

How Appsfactory reached near-100% OKR adoption across a **matrix organization**

DIGITAL DESIGN & IT SERVICES · 400 EMPLOYEES · WORKBOARD AI

Appsfactory needed every business unit and functional department pulling in the same direction without losing the autonomy behind its creativity. With Wave Nine and WorkBoard AI, it built aligned OKRs at every level and reached near-100% adoption.

~100%

OKR adoption in the initial program

2

quarters from a Wave Nine-led rollout to internal ownership

4

goal areas behind OKRs at every level

■ AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Appsfactory, one of Germany's largest owner-managed digital agencies, designing and developing software and providing IT consulting for household names like Microsoft and Porsche

INDUSTRY

Digital Design & IT Services

COMPANY SIZE

400

CHALLENGE

Strategic alignment across a matrix organization while keeping a large degree of autonomy in the business units, better resource utilization in customer-facing roles, and transparent systems for tracking progress

SOLUTION

WorkBoard AI, implemented by Wave Nine: an executive workshop, goal-setting workshops for every business unit and functional department, certified internal OKR coaches, and a guided rollout handed to Appsfactory's own team in the second quarter

RESULTS

Near-100% OKR adoption in the initial program, company-wide alignment on larger goals, localized goals that support each business unit's autonomy, and better resource optimization

■ THE CHALLENGE

GROWING FAST WITHOUT LOSING DIRECTION

20% growth a year calls for structure that keeps everyone aligned and independent.

Appsfactory is one of Germany's largest owner-managed digital agencies. It designs and develops software and provides IT consulting for household names like Microsoft and Porsche. With a 20% year-over-year growth rate, the 14-year-old company expects to reach 500 employees within the next 18 months.

Rapid growth comes with its share of challenges. To improve strategic alignment and optimize resource allocation across its business units, Appsfactory's leadership team launched an OKR program. Appsfactory adopted OKRs to:

- ✓ achieve strategic alignment across the organization, while encouraging a large degree of autonomy within business units
- ✓ optimize resource utilization for customer-facing roles to improve profitability
- ✓ create transparent systems for evaluating progress and achieving goals

Appsfactory chose WorkBoard AI as its OKR execution platform and brought in Wave Nine to implement the program efficiently. It relied on an experienced team of consultants to avoid the false starts and pitfalls that often come with first-time OKR rollouts.



At a certain point in your company's growth, you need to implement structures that allow people to work independently while remaining aligned. You need to build teams that are self-aware and self-sufficient, but also work in the same direction and toward the same goals.

Roman Belter

Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

BALANCING ALIGNMENT AND AUTONOMY WITHIN A MATRIX STRUCTURE

As a matrix organization, Appsfactory groups the employees involved in customer work by their functional department, such as Design, Engineering or Quality Assurance, and by the business unit they serve, such as Health & Finance or Media.

BUSINESS UNIT	DESIGN	ENGINEERING	QUALITY ASSURANCE
Health & Finance	● Team	● Team	● Team
Media	● Team	● Team	● Team

Every team answers to two leaders: the head of its business unit and the head of its functional department.

Each team and each team member answers to two leaders: the head of their business unit and the head of their functional department. This prevents silos from forming and promotes collaboration within cross-functional teams.

A matrix structure offers many advantages, and it can also make goal alignment harder: employees may struggle to serve incompatible or conflicting goals. That's why Appsfactory chose WorkBoard AI and Wave Nine to implement an OKR process that keeps the benefits of a matrix organization and brings laser-focused alignment.



ALIGNED GOALS AT EVERY LEVEL

STEP 1

Company-wide objectives

Set with the executive team, from financial and customer goals to employee development and internal processes.

STEP 2

Business unit OKRs

Clear, impact-focused OKRs that align every business unit with the corporate vision.

STEP 3

Functional department OKRs

Sets of OKRs compatible with each business unit's OKRs.

Wave Nine worked with Appsfactory's executive team to create company-wide objectives that clearly state the impact and value needed to achieve the strategy, from financial goals and customer goals to employee development and better internal processes. At the same time, every business unit and department kept a large degree of autonomy, to support the ingenuity and creativity that are key to the Appsfactory brand.

Then, in a series of goal-setting workshops, Wave Nine worked with Appsfactory to create clear, impact-focused OKRs that aligned every business unit with the corporate vision. Across the matrix, the OKRs now align a complex organization: the business units have compatible goals that feed into the larger vision.

Finally, Wave Nine brought alignment to the entire organization by aligning the functional departments through sets of OKRs that are compatible with each business unit's OKRs.



At first, our teams struggled to articulate goals, but the Wave Nine team helped them identify goals at the business unit and departmental levels. Finding goals that fit into the larger objectives helped us move the needle in the right direction.

Roman Belter

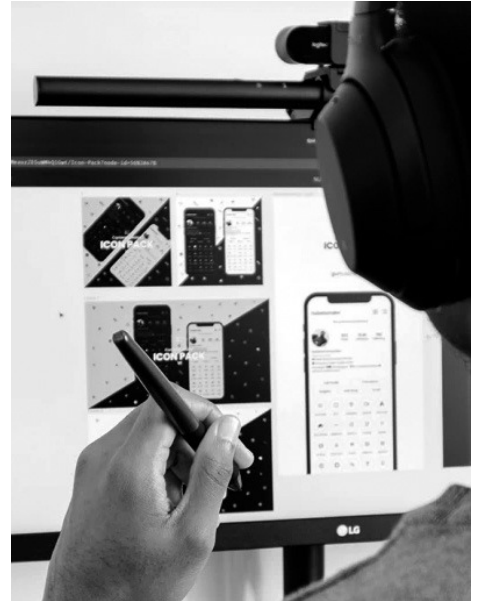
Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

With Wave Nine's careful planning and program management, OKR-setting workshops and enablement on WorkBoard AI, Appsfactory localized OKRs for both its business units and its functional departments. They gel seamlessly with each other and with the company's larger goals.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Beyond alignment, Appsfactory wanted to maximize resource utilization: the strategic use of labor on work that directly impacts clients. The goal is for 80% of each designer's, software engineer's and QA engineer's time to go to billable client work.

As a data-driven organization, Appsfactory uses the analytics in WorkBoard AI to identify objective metrics for whether these goals are met. When employees are pulled away from billable client work for other projects, such as a designer working on marketing collateral, the transparency of the OKR program leads to vital discussions about prioritization and utilization.



UTILIZATION TARGET FOR CUSTOMER-FACING ROLES

80% billable client work

20%

Designers

Software engineers

QA engineers

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It's a great practice to look at the WorkBoard dashboard regularly. It provides a link between the performance data we currently have and our strategic goals, and it allows every team member to see where they are in relation to their goals at any given moment.

Roman Belter

Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

FROM GUIDED LAUNCH TO INTERNAL OWNERSHIP

Appsfactory began its OKR journey with an executive workshop facilitated by Wave Nine, followed by workshops with each business unit and functional department to set localized OKRs. Meanwhile, Wave Nine trained a small team to become certified OKR coaches.

During the first quarter, Wave Nine led the initiative to establish the program efficiently, with Appsfactory's internal coaches working side by side and learning from Wave Nine's consultants. In the second quarter, Wave Nine handed the reins to the internal team, sitting shotgun and advising as the team developed the program further.

KICK-OFF	WORKSHOPS	CAPABILITY	QUARTER ONE	QUARTER TWO
Executive workshop	Business units and departments	Coach certification	Wave Nine leads	The internal team leads
Company-wide objectives with the executive team	Localized OKRs designed to fit together	A small internal team certified as OKR coaches	Internal coaches work side by side	Wave Nine advises from the passenger seat

Appsfactory built OKRs at all levels around four areas:

01 Financial goals	02 Customer goals	03 Optimizing internal processes	04 Employee learning and growth
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“ One of the reasons we had such a successful adoption is that we had this guided approach from Wave Nine on how to structure meetings, how to set up OKRs, and how to use the tools to get the data and define the different metrics.

Roman Belter

Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

Working with Wave Nine let Appsfactory move quickly. It implemented the program efficiently and avoided many of the challenges that beginners face when they launch OKR programs on their own.

GREATER ALIGNMENT WITH NEAR-100% ADOPTION



~100%

ADOPTION IN THE INITIAL PROGRAM

Thanks to the analytics and transparency of WorkBoard AI, Appsfactory achieved near-100% adoption across the business units and departments where it launched its initial OKR program. Wave Nine helped spot bottlenecks in updating OKRs, and the Appsfactory team used that data to perfect its implementation.

Based on that first-year success, Appsfactory plans to expand the program throughout the organization, beyond the people directly involved in billable client work. The OKR program helped Appsfactory achieve:

Company-wide alignment

on larger goals

Localized goals

that support each business unit's autonomy

Improved resource optimization

with transparency on utilization

Better systems

for connecting with, and supporting, customer goals

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Wave Nine's consultants were always able to answer my questions quickly. They were great coaches, and any time we needed them, they were there for us.

Rico Pechacek

Business Process Owner (BPO), Appsfactory

WORKBOARD **AI** SHOWCASE

How Appsfactory uses WorkBoard AI to keep a matrix organization aligned and transparent.

01 • ALIGNMENT

Alignment

Appsfactory uses alignment views to connect company objectives, business unit OKRs and functional department OKRs, so every team can see how its goals feed into the larger vision.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Compatible goals across business units and departments
- ✓ Fewer conflicting priorities for people with two leaders
- ✓ Autonomy for teams within a shared direction

02 • PERFORMANCE DATA

Scorecards

Leaders and teams review the WorkBoard AI dashboard regularly, linking current performance data, including utilization, to strategic goals.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Every team member sees where they stand against their goals at any moment
- ✓ Objective metrics to check whether utilization goals are met
- ✓ Fact-based discussions about prioritization

03 • ADOPTION ANALYTICS

Heatmap

Appsfactory and Wave Nine use WorkBoard AI analytics to spot bottlenecks in OKR updates and fine-tune the rollout.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Adoption gaps visible early
- ✓ Targeted coaching where updates lag
- ✓ A data-driven path to near-100% adoption

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Appsfactory credits its near-100% adoption rate to a number of factors:

01

Executive backing

Full support from executive management for the OKR methodology.

02

Data on adoption

Strategic use of WorkBoard AI analytics to spot bottlenecks in adoption.

03

The right sequence

Business unit OKRs first, once the company-level OKRs were set, then functional department OKRs that gel seamlessly with each business unit's goals.

04

Expert guidance

Support from Wave Nine for the initial implementation, outcome-based OKRs, training and certifying internal coaches, and keeping the program going strong.

INTERNAL MOTTO

**"NEW IS
BEAUTIFUL."**

As a data-driven organization that embraces change and new perspectives, Appsfactory's culture was set up for OKR success. All it needed was guidance from seasoned OKR professionals to bring the program to life.



ADVICE FROM THE COO

“Wave Nine has us working with very senior consultants, who are able to steer us on the correct path. They help us carve out what is important during each discussion, and they are always available to guide and support the process.

— **Roman Belter**

Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

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When your teams have a chance to set their own goals, you may be surprised by what they come up with, setting goals you would have never set for them. This can lead to helpful discussions where you work together to refine those goals.

— **Roman Belter**

Chief Operations Officer (COO), Appsfactory

STRATEGY EXECUTION WITH OKRS AND AI

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

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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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