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Trending Questions on OKRs & Employee Engagement

Answered by Betsy Summers, Principal Analyst, Forrester

Introduction

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, business leaders have come to regard employee engagement with new importance. Learning how to keep employees motivated during this uncertain time, and ensuring that remote employees still feel connected is becoming the top priority for many organizations.

Betsy Summers, Principal Analyst for Forrester's Future of Work team, was the featured speaker in a recent webinar hosted by Profit.co. This webinar, The Future of Employee Engagement: From HR to the Executive Suite, discussed how engagement is one of the most important elements of employee experience, as well as business success. Summers discussed how winning organizations, use goal and execution management frameworks like OKRs to build engaged teams that collaborate with focus and alignment. These organizations achieve stretch goals consistently while the employees feel invested in their companies, inspired by the organization mission, bringing their best everyday and learning continuously.

In this eBook, we explore five top questions concerning OKRs and employee engagement. Reading through, you will learn why so many businesses are now utilizing OKRs to execute their goals, also how OKRs can help promote better employee engagement.

How can we use OKRs to build high-performance teams?

High performance teams are focused, contribute to collective success, and achieve results. The OKR framework supports all of these attributes by creating clarity about what needs to be done and posts those objectives and outcomes publicly.

Transparency is important to high-performing teams to enable collaboration, recognition and learning. Every person, from the CEO to team members, collaboratively creates OKRs and shares them throughout the organization.

Doing so helps people to both focus on what they need to achieve based on the agreed-upon outcomes and assess the impact of change.

Performance appraisals are stressful for everyone. How do we make this more productive?

For those organizations still conducting performance reviews, there are several ways to alleviate the stress that results from feelings of bias, unfairness, work unseen by the manager, opaque career growth opportunities, and the subjectivity of appraisals. First, investment in a tool that provides managers with continuous, objective data about their employees' performance. That way, the manager can provide comprehensive, objective appraisals in less time.

Secondly, the HR team must make sure the prompt fields that managers have to fill out about each employee are scrubbed of subjective questions like "what is this person's strengths and weaknesses?" Rather, the manager should be prompted to reflect on each employee's contributions and accomplishments. Third, no matter what the appraisal process entails, the manager should provide as much transparency into how appraisal, calibrations, and compensation evaluations are done.

03 We are not a silicon valley tech company. Will OKRs work for us?

OKRs are absolutely feasible and valuable for any type of organization, no matter it's an industry or business model. The OKR methodology provides collective understanding of an organization's primary goals, defines a common language for how results will be communicated and tracked, and prioritizes continuous monitoring and transparency on each team's projects.

As each organization considers its mission (what it wants to achieve) and the big initiatives to achieve it (the how), OKRs provide a clear structure and repeatable methodology for achieving results and building a shared culture of transparency and accomplishment. In connecting the "what" and the "how" of organizational success, OKRs will add value to any organization.

What are the top 3 problems customers can expect to solve by implementing OKRs?

OKRs help build high performance teams and insight-driven organizations. OKRs make a huge impact on organizational results because they solve the biggest challenges between organizations and success: lack of clarity, lack of collective focus, and lack of measurable objectives.

In a traditional goal-setting approach, there isn't much emphasis on measurable outcomes, outside the roles where metrics are central, like sales or customer service. In the OKR methodology, every employee works towards quantifiable results, so they know exactly what success looks like.

05   Is Employee Engagement now an executive priority? What should the leadership team do to improve employee engagement?

Employee Engagement has long been a priority for executive teams, because of the link between engagement, productivity, profitability, and retention. They know it's important, but few succeed in execution. When trying to improve engagement, an organization must invest in employee experience, which entails providing the necessary tools, environment, and culture so that employees can engage meaningfully with their work.

Great EX companies invest in helping people build their personal resources and resilience; fostering a transparent, supportive environment; improving the resources and tools that relate directly to employees' work; increasing access to, and the quality of, organization-level resources; and providing superior development opportunities.

About Betsy Summers

Principal Analyst at Forrester

Betsy Summers is a principal analyst on the Future of Work team, specializing in human capital management (HCM). With a wide range of HCM experience including research, strategy, design, and delivery, Betsy has been both a practitioner and a strategic partner to heads of HR, talent, and learning. At Forrester, she helps leaders in employee experience, talent management, HR, and IT connect talent strategy to business outcomes and ultimately to vendor and technology selection. Her marketing and strategy roles at provider organizations have given Betsy a perspective that allows her to help clients get value from their technology investments.

Previous Work Experience

Prior to Forrester, Betsy ran Compete & strategy for Cornerstone OnDemand, which included deep customer experience surveys and interviews, close monitoring of the HCM vendor landscape, and making recommendations across the company to improve differentiation. Her work experience also includes research, professional services, and consulting, all aligned to talent management and broader HCM strategy. She has worked with global talent leaders and practitioners from startups to the world's largest companies. With cross-functional expertise across marketing, product and service strategy, design thinking, coaching, and talent, Betsy helps people leaders create successful strategies that align to culture, values, and organizational outcomes.

Education

Betsy holds a BA in American studies from Barnard College of Columbia University.

About Profit.co

Profit.co provides an enterprise-class Saas application for companies to define, manage and execute their goals. Companies and teams can define their goals as OKRs and manage their collaborative execution through the full life cycle of OKRs. Quarterly goals (OKRs) can be broken down to daily "Tasks'' and managed through our "Task management" application. We also provide "Employee Development" and "Employee Engagement" modules to facilitate the people processes in achievement of goals. Profit.co also provides coaching on the OKR

Profit.co is the only results management platform that has all these five capabilities Strategy, OKRs, Tasks, Employee Development, and Employee Engagement. We added several features to integrate these circles better so that businesses can focus on what matters better while motivating and engaging their employees on what matters for the business.