WAVENINE

CASE STUDY

How AssetMark turned a new five-year strategy into everyday work

FINANCIAL SERVICES · 1,000+ EMPLOYEES · WORKBOARD AI

AssetMark, a wealth management tech leader with over $100 billion in assets under management, worked with Wave Nine to roll out OKRs and WorkBoard AI. Today, every team is anchored to the strategy, and leaders review outcomes.

5 pillars

brought to life through annual and quarterly OKRs

2 quarters

to roll out WorkBoard AI and a custom operating rhythm

1 platform

for all OKRs, replacing status emails and static slide decks

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

AssetMark, a leading provider of wealth management and investment solutions for financial advisors across the U.S., with over $100 billion in assets under management

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

COMPANY SIZE

1,000+

CHALLENGE

A new five-year strategy without the means to execute it, a strategy that had never been articulated across the organization, and teams focused on tasks and deliverables

SOLUTION

WorkBoard AI and a custom operating rhythm, rolled out by Wave Nine over two quarters, with software and OKR training and OKR-setting workshops for leadership and L2 teams

RESULTS

Everyone knows the strategy, work is directly linked to it, discussions focus on outcomes, the leadership team is fully engaged, and other levels are excited to start using OKRs

THE CHALLENGE

A BOLD STRATEGY WITHOUT A WAY TO EXECUTE IT

A bold new strategy called for a bold new framework, and the right platform to bring it to life.

AssetMark is a leading provider of wealth management and investment solutions for financial advisors across the U.S. With over $100 billion in assets under management, it supports independent advisors in delivering better outcomes for their clients through tech-enabled platforms, curated investment solutions and deep client support.

After a major acquisition, AssetMark moved under the wing of a new Group CEO with a bold mandate: clarify the company's five-year strategy and execute on it fast. The ambition was there, but the alignment wasn't.

Strategic conversations had existed before the acquisition, but the strategy had never been clearly articulated or operationalized across the organization. AssetMark lacked a shared way to focus, prioritize and measure what mattered.

THE CHALLENGE

A CEO WHO KNEW OKRS

The new Group CEO, Lou Maiuri, knew the OKR framework from previous roles. He was confident that implementing it throughout AssetMark would drive the transparency, alignment and velocity needed to execute the strategy. He also knew that rolling out a framework in an organization the size of AssetMark would take some external help, and a new platform to track OKR progress. AssetMark faced three challenges:

01

A new strategy without the means of actually executing it

02

A strategy that had never been articulated across the organization

03

Teams focused on tasks and deliverables, with too little attention on outcomes

THE SEARCH

FINDING THE RIGHT PLATFORM AND PARTNER

When it came time to pick a new software solution, Esi Minta-Jacobs, head of AssetMark's Human Resources and Program Management Groups, did her homework. With her team, she surveyed the landscape and quickly realized that not all platforms were created equal.

Many platforms had OKRs, but not as a main feature. OKRs often seemed like an afterthought, something the developers had tacked on at the last minute. That's where WorkBoard AI stood out. It was purpose-built for OKRs, and it showed. From strategic alignment to structured tracking and reporting, it was clearly designed to support real OKR adoption at scale.

MANY PLATFORMS

OKRs as an afterthought, tacked on at the last minute

WORKBOARD AI

Purpose-built for OKRs, from strategic alignment to structured tracking and reporting

> **We saw a lot of tools that were doing OKRs...kind of. But WorkBoard AI was all in. It was sophisticated, and over time, we've come to see it's even more sophisticated than we initially thought.**

Esi Minta-Jacobs
EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

THE DECISION

WHAT MADE ASSETMARK CHOOSE WORKBOARD AI AND WAVE NINE

When the team brought WorkBoard AI to the table, CEO Lou Maiuri lit up. He had worked with the platform at a previous company and was already convinced of its value. His previous company hadn't taken full advantage of it, but Lou had seen enough to know it was an industry leader and the right choice to power AssetMark's strategy execution. Best of all, Wave Nine was ready to help AssetMark implement it and use it to its full capabilities.

WORKBOARD AI

- A core focus on OKRs
- An industry leader in helping large enterprises align, measure and drive strategic priorities at scale

TOGETHER WITH WAVE NINE

- The ability to connect the strategy to OKRs, tasks and outcomes
- Wave Nine's consulting experience in the finance industry

> Wave Nine is very involved and they're very connected. But at the same time, they're very light-touch, meaning they don't have an army of consultants coming in and bombarding you with tons of information. We have a dedicated focused consultant partnered with us hand in hand. And that's been a real pleasure.

Esi Minta-Jacobs
EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

THE ROLLOUT

A PERSONALIZED ROLLOUT

Implementing a new strategy execution platform like WorkBoard AI is a huge shift for any organization. For AssetMark, Wave Nine was the partner that made that shift possible, and successful.

That meant educating teams on the fundamentals of OKRs, guiding them through change management and building a foundation of understanding before a single key result was entered into WorkBoard AI.

Wave Nine came without a slide deck full of buzzwords and generic templates. It co-created tailored solutions that fit AssetMark's needs. Together, they designed a bespoke rollout strategy that took the complexity of WorkBoard AI and broke it into digestible, bite-sized chunks. Wave Nine's deep knowledge of the platform let it move at AssetMark's pace, so the team never felt overwhelmed and always felt supported.

WHAT ASSETMARK DIDN'T GET
An army of consultants
A slide deck full of buzzwords
Generic templates pulled off the shelf

WHAT WAVE NINE DELIVERED
A dedicated consultant, hand in hand with the program team
A bespoke rollout in bite-sized chunks, over two quarters
OKR and software training, plus OKR-setting workshops for leadership and L2 teams

> **Wave Nine is very efficient. A lot of consulting firms will come in and give you a lot of words and a lot of paper, and...just a lot of noise, really. Wave Nine is more about asking what the problem is that you are trying to solve and how they can support you. And they come back very quickly with a custom solution that isn't just something pulled from off the shelf.**

Esi Minta-Jacobs
EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

SETTING THE OKRS

Wave Nine worked with AssetMark to build a custom OKR program tied directly to five strategic pillars:

GROWTH	CLIENT EXPERIENCE	INNOVATION	ORGANIZATIONAL SCALE	PEOPLE & CULTURE
ANNUAL · LEADERSHIP	Leadership OKRs for each pillar, defined in OKR workshops with the executive team			
QUARTERLY · L2 TEAMS	Team OKRs	Team OKRs	Team OKRs	Team OKRs	Team OKRs

In OKR workshops, Wave Nine helped the executive leadership team define the annual leadership OKRs for each pillar. Once those were in place, it was time to localize them into quarterly L2 OKRs across departments, so each team's goals connected back to the bigger picture.

This was done with one OKR workshop per team or department. Each team worked with a Wave Nine OKR expert to create its own quarterly OKRs that clearly fed into the overarching annual OKRs.

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> **Wave Nine has been very responsive to our needs. It's refreshing to not have to meet with 20 people and then wait for a solution or an outcome. I can get on the phone with them, talk about something, and then they quickly turn something around.**
>
> **Esi Minta-Jacobs**
> EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

THE RESULTS

EVERYONE HAS A NORTH STAR

Before the OKR rollout, teams focused on projects, deliverables and tasks, and they weren't always aligned on the outcomes those efforts were meant to drive. Now, everyone has a north star.

With Wave Nine's guidance and WorkBoard AI in place, AssetMark has become a company where every team is anchored to a set of clearly defined objectives. The five strategic pillars come to life through annual leadership OKRs, with quarterly team OKRs tied to them and driving execution.

Leaders now have a common language and a shared direction. Teams understand how their work contributes to the big picture. Conversations have shifted from status updates to outcome-driven discussions.

It didn't take a massive army of consultants or a heavy-handed transformation. It took an efficient, high-impact rollout tailored to AssetMark's culture, pace and priorities. Today, AssetMark's strategy is embedded in its work, well beyond the boardroom.

Thanks to the rollout:

- **Everyone knows the strategy**
- **Work is directly linked to the strategy**
- **There are more outcome-focused discussions**
- **The leadership team is fully engaged**
- **OKRs are easily tracked in one platform**
- **Other levels of the organization are excited to start using OKRs**

> **Wave Nine made sure that we understood WorkBoard AI and how it could support our work. Their coaches also worked with each of the individual teams to make sure they were building high-quality OKRs. It was educational and also got everyone excited about the future of OKRs at AssetMark.**

Esi Minta-Jacobs
EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

THE RESULTS

FROM LOOSE ALIGNMENT TO METRIC-INFORMED DECISIONS

AssetMark has gone from loose alignment around strategy to a structured, metric-informed process that elevates how decisions get made across the business. Leadership used to review long lists of initiatives or rely on short-term wins. Today it reviews outcomes: Are we moving the metrics that matter? Are our objectives contributing to one of our five strategic pillars? This shift has brought a new level of focus and clarity to executive reviews and planning conversations.

Team leaders also use OKRs to ask and answer smarter questions:

PURPOSE

What are we really trying to achieve with this project?

PROOF

How will we know if it worked?

FOCUS

Is there something we should stop doing based on the data?

> Wave Nine helped us make sure our objectives and key results weren't just words. They pushed us to think through whether our KRs really measured the outcomes we wanted. They helped us customize the way information is structured so we can use it in the right context, especially when having key conversations and making decisions.

Esi Minta-Jacobs
EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

With WorkBoard AI in place, real-time dashboards and progress indicators have replaced status emails and static slide decks. And because Wave Nine helped tailor the platform to AssetMark's needs, teams can easily see how their work ladders up to broader company goals.

BEFORE	NOW
Long lists of initiatives	Reviews of outcomes and the metrics that matter
Status emails and static slide decks	Real-time dashboards and progress indicators
Loose alignment around strategy	Every objective tied to a strategic pillar

PILLARS TO TEAM-LEVEL WORK

WORKBOARD AI SHOWCASE

How AssetMark uses WorkBoard AI to connect its five strategic pillars to team-level work and keep monthly reviews focused on outcomes.

01 · STRATEGY TO TEAM GOALS

OKR Management

AssetMark sets annual leadership OKRs for each of its five strategic pillars in WorkBoard AI, and every L2 department sets quarterly OKRs that feed into them.

BENEFITS

- All OKRs tracked in one platform
- Every team OKR traces back to a strategic pillar
- Live progress indicators that replace status emails

02 · LINE OF SIGHT

Alignment

Wave Nine tailored how AssetMark's goals are structured in WorkBoard AI, so teams can see how their work ladders up to company goals and leaders can check which pillar each objective serves.

BENEFITS

- Teams understand their contribution to the strategy
- Leaders share one language and direction
- Gaps between work and strategy become visible

03 · MONTHLY REVIEWS

Scorecards

AssetMark tags its high-impact OKRs, which then appear in a scorecard. Leaders use this scorecard in the monthly OKR review to discuss the highest-impact OKRs first.

BENEFITS

- Monthly reviews start with what matters most
- Focus stays sharp across a large number of OKRs
- No more static slide decks for reviews

Implemented with **Wave Nine**, the No. 1 implementation partner for WorkBoard AI.

WAVENINE

SPOTLIGHT

Q&A WITH ESI MINTA-JACOBS

Q

What is one of your favorite WorkBoard AI features?

"Since we have so many OKRs, the ability to identify and tag high impact OKRs has been really helpful. Once they're flagged, we can then have them show up in a scorecard. That is something that we're using right now when we review our OKRs each month. We're looking at those with the highest impact before talking about the others. To me, that is really powerful."

Q

If you could give one piece of advice to a company that is new to OKRs, what would it be?

"Crawl before you run. There's a lot to OKRs, so you have to be patient in making sure you take baby steps first, and then bring the organization along with you. You'll need to find advocates in the organization. You need people who are excited. Get them onboard and engaged because they're going to be the ones that help you evangelize the rest of the organization."

Q

Would you recommend Wave Nine to other companies looking to implement OKRs and OKR software?

"Yes, it's been a great partnership. AssetMark is very unique, and Wave Nine has done an amazing job at adapting to our structure, pace and needs. They really helped us bring this program to life."

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> **CRAWL BEFORE YOU RUN. THERE'S A LOT TO OKRS.**
>
> — **Esi Minta-Jacobs**
> EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

LOOKING AHEAD

SCALING THE PROGRAM, WITH ONGOING SUPPORT

AssetMark's OKR journey is just getting started. With the foundation in place, the focus is shifting from implementation to evolution: **"We've gotten better and better each quarter. It's not a sprint. It's a marathon,"** says Esi.

AssetMark plans to roll out the OKR framework and WorkBoard AI to the next level of the organization. The success of the initial rollout has already sparked the curiosity of L3 employees, with many asking: "How do I get involved and engaged with this?" As leaders grow more confident with OKRs, AssetMark is focused on building consistency, improving measurement practices and making OKRs a natural part of how work gets done. Wave Nine continues to play a key role, whether it's facilitating workshops, advising on best practices or helping teams make better use of WorkBoard AI's advanced features.

NEXT	FOCUS	GOAL
OKRs and WorkBoard AI for the next level of the organization	**Consistency and better measurement practices**	**OKRs as a natural part of how work gets done**

> **It's been really great having Wave Nine come in, saying 'here's what other companies in your industry are doing' or 'other companies who are implementing this have approached it this way.' Those types of conversations and that level of experience has really helped us build effective OKRs.**
>
> **Esi Minta-Jacobs**
> EVP, Program Management & HR Leader, AssetMark

STRATEGY EXECUTION WITH OKRS AND AI

Let's talk about what this could look like in your organization.

wavenine.com

WAVENINE

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About Wave Nine. Wave Nine are AI and OKR consultants for complex organizations. Founded in Silicon Valley, we have guided 300+ transformations in 30+ countries, trained 50,000+ people and are the No. 1 implementation partner for WorkBoard AI. We help leadership teams turn strategy into results: the right goals, a steady operating rhythm, and AI that the whole organization uses to run the business.

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