

How Native relaunched OKRs and tied every team's work to strategy

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES · 30 EMPLOYEES · OKR CONSULTING

Native, a climate-focused Public Benefit Corporation, had OKRs in place but little momentum. With Wave Nine, it reset the program in 2024 and made OKRs part of how its remote teams work every week.

3 days

from kickoff to aligned OKRs across the organization

6 months

per OKR cycle, built around third-party climate project validation

Monthly

executive business reviews on progress across teams

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Native, a Public Benefit Corporation and Certified B Corp that has worked with hundreds of organizations on catalytic climate action since 2000

INDUSTRY

Environmental Services

COMPANY SIZE

30

CHALLENGE

OKRs that weren't moving the organization forward: individual OKRs weren't effective, priorities weren't being addressed and communication wasn't structured

SOLUTION

An OKR reset with Wave Nine: a tailored process with 6-month cycles, executive training and workshops, certified internal OKR coaches, a three-day onsite kickoff in Vermont and remote training on Results Rituals

RESULTS

Easier progress tracking, more focused and better aligned teams, OKRs discussed regularly at every level, more transparent communication and work that is tied directly to strategy

THE CHALLENGE

BIG GOALS, AND A PROGRAM THAT HAD LOST MOMENTUM

This Certified B Corp is making an impact on climate change, one OKR cycle at a time.

Native, a Public Benefit Corporation, is no stranger to change. Since 2000, Native has worked with hundreds of organizations to bring about catalytic climate action. It carries out community and landscape-scale initiatives that lower greenhouse gas emissions, support communities, engage businesses and make true global progress on climate change. Native is all about changing the world for the better and helping organizations meet their sustainability goals.

But what about Native's own goals? In 2024, Native needed a change. It was already using OKRs, but it hadn't yet adopted them in a way that really moved the organization forward. Native had big goals, and its way of doing things wasn't helping it reach them.

01

Individual OKRs weren't effective

02

Communication wasn't structured

03

Priorities weren't being addressed

Since Native wasn't seeing the results or engagement it needed, it was time for a relaunch. To make it stick, Native brought in an external partner: Wave Nine.



GETTING EVERYTHING SET UP VIRTUALLY

Native and Wave Nine began the OKR revamp virtually. The first phase included:

<p>01</p> <p>A tailored OKR process</p> <p>An OKR process designed for Native's organization, captured in an OKR Playbook.</p>	<p>02</p> <p>Executive alignment</p> <p>Executive OKR training, and an executive OKR-setting workshop to finalize the top-of-house OKRs.</p>	<p>03</p> <p>A community of champions</p> <p>Advanced OKR coach training for selected staff, who were certified as OKR coaches.</p>
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For the process design, Native couldn't rely on the standard fiscal quarter cadence. Its business involves many externalities and diverse stakeholders in many parts of the world, so Native worked with Wave Nine to adjust the OKR cycle to the company's needs.

The climate projects Native develops are validated and verified by third parties, and these groups all work on asynchronous timelines. In its earlier OKR efforts, Native had tried 3-month cycles, but those cycles were too short for the various validation timelines. Progress stalled, and the OKR program lost momentum. Based on its operational structure, and to improve its overall OKR process, Native and Wave Nine agreed that 6-month OKR cycles would be far more effective. This, together with other tailored OKR parameters, allowed Wave Nine to design a custom OKR process for the organization, captured in an OKR Playbook.

<p>BEFORE</p> <p>3-month cycles</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Q1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Q2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Q3</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #f0f0f0;">Q4</div> </div> <p>Too short for third-party validation timelines, so progress stalled.</p>	<p>NOW</p> <p>6-month cycles</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #333; color: white;">Cycle 1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; background-color: #333; color: white;">Cycle 2</div> </div> <p>Built around asynchronous validation and verification, and captured in an OKR Playbook.</p>
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We've had so much access to the Wave Nine team. They didn't just come and do a three-day workshop with us and then leave. It's been a long-term engagement, and that's what our teams needed for this to be successful.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC

VERMONT, HERE WE COME!

Native's employees mostly work remotely, with team members spread across the U.S. and Kenya. Twice a year, they come together for a Team Week at Native's headquarters in Burlington, Vermont. This biannual event fosters teamwork and strengthens connections among the staff. With an OKR reset in the pipeline, Native decided to use this onsite gathering to announce the new initiative and give everyone in the organization in-person OKR training and OKR-setting workshops.

3 days

Two Wave Nine consultants flew out to Native's headquarters. In three days, they introduced the OKR methodology to the entire organization, facilitated OKR-setting workshops for three teams, and tied off those OKRs with the executive leadership team.

■ The structure of the onsite event

DAY

1

Kickoff and OKR training

The day started with the announcement of the OKR program reset and what it meant for everyone. The rationale, timeline and expectations were clearly communicated, building excitement throughout the day. Wave Nine also provided OKR training, so all participants had a solid understanding of the methodology and best practices before the first team OKR workshop later that day.

DAY

2

Team workshops

The second day was dedicated to three extensive OKR-setting workshops. These hands-on workshops, each facilitated by one Wave Nine consultant, let the teams collaboratively develop OKRs aligned with the strategic intent of the top-of-house OKRs set earlier.

DAY

3

Tie-off session

The final day closed with a tie-off session for the entire organization, to make sure all OKRs were aligned and focused on Native's biggest priorities. It also gave everyone a huge amount of transparency: everyone could see what each team was going to focus on, and what the next steps were.



THE IMPACT OF THE ONSITE SESSIONS

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In the past, our Team Weeks have covered a number of priorities, in the effort to tackle as much as possible when our team is together. During this Team Week, we concentrated on the single OKR initiative, which was beneficial for everyone to learn about the process together. Having that opportunity in person allowed us to focus collectively in a new way, which was impactful.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC

The onsite kickoff, training and workshops were instrumental in setting the tone for the OKR program. Shortly after the event, Native's Director of People & Culture, Emily Gaynor, ran a survey.

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We did a survey after the Team Week, and one of the sentiments coming out of that survey was an overall positive feeling toward the forward momentum of the organization. People are starting to see how the structure of this revamped OKR process is going to be beneficial and they are buying in.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC

The event brought a renewed sense of engagement with the OKR process, which is essential for the long-term success of any OKR program.



TRANSITIONING BACK TO A REMOTE APPROACH

After the onsite event, Native's team went back to remote work. That shift brought challenges, but the foundation laid during the onsite event kept progress going. To keep the momentum strong, Wave Nine now focused on establishing the habits that keep OKRs top of mind: the Results Rituals.

Wave Nine continued with virtual training on the Results Rituals:

01

Action Plans

02

Calibrate &
Celebrate

03

Monthly Business
Reviews

04

Mid-Quarter
Check-Ins

05

1:1 Meetings

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The in-person Team Week was invaluable and really instrumental for the success of the program. People really appreciated having 3rd party facilitators join us in person, to really bring this program to life. And having those facilitators continue to work with us after going back to working remotely has been really beneficial.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC



IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FIRST OKR CYCLE

Even though Native is only in its first OKR cycle, it has already seen a positive shift:

Improved tracking of progress

Everyone is focused

OKRs are discussed regularly

Transparent communication

Better alignment

Work is tied to strategy

From the executive leadership to the functional teams, OKRs have found their way into conversations. They come up regularly in team meetings, and they have a place in the larger meetings Native has held since the rollout.

Progress is easier to keep track of, and there is ongoing communication about potential roadblocks. That gives everyone a chance to adjust course and find solutions much more proactively. The cohesion and focus of all teams have also grown stronger, driving the organization forward. And Native is practicing healthy OKR habits, such as weekly Calibrate & Celebrate meetings and monthly business reviews.

“We had a productive MBR yesterday with the executive team. This ritual helps us know the progress of each team more quickly, and lets us be mutually accountable, both for ourselves and the whole team.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC

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I recommend working with Wave Nine to other organizations that are struggling to define, implement, and stay accountable to their OKR process. Their materials are clear, their team is accessible, and they are fun to work with.

Emily Gaynor

Director of People & Culture, Native, a PBC

NATIVE'S LONG-TERM OKR GOALS

Native aims to make the OKR process second nature and fully integrated into the company's DNA. The playbook developed with Wave Nine will become part of employee onboarding, so new hires understand and embrace the OKR methodology from day one. Native's certified OKR champions are also equipped to give everyone ongoing support, building a culture of continuous improvement.

ONBOARDING

The OKR Playbook becomes part of every new hire's first days

CHAMPIONS

Certified OKR coaches give everyone ongoing support

THE GOAL

OKRs as second nature, part of the company's DNA

Native's decision to revamp its OKR process with Wave Nine has already shown promising results. The intensive onsite kickoff was a turning point that set the stage for a robust and sustainable OKR program. With OKRs now a regular part of discussions at all levels, this mission-driven team is better positioned to reach its organizational goals, and to combat climate change and make a lasting impact on the planet, one OKR cycle at a time.



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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