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# NEXT STEP

## HOW GOOGLE PLANS FOR SUCCESS

Did you have a stellar first quarter? Great evaluations? Great sales? Great engagement? While it's a time to look back, it's also a time to look ahead and decide what you want to achieve in the coming months. And what better way to go about it than OKR? The planning technique that's fuelled Google, Uber, Zynga and Intel's exponential growth and success.

### What is OKR?

OKR stands for Objectives and Key Results. They include not only the aggressive goals you will pursue in say a quarter, but the definable, quantifiable steps you will take to reach them. They can be used for both quarterly and annual planning, and can be set at the organisational, team and individual level. Let's see what they look like.

#### Organisational OKR

Objective: Raise brand awareness

- Key result 1: Increase Facebook engagement by 30 percent
- Key result 2: Launch customer engagement campaign by March 10
- Key result 3: Increase social media reach to one new target market
- Key result 4: Introduce thought leadership programme by placing guest articles on three related sites

#### Digital team OKR

Objective: Increase social media engagement by 40 percent

- Key result 1: Identify two most popular social media sites and one new target audience and engage strategy by March 5
- Key result 2: Partake in five Twitter chats involving industry leaders
- Key result 3: Respond to new Facebook comments within two hours
- Key result 4: Increase followers on social media sites by 20 percent

#### Team member OKR

Objective: Increase social media connections by 20 percent

- Key result 1: Multiply posting frequency on Facebook by three times
- Key result 2: Establish presence on LinkedIn and Instagram
- Key result 3: Join 10 LinkedIn groups with at least 2,500 members each and leave comments on the 10 most popular discussions
- Key result 4: Gain 100 followers on Quora by posting 10 answers and 2 questions every week

Don't crazy with goal-setting and wear yourself thin. There should be no more than



five objectives and four key results at each level. Team member goals should reflect team goals, team goals should reflect department goals, and department goals should reflect organisational goals. They are not for evaluating performance—they're to push forward the whole organisation.

#### The OKR checklist

1. Ambitious. OKRs are supposed to make

you nervous. If you're always meeting or outdoing your goals, you're not setting the bar high enough.

2. Measurable. Attach numeric values to your goals—percentages, monetary amounts, or a due date. Vague terms like "More customers" are a no-no.

3. Public. OKRs have to be visible throughout the entire organisation, regardless of the level

at which it was made. This fosters collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

4. Graded. At the end of the set period, grade how you did on all of your key results—0 being "Didn't come close" and 1 "Aced it."

#### Grading your results

If your objective is to increase social media connections by 20 percent and you managed to increase it 10 percent, give yourself a score

of 0.5. Average key result scores for an objective score, and average your objective scores for an overall quarter/yearly grade. If you're always scoring full points, start setting more challenging goals. Aim high and feel good if you're hitting at least a 0.6 or 0.7.

Google says it's better to miss your goal than to overachieve. A low score isn't a sign of failure—it means you might not to re-focus your efforts or change your approach. An article on Wrike says scores benefit everyone by showing you what not to do, what to do differently, and what to continue doing more of.

#### How to set OKRs

What sets OKRs apart from other planning techniques is the fact that around 60 percent of organisational objectives are bottom-up. Each employee is asked to submit OKRs they think the department should prioritise. Meetings with the managers help develop team goals and align them with company goals.

Employees then set individual OKRs that support the larger goals and meet with their managers to decide and negotiate what they want to work on in the coming months.

Mid-period team check-ups are held to share progress and make necessary adjustments. Goals aren't set in stone—if assumptions you made last year aren't accurate, make changes. At the end-of-quarter wrap-up, share your grades, explain your outputs, and outline what modifications will be made for next time. Reflect and start setting OKRs for the new quarter.

OKRs are useful as references for individuals because they'll always have a detailed breakdown of what they've achieved in the past based on data that quantifies their contributions to the organisation. Nurture a culture where employees can shoot for the moon, be bold without fearing repercussions, and don't have to play it safe for short-term incentives.

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Skills that constitute your IQ—like abstract reasoning, language skills, and identifying patterns and relationships—can all be developed with training. Some people may be able to build those skills faster and with less effort, but we all have the ability to improve our basic intelligence.

In fact, Online Course Report shows that you can raise your IQ by almost 20 points in just 7 days. Think you can't get smarter? Think again. It'll just take a week to increase your IQ score. Here's how:

#### Sunday

Activity: Play games and solve puzzles

Why: A major part of IQ testing is measuring fluid intelligence, which is your ability to adapt and solve problems.

How long: 25 minutes per day  
IQ points added: 4

#### Monday

Activity: Take creatine supplements (but not too much)

Why: Creatine, long used to improve athletic performance, has also been found to boost memory and intelligence; it also helps maintain energy levels in the brain.

How much: No more than 5

grams per day (unless you're also trying to bulk up)

IQ points added: 2

#### Tuesday

Activity: Put down the steak

Why: Lifestyle and nutritional choices of vegetarians are associated with high intellectual functioning and slower cognitive decline; researchers have found that changing your diet could bring back 10 years of your IQ age.

How long: 10 minutes to prepare a healthy dish

IQ points added: 1

#### Wednesday

Activity: Play a social game like Words with Friends

Why: We already that games help boost your fluid intelligence, but the social interaction of a game like Words With Friends naturally stimulates intelligence by requiring your brain to collect, organise and recall information.

How long: A complete game takes

about 50 minutes

IQ points added: 1

#### Thursday

Activity: Try yourself

Why: As with most activities, practice can make perfect, and taking a practice IQ test can quickly prime the pump and improve your IQ.

How long: 30 minutes

IQ points added: 2 points

#### Friday

Activity: Exercise

Why: Cardiovascular exercise can raise verbal intelligence by as much as 50%.

How long: 20-30 minutes per day

IQ points added: 5

#### Saturday

Activity: Pick up the controller

Why: First-person video games have been determined to enhance visual awareness in the real world.

How long: 60 minutes a day

IQ points added: 2 points

Total points added in 1 week: 17

## Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

### 3 benefits of breaking your routine

In her book *Mindfulness*, Ellen Langer, professor of psychology at Harvard University, tells the story of a generation of cooks who would cut off each end of a pot roast before putting it in the pan. When a family friend inquired about the odd practice, the family did some investigation work and found out it started that way because the pan the original cook used over 50 years back was too small to hold the entire thing.

In the chaos of everyday life, routines can be comforting. They are also the best way to pick up a good habit and can reduce the decision fatigue that accompanies the many different choices we face every day. But as the example of the family of cooks shows, sometimes our routines are not doing us any favours. Here are four ways you can benefit from breaking it.

#### 1. Better focus

Do you find your mind wandering before your 45 straight minutes of work are up? Rest assured, it's a fairly non-fatal phenomenon. Our brains are constantly seeking novelty. Breaking your routine can provide the stimulus it needs, improving your engagement with the new and not-so-mundane task at hand.

#### 2. Better memory

Although repetition is commonly associated with retaining information, turns out that changing location stimulates the hippocampus, which stores long-term memories. Take a rickshaw instead of the car, work in a different spot, or go out for lunch break. Benedict Carey, author and report on medicine and science at The New York Times, says that changing your work environment and daily movements maximises the



brain's effectiveness and allows you to retain more information.

#### 3. Greater creativity

Remember that time you were staring at the computer screen like a zombie, your fingers refusing to type your big ideas into words, but then you took a break and came back and suddenly the creative juices started flowing? That wasn't just chance.

When you get outside of the standard flow of work, you're actually exercising your brain's neuroplasticity. That's just a cool word for your brain's ability to

connect the dots between thoughts. The more "plastic" your brain becomes, the more flexible it is and the more creative thoughts and connections we're able to come up with.

We tend to follow routines to the extent that we don't even realise when they no longer benefit us. Take a step back, find out what works well for you, re-evaluate, make some tweaks, and reset yourself on the course to achieve your goals.

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