OKRs vs KPIs Cheat Sheet

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How to Use Both to Drive Smarter Growth

Most teams don't fail because they lack ambition — they fail because they track the wrong things, or use the right tools in the wrong way. This cheat sheet helps you decide when to use OKRs, when to lean on KPIs, and how to make them work together.

What's the Difference?

	OKRs	KPIs
Purpose	Drive focused change	Monitor ongoing performance
Scope	Strategic initiatives	Core business metrics
Cadence	Set each quarter or cycle	Monitored weekly/monthly
Flexibility	Can change as priorities shift	Should remain stable over time
Examples	Launch a new product feature	Monthly active users, churn rate

Use OKRs When…

- You're launching something new (e.g. a product, campaign, or process)

- You want to push the team beyond the status quo

- You're trying to align multiple teams around one bold goal

OKRs are great for *driving change* and focusing your team's energy on what matters most — for a specific period of time.

Use KPIs When…

- You want to measure performance over time

- You're tracking something essential to business health

- You need a stable baseline to detect improvements or declines

KPIs are best for *maintaining excellence* and spotting when something's off.

How to Use Both Together

Here's how OKRs and KPIs can complement each other:

Example: You want to increase customer retention.

- **KPI:** Current retention rate = 80%

- **OKR:** Objective: Increase customer retention to 90% by Q4

    - KR1: Interview 15 churned customers

    - KR2: Ship 3 new onboarding improvements

    - KR3: Reach 75% NPS among new users

Use the KPI to *measure the outcome*. Use OKRs to *drive the improvement*.

Quick Tips for Founders

- Don't confuse KPIs with Key Results. KPIs are *outcomes*, not action items.

- Avoid tracking too many OKRs at once — 3–5 max is plenty.

- Revisit both regularly. Use OKRs to evolve, KPIs to stabilize.

- Let your KPIs inform your next set of OKRs.

Want help writing better OKRs?

👉 Download our [Free OKR Writing Workbook](#) for real templates, examples, and prompts.

Want a Simpler Way to Track OKRs and KPIs?

Spreadsheets get messy. Dashboards get bloated. OKRs Tool is built for lean, fast-moving teams that want clarity — not complexity.

With OKRs Tool, you can:

- Create better OKRs in minutes using AI prompts

- Track both OKRs and KPIs in one place — no tabs or templates

- Share async check-ins right from Slack

Start free and see why more startups are switching to OKRs Tool.

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