

CUSTOMER CASE

How can the creative industry implement OKR?

We asked our client Atyp, a creative advertising and media agency, to share their journey with OKR.



Hågen Pettersen
CEO

How long have you been using OKR?

We started with an OKR opportunity meeting in June 2020, during Atyp's first operational year.

What challenges did you face when you started?

Atyp was a brand-new company formed through the merger of a full-service advertising and media agency and a full-service advertising agency. The merger was completed in December 2019, establishing and co-locating the new company.

The new company needed a shared vision, value foundation, strategy, goals, action plans, and a common direction. The leadership team had to lead this work in the midst of a pandemic with limited opportunities to work together physically.

What made you decide to use OKR?

As advisors for marketing and communication, we are accustomed to solving challenges that contribute to achieving business goals for our clients. To achieve the same internally and manage our internal activities, we chose OKR because we felt the methodology aligned with Atyp's desires and needs. The CEO was first introduced to the methodology by one of Futureworks' OKR advisors, who then gathered the leadership team for an opportunity meeting. The OKR advisor also had individual conversations with the leaders before we decided to implement OKR.

How have you addressed the challenges using OKR?

We find that OKR has two important phases: implementation and daily operations. We chose to allocate ample time for implementation. During this phase, we closely collaborated with one of Futureworks' OKR advisors who actively participated in our leadership meetings. Additionally, we had individual follow-ups with all members of the leadership team. We used the last half of year 0 as preparation to start from January 1st of year 1. When we started year 1, we continued the participation of the OKR advisor to receive feedback on how we implemented the methodology in our daily operations. After 4-5 months, we felt ready to stand on our own.

OKR is a process where you continuously learn more about what it takes to set new goals, desired key results, and actions to achieve them. Therefore, we have learned a lot about:

- How we should involve the rest of the organization to carry out the activities
- How we should evaluate and implement changes throughout the year.

This is also a very important success criterion because we continuously learn more about what it takes to adapt the working methodology to our culture, thereby achieving better results.

What results do you see now?

The entire leadership team agrees that it is very motivating to see that this way of working yields results beyond what we would have achieved without such a methodology. Additionally, the leadership team feels that the methodology contributes to a stronger culture because all employees perform their work more in line with the company's values and rules.

What lessons have emerged?

We have experienced many learning points. A couple of the most important are:

- Goal management yields results because it provides a common focus and commits leaders to carry out prioritized tasks and activities in line with deadlines. It helps us do more of the right and important things and less of things that drain us of resources and energy. We simply prioritize better in a busy everyday life.
- Leadership takes time. It is necessary to prioritize time for carrying out activities that will contribute to achieving our strategic goals in a busy everyday life characterized by the need for short-term operational focus. This is a challenging prioritization in a leadership team where most have leadership tasks as additional responsibilities to their operational positions. However, we have solved this by focusing on delegation and increased involvement of other employees in the various areas of expertise that the leadership team is responsible for.

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What have you done to adapt OKR to your culture and organization?

- We inform about goals, activities, and results.
- We evaluate and present results.
- We use employee conversations and our value foundation as important criteria for evaluation and improvement.
- We aggregate improvement points, discuss them in functional areas, and develop measures that people can recognize and identify with.

In this way, employees' opinions are seen and heard. Furthermore, they gain a better understanding of the measures and what it takes, which leads to more motivation to contribute with the necessary measures and activities.

What advice do you have for other companies considering starting with OKR?

- Think carefully about the organization's attitude towards and experience with goal management. Remember that there is varying degrees of knowledge and understanding of this way of working. Adjust the degree of involvement accordingly.
- Use employee conversations and employee satisfaction surveys as important tools to receive input from employees. Summarize, aggregate, and inform employees about measures in light of this.

In this way, we have experienced greater understanding and involvement in the work with the methodology, in a way that does not require us to constantly talk about the methodology to get things done.



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