

How Obagi turned a new strategy into company-wide OKRs in **two weeks**

COSMECEUTICALS · ABOUT 200 EMPLOYEES · WORKBOARD AI

Obagi had a new CEO, a new strategy and a largely new management team. Wave Nine helped them launch a tailored OKR program on WorkBoard AI in two weeks, with every team in scope writing its own OKRs from the start.

2 weeks

to launch the OKR program and WorkBoard AI

75+

employees in the first rollout

Weekly

OKR update rhythm

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Obagi, a cosmeceutical company that provides transformational skincare products worldwide

INDUSTRY

Cosmeceuticals (skincare)

COMPANY SIZE

~200

CHALLENGE

A new CEO, a new strategy and a largely new management team, with teams that needed more clarity on the strategy, OKRs aligned to strategic priorities, and more alignment, focus and speed

SOLUTION

An OKR program tailored to Obagi and WorkBoard AI, launched by Wave Nine on a two-week timeline, with a documented OKR process, thoughtful change management, workshops, training and certified internal OKR coaches

RESULTS

Strategic clarity, better organization, cross-functional synergy, more alignment, focus and speed, and full transparency for the 75+ employees in the first rollout

THE CHALLENGE

A NEW STRATEGY THAT TEAMS COULDN'T SEE YET

New CEO, new strategy, new management team, and teams that needed a stronger sense of direction.

Obagi is a cosmeceutical company that provides transformational skincare products worldwide. Its products are designed to reduce signs of aging, treat dark spots, smooth wrinkles and improve overall skin tone and texture.

Like many companies that have been in the game for over 30 years, Obagi was facing operational challenges behind the scenes that led to isolated teams, slow progress and ineffective communication. To combat these challenges, Obagi brought in a new leader.

Jordan Meyer joined Obagi as CEO in 2023, and he brought an exciting new strategy and vision for the company. In addition, the majority of Obagi's management team changed. With so many shifts in such a short time, teams became less aware of the leadership team's long-term goals and needed a stronger sense of direction.



OBAGI'S FIRST TANGO WITH OKRS

“Due to so many new people joining the company, there was a lot of 'who does what?' We really wanted to get information flowing throughout Obagi and get our teams focused on the right priorities. We saw OKRs as the perfect way to do that.

Jordan Meyer

Chief Executive Officer, Obagi

Obagi wanted to improve its OKR approach with:

01

More clarity into the strategy

02

Teams aligning their OKRs to strategic priorities

03

More alignment, focus and speed

Jordan realized that the leadership team had a great strategy for the cosmeceutical leader, and that it needed more transparency and alignment to make sure teams were working toward that strategy. Obagi had the vision. It had skilled people. Now it needed to execute, and that's when it turned to the OKR framework.

Information wasn't flowing efficiently. Obagi needed an OKR program that went beyond the leadership level and involved every department, team and team member. The company recognized the need for a more structured approach to an impactful OKR program, one that would align Obagi's teams with the new strategic direction and improve overall performance. With over 75 employees in the scope of the initial OKR rollout, and plans to expand in the future, Obagi also needed software to keep track of progress and give everyone complete transparency.

That's when Jordan asked Obagi's Chief of Staff, Lu Al-Nsour, to find a way to move quickly and deploy OKRs across the organization.



THEY SAID "IT CAN'T BE DONE"

Obagi wasn't wasting any time. It wanted a fast implementation, with the OKR program and software up and running in only two weeks, and teams crafting their own OKRs right away.

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I did a lot of independent research to determine how to launch an OKR program. I read all the recommended books and interviewed people in my network that had experience with OKRs. Through my research, I realized we needed to partner with experts who have experience launching a program.

Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

With that decision made, Lu interviewed a number of freelance consultants. All of them confidently told her that "Obagi's timeline is impossible."

Lu pushed forward and doubled down on finding an expert who believed in Obagi's aggressive OKR deployment timeline. Wave Nine had the team, the experience and the software to meet Obagi's tight deadline and ambitious vision, far beyond what any single consultant could offer.



WEDNESDAY EVENING

Lu starts her search for an expert



FRIDAY

Lu is on the phone with Wave Nine



THE FOLLOWING MONDAY

The plan is set in motion



TWO WEEKS

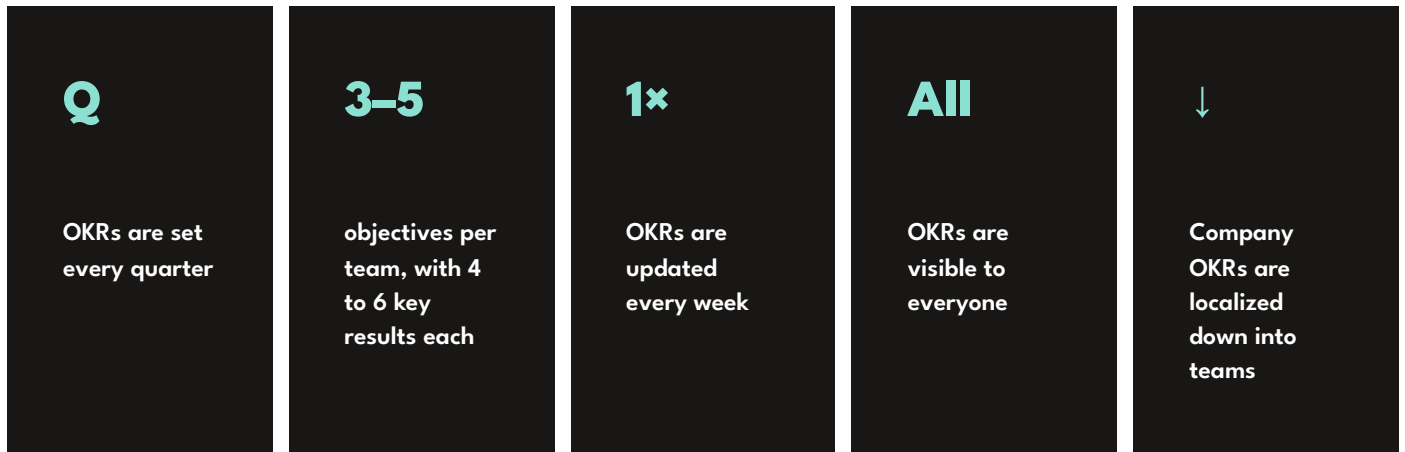
A tailored OKR program and WorkBoard AI

On the following Monday, the plan was set in motion. Obagi was going to get an OKR program tailored to the organization, together with WorkBoard AI, the leading strategy execution platform, all within two weeks.



ESTABLISHING A STRONG OKR PROCESS

Wave Nine partnered with Lu to assemble a program team responsible for managing the implementation. With the program team in place, the next step was to analyze Obagi's current OKR approach and its strategy execution maturity. Based on these assessments, and in close collaboration with the skincare innovators, Wave Nine developed OKR parameters and an approach that worked for Obagi:



OBAGI OKR PLAYBOOK

This new OKR process was documented in the Obagi OKR Playbook, which everyone in the company can easily reference. With the playbook published, Obagi had a unified structure for its OKR process.

But a strong OKR process only helps when everyone knows it's happening.



COMMUNICATING THE OKR PROGRAM

An organization can't put a playbook on everyone's desk and expect them to take part. Thoughtful change management is an important building block of an effective OKR program. Obagi knew this and trusted Wave Nine's expertise in communicating an OKR program to everyone in scope. Wave Nine's approach to Obagi's change management involved four key elements.

■ Project overview

With a large-scale rollout and a strict timeline, the program team needed a comprehensive project overview to follow. OKR rollouts are complex by nature, with many workshops and training sessions to schedule. Wave Nine's single-document project overview simplified this and made it easy to keep track of the implementation's progress.

“ The project overview was extremely helpful. It provided the structure and helped facilitate our seamless deployment.

— Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

“

What Wave Nine brought to the table really helped our vision come to life. In order for our OKR program to be successful, our team required a lot of communication to get things off the ground. Being able to point to an authority in the space who has successfully done this so many times was crucial. I don't think we could have pushed it across the finish line without Wave Nine's partnership.

— Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

KICKOFFS, MATERIALS AND COACHES

Element 2

Kickoffs

Wave Nine held three separate kickoffs: one for the program team, one for executive leadership and one for everyone else in scope. The kickoffs explained the rationale behind the implementation, how each group plays a direct role in its success and what to expect. They built excitement and gave people an open forum to ask questions and gain a fundamental understanding of the methodology.

Element 2, continued

Every step explained

To prepare participants for what lay ahead, each step of the implementation was explained, together with why their active participation mattered. The program was communicated in a way that showed how it would benefit each group and improve its ability to perform.

Element 3

Custom communication material

For each step of the implementation, such as the OKR workshops and the software training, Wave Nine drafted custom communication material that prepared participants and got the most important information across. It covered the reasoning behind each step, the agenda, what to expect and how to best prepare.

Element 4

Coach certification

A common misconception is that an OKR coach certification only teaches people how to write great OKRs. In fact, OKR coaches gain a deep understanding of the methodology, and they also learn how to be impactful change agents. By certifying employees from various departments and equipping them with advanced change management tactics, Wave Nine made sure Obagi had a community to champion the new program and support the change going forward.

“

Wave Nine's approach did a lot for me in terms of my own professional growth. I now fully grasp the level of communication required in a large scale change management initiative. When I lead a major change management initiative in the future I will leverage a similar playbook.

Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

SMOOTH SAILING FROM THERE

With a strong, documented OKR process and a plan for change in place, the rest of Obagi's OKR implementation was set for smooth sailing. Wave Nine continued to support the rollout with:

Executive & team OKR workshops

To set high-quality OKRs.

WorkBoard AI training

To reach high adoption quickly.

"Ask-Me-Anything" sessions

To ease the shift into a new process.

OKR rituals training

To drive OKR behavior and value in everyday work.

“

The level of flexibility from the Wave Nine team has been really impressive. They always make time for us if a question comes up. Every interaction with their team has been wonderful.

Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

THE FULL PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

- ✓ A program team to manage the implementation
- ✓ OKR parameters and the Obagi OKR Playbook
- ✓ Three separate kickoffs
- ✓ Certified internal OKR coaches
- ✓ WorkBoard AI training and OKR rituals training
- ✓ An assessment of OKR approach and strategy execution maturity
- ✓ A single-document project overview
- ✓ Custom communication material for every step
- ✓ Executive and team OKR workshops
- ✓ Regular "Ask-Me-Anything" sessions

A STRATEGY EXECUTION POWERHOUSE

The implementation of a strong OKR process and a meticulous change management strategy has turned Obagi into a strategy execution powerhouse. The results show what a structured process and effective change management can do for an OKR rollout. Obagi now benefits from:

01

Strategic clarity

Clearer insight into Obagi's strategic priorities. Every team member now understands the company's long-term goals and how their individual efforts contribute to them.

02

Better organization

A structured approach to setting, tracking and reviewing OKRs has brought order and clarity to project management, reduced ambiguity and given project execution a clear direction.

03

Cross-functional synergy

Teams are more aware of each other's goals and progress. Projects that need several departments run more efficiently, with each team contributing its expertise toward common goals.

04

Alignment, focus & speed

With quarterly OKRs and weekly progress updates, Obagi has improved its focus and execution speed. A rhythm of accountability means issues are identified and resolved quickly.

05

Full transparency

OKRs are visible to everyone, and WorkBoard AI keeps track of progress across the teams in scope.

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Obagi is a very ambitious organization; we are executing quickly against many strategic priorities across several different channels. The OKR program put us in the same boat rowing in the same direction. We have achieved a new level of focus as a team.

Lu Al-Nsour

Chief of Staff, Obagi

WORKBOARD SHOWCASE

How Obagi uses WorkBoard AI to get teams writing, aligning and reporting on OKRs from the first cycle.

01 • AI OKR DRAFTING

OKR creation, alignment and cycle

With teams writing their own OKRs from day one, Obagi uses WorkBoard AI's co-author to draft objectives and key results from company priorities. In the first cycle, teams refined these drafts in the OKR workshops.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Teams new to OKRs start from a solid first draft
- ✓ Key results become more measurable before workshop time
- ✓ Faster planning at the start of each quarter

02 • ALIGNMENT

Generated and inferred alignment

Obagi localizes company OKRs into team OKRs, and WorkBoard AI's generated alignment links team goals to the company's strategic priorities and shows where teams depend on each other.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Every team sees how its work connects to the new strategy
- ✓ Cross-team dependencies become visible early
- ✓ Leaders spot gaps in alignment across departments

03 • AI CHIEF OF STAFF AGENT

Automate Executive & Initiative Briefings

With weekly OKR updates in place, Obagi's leadership uses WorkBoard AI's executive briefs to get summaries of progress and risks across teams, with no reports compiled by hand.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Leaders see progress on strategic priorities each week
- ✓ At-risk results surface quickly, so issues are resolved sooner
- ✓ Less time spent on manual status reporting

OBAGI IS READY FOR ANYTHING

Obagi's journey shows what's possible when a company sets the foundation with a strong OKR process and manages change alongside the implementation. By partnering with Wave Nine, Obagi transformed its approach to strategy execution and laid the groundwork for long-term success and more innovation in the cosmeceutical industry.

As Obagi continues to grow and evolve, its OKR program will stay central to the company's future achievements.

A strong process, thoughtful change management and every team rowing in the same direction.



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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