006, 1446).

The empirical study reflects Hrebiniak's intuition. His survey of over 400 managers involved in strategy execution, verified that company culture is at the core of many changes-related problems (Hrebiniak 2006, 16). Good people are important for execution. When individuals apply to a company based on its future direction and the company ends up changing course, it can create issues. Conversely, if individuals join a company due to the presence of other individuals, altering the company's direction becomes comparatively simpler (Collins 2001, 70).

According to Hrebiniak (2006, 17), managers expressed that they missed a logical model to guide execution directions and actions. Such a model would have helped managers understand what needs to be done, in what order, and when. Without a model, managers may struggle to determine the order of tasks, leading to failure and frustration. In addition, without a clear understanding of the order of tasks, it can be difficult to influence others and move them into a purposeful direction. At that time, a balanced scorecard was one of the tools used in

strategy implementation: over 60 percent of Fortune 1000 companies experimented with it (Atkinson 2006, 1442).

Candido & Santos (2019) embarked on an ambitious endeavor to explore the causes of obstacles in strategy implementation. They observed that managements have the potential to control most of these obstacles, which is positive news, but there is significant disagreement about which ones are the most important. Any of the identified blockages could impede the pace of strategy execution (Candido & Santos 2019, 40). The occurrence of an obstacle will probably generate another related impediment, which in turn can create another and another. Therefore, it brings increased complexity to control the implementation process.

Kaplan & Norton (2000, 362) in their Strategy Focused Organization book stated that it is important that senior management show their emotional commitment to strategy execution. Time spent formulating, debating, and arguing about objectives and measures is well a well spent time while the management style required is participative, not authoritative (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 371).

Kotter stated in his book Leading Change (2012, 14-15) that if the urgency level is not intense enough, the vision is not clear enough and victory is declared too soon, organizations are always subject to degradation. Sufficient time is required to root social norms and shared values in the behavior of people and organizations. While the execution of strategy seems to work and the organization is finalizing the related tasks, activities, and behavior may begin to revert to where they were before the beginning (Kotter 2014, 202).

Kotter has introduced an eight-stage process to make major changes in organizations (Kotter 2012, 23):

1. Establish a sense of urgency: discuss the crises and possibilities.
2. Create the guiding coalition: the group that leads the change and makes it work together like a team.
3. Develop a vision and a strategy.
4. Communicate the change vision.
5. Empower broad-based action: encourage risk-taking, and get rid of the obstacles.
6. Generate short-term wins.
7. Consolidate gains and produce more change.
8. Anchor new approaches in the culture.

Organizations may try to transform organizations only with steps 5-7. However, the warm-up steps 1-4 are necessary steps to create a solid base on which to proceed. The eighth step is needed to stick changes to the organization. (Kotter 2012, 25.)

Social scientist and psychologist Kurt Lewin's holistic human behavior field theory in the 1940's supported Kotter's viewpoints too. Lewin's basic argument was that without a clear comprehension of the present circumstances, and the factors preserving the current balance, initiating any change becomes impossible (Burnes & Cooke 2013, 420).

Although Kotter's eight-step process is one way for managers to initiate change in their organizations and utilizing this model can enhance the likelihood of success, it is important to note that it does not assure guaranteed success. It could be beneficial to merge Kotter's structured framework with other prominent change models, like emergent, contingency, or choice models, found in change management literature. (Appelbaum et al 2012, 776.)

### 2.2.2 Challenges arising from employee engagement and incentive systems

Nienaber (2022) has studied strategy implementation from the employees' viewpoint. If an employee confronts negative enterprise politics, mistreatments, interpersonal conflicts, enterprise constraints, role conflict, role ambiguity, and concerns about job security and workload it will frustrate goal achievement. Employee engagement is one possible solution to improve strategy implementation. (Nienaber 2022, 1037.)

According to Nienaber (2022, 1045-1046), employee engagement is important for creating healthy enterprises in which employees can thrive and perform. Employee engagement is activated by six drivers of engagement and the immediate manager's role is very important in keeping employees engaged: work content, coping, compensation, community, congruence, and career.

Work content includes the demands and sense of achievement of the job, as well as opportunities for learning and meaningfulness. Coping involves whether employees can handle the job, including competence, technology, resources, and training, as well as a supportive working environment. Compensation refers to the belief that employees are remunerated and recognized for their contribution. Community involves positive social interactions and a supportive or collaborative work environment. Congruence entails the alignment of individual and enterprise values and expectations. Career covers the alignment between career and life expectations, work-life balance, and opportunities for shaping one's destiny within the enterprise. Managers need to have good emotional and political skills to interact well with employees. (Nienaber 2022, 1045-1046.)

Niven and Lamorte (2016, 145) have warned about sandbagging. The term "sandbagging" is often used to describe actions that manipulate the incentive structure to the employee's advantage. By keeping expectations low and then exceeding those expectations, employees

can secure larger payouts or rewards. Sandbagging is present also in the strategy implementation process: if the team sets goals only considering what they are already doing, they might end up playing it safe and not aiming as high as they could.

Nobel-awarded economist Bengt Holmström (2017) has stated that incentive systems overall are problematic. The integrity of performance measures within the firm is weaker than in the market. This is the consequence of the fact that measuring performance is hard when employee jobs consist of many tasks. Knowing employees' full portfolio of activities is essential for designing a coherent, balanced incentive system (Holmström 2017, 1765).

Routine and innovative tasks should be separated into different employees so that hard-to-measure tasks are provided with equal low-powered incentives, and easy-to-measure tasks are provided with equal high-powered incentives. However, if pay-for-performance incentives are hard to set, companies may end up using rules and controls over employees, because it is an easy solution to complicated incentives problems. (Holmström 2017, 1769.)

Holmström (2017, 1772) also explained, that career concerns are more powerful in companies than in markets. If employees know what is expected from them, they can work on making a good impression in those dimensions. Promotion policies are powerful incentive drivers.

### 2.3 Strategy execution frameworks

Several frameworks have been created to help deal with the problem of how companies could achieve their strategic goals and improve performance. In general, when a company sets a target to achieve strategic goals, it is common to work with budgets and KPIs. Also environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues are today part of the sustainable business model.

The most popular and the widest spread of these is the balanced scorecard (BSC) of Kaplan & Norton. In the 1990s, it was the first performance measure system that connected and balanced financial and non-financial measures. Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) had its blooming time in the 21st century when the model was applied successfully at Google.

#### 2.3.1 Objectives and Key Results

According to Hämäläinen & Sora (2021, 63-64), the system is conceptually simple as shown in Figure 1. The company chooses and defines the most important annual Objectives from its mission and strategy. Objectives should show the company's direction and be inspiring and clear. The Key Result is a short-term activity whose end result is the outcome, a change in human behavior that drives business results. The key result is concrete and numerical. An optimal OKR system frees contributors also to set some of their own objectives and key results. OKR is both a top-down and bottom-up process. This secures involvement and

ownership. OKR framework adds accountability to the work, allows to focus on what is important, and overall forces organizations to plan and act more target-oriented manner. However, currently, there is no unifying definition or manifesto that exactly could tell what OKR is or is not. Therefore the components and process introduced here are just a summary of the shared experiences and knowledge from business literature. At its best, OKR creates focus, commitment, and results. OKRs help everyone in the company understand what is important and how it is going to be measured.



Figure 1. The larger framework of OKRs (according to Hämäläinen & Sora 2021)

Doerr (2018, 134-135) introduced two objective variants: Aspirational and Committed. Aspirational objectives are higher-risk, future-oriented ideas. Those are challenging to achieve, and teams are only aiming to reach 60-70 % of the targets. However, the idea is not to fail in the beginning. Everyone should target 100 %, but 70 % is called success in the end. The life cycle of an objective is dependent on how long it takes to reach the target. Committed objectives in turn are tied to metrics: product releases, customers, and bookings. Management sets those at the company level, and teams at the department level. Committed objectives are to be achieved in full within a timeframe.

According to Niven & Lamorte (2016, 62), many organizations struggle to create aspirational business-value objectives. Finding the balance between inspiration and reality is one of the trials to make objectives work. An objective is a concise statement outlining a broad qualitative goal designed to propel the organization forward in a desired direction (Niven & Lamorte 2016, 67). An example of a well-formulated objective is: “Produce the most successful sales kickoff in the company history”. It starts with an action-oriented verb, “most successful in the company history” is qualitative, inspirational, and attainable, it provides business value and is controllable by the team.

Key Results have several criteria to follow too. Key results are necessarily concrete and quantitative, but not binary yes/ not one-time outputs. Without measurability, it is simply not a key result. The discussion around how things should be measured is part of the cultural change that OKR creates (Olsson 2021).

The key result is an outcome-oriented number, i.e. it should describe the desired outcome with the help of a number that needs to be worked on during the quarter (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 40). Like objectives, key results benefit active-oriented verbs like increase, grow, and build, too. Passive verbs like help and participate should be avoided. A positive, simple, and clear format should be used overall.

Depending on the maturity of the business and the availability of the data, there are possibilities to use different formats of key results. A baseline type of key result can be used when the company doesn't have a metric to reflect on the objective i.e. the baseline is missing. During the quarter, the company tries to find the baseline number that can be used as the source for a target setting of an actual key result in the next quarter. (Niven & Lamorte 2016, 78.)

Metric key results are the most common and recognizable types of measurement. The positive metric for example is "Increase revenue per e-mail sent by 10 percent by the end of June". Conversely, negative metrics can be used too, but with caution because of the non-motivational framing: "Reduce invoice processing time from two weeks to one week.". The third version of the metric key result is the threshold target. The company can use it when it is challenging to pinpoint an exact target number for the key results, for example, "Maintain billable hours between 70 to 80 percent". (Niven & Lamorte 2016, 78.)

Measurability forces teams to think about how to measure something they want to achieve. It is easy to end up with goals like "Write three blog posts by the end of December". The challenge with that kind of formulation is that it has no value. Focusing on results is challenging and often we think of activities as results. What do we try to accomplish with blog posts? New customers, better brand, more sales? If the target is to bring in new customers, that should be considered with the blog content. In this case, the real target for the key result could be "Bring in three new customers with the help of the blog post". Results focus means in OKR that the key results that are produced, should describe an effect we wish to achieve and never an activity. (Olsson 2021.)

Yet there is also a significant role in tasks or activities when working with the key results. Tasks give rhythm to everyday life and enable one to track progress. When the target is to have three new customers with the blog posts, the tasks should be like: Set the topic, write the first draft, gather feedback, rewrite the article, publish the article, share the article, track the performance, and gather customer feedback. Hämäläinen & Sora (2021, 47)

recommend using tasks as a concept under the key results. It is a concrete way to promote and ensure that teams are working with the key results.

Olsson (2021) states that working with key results may lead to the situation that new ways to reach the goal can be identified and some activities to be ceased. Companies must be aware too that too ambitious key results may cause stress among employees. It is as harmful as the lack of ambition. Therefore key results should always be clear, ambitious, and achievable. These kind of goals create a sustainable commitment, raise the level of ambition, and lead to higher performance.

At the end of the quarter when the work for key results is completed, the team gathers and goes through the scoring, subjective self-assessment, and reflection (Doerr 2018, 120). In simplest the completion percentage is used on a scale of 0 to 1,0 for every key result:

- 0,7 - 1,0 = We delivered, green.
- 0,4 - 0,6 = Progress made, yellow.
- 0,0 - 0,3 = Failed to make progress, red.

The data of traffic lights is an intuitive visualization for the leaders who need to know how the teams are performing throughout the quarter and, of course, at the end of the quarter. For stretched goals score of 0,7 means success, but for committed operational goals number below 1,0 means failure (Doerr 2018, 120). Key results should be reviewed every week. By comparing the current performance with the score 1 performance, the key result's current value and its corresponding color are formed. (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 43.)

The scoring is an objective task because, as we've learned before, the main outcome needs to be action-oriented and what we can measure. However, in evaluating OKR performance, objective data is enhanced with subjective judgment. E.g. if the objective scoring shows a red number to a key result, it doesn't tell yet about the efforts made or about the change that was achieved while working with the key result. Self-assessment and reflection should drive the goal-setting process for the next quarter. (Olsson 2021.)

It is worth noting that in the OKR framework, monetary rewards are prohibited. Incentives don't work with the aspirational goals which are not even meant to be targeted in full (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 30-31; Doerr 2018, 117) The other rule is that people are not punished if they don't reach the target. These are the the same rules. Punishment and the fear of not getting monetary rewards would lead people to downscale their goals. This is not wanted in the OKR framework. Naturally, teams and individuals should have the feeling of psychological safety so that they can take risks with ambitious goals without feeling insecure or embarrassed.

Working towards a shared goal, every company and organization has some kind of organizing method for collaboration. OKR implementation in an organization with 10,000 employees is something completely different than in an organization with 10 employees, both in terms of planning, complexity, and time required. OKR execution involves the organization collaborating on objectives and key results within the majority of teams. Additionally, there should be a shared procedure outlining the creation, alignment across teams, tracking, and assessment of OKRs, as well as a continuous evaluation of progress throughout the year. Additionally, strategic OKRs are set annually, often aligning with budgeting, while tactical OKRs are set quarterly, resulting in four or three tactical periods per strategic cycle. The load can look very different over the year in different periods, but the organization should make sure to stick to the same length of the cycles over the year. Otherwise, teams can lose the sense of what they can plan and achieve during one period (Olsson 2021).

Figure 2 shows an example of strategic OKRs produced annually and tactical OKRs produced quarterly. Every company has its rhythm, but in general company creates strategic yearly targets based on longer-term strategy goals and from vision, mission, and purpose. The result is a target image for the whole organization. The company needs to focus on this very carefully: if the target image is not correct, OKRs will lead the company in the wrong direction.

Quarterly goals are derived in teams from this target image. The leadership team follows and feeds back on an ongoing basis to maintain the focus and ensure that the company moves forward at the phase planned. In addition to the reconciliations that can be seen in Figure 2, ongoing follow-ups are also carried out on a monthly and weekly basis at the management and team level.

At the end of each quarter, teams meet to review their accomplishments. Teams collectively evaluate their achieved results in relation to the conditions they face. The scoring aims to determine if the team is content with their outcomes if they worked to their fullest, and if there are opportunities for improvement. Teams have full transparency to each other's key results and scorings.

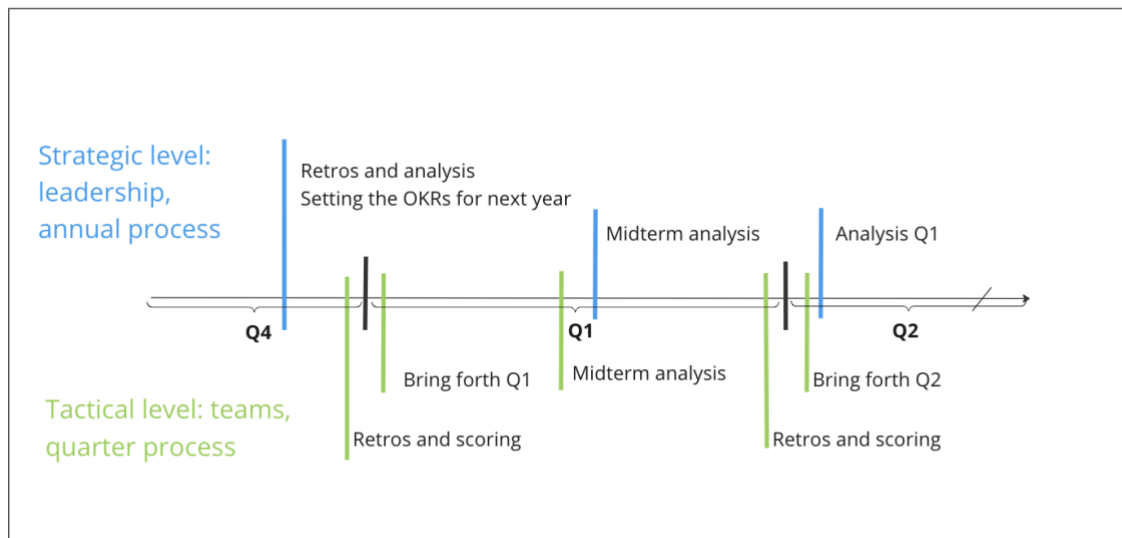


Figure 2. The strategic and tactical level of the OKR framework (according to Olsson 2021, chapter 15)

Olsson (2021, chapter 14) encourages teams to make their vision from company-level targets. It is not even unique to OKR, a team in an organization always needs to have a picture of what role it has in the company strategy. The team should have a clear picture of what the organization expects from it. Team vision describes a future state that it wants to reach as a team. Team mission can be used to describe how it should work towards the vision. This makes it easier for the teams to discuss the strategic key results they believe they can influence.

Niven & Lamorte (2016, 163) stated that OKR is not a project with a beginning and an end. It is a continuous process that needs to be integrated into the company's culture and the way the company does business. As conditions making business inevitably change, OKRs make sure that everybody is focused on the most important goals. Further, the writers encourage to find committed owners for the process. Ideally, the sponsoring owner should be the CEO itself or at least a senior executive C-suite member who can vocally advocate in the process. The partner for sponsoring executives is an OKR champion. Champion works with the implementation and provides support for the team leaders.

The organization part, the function, and housing of the process are also vital to consider. Usually, the custodians for the OKR process are HR, finance, or strategy functions (Niven & Lamorte 2016, 165). It's important to make sure that one department doesn't take full control of the OKR process leaving others to the sidetrack. People in the company should not think that OKRs are just a function's thing or that OKRs are forced to apply because the finance says so.

Sora & Hämäläinen (2022) emphasized in their book, that OKR is a disciplined and systematic process. The company must have a management system in place that ensures that teams and team leaders carry out their responsibilities. If a company has a tradition of starting new things rather than finalizing those, the activities are not goal-oriented. In that situation, how company think it can reach the strategic targets overall? Or in a situation where the plans are big, but there is no time to execute them. Therefore, the management system should be in place before taking the OKR framework into use. OKR system also supports a systematic approach, because of the weekly bases updates showing the real-time situation in the degree of readiness.

The ultimate target is not the perfect adoption of the OKR process for the company, but the improvement in business with the help of OKRs (Hämäläinen & Sora 2022, 136). It is important to do OKRs at a “good enough” level and forget the validation against framework definitions. The most valuable thing to do is just to start implementing. People and organizations learn while doing.

People will face challenges and frustration. Teams and individuals may claim that they don't have time for OKRs and the whole process is too time-consuming. In that situation making sure that the entire organization understands the company's direction is crucial. OKRs provide a method to align the organization, leverage innovation, and allocate resources effectively toward the right goals.

Doerr (2018, 258-261) has listed mistakes and traps the company can do with OKRs:

**1:** Failing to differentiate between committed and aspirational OKRs. Don't mark committed OKR as aspirational or vice versa.

**2:** OKRs are business-as-usual type. This doesn't promote change. And it doesn't change anything teams are currently doing.

**3:** Timid aspirational OKRs. The good formulation for the aspirational goal is that the team doesn't know how to achieve the state when OKR is first formulated.

**4:** Sandbagging. If a team reaches all its targets without needing every team member, the team is underperforming.

**5:** Objectives that have low value. Even if the team reaches 1,0, no one cares or notices.

**6:** Insufficient Key Results for committed Objectives. Key results must be written such that when scoring 1,0 on all the key results, that means 1,0 for the objective. A common mistake is to outline key results that are necessary but not sufficient for achieving the goal. This allows teams to avoid challenging commitments required to achieve significant results.

### 2.3.2 Balanced Scorecard

Kaplan & Norton (2000, 212-213) stated that successful organizations rely on decentralized business units and teams, which are close to the customer and focus on intangible assets such as knowledge, capabilities, and relationships. Strategy implementation requires all employees to be aligned with the strategy, and that must be a continual and participatory process due to rapid changes in technology, competition, and regulations. Success depends on making strategy everyone's everyday job.

Organizations need a tool to communicate strategy and processes to implement it effectively and gain feedback. Kaplan and Norton's solution for effective strategy execution and performance management is the Balanced Scorecard, introduced originally in 1992, and is still a popular and widespread strategic management system. Kaplan and Norton's (2000) industry examples come from banking, insurance, retailers, and oil and petroleum and are initially focusing on large companies.

By measuring four metrics, the BSC assists firms in tracking all the important aspects of a firm's strategy: financial (e.g. volume, profit, revenue), customer (e.g. claims index), internal (e.g. quality report), and learning and growth (e.g. employee retention). Each individual from top management to lower positions should have items on their scorecard that he or she can affect (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 247). Measures cascade down the levels in the organization, and each level can see the relations to the upper levels and the strategy, just like in the OKR framework. The difference is that performance on measures is linked to extra employee benefits and incentive systems.

According to Kaplan and Norton (2000, 255) without the link to the compensation, there would not be the same focus on reaching the targets. However, Kaplan & Norton (2000, 269) didn't have an exact opinion or guide on how to balance between group and individual rewards, but they did have some good remarks on how to manage these tensions and tradeoffs: First, companies must avoid nonfinancial metrics in compensation systems. Second, companies in fast-changing environments should use long-term financial performance to determine employee incentive pay. This way, the reward system focuses on creating long-term value, and performance measures can be changed without adjusting compensation. This approach allows for quick adaptation to new circumstances while maintaining the benefits of the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 270).

However, BSC has also limitations and weaknesses both in concept and practice. The clear link between the Balanced Scorecard and the performance of an organization is difficult to verify, and BSC's four categories restrict the organization's perspective and limit its view (Awadallah & Allam 2015, 98). Additionally, BSC doesn't have the viewpoint of social and environmental responsibility.

### 2.3.3 Summary of strategy implementation frameworks

The presented frameworks for setting and achieving strategic objectives were the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and OKR. I shortly describe and summarize the frameworks from the viewpoint of origin, adoption, focus, structure, and measurability.

As shown in Table 1, a Balanced Scorecard is a management system developed by Kaplan and Norton in the early 1990s (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 3). Mature industries like banking, insurance, retailing, and public sector organizations worldwide are used as examples of using BSC (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 369). OKRs were popularized by John Doerr in 2018 and its roots are in the Silicon Valley tech industry, namely in Intel and Google. OKR framework has gained worldwide adoption by a wide range of organizations. Special cultural compatibility lies in the similarities of the OKR process to the agile principles used in IT companies (Doerr 2018, 136-138).

Sources	Framework	Origin	Adoption	Focus	Structure	Measurability
Kaplan & Norton, 2000	Balanced Scorecard, BSC	1990s in the US.	Large companies in the banking, insurance, and retail industries.	Combined first time financial and non-financial measures.	High-level objectives are broken down into key performance indicators (KPIs) and initiatives at different organizational levels.	KPIs and metrics: both historical data indicators and forward-looking measures.
Doerr 2018, Sora & Hämäläinen 2021, Niven & Lamorte 2016	Objectives and Key Results, OKRs	2018 in Silicon Valley, US.	Silicon Valley companies like Google, Oracle, Facebook, Zynga, LinkedIn.	Help businesses to set strategy based ambitious goals and help teams to achieve the outcomes and accelerate growth.	Consists of a few high-level objectives and cascading measurable key results managed in quarterly periods.	Forces the companies to focus on a few carefully selected priorities: at the end of the quarter teams score their key results.

Table 1. The summary of the strategy implementation frameworks according to main sources

BSC focuses to measure employees in four balanced perspectives: financial performance, customer knowledge, internal business process and learning and growth (Kaplan & Norton

2000, 23). OKRs' idea is to help businesses to set strategy based ambitious goals and help teams to achieve the outcomes and accelerate growth (Niven & Lamorte 2016, 35-36).

OKR model is well described and relatively simple in its structure. It consists of a few high-level objectives and cascading measurable key results managed in quarterly periods. OKR framework is easy to understand and can be grasped relatively quickly (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 54-56). BSC also uses a cascading structure. High-level objectives are broken down into key performance indicators (KPIs) and initiatives at different organizational levels in a longer planning horizon. (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 242-45).

BSC emphasizes the use of KPIs and metrics to measure performance. It often incorporates both historical data indicators and forward-looking measures (Kaplan & Norton 2000, 253-255). OKR forces the companies to focus on a few carefully selected priorities and empowers people and teams to work together. Numerous software exist to keep track of progress and show transparently how teams are doing with their key results. At the end of the quarter, teams score their key results (Doerr 2018, 120-122).

Usually, KPIs, which are the key element in BSC, have an important role even in an organization working with OKRs. Since things to be changed are reserved for key results, the KPIs are usually called health indicators. If KPIs should start to show a negative trend, in many cases such a KPI can be targeted as a key result for the next OKR period to get back to a stable level. (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 200-201.)

#### 2.4 Validation of the knowledge base

The structure of the knowledge base goes from the strategy formulation to the strategy implementation, change management, and to framework options. Noteworthy authorities Porter, Kotter, and Chesbrough have been used as primary sources in strategy formulation and change management. Michael Porter, emeritus professor at Harvard Business School, has applied economic theory to address complex issues in business. His influential and cited research work is highly acclaimed globally (hbs.edu 2023). John P. Kotter is also an experienced emeritus professor at Harvard Business School contributing to change management and leadership (hbs.edu 2023). Henry Chesbrough, credited with the paradigm "open innovation," is the educational director of the Garwood Center for Corporate Innovation at Berkeley Haas (haas.berkeley.edu 2023).

In his international bestseller *Leading Change*, John Kotter provided an eight-step process for implementing successful transformations. Combining all of Kotter's eight steps in a structured manner is crucial in Kotter's model. However, the significance of following this sequence hasn't been thoroughly studied in research. Despite this lack of validation, the model continues to be widely embraced. Kotter's books are not primarily directed at an academic

audience but instead aimed at end users, like stakeholders engaged in change management. (Appelbaum et al 2012, 776.)

In studying the difficulties of putting strategies into action, Professor Hrebiniak's work stands out. He's a respected expert who taught at Wharton and worked as a management consultant. He has advised global companies and wrote well-known business articles. Because he worked closely with many different companies worldwide, he gained valuable insights that he used in his research. (Wharton 2023.)

Strategy implementation frameworks are mainly methods occurring in business management books. Robert Kaplan is a Harvard Business School professor and David Norton is a management consultant, and from that background, they innovated the balanced scorecard method sponsored by KPMG (Thinkers50, 2023). Another good example is Hämäläinen's and Sora's book. The book is known for being well-organized and clear, using real examples from business life. It's important to know that this work is based on two persons' perspectives and doesn't use a wide variety of sources. The main source it uses is from John Doerr, which I am also using for this project. Therefore it's worth noting that the information for the OKR framework mostly originates from Silicon Valley practices and tries and fails, not from academic research.

## 2.5 Synthesis of the knowledge base

Several challenges come to the forefront in the process of strategy implementation. While it is not as glamorous as the formulation of strategic plans, the act of translating those plans into action is crucial for an organization's success.

Figure 3 illustrates the interconnected relationship between company strategy, the challenges of strategy execution, and the strategy execution frameworks. The picture shows how these elements are introduced and addressed within this thesis. The influence of leadership and organizational culture plays a pivotal role in strategy execution. Many leaders are trained in strategic planning but not in the practical steps necessary for effective execution. Effective execution requires close interaction between planners and executors (Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 12-14).

An organization's culture can play a significant role in fostering accountability and collaboration among employees (Doerr, 215-216). In addition to these challenges, it's essential to consider the perspectives of both managers and employees, as well as the role of incentives in motivating individuals. Managers often need guidance and models to understand the steps and sequencing required for effective execution (Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 17). Meanwhile, employees' engagement and satisfaction are crucial for achieving strategy implementation goals (Nienaber, 2022, p. 1037).

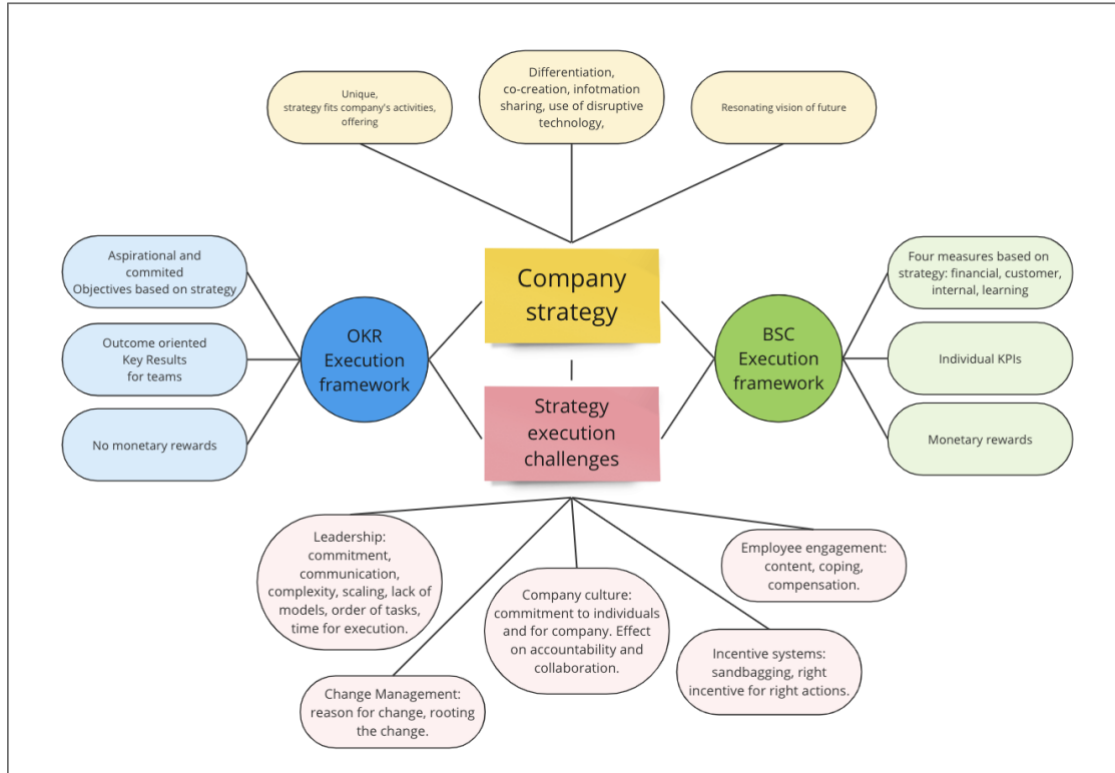


Figure 3. Interconnection between company strategy, strategy execution challenges, and the linkage to OKR and BSC execution frameworks

As the number of individuals involved in strategy implementation grows, so does the complexity of the process. Communication challenges, both vertically and horizontally, are recurring themes in the literature. (Kaplan & Norton 2000, p. 217; Atkinson 2006 p. 1446).

Ultimately, creating a culture of accountability and engagement, where employees are motivated by intrinsic factors rather than punitive measures, can lead to more successful strategy implementation (Kaplan and Norton, 2000, p. 362). Incentive systems should align with the organization's goals, and a balanced approach is needed to address both routine and innovative tasks (Holmström, 2017, p. 1765).

### 3 Development setting

#### 3.1 Purpose, objectives, development project and issues

To stay ahead in the competitive industry and to fulfill the financial target, the target organization needed a clear roadmap and everyone's effort to keep the entire organization's focus on strategic goals. Time and resources were invested into training and learning of OKRs and two full rounds of disciplined execution have been made by summer 2023. However, as in all change management processes, some areas performed well and, in some areas, the organization is learning and finding its way to perform better. Overall, the OKR process fits well for the IT company as OKR has a lot of similarities with Agile methodology.

Target organization does demanding IT projects for public administration and corporate customers and software development is done by Agile principles. That means active communication, an output-oriented way of doing, and a fast response to changes. Agile and OKR principles have similarities like an output-oriented viewpoint instead of focusing on proxies. Both aim to deliver outcomes that create value, like profit or learning, and deliver benefits to stakeholders both within and outside the organization. For example, building, launching, and promoting features are not the goals. The goals are what are benefits expected to gain from those actions.

OKR and agile methodologies both also help to create order and routine in the way of working. Delivering goals is an operational issue. In the agile way of working, the project has certain routines like planning meetings, sprints, dailies, and retrospectives. In the OKR process, the team has the same setting process, but for a longer period. In OKR, the planning and setting phase is short and intensive, while during the tertiary team leaders support and follow the progress. A live visual display is preferable for monitoring and following. Target organization is using the 4straction tool for that purpose. Everyone can check the situation and progress from the 4straction system.

Writing OKR's objectives is a strategy question. Leaders must think broadly about what the strategic priorities for the following tertiary are. Prioritization is also about deciding what not to do. Everything that is not in the OKRs is on lower priority. Top-line objectives must be significant. If you are setting a crazy, ambitious goals, but miss them, you'll probably still achieve something remarkable. These stretched aspirational objectives reflect bigger-picture, higher-risk, more future-oriented ideas. Objectives can contain also so-called committed objectives which are tied to metrics like product releases or sales and are to be achieved in full. Whereas aspirational goals are not meant to be achieved only partly (Doerr 2018, 135). Target organization has used both types of objectives so far.

Figure 4 shows the phases of the development process. The initial concept for the development task was to explore ideas and solutions to improve OKR cycles, aiming to enhance the company's strategy. The concept developed on the way as the knowledge base accumulated. This thesis is a case study. A case study is not a method itself, it is an approach or perspective to studying reality (Vilkkä 2021, Tapauksen rajaaminen). I delve into the functionality of the OKR framework used in the implementation process of the organization's strategy with the following steps:

1. The material-based content analyses how the organization and teams performed with the OKRs
  - a. 4Q 2022 results
  - b. 1T 2023 results and the typification
2. Semi-structured interviews with well-performed teams' team leaders
  - a. To identify and analyze themes within the data to uncover patterns and relationships that made successful teams to be successful.

Setting the development task	Knowledge base definitioning	Developing the results
The starting point for the thesis: work life oriented development need for the topic "leading in transformational change".  Initial development idea concerning the strategy execution for the target company as a case study: how to ensure that the strategy execution will succeed.  Target company had started implementing OKR framework for the strategy execution fall 2022.  The framework was a new method for everybody in the company.  Two full rounds of OKR cycles were analysed in this thesis.	Reading and writing the knowledge base about strategy, strategy implementation challenges and implementation frameworks overall.  Choosing the methods.  Gathering the material from 4Straction and sharepoint: retro material.  Initial data analyse with OKR champion.  Definition of the development task: what can other teams learn from successful teams to enhance teams' performance in OKR cycles.	Analysing the quantity and quality of objectives and key results: 4Q 2022 and 1T 2023. Analysing retro material.  Typifying teams into three categories.  Interview questions based on knowledge base. Semi-structured interviews and literation.  Analysing and classifying interviewees viewpoints to the strategy, company culture, motivation, OKR model and commitment.  Conclusions and reflections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of OKRs</li> <li>How company's strategy, culture, motivation, opinions of OKR model and commitment affected in success of OKR cycles.</li> </ul> The set of recommendations for better OKR cycles in the target company.  What can other companies or organizations learn from this case study.

Figure 4. The phases of the development process

The development project's target is to generate a set of recommendations for the organization to enhance teams' performance in OKR cycles. Additionally, other companies alike could benefit from the recommendations, too.

## 3.2 Methodological solutions

### 3.2.1 Description of the development method and the application of the method in the thesis

The selection of research methods and the gathering of material must be intricately linked to the research questions posed for the study (Vilkka 2021, Tiedonintressi). This thesis employs a triangulation method, initially utilizing a material-based content analysis approach to address questions related to quantity and reasons. For this purpose, available data from the 4Straction OKRs follow-up system is employed, encompassing descriptions of Objectives and Key Results, along with final outcomes and team retrospective materials. The comprehensive research material was then organized and categorized.

Subsequently, a qualitative method is employed to delve into questions related to 'what' and 'how' through semi-structured interviews. The rationale for employing diverse materials and methods lies in the sequential nature of this research. The material-based content analyses phase guides the selection of individuals for interviews, ensuring a representative sample related to the development project. Every team within the overall sample group that contributed retrospective materials to the system had the opportunity to be included in this representative sample.

The distinctive feature of qualitative research methodology means that the objective is not to find the truth about the subject under investigation. Interpretations are drawn from the clues and hints provided by individuals. Unraveling these interpretations and solving puzzles in this manner leads to the development of models, guidelines, and operational principles in research concerning the subject. (Vilkka 2021, Menetelmän erityispiirteet). Furthermore is beneficial that the author knows the target group, the operating environment, and the company culture. It promotes the understanding of the experiences of the interviewees (Vilkka 2021, Tutkimushaastatteluiden keräämisen pulmat ja ratkaisut).

The method for semi-structured interviews has a phenomenologic approach. The research material is not intended to be overly simplified, as is suitable for material-driven content analysis. Rather, the research material is treated as a whole. Despite the research problem directing the exploration of specific meaningful aspects, the research material does not contain so-called unnecessary information in this method (Vilkka 2021, Fenomenologinen lähestymistapa).

### 3.2.2 Data collection

The investigated periods are the fourth quarter (4Q) of 2022 and the initial tertial (1T) of 2023. Multiple sources are used in data collection. The data of company objectives and key

results and teams' key results are in the 4Straction tool which is the system the organization uses to enroll and maintain the OKR process. The tool is made to support a continuous strategy process, but it also has features to manage the planning and follow-up for the OKR process. The tool makes the implementation of the strategy visible to every employee. The OKRs and their results were taken from the 4Straction tool, moved to MS Excel, and processed there to numerical data and tables. Teams' 1T 2023 retrospective material was taken from SharePoint to MS Excel, too (example in Attachment 1).

The teams involved have also made retrospectives after each period. That qualitative material is situated in the company's SharePoint and it has been used for the analyses too.

In June 2023, six team leader interviews were conducted to gain a deeper insight into the topic. The interviewed persons were selected based on the analysis of the available retrospective data, and the criterion was good performance in the initial tertial 2023. Every interview lasted about an hour. Participation was voluntary. A person could refuse to participate, interrupt, or cancel participation at any stage.

### 3.2.3 Data management plan

The principles of data processing were responsibility and compliance with the law. Research material contains personal data: a person or persons can be directly or indirectly identified from it. The interviews were recorded using the Teams recording function and a text recording was created from it. The recordings were stored for 60 days on the researcher's computer.

The purpose of using the material was to deepen the knowledge of the researched topic by means of an interview. The information of the interviewed persons will not be published or included in the study unless the interviewee specifically wanted it.

After 60 days, the researcher deleted the recording from her computer. No data is permanently stored in Teams. During that time, the interviewee could request to see the recorded information about him-/ herself. The following personal data was included in the recording: Name, e-mail, organizational unit, years of employment, position, profile picture, video picture, voice, text recording, messages written in the chat, and IP address.

### 3.2.4 Description of data analysis

The teams' key results were divided into two categories whether those were value-based or activity-based targets. The used criteria were:

- Value-based key result: measures the outcome of successful activity. E.g. Improve something from X to Y.

- Activity-based key result: measures only the completion of the task. E.g. Write a blog post.

The used method for that material was typifying. A type is an entity built based on features and characteristics of the members of a certain group, which summarizes and illustrates the phenomena occurring in the material. The types are always the researcher's constructions, but it is good to strive for the types to be recognizable from the material without forcing. Types can be formed, for example, by means of classification or theming (Kallinen & Kinnunen, Etnografia)

Firstly, the features and characteristics typical of a certain phenomenon should be emphasized in the different types. Second, the features and characteristics of one type distinguish it from another type. Retrospective material was suitable for typification and was also sufficiently extensive.

The interview material was transcribed so that it is not too superficial but at the same time not too precise. Transcription that is too precise from the point of view of the research questions is difficult to read and the phenomenon under study may be hidden in the details of the literature. Then the analysis proceeded with coding to the Miro board (example in Attachment 3). In it, the parts of the material, i.e. longer and shorter sentences from the transcribed interviews, are combined and separated according to some characteristic. Similar parts are classified together and this class is given a name according to the common characteristic. Coding is never just a technical classification procedure, because the categories, subcategories, and the material summaries formed from them are largely created during the coding process. The materials of qualitative research are always so rich that there is something to code from many different perspectives. Thus, coding is also about the choices made by the researcher. (Kallinen & Kinnunen, Etnografia).

Tacid knowledge and reflection:

- The author is personally involved in the OKR process as an employee.

Material:

- Quantitative: OKRs and their results from the 4Straction tool
- Qualitative: retrospective material, interviews, perceptions

## 4 Results

Target organization's strategy is a growth strategy, and growth will be achieved together. Together employees will bring the strategy to life in the daily tasks, and achieving the goals will be a collective effort. OKRs were the chosen model to implement the growth strategy.

The goal is to have the OKR model fully incorporated into the organization's regular operations by the end of 2023 emphasizing self-direction and effectiveness. The operational-level OKR process is supported by the consulting team, with a dedicated person in charge. OKR decisions are made by the organization's group management team.

Next, the results from 4Q 2022 and 1T 2023 are introduced.

### 4.1 4Q 2022 results

The initial objective of the OKR process was, that by the end of 2022:

- The organization practices working with the model.
- OKRs have been implemented in every 27 teams.
- 4Straction tool has been taken into use.

Given the limited resources, the workload proved to be almost overwhelming. The facilitation process was concluded only in the late fall, leaving some teams with a very limited timeframe for implementing their key results. This all came true with the exception of two teams comprising 25 individuals altogether, accounting for approximately 10 % of the total workforce which were left out of the 4Q 2022 round.

The organization's management established several key results for each of the five Objectives: O1-O5. The teams were then tasked with devising their team-specific key results beneath these pre-defined benchmarks. There were altogether 146 Key Results to be categorized and analyzed. In figure 5 you can see that Objectives 4 and 5, which comprised improving the team spirit and increasing self-direction, were the most popular and more successful goals. The least popular were Objectives 1, 2, and 3 which were aspirational and therefore more abstract and challenging targets.

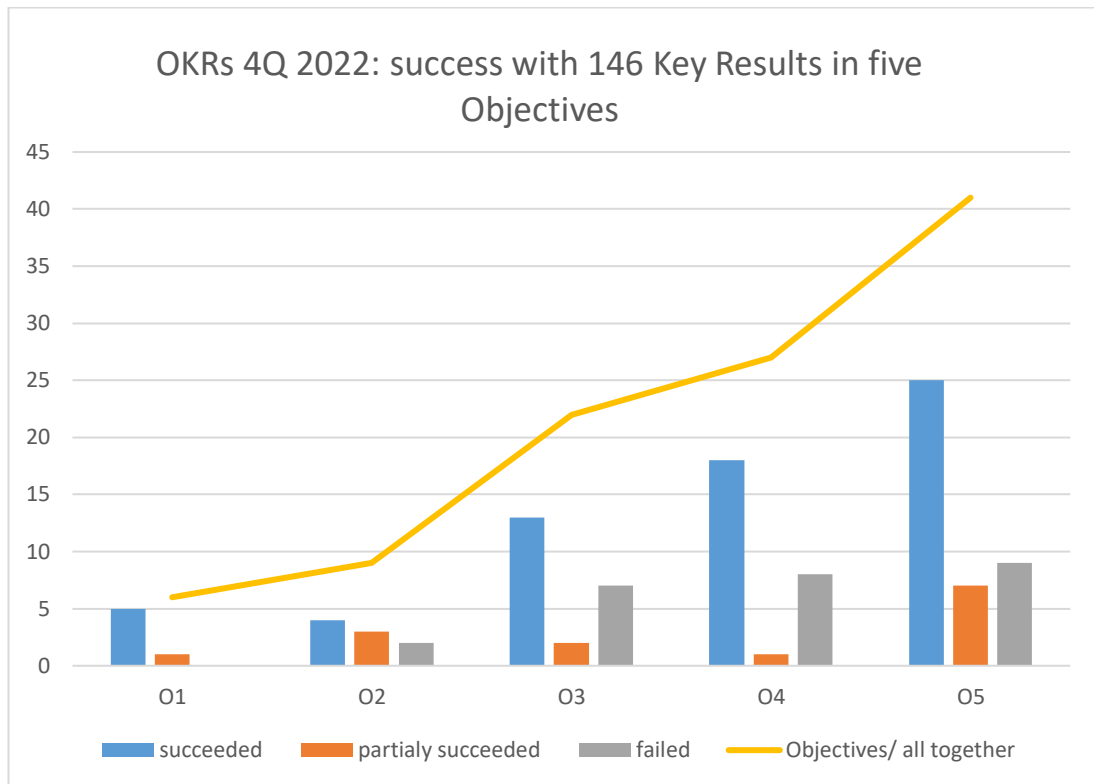


Figure 5. How O1-O5 Objectives' 146 Key Results succeeded in 4Q 2022

The data was categorized as value-based and activity-based key results. If a key result measured the outcome, it was categorized as a value-based key result. If it just measured the completion of a task, it was categorized as an activity-based key result. From Figure 6 we can see, that teams succeeded mostly with easier activity-based key results with Objectives 4 and 5, and value-based key results were numerically overall less present.

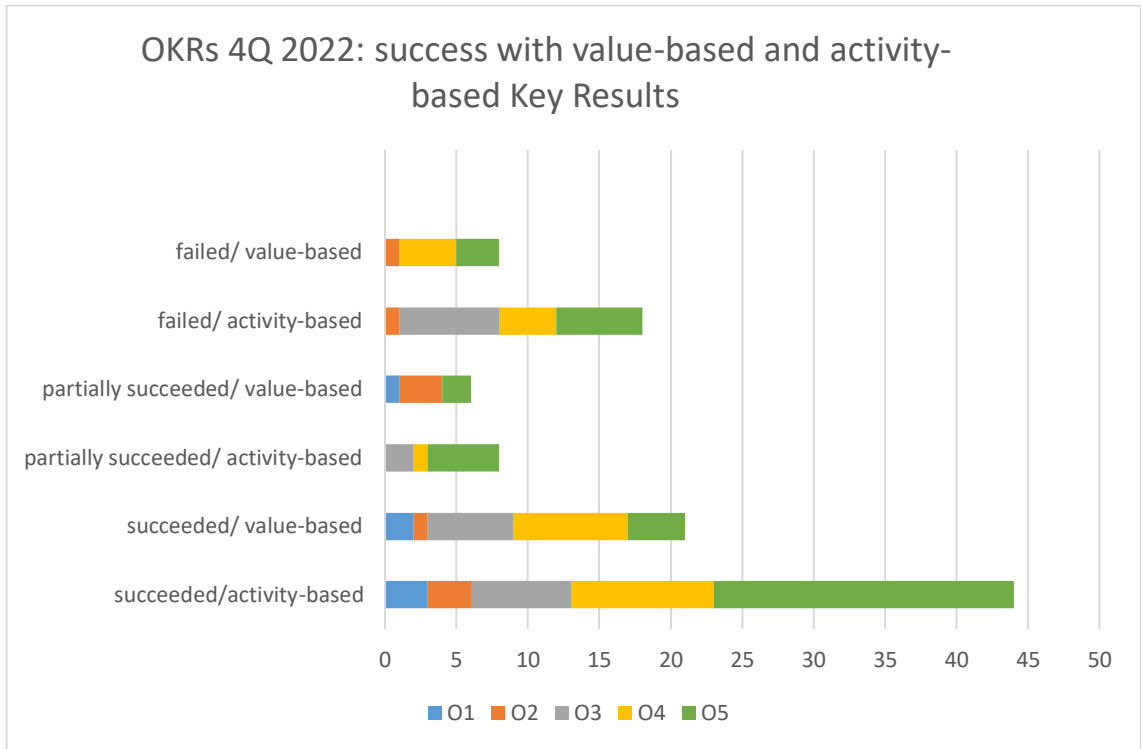


Figure 6. How Objectives are separated between successfulness and their quality: value-based/ activity-based category in 4Q 2022

Figure 7 we can see, that overall in both OKR cycles activity-based Key Results were in the minority: in 4Q 2022 30 % of the Key results were value-based and in 1T 2023 even less, only 20 % were value-based Key Results.

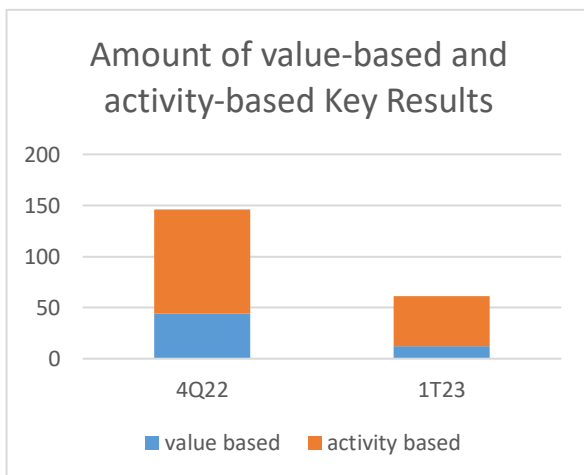


Figure 7. The amount of activity-based and value-based Key Results in OKR cycles

#### 4.2 1T 2023 results and the typification

In the first tertial of 2023, updates have been made to the organization’s OKR key results, with new key results becoming available in late January 2023. For the first tertial of 2023, organizations’ OKR goals remain unchanged except that one previous Objective (O4) was left out.

We can see from figure 8, that there were fewer key results, 61 altogether, and less success overall. Teams had ambitious targets with Objective 1, but the system intended to support O1’s outcomes was not prepared for completing the target. There was success with O5 key results like in 4Q 2022.

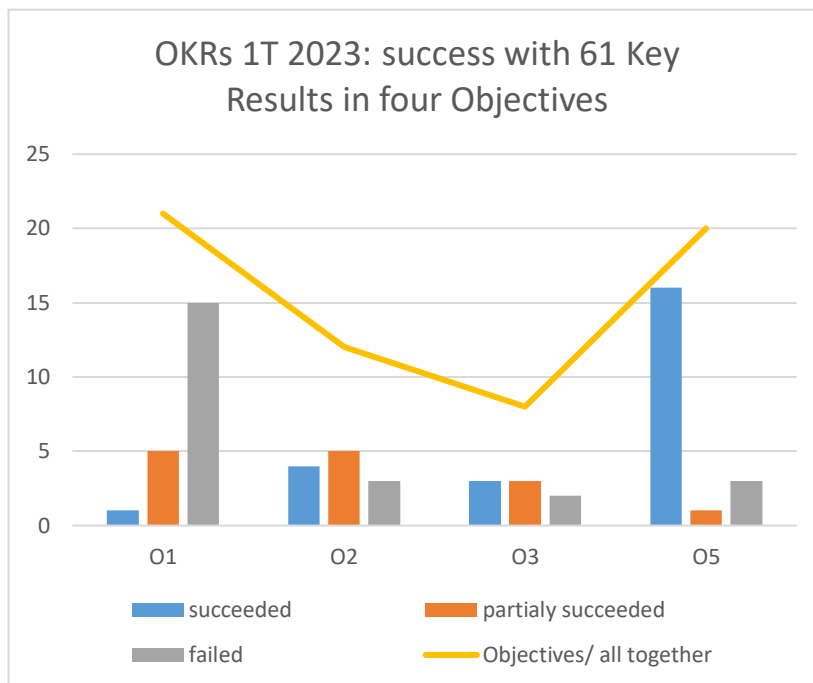


Figure 8. How O1-O5 Objective’s 61 Key Result succeeded in 1T 2023

From Figure 9 we can see, that teams continued succeeding with easier activity-based key results with Objective 5.

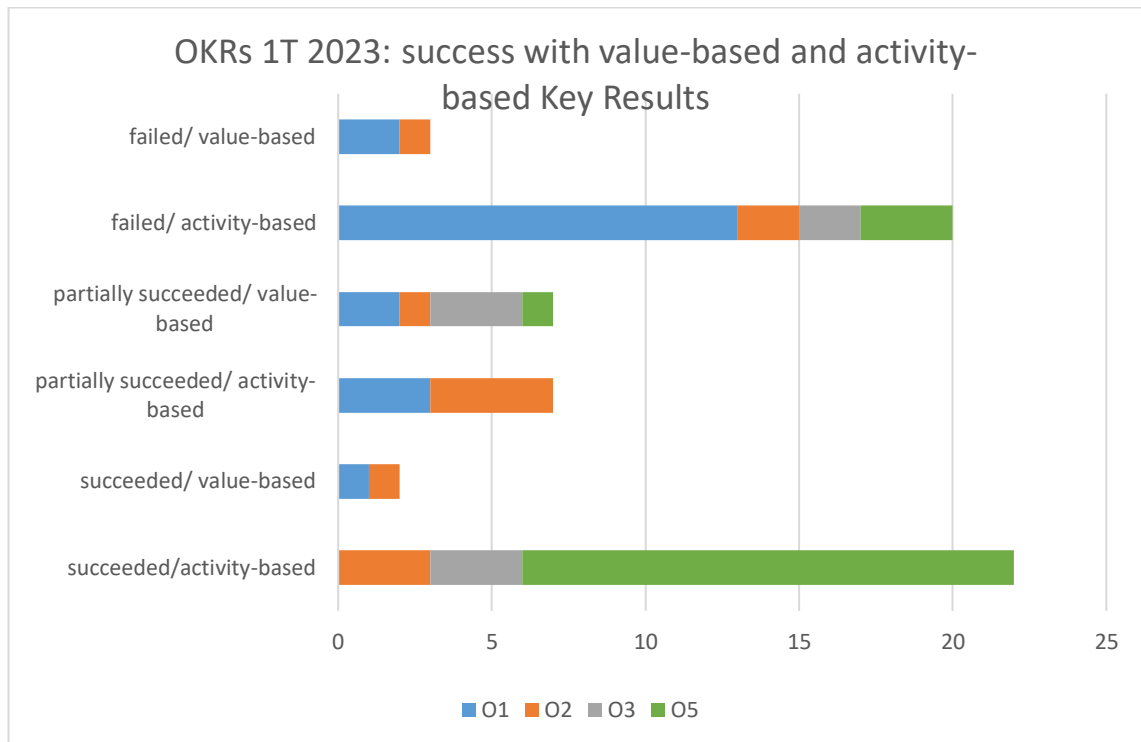


Figure 9. How Objectives are separated between successfulness and their quality: value-based/ activity-based category in 1T 2023

The processing of the 1T 2023 retro material continued so that it was classified into informative types based on common features and properties. A type is an entity built based on the features and characteristics of the members of a certain group, which summarizes and illustrates the phenomena occurring in the material (Kallinen & Kinnunen, Etnografia).

The material was grouped based on similarities and differences, and three types were formulated (Table 2):

- Type 1: Enthusiastic and achieving team.
- Type 2: Indifferent, even sabotaging team.
- Type 3: Critical and frustrated team.

Six teams were typified into the Type 1 category as enthusiastic and achieving teams: The teams were mostly successful with their key results and the team had a positive attitude toward the OKRs in general. They had time to do the work and they helped each other. Eight Type 2 teams' outcomes varied with key results, they did the minimum work and they didn't see OKRs as beneficial. Seven Type 3 teams wanted to do and succeed with OKRs, but they saw a lot of contradictions and obstacles.

	<b>Type 1: Enthusiastic and achieving team</b>	<b>Type 2: Indifferent, sabotaging team</b>	<b>Type 3: Critical and frustrated team</b>
<b>Unifying and distinguishing features (1-5):</b>	Six teams were type 1 teams	Eight teams were type 2 teams	Seven teams were type 3 teams
<b>1. Succeeding in goals in team's own opinion</b>	The key results were mostly successful.	Success in key results varied.	Success in key results varied.
<b>2. Description of the challenges</b>	Analytical approach, practice makes perfect, difficulties are made to be solved.	Problems in external matters and cannot be influenced.	Want to improve doing in the future, but can persistence and commitment be found?
<b>3. Ideas about inclusion</b>	We do it together.	No one did more than what was required, OKRs were forgotten.	The work was dependent on a few people or OKRs were in mind, but no effort was put into it.
<b>4. Self-management and suitability for everyday life</b>	Team found time for OKRs.	There is no time for OKRs.	Want to understand and do the process better next time.
<b>5. The team's idea of the next tertile</b>	Let's invest and improve the results in the next round.	Does not see benefits for the company, himself or the team.	How to do it with little investment, succeeding at least reasonably while meeting management's goals.

Table 2. Typification of the 1T 2023 retro material

The objective of the development project is to identify recommendations for the teams for enhancing upcoming OKR rounds. To gather insights, interviews were conducted with the six most successful teams. The working hypothesis was that these teams might have discovered

insights or strategies that set them apart from others or that have not yet been adopted by their counterparts.

### 4.3 Interview results

Building upon theoretical foundations and aligned with the development project, a questionnaire was crafted, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with six team leaders. However, one of the interviews took the form of a group interview, involving the team leader alongside two team members. Interview questions and iteration of the answers can be read in Attachment 1. Next, I will go through the analyses of the interviews. As mentioned earlier, the interview material will not be oversimplified because, in the phenomenological approach, every answer is meaningful.

#### 4.3.1 Background of the interviewees

Among six team leaders, four had only one to two years of working experience within the company (table 2). Additionally, one leader had six to ten years of experience, while another boasted over ten years of expertise. Interviews were made in June 2023. An identifier is used when a person is referred to in the text. E.g. reference (Person 1, q 5) means that the reference is from Team leader 1 (Person 1) and it can be seen also in Attachment 1 answers in question 5 (q 5).

Interviewee	Working history with the company	Experience with other strategy implementation methods	Participated in strategy formulation	Interviewed	Identifier in the text
Team leader (1)	Over 10 years	No	Indirectly	26.6.2023	Person 1
Team leader and two team members (2)	Team leader: 1-2 years	KPI	Indirectly	28.6.2023	Group 2
Team leader (3)	6-10 years	No	Yes	27.6.2023	Person 3
Team leader (4)	1-2 years	KPI	No	27.6.2023	Person 4

<b>Team leader (5)</b>	1-2 years	KPI	Yes	26.6.2023	Person 5
<b>Team leader (6)</b>	1-2 years	KPI	No	20.6.2023	Person 6

Table 2. The background of the interviewees.

Four team leaders had experiences with other KPI-based strategy implementation frameworks. Two of the leaders had no experience with any models.

“If turnover and result were good enough, everything was ok” (Person 4, q 5).

“Growth target has been there also previously. That we have managed to do without team thinking that now we are implementing the strategy” (Person 4, q 2).

One-third of the leaders haven’t participated in strategy formulation, one-third have participated indirectly, and the rest two team leaders have actively participated in the formulation of the IT company’s strategy work.

#### 4.3.2 Interviewees’ viewpoints on the strategy, company culture, and motivation

Team leaders thought that the company strategy was broad, practical, and not unique.

“There is no distinguishing factor in that” (Group 2, q 1)

“Competitive advantage, in my opinion, is still not found now” (Person 5, q 1).

But what separates the company from other related companies is that it is customer-centric, it values openness, it has transparency, and the company has the worth of trust.

Contradictions were observed in how the strategy manifests in day-to-day operations:

“Productivity and being the best place to work and taking care of employees are not quite in line with each other” (Person 5, q 2).

Company culture is perceived as good: low hierarchy, kindness, helpfulness, customer oriented open culture, freedom together with responsibility. Success together is the company’s strength. The company has a good working culture.

“Freedom and power and responsibility and organizing things as I see has been a good way to go. Helpful organization” (Person 5, q 3).

Overall, the corporate culture supports the implementation of the strategy. However, one of the leaders saw it quite the opposite:

“But then, on the other hand, there is the fact that maybe that strategy is still a little distant for our line of employees. OKR now brings it closer to everyday life, but at least as far as my own team is concerned, it is an intermediate layer. OKR hides the strategy” (Person 3, q 3).

A lot of good perspectives were given for the proposition: “The OKR model does not include monetary rewards, but there is also no punishment if the goals are not reached. The idea is to reach out and do your best, and learn from difficult goals.” The thoughts it evoked were that some team leaders felt that achieving goals without corresponding financial incentives may seem wrong or demotivating for individuals.

“If there are no incentives, there is a risk that things just stay undone. Or not much effort is put into it” (Person 4, q 8).

However, many leaders clarify that remuneration is more applicable to basic work rather than specifically tied to OKR-related efforts. The focus has been on goals that are meaningful to the team, emphasizing that the achievement of these goals should feel useful. One of the leaders highlighted the importance of setting meaningful goals that contribute to personal development rather than solely aligning with company objectives:

“Don't look at Company goals and don't try to find goals for the group that would directly promote Company's goals, but look for goals that are the key results that promote your own doing” (Person 1, q 8)

The answer to the question that what motivates people most in achieving their goals is highlighting the importance of the content of the work. The meaningfulness and satisfaction derived from the tasks performed emerge as crucial motivational factors across multiple responses. Customer satisfaction is identified as a motivator too, suggesting that individuals find fulfillment in knowing that their work positively impacts customers. Salary was mentioned often as important too:

“Salary and remuneration. Content of the work. Success at work” (Person 1, q 10).

The sense of community within the workplace is noted as a motivational factor. For younger individuals, the work community is emphasized. The traditional financial incentives, including salary and remuneration, are considered important motivators too. Overall, the responses give a holistic view of motivation that includes financial incentives, emphasizing the

importance of meaningful work, personal and team success, and alignment with organizational values.

#### 4.3.3 Interviewees input to the OKR model and commitment

Persons 1, 5, and 6 (q 4) saw the OKR model in a positive light as a good tool and a clear, flexible framework when they framed the answers to the question: “What kind of model do you see OKR as?” OKR is considered suitable for various purposes, not just limited to strategy implementation. In the early stages, there were difficulties in connecting the model to everyday work. However, with time and experience, it becomes more routine, similar to other functional tools like Kanban and Scrum.

When team leaders thought about the benefits of using OKRs in everyday work, two of them emphasized that they have learned to know the team and organization better. OKRs made abstract goals, like “grow profitability,” more tangible. In general, OKR gives common goals for the team, it gives all team members a voice and it creates collaboration.

“Team gets to highlight what they themselves want and that is perhaps the best part of this model” (Group 2, q 17).

Team leaders' views on support in the context of OKRs range from a reactive model where support is provided upon request to instances where specific individuals play a crucial role in providing motivation and guidance. Some leaders felt they were well-supported without needing to request assistance actively. One leader emphasizes the significant help provided by a specific person and expresses the need to find another inspiring individual to maintain the motivation in the process.

“Person X has been a really big help here. if you ask, the answer will come almost immediately. Now that Person X leaves us, we need to find one such inspiring person who will motivate us to go forward with the same intensity as Person X.” (Person 4, q 18).

Team leaders identified several areas where the process could be enhanced too. They emphasized the need to share success stories, increase OKR awareness overall, and improve the experience sharing across the teams. People were also overloaded and OKR might have disturbed the customer work. Also, customer work was in teams' highest priority and OKR was done as additional work. Team leaders have tried to create models where OKR work increases the efficiency in the customer work or even a situation where OKR work is billable work.

In general, when we all do work for the customer, no work is a low priority - everything you do is important from that viewpoint. While OKR work is seen as additional work.” (Person 3, q 13).

The commitment was handled in the questions 6 and 7. The top management felt more committed to the OKR process than the staff. The unit goals don't show much anywhere: we have moved from the company-level straight to the team level. Teams are left alone with company level objectives. Two of the six team leaders thought the teams and employees were well-committed. Other teams were busy with their customer work. One team was enthusiastically throwing around key result ideas, but a week later nothing was done for OKRs. One team raised questions about appreciation and reward.

## 5 Conclusions and reflections

In this chapter, I will provide answers to the defined development project and formulate conclusions. Finally, I will present the content created based on the obtained results about the recommendations for the organization to enhance teams' performance in OKR cycles.

### 5.1 The quality of Objectives and Key Results

The target company is committed to its growth strategy, and all employees must maintain focus on strategic goals. OKR was selected as the tool for handling strategy implementation. Organizational change took place in the fall of 2022 and the management system, business areas, roles, and processes were clarified. Hämäläinen & Sora (2022, 104-105) stress the importance of having a well-established management system, accompanied by a clear strategy, the right mindset, organizational maturity, and sufficient time, before implementing the OKR framework.

For the 4Q 2022 Objectives, Objectives 4 and 5 were established as committed targets, while Objectives 1-3 were aspirational, representing higher-risk, future-oriented ideas (Doerr 2018, 134-135). Teams primarily achieved success with easier, activity-based key results for Objectives 4 and 5 in the first OKR round. While this was deemed acceptable as the organization learned how to execute the work, unfortunately, a similar pattern emerged with the 1T 2023 Objectives. Objectives 1 and 5 were categorized as committed objectives, and their key results were the most popular choices to be taken for teams' targets.

Looking at it from this perspective, it appears that a significant number of teams are not achieving their full potential, and this could be associated with the sandbagging phenomenon. When teams set goals based solely on their current activities, they may opt for a conservative approach, avoiding more ambitious targets (Niven and Lamorte 2016, 145). Doerr (2018, 258-261) complements this by stating that if OKRs are business-as-usual type, it doesn't promote change. However, teams have all the power to choose aspirational targets over committed targets, but they didn't choose differently. The importance of customer work over OKR work was mentioned several times in the interviews.

A similar pattern, observed in the Objectives, was also evident in the Key Results. Key Results were predominantly activity-based and output-oriented rather than value-based and outcome-oriented. As highlighted by Niven & Lamorte (2016, 35-36), the essence of OKRs is to assist businesses in setting ambitious, strategy-driven goals and enabling teams to achieve meaningful outcomes and foster growth. If the quality of Key Results is lacking, it can hinder the realization of Objectives in their entirety or within the specified timeframe. For subsequent rounds of OKRs, the company, namely the dedicated OKR champion or management leaders in charge, must guide teams to opt for more ambitious goals with outcome-oriented Key Results. However, it must be kept in mind that too ambitious key results may cause stress among employees (Olsson 2021).

Workload, especially with customer work taking precedence, emerged as a recurrent theme in the interviews. Nienaber (2022, 1045-1046) advocates for companies to ensure employee engagement by focusing on work content, coping mechanisms, compensation, community, congruence, and career development.

## 5.2 How the company's strategy, culture, and motivation affect the success of OKRs

In Doerr's book (2018, 46), Andy Grove states that "Bad companies are destroyed by the crisis. Good companies survive them. Great companies are improved by them." For a company to navigate challenges effectively, it must concentrate on and commit to its priorities. Successful organizations streamline their focus to just a handful of initiatives, with leaders fully committed to their realization (Doerr 2018, 47). The company selects and defines the most crucial annual objectives derived from its mission and strategy. The OKR model serves as a tool for the company's board of directors to ensure and monitor the fulfillment of the company's strategy (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 21). Given that OKR targets are updated weekly, management can closely track the efforts of the teams.

Given the challenging growth strategy of the target company, it's crucial to recognize that rapid growth comes with great risks. As Drucker highlighted (1994, 103), when a company experiences a substantial increase in size over a short period, it may have outgrown its existing framework. Leaders at various levels, including the management and board of directors, should understand that OKRs entail a longer commitment, and the strategic direction cannot be altered at every management team meeting or with the emergence of new ideas (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 21). Nevertheless, companies encounter extraordinary circumstances periodically. In the upcoming OKR period, Company KPIs, serving as vital health indicators, can be established as Key Results to restore stability (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 200-201). The target company's strategy appears quite broad and lacks a differentiating factor. These remarks prompt reflection on the validity of the growth strategy and, consequently, the formulated objectives in OKR.

An organization's culture can play a significant role in fostering accountability and collaboration among employees (Doerr, 215-216). According to a survey involving over 400 managers engaged in strategy execution, company culture is identified as a central factor contributing to various challenges related to change (Hrebiniak 2006, 16; Kotter 2012,23). As noted by Niven & Lamorte (2016, 163), OKR is not a project with a defined beginning and end. Rather, it is a continuous process that should be seamlessly integrated into the company's culture and its overall business operations. The interview material indicates that the target company's culture was perceived as good, with strength in achieving success together. Culture should be considered even in the recruitment process, as the quality of individuals is crucial for successful execution. When people are attracted to a company based on its envisioned future and the company later changes its course, challenges may arise. If individuals join a company because of the existing team, adjusting the company's direction becomes relatively smoother (Collins 2001, 70).

The OKR model lacks monetary rewards, and during the interviews, it was emphasized that this absence creates a risk of tasks being left incomplete. However, it was noted that Key Results should hold meaningful value for the team. A reasonable minimum reward could be the leaders' expressed interest in the outcomes of OKRs. Additionally, Holmström (2017, 1772) highlights that promotion policies serve as powerful incentive drivers.

### 5.3 How company's OKR model and commitment affect in success of OKRs

Based on the interviews, the OKR model was perceived as relatively simple and functional, aligning well with the familiarity of Agile methodologies among company employees. Challenges, however, arise in integrating the OKR model into daily work routines, as customer-related tasks often take precedence over OKR-related activities. Despite this, the model facilitates a shift from abstract concepts to tangible goals and promotes better understanding among team members. Strategy implementation is a process and successful integration takes time and attention (Atkinson 2006, 1443).

Ensuring ongoing support for team leaders is vital, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement in each cycle. As one team leader pointed out, the organization requires an inspiring individual to uphold motivation throughout the process. This suggests that individual support plays a crucial role in the success of OKR implementation. Recognizing the importance of a "torch-bearer" role, described by Hämäläinen & Sora (2021, 113) as active and self-directive, is crucial. The torch-bearer possesses a deep understanding of the process and can inspire both teams and management. However, this individual should not exclusively represent the management team. Ideally, the organization should have multiple torchbearers rather than relying on a singular person.

Kaplan & Norton (2000, 362) emphasize in their book "Strategy Focused Organization" that senior management must demonstrate emotional commitment to strategy execution. Ideally, OKRs foster focus, commitment, and results, helping everyone in the company comprehend what is important and how it will be measured. However, there seems to be a disparity in commitment levels within the organization. While top management appears more committed to the OKR process, staff commitment is less evident. The feedback from six team leaders reveals varying levels of team and employee commitment, with some teams heavily engaged in customer work and others struggling to translate key result ideas into action.

#### 5.4 The set of recommendations for better OKR cycles

As the target company wants to improve its OKR cycles, what can other teams learn from those teams that are already performing well? For this purpose, we need to understand the areas in which teams consider themselves successful and what they value. Three clear sub-areas were identified from the interview material:

##### 1. Enhance the culture

Express having a positive and open working culture where individuals are kind and helpful. Create a notable sense of autonomy, emphasizing freedom and responsibility. The culture promotes collective success and is reflected in the recruitment process. Anchor the change into the company's culture.

##### 2. Sustain the motivation

Sustain motivation by fostering psychological safety, maintaining a positive atmosphere, encouraging ambitious key results, implementing a promotion policy, sharing success stories, and ensuring leaders express interest in the outcomes of OKRs.

##### 3. Offer support

OKR champions need to be readily available for teams and team leaders, serving various purposes such as guiding the process, assisting with content, facilitating team and leader activities, and providing inspiration. OKR champion should have sufficient time to offer support effectively.

Additionally, when key results are attributed to a team without specific individuals being named, it can create the illusion that nobody is accountable, leading to the situation that tasks are kept undone. Assigning responsibility to individuals for each key result and promptly addressing issues when the team underperforms is essential (Hämäläinen & Sora 2021, 44). In

OKR, teams share joint responsibility for results, yet individuals are responsible for the actual work. Adopting this approach fosters a culture of accountability, where individuals take responsibility not just for their tasks, but also for the collective success of the team.

Figure 10 encapsulates the development process and its underlying topography and thinking.

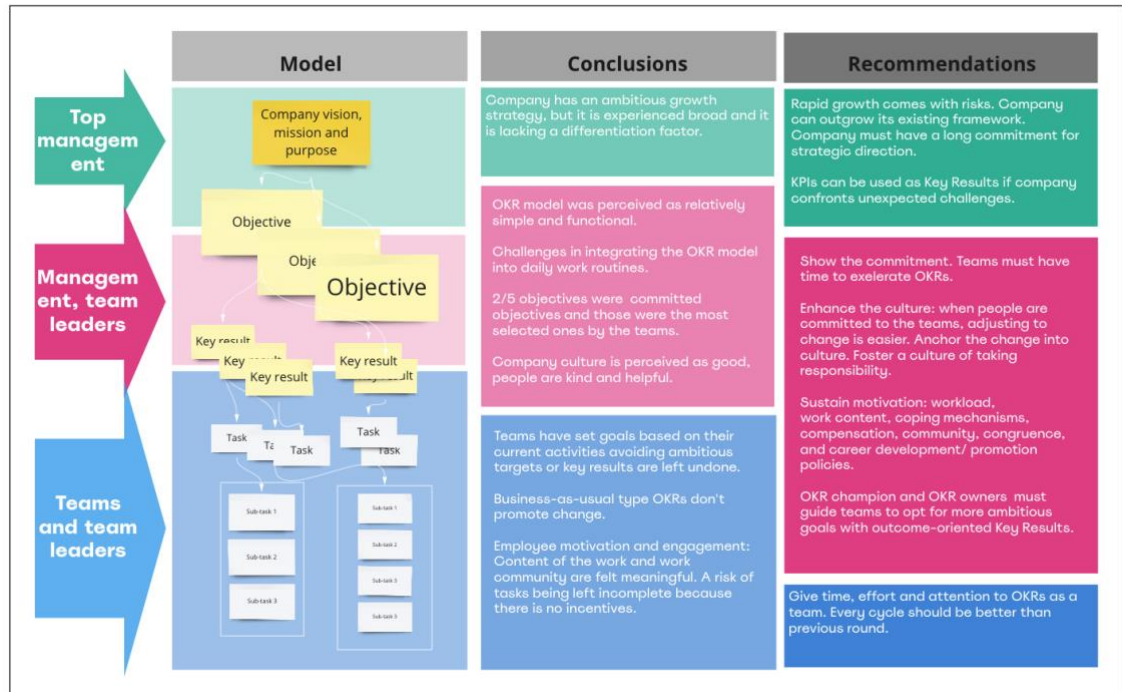


Figure 10. The reflections and recommendations for the company, by concentrating on which, the company can improve OKR cycles and bring its strategy live

The overarching emphasis does not solely lie in improving the formulation of Objectives and Key Results or optimizing the process. Much like any change management process, the essence lies in comprehending human behavior and its motivations. Understanding what motivates individuals and how the company can foster its culture is pivotal. In addition to this, the company must devise methods to allocate time for teams to engage in OKRs, and leaders must demonstrate unwavering commitment to the strategy and its execution.

In a volatile economic environment, the company must align the entire organization toward a chosen common goal. The OKR framework, by its nature, facilitates results, and its impact on the strategy lies in its focus on the desired outcomes and effects that an organization aims to achieve, rather than activities to be performed. OKR approach enables the organization to learn from outcomes and use them as guidance when setting goals in subsequent periods. OKR also allows for continuous adaptation and course correction when needed.

Currently, a specific plan with concrete actions for implementing these recommendations within the company has not been devised or executed. The intention is to present these results, conclusions, and recommendations to the executive board for further discussion.

## 6 Evaluation of the development layout

The reliability and validity of the research can be assessed by presenting a comprehensive critical evaluation of the work conducted (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006, 3.3.3). As a researcher, I embarked on this topic because of my interest in the novelty and complexity of the subject. As the interest in the research topic grew, the company itself was still in the early stages of practicing the process of implementing its strategy. At the outset, I engaged in numerous discussions with the OKR champion, familiarized myself with existing quantitative data, and reviewed relevant literature.

In the initial stages of the project, there was a risk of concluding the quantitative data before the knowledge base was fully established. Initially, I also did not pinpoint the research question at a concrete level, and for a considerable time, the theme remained at a high level, focusing on how to improve OKR cycles in general.

When entering the interview phase, the researcher had several alternative models for strategy implementation in mind. However, under the guidance of the supervisor, the research focus narrowed to "what other teams can learn from successful teams in the OKR process." It partly turned out that the interview research did not fully support the research task. In the analysis phase, questions that were not relevant to the research question were disregarded.

The interview research data was transcribed from Finnish to English and then categorized with keywords and themes in a mind map. The approach used for the interview material was a phenomenological method, considering the entire data set as the subject of investigation without excluding any details. In phenomenology, the process of becoming something is more fundamental than the moment of measurement, and the object is perceived in itself, with what the researcher observes depending on sensors and understanding (Puusa & Juuti 2020, chapter 19). This leads to the fact that the analysis, and interpretation of interviews in this study are not being objective, but rather a result of the researcher's interpretation, aimed at making it understandable to readers. The credibility of the study can only be assessed by seeking to understand the researcher's interpretations (Puusa & Juuti, chapter 19).

In addition to the qualitative data processing method mentioned above, this study was conducted as a multi-method research. The use of this method is acceptable when the research has both descriptive and explanatory purposes and research questions (Puusa & Juuti

2020, chapter 20). Answering the research question would not have been possible without processing and categorizing the quantitative data. Therefore, the study first conducted a quantitative research phase and then a qualitative research phase. Both methods yielded conclusions, and the quantitative research phase provided a pathway to interview a specific and targeted audience. The results of the study are contextual: dependent on time, place, and the researcher (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006, 3.3.3). As a researcher, I hope that by following a similar research design, future researchers may obtain results that are aligned or complementary. This would enhance the informational value and reliability of this study.

## 7 Topics for further development

During the research, several significant and broader avenues for further studies emerged within the scope of the study. Right from the beginning of the research, the CEO of the company raised a contemplative point, expressing the desire for concrete connections and evidence between key result outcomes and progress in strategy. However, this aspect is intentionally left unexplored and open for subsequent researchers, avoiding speculation. One potential approach for that kind of concrete future research could involve exploring the integration of OKR outcomes with changes in customer satisfaction.

Also, this study did not delve into whether the implementation of strategy could influence the formulation of strategy. This angle is not supported in the OKR framework but is a possible scenario in real life.

Another concrete and prominent challenge demanding a solution, highlighted in the research, is how to reconcile hourly basis billed expert work, with the practice of OKR. For a company to be successful, it must excel in its strategy. If employees lack the time and opportunity to participate and achieve key results, the company cannot succeed in implementing its strategy. One potential solution is to explore the integration of case company targets with project targets in a way that does not compromise billing rates while enhancing customer satisfaction. Also, there is a strong suspicion that teams, driven by time constraints, are choosing easier key results for themselves. Addressing this issue requires prompt interpretation, research, and the identification of solution models.

The success of teams with specifically aspirational objectives was not specifically investigated. Overall, focusing on crafting high-quality OKRs that are challenging yet achievable for teams could be a fruitful and concrete topic for further research.

Objective owners and their role in the success and operation of the model also received limited attention. Some business unit owners have served as objective owners, and it is

known that ownership has been approached in varying ways. Generally, a more detailed analysis and interviews with other stakeholders, such as leaders and employees, would undoubtedly provide crucial 360-degree insights into the functionality and efficiency of the model.

Given that the company operates in the IT sector, one potential research direction could involve introducing gamification into the model. Exploring the inclusion of game design elements on the OKR dashboard could be an intriguing avenue for further research. Den Haak (2021, 273) has presented preliminary and exciting perspectives on this matter.

## 8 Ethical and data protection issues related to the development project

Reliability, honesty, appreciation, and responsibility are the values of the Research Ethics Advisory Board according to the publication (2022, 6), the basic principles of good scientific practice, which researchers should be followed. Good scientific procedures are divided into eight scientific principles to the area of activity, one of which deals with research ethics. That the researcher can act by good scientific procedures should be followed when conducting research ethically sustainable research methods (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2022, 6-7). As the author of the thesis, I familiarized myself with scientific practices during the thesis process. I have followed the principles of research ethics and good scientific practices throughout the research process.

The study followed the guidelines of Laurea University of Applied Sciences and the thesis and regulations. An actual research permit was not needed for this thesis. Guidance for this thesis came from Laurea University of Applied Sciences and the OKR Champion from the target company in question. In this work, the reporting has been tried to be as accurate as possible and I respected the work done by other researchers by marking all sources as original, and appropriately so that their origin is displayed.

To ensure the ethical conduct of the research, I gave the subjects enough information on matters related to the conduct of the study such as data protection, confidentiality, and the use of material in the thesis. These promises remained throughout the entire thesis process and research the survey material has been properly disposed of. The matters of the research target organization are kept in the knowledge of the researcher, and not to bring up issues that might harm the organization, the working community, and its members (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2022, 8). Here, in the thesis, the target organization is completely anonymized.



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In editing the language of this thesis, ChatGPT has been utilized.

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Attachment 1: Example of the data of retro material 1T 2023 and which has been analyzed as the part of the typification

sovittuja toimenpiteitä ei ole otettu käyttöön, niistä on vasta sovittu  
aikaa pitäisi irrottaa tekemiseen useampi tunti per viikko  
vähemmän tavoitteita ja keskittyminen niihin, vähempi parempi  
jotkin tavoitteet ei koske tiimiä, esim ostotilaus  
fasilitoinnin delegointi voisi toimia  
enemmän aikaa pohdinnoille  
hyviä nostoja tiimiltä  
avaintulos pitäisi olla enemmän mitattava  
eteneminen paremmin esille  
4straction buginen  
pitäisi olla osa tiimin jokapäiväistä tekemistä  
arkityöhön liittyvät tavoitteet tuli tehdyksi parhaiten  
serttejä ei suoritettu koska ei tiedetty mitä olisi pitänyt suorittaa  
unohtuneet arjessa  
avaintulokset pitää integroida syvemmin päivittäiseen työhön  
jatkossa vähemmän tavoitteita  
tiheämpi seuranta  
muistuttelua tavoitteista  
4straction kankea ja kaaottinen  
tuntunut ajanhukalle  
yksilötasolla ei ole konkretiaa  
tiimitason tavoitteet onnistui hyvin  
aikaa ei ollut riittävästi okr:iin  
pitää tarttua työhön rivakasti  
tavoitteita on ollut hankala keksiä  
toteutuminen yksilön vastuulla  
tavoitteet eivät seurattavia tai mitattavia  
4straction on työkaluna sekava  
Ei tietoa muiden tiimien tilanteesta  
hyvä kun on konkreettisia tavoitteita  
eteneminen liian nopeaa  
paljon toistoa  
kierrokset menevät sekaisin  
tuntuu raskaalta prosessilta  
kohtuullinen onnistuminen on yleisfiilis  
kommunikaatio parantui  
okr ei toimi hyvin virtuaalitiimillä kun ei ole yhteistä laskutettavaa  
.....

## Attachment 2: Interview questions and answers

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p><i>What do you think about Company's strategy? 1</i></p>	<p>I might not see anything so hugely different compared to competitors. It is embracing the world. It is practical.<sup>1</sup> Pretty good focus and limitations. (1)</p>
	<p>There is no distinguishing factor in that.<sup>2</sup> (2)</p>
	<p>The short answer to that is yes and no, because there are quite a lot of areas in our strategy that are practically suitable for any of our competitors.<sup>3</sup> eg. skilled stuff is generic. But few things separate us from competitors: customer-centricity, worth of trust, openness, transparency.<sup>4</sup> The help from neighboring team is always available. Monthly infos: it is good that top directors tell straight to the line workers what is on-going. (3)</p>
	<p>Contains familiar and good things (4)</p>
	<p>There is no differentiation factor in it.<sup>5</sup> Competitive advantage in my opinion is still not found now. <sup>6</sup> Green code will not be long a differentiating factor either. Strategy is broad. It now lists all possible employee experiences and customer experiences and productivity and others. If it were more limited, some things could emerge better from there, which could be the distinguishing factors. Reliability and down-to-earthness -like should have been emphasized more in my opinion. (5)</p>
	<p>The values are understandable and are perceived as one's own. However, the values are not realized in every part of everyday life. The strategy is not widely known.<sup>7</sup> The strategy is no different from competitors.<sup>8</sup> Growth has taken place, in accordance with the strategy. The content of the strategy is broad enough, but it is difficult to assess its content specifically. The strategy is adaptive. The customer always comes first and, for example, working hours are flexible to make this possible. In small projects, customer orientation is more challenging to implement. (6)</p>
<p><i>How do actions contribute to the strategy? 2</i></p>	<p>it probably promotes it, but I would say that now not quite as systematically<sup>1</sup> as this might happen. (1)</p>
	<p>all-embracing obvious<sup>2</sup> things kind of (2)</p>
	<p>strategic themes that are a little further away from the line workers, at the level of the team leader they will be taken into account, and if not the daily work, then at least weekly: operation and the strategy are in the same direction. (3)</p>
	<p>Growth target<sup>3</sup> has been there also previously. That we have managed to do without team thinking that now we are implementing the strategy. (4)</p>
	<p>Productivity and being the best place to work and taking care of employees are not quite in line with each other<sup>4</sup>. But there's more good stuff there: sales stuff,</p>

	customer orientation has started to be emphasized more. We'll need more processes <sup>5</sup> . Now nothing works, but everything is handled in the end. (5)
<i>Have you participated in the creation of Company's strategy?</i>	Yes, but indirectly, answering to surveys. Unit executive teamwork promotes strategy formulation. (1)
	Indirectly yes when two companies were merged (2)
	Yes, from the perspective of its responsibility. (3)
	No, I haven't have participated. (4)
	Yes, I had. (5)
	I haven't participated in the creation of the strategy. However, participation would have created commitment. (6)
<i>What do you think the company culture is like at Company? 3</i>	People are kind and helpful <sup>1</sup> . A lot of new people, hard to guide it towards wanted direction. (1)
	basic good open culture <sup>2</sup> , individuals have a lot of autonomy <sup>3</sup> . level of low bureaucracy. we are still very siloed <sup>4</sup> , especially between the units (2)
	Company has grown a lot. Small company culture has prevailed, but while we have grown, it is starting to be also the ballast of history. everything doesn't go as smoothly as it did few years ago. Overall, the corporate culture supports the implementation of the strategy. But then, on the other hand, there is the fact that maybe that strategy is still a little distant for our line of employees <sup>5</sup> . OKR now brings it closer to everyday life, but at least as far as own team is concerned, it is an intermediate layer. OKR hides the strategy <sup>6</sup> . There are good and bad things in that. (3)
	Company is a big company compared to the merged companies. It takes time to get to know the new company. Everything is not written in confluence (Company's intra). Data protection is better handled than in previous company: rules and training. The allocation of resources is not known. If person is allocated to different projects, team leaders may overload person. (4)
	We have a good working culture. Freedom and power and responsibility and organize things as I see has been a good way to go. Helpful organization <sup>7</sup> . (5)
	The company culture is perceived as good; low hierarchy <sup>8</sup> , talking, helping, customer orientation. Everyone implements company culture from their own work and skills. Success together is company's strength. (6)
<i>What kind of model do you see OKR as? 4</i>	Basically, a good tool. I read the book (Sora) and it was interesting too. As a generic framework, the model is also suitable for other purposes, e.g. running business, than strategy implementation <sup>1</sup> . (1)

	<p>it's hard to get any sort of grasp of what exactly we're doing here<sup>2</sup>. in the first round, not everything was connected to everyday life and that was a bad thing. (2)</p>
	<p>It was new for all of us at the beginning, the starting was quite heavy, but now that I have participated in several rounds and little by little it is starting to become a routine. Functional tool<sup>3</sup>, similar like Kanban and Scrum as a process. (3)</p>
	<p>I understand the purpose of OKR, but it is quite far from so called production teams working for customers<sup>5</sup>. OKR work is suitable for consultant work<sup>6</sup>. (4)</p>
	<p>OKR model is really clear and I'm familiar to it. it's clear and flexible in my opinion<sup>7</sup>. (5)</p>
	<p>I see the model basically good: understandable, increases competence, transparent<sup>8</sup>. Numeracy is perceived difficult<sup>9</sup>. It is important that the presentation and analysis of effectiveness should be developed and brought out more: importance for Company, successes, sharing of know-how. (6)</p>
<p><i>There are also other models: do you have experience with other models and related working methods and would you compare the models and successes with each other? 5</i></p>	<p>No experience of certain previous model, but practicalities was: communication about the strategy and then we have figured out how to take it to everyday work. Now with OKR there is an extra layer between strategy and implementation<sup>1</sup>. People can not decide what strategy is meaning straight for themselves. Thinking is prohibited kind of and it underestimates people<sup>2</sup>. (1)</p>
	<p>Very classical methods have been used in the past, at least with the goal and the measure, with the approach and the metrics around it, so that in a way, over the years, maybe a little variability in how much from above and how much from below has come goal setting throughout the years, but it has been the classic approach. (2)</p>
	<p>No experience of certain previous model. (3)</p>
	<p>Yes, by managing by numbers. If turnover and result were good enough, everything was ok. (4)</p>
	<p>What have I read and understood is that there are not many implementation systems existing, and it is quite new invention, like past five years these started to be more common. KPI based balance scorecard is somewhat familiar.(5)</p>
	<p>KPI based model is familiar. (6)</p>
<p><i>The management (from the heads of the unit upwards) must show their own commitment to the</i></p>	<p>Yes, management seem to be committed. (1)</p>
	<p>Feeling that the management is more committed than the staff<sup>1</sup> and sometimes you get the feeling that we are missing a step in between. We have house-level goals in a certain way, but then the unit is not necessarily reflected as such in this model, it is an intermediary in a certain way. Here in our current model we</p>

<p><i>strategy and its implementation: do you think the management of Company is committed to it? 6</i></p>	<p>jump directly to the team level from the Company level and I think that there is something which is not correct. Teams are left alone with Company level objectives<sup>2</sup>. (2)</p>
	<p>top management is committed. Simply because they have chosen to use this model for us. but there's still a gap that looks like that OKRs come from the top management straight to the team leader level<sup>3</sup>. from the point of view of a line worker, when upper management says something, it might show as a bit of a cliché. (3)</p>
	<p>What i've seen myself I would say no. We are trying hard to do it or work to make it happen, but everyone has their own rushes<sup>4</sup> and this way it is not going quickly at all, but still moving forward. (4)</p>
	<p>Depends very much on the person. Former CEO seems to be committed and is interested on how we succeed with this. His follower is maybe not so committed and this might show as a confusion between OKR and projects<sup>5</sup> (actual work). (5)</p>
	<p>I feel that the management is committed to strategy and customer orientation. Still, questions are raised about appreciation and rewarding<sup>6</sup>. More transparency is needed in the OKR model; what other teams are doing, what can be learned from. It is good that studying is supported. There is a work cycle, but its rules need clarity, transparency and uniformity. (6)</p>
<p><i>Employee commitment is key to successful strategy implementation. How committed do you think the employees are to Company and to Company's success? 7</i></p>	<p>Because the end result doesn't show to employees, it might lower the commitment<sup>1</sup>. (1)</p>
	<p>Everyday life and the customer keep busy and focused. there is no time to be committed<sup>2</sup> to Company's strategy.(2)</p>
	<p>Team is enthusiastically throwing around ideas and thinking and planning. But a week later nothing has been done<sup>3</sup>. (3)</p>
	<p>I would say that they are very committed, even if they don't necessarily think about it. (4)</p>
	<p>Everyone has the right to their own opinion about everything, and I think it's so nice that in our team everyone can say that there's no need to act, that if you're not interested at all, then you can honestly say that you're not interested. Depends on the content of work too that how it fits to strategy work. I won't force anyone to come up with good key results. It just makes people annoyed. (5)</p>
	<p>there is genuine commitment to the OKR model, strategy and work<sup>4</sup>. the majority of people are very committed, want to learn and develop.(6)</p>
<p><i>The OKR model does not include monetary rewards, but there is</i></p>	<p>There is this kind of raising oneself and doing one's best, and then if one reaches out a bit and achieves and reaches the goals more than one would have otherwise, then one will not be rewarded for that. it feels a bit wrong for a</p>

<p><i>also no punishment if the goals are not reached. The idea is to reach out and do your best, and learn from difficult goals. What thoughts does this evoke? 8</i></p>	<p>person. Don't look at Company goals and don't try to find goals for the group that would directly promote Company's goals, but look for goals that are the key results that promote your own doing<sup>1</sup>. (1)</p>
	<p>it's probably not worth mixing the money pattern with, but then goals must be meaningful to the team<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the achievement of that goal should then feel like something useful, and not just a tick on the box that this has now been done. OKR is development task and rewards are paid based on the monetary results.(2)</p>
	<p>Pointing: does this mean like the goals were set, but nobody cares will they be realized?<sup>3</sup> It is not so, but in practice, when you think like that, it's really very close basic application development, eg. setting some goals with Sprint. In the best case, they will come true. Sometimes it's worse and they don't come true, and that is life. (3)</p>
	<p>first, it raised a few questions, what is this, what is this really. But then when I understood that this is what we're aiming for, I think it's a very good model. (4)</p>
	<p>If there is no incentives, there is a risk that things just stay undone.<sup>4</sup> Or not much effort is put into it. The idea is that when people do key results, the working is implemented on daily processes and working culture. That is why in our team we have taken less ambitious targets that we can reach those. It is too early to take challenging targets because being successful in that means a lot of work and still the result may be failure. That is not motivational when we are so beginning with this process. (5)</p>
	<p>There is some perceived unfairness between the teams; some teams participate actively despite their own busy schedules, some fall under the bar. However, remuneration is not needed for OKR work, but for one's basic work.<sup>5</sup> (6)</p>
<p><i>The courage to fail requires psychological security from the work community. What thoughts arise from this? 9</i></p>	<p>People try to avoid failures<sup>1</sup>. (1)</p>
	<p>We have courage to fail in our team (2)</p>
	<p>Even if it doesn't go exactly as planned, it's not the end of the world for anyone. We must be aware that if some key results in the future are on some individuals' responsibility, does it change the game? (3)</p>
	<p>sometimes when you try hard, you can't always succeed, that's how it's sometime is. Of course, you also have to go through why it didn't work out. We managed to think about what those factors are in the background so that we can do better the next time. If we compare our team's OKRs, in the previous round we probably had too big goals. And secondly, the goals must be very concrete for the team. (4)</p>
	<p>As a supervisor I highlight the positive side to team members. If 90 % is done, team should not be disappointed that 10 % was not achieved. Team members are honest and open. (5)</p>

	We are allowed to fail <sup>2</sup> . This is also really important and should be adhered to. OKR increases understanding of the effects and encourages experimentation. The team has a big impact on success and the atmosphere that enables success. (6)
<i>What motivates you the most in achieving your goals? The content of the work, salary and remuneration, work community, success at work, you can use your skills, the company's values are the same as mine. 10</i>	Salary <sup>1</sup> and remuneration. Content of the work. Success at work. (1)
	job content <sup>2</sup> and success at work (2)
	Content of the work. Company values. Team raises quite quickly if it notices even a small contradiction between values and daily work including OKR. This is a positive thing. (3)
	the work community <sup>3</sup> , and success at work. there are certainly people in the team who will answer salary and reward.(4)
	Content of the work and salary. But when certain level is achieved in salary, then the work content is what matters most. For senior people for sure the content of work. For younger people the community. (5)
	customer satisfaction <sup>4</sup> and financial compensation are the most important motivators. (6)
<i>About stakeholder thinking (Performance Prism): what stakeholders does Company have? Are they sufficiently considered in the strategy? 11</i>	Customers <sup>1</sup> are mentioned well. Partners not. Schools moderate. (1)
	Customers are well considered. Tech partners <sup>2</sup> e.g. Microsoft is not taken into account anymore. (2)
	our own personnel <sup>3</sup> and customers are very strongly represented in it, which is good. Investors, authorities, competitors mentioned? (3)
	The personnel is well observed. As well as customers. These are the most important ones and those are well presented. There could be subcontractors, partners, competitors? The owners? Organizations, students, our future employees, authorities, media? Winning sales culture is to mind not so top level target (of all Q1 key results) (5)
	Stakeholders are hardly visible, but stakeholders should not be visible on a wider scale. The most important stakeholders, e.g. Suppliers, EXTs, consultants, client's customers. (6)
<i>How is the maximization of the value produced for the customer, continuous improvement and reduction of waste</i>	Overall this kind of way of working is on Company's DNA. (1)
	That's the essence of everything (2)
	We decided that we would try to link okr-work as close to team members' own everyday life as possible. The way people learn and do work, benefits customers. (3)
	Yes, lean elements are there in everyday work. (4)

<p><i>reflected in the work?</i> 12</p>	<p>maybe it's more important for us as a company to maximize value than for the customer. but it's always the case that there may be so many moving parts in projects and other things that affect that. (5)</p>
	<p>It can be seen, but OKR is not the core channel here. At T1, increasing customer value was involved, and it was perceived as good. (6)</p>
<p><i>OKRs help to prioritize and focus on the right things. This should help with "doing a lot of things but getting nowhere". Anything that is not in the OKR is a lower priority to do. How do you feel about these thoughts?</i> 13</p>	<p>The intention is to go and I believe that round by round we will get more in that direction. for example, how doing things emphasizes your own doing and not the company's goals. (1)</p>
	<p>very big contradictions. At least in our team and I assume that in the whole company, the highest level, the highest priority, is the project work that we sell to the customer<sup>1</sup>. Because we are not a product house where this prio-OKR principle could work. (2)</p>
	<p>In general, when we all do work for the customer, no work is low priority - everything you do is important from that viewpoint. Where as OKR work is seen additional work<sup>2</sup>. Important as such but it is done if there is time left. (3)</p>
	<p>New team benefits from OKRs. It gives the methods and a goal how team can work together. (4)</p>
	<p>I wouldn't sign it completely. We do so much more. (5)</p>
	<p>Customer is always the number one. (6)</p>
<p><i>How do you feel about the conflict between billable work and OKR work? Are there any contradictions? How could a conflict be avoided?</i> 14</p>	<p>regardless of the method, time must be left to implement the strategy. OKR is not overloading<sup>1</sup> the team and time is left for doing OKRs (1)</p>
	<p>People are very committed in doing the work for the customers well. everything that interrupts their main project work is felt like disturbance. I have emphasized to the team members that you can really spend time on this, that even if the billing percentage drops for a while, it has no practical significance in the long run. But people don't dare to take that time away from customer work still. Maybe people are afraid that what customers think about the situation (time spent for OKRs instead of working for the project). (3)</p>
	<p>People with overload situation: I've reduced their OKR load. Then there is a conflict. But on the other hand, if I like to get the team's goals done so that it is useful for customer work, then the conflict decreases. (4)</p>
	<p>if it helps us to improve some of our processes or to focus on the right things, then indirectly it may very well be that it somehow increases the efficiency in project work. It's just not as it seems and there is a contradiction in them. When it's emphasized that you can spend this much time on this work without having to explain it to anyone, would at least save the time of our team leaders and maybe others as well. (5)</p>

	<p>There is a perceived conflict between OKR work and customer invoiced work: if 100% is allocated to customer work, you cannot promote OKR. In an ideal situation: OKRs are billable work. OKR work can be split for several different projects. However, on a personal level, working hours are met easily here. (6)</p>
<p><i>What is the benefits of using OKR in your work? 15</i></p>	<p>the strategy has been brought concretely<sup>1</sup> to everyone's awareness. frustrating to rewrite key results. (1)</p>
	<p>gives variety to everyday life<sup>2</sup>.It formalizes in a certain way things that would anyways be promoted in the team. (2)</p>
	<p>OKR owners have modified the targets concrete for the team leaders. Some easy topics like green coding and great work community. OKR has brought concreteness eg. How otherwise teams can do "grow profitability"? The value is also that OKR gives goals for a team. Or maybe people think that OKR objectives are on team leaders responsibility (and not for teams responsibility). (3)</p>
	<p>through this I have learned to know the organization and team better. (4)</p>
	<p>there is such a benefit from it now that there are some common goals<sup>4</sup> across the units. And then if there is something like that, when you have the idea that you would like to improve something or focus<sup>3</sup> on something or bring some new ideas like some people have, then when it is put on the OKR level, it is in a way easier to get a permit to proceed and do it. (5)</p>
	<p>I get to know<sup>6</sup> the team and team members. Gives all team members a voice. Creates the framework for collaboration<sup>5</sup>. (6)</p>
	<p>Does the team lack the knowledge or skills to complete the OKRs?16</p>
<p>Make sure that OKRs are part of new employee orientation program<sup>1</sup>. Also for new supervisors.(1)</p>	
<p>to find the right instructions when it's needed (2)</p>	
<p>Sometimes unrealistic ideas come from the team<sup>2</sup>. There needs to be some kind of economic realism. (3)</p>	
<p>There have been good instructions from PersonX. (4)</p>	
<p>I would say that our team is pretty much aware what to do and how to do. (5)</p>	
<p>A functional tool to support OKR operations. Showing the results: now the image is created that OKRs are done, but the results are not interesting?<sup>3</sup> The model and implementation work is exciting, but there is no time<sup>4</sup>. Support and help have been received. It would be good to deal with the results - not at team level but as key result level. For example, Company info: highlight the good things, how the company can and utilize the results. (6)</p>	
<p><i>How exciting do you find doing OKRs? 17</i></p>	<p>it's been pretty much the same for everyone, maybe a little bit of a compulsion, so I have to admit that it's maybe not so exciting. some goals more exciting than</p>

	<p>others, e.g. information security. the most interesting part here is that the team gets to highlight what they themselves want and that is perhaps the best part of this model<sup>1</sup>. (2)</p>
	<p>from my own point of view, I've liked this model. It is so concrete, so easy to approach. Big team: There are a lot of silent participants in the planning phase<sup>2</sup> and when we go forward in implementing the enthusiasm dies down a bit. (3)</p>
	<p>It's not really my favorite because of my personality reasons. But we do what needs to be done and we have been successful too. (4)</p>
	<p>It is nice to have common targets with teammates<sup>3</sup>. Otherwise, that kind of doing would be minimal. (5)</p>
<p><i>Have you been heard and understood in matters related to OKR? Where do you get support, do you get enough support?</i> 18</p>	<p>the discussions have been quite few. support has been received if requested. (1)</p>
	<p>Very good support from PersonX and PersonY. Future need: how to activate the team<sup>1</sup>. bet that our team is not the only one that suffers a little from loss of motivation after the planning sessions. (3)</p>
	<p>PersonX has been a really big help here. if you ask, the answer will come almost immediately. Now that PersonX leaves us, we need to find one such inspiring person who will motivate us go forward with the same intensity as PersonX. (4)</p>
	<p>I have been very well supported. Haven't asked much. Information level has been good and then I have acted quite independently. (5)</p>
<p><i>What did I forget to ask, what do you want to add?</i> 19</p>	<p>Team uses Miro board instead of 4Straction tool because 4Straction is irritating. (1)</p>
	<p>certain people are more open, and certain people are more shy, and that it will take time before the group that dares to open their mouths grows, and that in a way it will take a few rounds that everybody are in the process. (4)</p>
	<p>4Straction: we need be confident that we want to recommend the tool, and now we can't do it. Tool is slowing down doing or something and it's probably one of the reasons that they don't want to participate in this so much, because they feel that the tool is so inconvenient. basic functions have been made really difficult. (5)</p>
<p>Interviewees</p>	<p>(1) team leader 28.6.23  (2) team leader and two team members 28.6.23  (3) team leader 27.6.23  (4) team leader 27.6.23  (5) team leader 26.6.23</p>

	(6) team leader 20.6.23
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Attachment 3: Example of the coding and classification of the interview content in Miro board

