

# How Wandelbots turned rapid growth into **laser focus** with OKRs

SOFTWARE & ROBOTICS · 130 EMPLOYEES · WORKBOARD AI

Wandelbots grew from 30 to 90 people in 2020 and needed everyone pulling in one direction. Wave Nine helped leadership choose one North Star and built the OKR rhythm to deliver it.

## 20+

workshops with staff and super users

## 10

certified internal OKR coaches

## 3 months

from strategy to company-wide launch

## AT A GLANCE

### CLIENT

Wandelbots, a German tech company whose no-code platform lets people train industrial robots in minutes

### INDUSTRY

Software & Robotics

### COMPANY SIZE

**130**

### CHALLENGE

Keep a fast-growing, increasingly remote company aligned after headcount tripled from 30 to 90 in one year

### SOLUTION

A five-phase OKR rollout with Wave Nine on WorkBoard AI: an executive workshop that set one North Star, departmental OKR workshops, training and coach certification, launch support and an end-of-quarter retrospective

### RESULTS

A company that rallied behind one goal, welding fundamentals for every employee, better leads, stronger hardware and software, growing revenues, and 10 certified coaches who run OKRs in-house

## THE CHALLENGE

# GROWTH THAT STRAINED ALIGNMENT

**Train a robot in minutes, without writing a single line of code.**

Imagine training a robot to perform complex tasks in a matter of minutes, without writing a single line of code. Wandelbots, a German tech startup, has created the technology to do just that. Still a relatively young company, it helps companies like BMW, Siemens and Volkswagen automate their manufacturing processes with its no-code robotics platform. CEO Christian Piecknick can train a robot to weld two metal components together using nothing more than Wandelbots' proprietary TracePen and a tablet.

Wandelbots quickly made a splash in the tech world: it won awards, attracted big clients and raised \$30 million in venture funding in 2020. After growing from 30 to 90 employees by the end of that year, it faced a challenge common to many successful startups.

**\$30M**

venture funding  
raised in 2020

**30 → 90**

employees by the end of  
the year

**3×**

headcount in one  
year



## THE CHALLENGE

# NEW TEAMS, NEW OFFICES, REMOTE WORK

Gaining alignment on strategic initiatives is relatively easy during a bootstrap stage. It gets harder as a company scales quickly. The mechanisms that create transparency, provide direction and keep everyone committed to the same mission start to break down as the workforce grows. That was the case at Wandelbots as it added new teams, new team members and new office locations. Covid-19 also forced a shift to a more remote workforce, which compounded the problem. Leadership spotted the issue and looked for a methodology that would help it:

01

**Create transparency  
across the organization**

02

**Identify long-term  
departmental goals  
that feed the mission**

03

**Make sure everyone  
works toward the same  
goals**

04

**Use company resources  
to maximize impact  
and growth**

## Finding the right partner

Martin Wanitschke and Jonas Paul Schreiber wear many hats at Wandelbots, but they essentially share the Chief of Staff role. Together, they selected OKRs to bring alignment to their growing company. Their investors recommended WorkBoard AI as the platform for the OKR program, and the WorkBoard AI team referred them to Wave Nine. From their first interaction, Martin and Jonas were impressed with the Wave Nine team, from its breadth of OKR knowledge to its willingness to fully understand Wandelbots' business model. It didn't take long before they knew they had found their implementation partner.



**Jonas Paul Schreiber**

Co-Chief of Staff, Wandelbots

“

We were total beginners when it came to OKRs. Wave Nine was knowledgeable about the OKR method in general as well as implementing OKRs through WorkBoard. That was our first impression of them, and they really delivered in the end.

# SETTING WANDELBOTS UP FOR SUCCESS

Wave Nine is more than a WorkBoard AI consultancy. Training and implementation are key to its service model, and a successful OKR rollout begins in the boardroom. It means diving into a client's goals, processes and business model to help clarify the vision. Only then can Wave Nine help a client set departmental goals, train staff on the platform and the methodology, drive company-wide adoption and evaluate results. Wave Nine guided Wandelbots through a five-phase rollout:



## Phase 1: Executive leadership OKR workshop

Wandelbots' leadership was split between two schools of thought. Some executives favored a general approach, aiming to excel in all the areas Wandelbots served. Others believed the company should focus on one specific part of the business, where it could expect the highest return.

The three-day workshop involved thoughtful debate and thorough analysis, facilitated by Philipp Schett, founder of Wave Nine, and Jessica Stimac, Director at Wave Nine. They drew on their experience implementing OKRs to guide the discussion and helped the executives weigh the pros and cons of each approach.

In the end, leadership settled on one laser-focused North Star to guide every other OKR.



### WANDELBOTS' NORTH STAR

**BECOME THE WORLD LEADER IN A SPECIFIC  
TYPE OF MIG/MAG ARC WELDING**

# ONE LASER FOCUS

“Philipp from Wave Nine helped us on a fundamental strategic level, trying to decide between a general North Star OKR and a very specific one. Once we decided to choose the laser-focus approach, Wave Nine helped us choose the right laser focus of MIG/MAG arc welding. That really helped us in our implementation.

**Martin Wanitschke**

Co-Chief of Staff, Wandelbots

MIG/MAG welding, a type of gas metal arc welding, represented a massive growth opportunity for the young tech company. The executives set further OKRs based on existing key performance indicators (KPIs), and designed new KPIs and metrics for the laser-focused mission. The additional OKRs covered:

Improving  
customer  
satisfaction

Increasing sales  
through effective  
marketing

Innovative product  
development

HR training,  
development and  
hiring

Effective resource  
allocation from  
Finance

Leadership then shared these OKRs with the whole organization in a town hall meeting, where people could ask questions and get clarity on the larger mission.



# WORKSHOPS TO DEFINE DEPARTMENTAL OKRS

Next, Wave Nine led OKR-setting workshops with each department. These Level 2 OKRs feed into the Level 1 OKRs set by the executives, and each one supports the overarching vision of making Wandelbots the world leader in MIG/MAG arc welding.

## LEVEL 1

**Company OKRs set by the executives**

## LEVEL 2 • HANDSHAKE MEETING

**Each team lead meets the executives to make sure the department's OKRs fall in line with Level 1**

A few examples of the departmental OKRs that help Wandelbots work toward its ambition:

### Human Resources

Organized welding training for every employee, so everyone understands clients' needs and how Wandelbots' welding products work.

### Sales & Marketing

Marketing focused on specific geographic areas and identified manufacturers that already use robots in their welding processes. That paved the way for Sales to close more deals and exceed its goals.

### Design Studio

The hardware design team worked to improve the TracePen that interfaces with the Wandelbots software. It prototyped different tips and tested them with customers, which improved the product.

### Engineering

The engineering team makes up 60% of the company and worked diligently to enhance what Wandelbots calls its "Minimum Loveable Product" (MLP).

### Operations + Technical Engineering (co-owned OKR)

The two teams worked together to make sure the product is safe and effective.



# TRAINING, LAUNCH AND THE FIRST RETROSPECTIVE

## Phase 3: WorkBoard AI training and internal coach certification

Once Wandelbots had clearly defined its Level 1 and Level 2 OKRs, Wave Nine trained the staff on WorkBoard AI and on the OKR methodology. The training included general instruction for all staff and intensive deep dives for super users. Wave Nine also built communities that bring expert users together, so they can solve problems and develop a knowledge base. In all, Wave Nine ran more than 20 workshops with staff and super users.

Wave Nine trained 10 Wandelbots employees in the OKR methodology, creating an in-house team of certified OKR coaches. These coaches help sustain Wandelbots' OKR work in the months and years to come.

**20+**

workshops with staff and super users

**10**

employees certified as internal OKR coaches

**3 months**

of strategy work and training before launch

## Phase 4: Program launch and adoption

After three months of strategy work and training, Wandelbots launched its OKR program under Wave Nine's guidance. The Wave Nine team kept careful track of OKR engagement and WorkBoard AI adoption, and gave staff members additional guidance so they used the methodology and the platform properly. It also held regular check-ins with the steering committee to keep the program on track and address any concerns.

## Phase 5: End-of-quarter retrospective

At the end of the first quarter, Wave Nine assessed Wandelbots' OKR efforts together with the team and set the next quarter's OKRs.



# A WHOLE COMPANY TALKING ABOUT WELDING

“

Needless to say, becoming the world leader in anything isn't actually possible in one quarter. But over the course of our first quarter rollout, we accomplished what we were hoping to achieve. You couldn't find a single employee who wasn't talking about welding.

— **Martin Wanitschke**  
Co-Chief of Staff, Wandelbots

In terms of specific, measurable goals, the OKR program on WorkBoard AI delivered:

- **Welding fundamentals for every employee:** the whole company understands customers' needs and how the product works.
- **Better leads:** Marketing targets regions where manufacturers already use robots for welding, which helps Sales close more deals and exceed its goals.
- **Superior hardware and software:** a better TracePen from the Design Studio, and a stronger Minimum Loveable Product from Engineering.
- **Growing revenues:** the fourth of the measurable goals Wandelbots set out to achieve.
- **OKRs run in-house:** Wave Nine set Wandelbots up to manage the lion's share of its OKR work internally, through its own OKR-certified staff.

Wandelbots' work with Wave Nine helped it find alignment as a fast-growing tech company in an ever-changing industry.

# WORKBOARD SHOWCASE

How Wandelbots uses WorkBoard AI to connect one North Star to the work of every team.

## 01 • OKR MANAGEMENT

### Company and team OKRs in one place

Wandelbots sets its Level 1 company OKRs and every department's Level 2 OKRs in WorkBoard AI, and uses the platform at the end of each quarter to review results and set the next quarter's OKRs.

#### BENEFITS

- ✓ One place for every company and team OKR
- ✓ Progress visible to all employees, in the office or remote
- ✓ A clean quarterly reset based on real results

## 02 • ALIGNMENT

### Every OKR linked to the North Star

Alignment views link each department's OKRs to the company North Star, supporting the handshake meetings between team leads and leadership and the co-owned OKR of Operations and Technical Engineering.

#### BENEFITS

- ✓ Every team sees how its work feeds the welding goal
- ✓ Level 2 OKRs checked against Level 1 before launch
- ✓ Shared OKRs across teams stay visible

## 03 • HEATMAP

### Engagement and adoption at a glance

The Heatmap shows OKR engagement and platform adoption across teams. During the launch, Wave Nine and the steering committee used this view to give extra guidance where usage lagged.

#### BENEFITS

- ✓ An early view of teams that need support
- ✓ Steering committee check-ins grounded in data
- ✓ Staff using the method and the platform properly from the start

# ASK ANYONE, ANY TIME

“ Ideally, you should be able to wake up any employee in the middle of the night and ask them to identify the most important thing the company is working on and how their work contributes to that goal. I believe that's something we achieved.

**Martin Wanitschke**

Co-Chief of Staff, Wandelbots

## ONE GOAL

**Level 1 and Level 2  
OKRs aligned to a single  
North Star**

## ONE CONVERSATION

**Every employee talking  
about welding after the  
first quarter**

## ONE TEAM TO SUSTAIN IT

**10 certified coaches  
running OKRs in-house**

Wave Nine set Wandelbots up to manage the lion's share of its OKR work internally, through its own OKR-certified staff.

## STRATEGY EXECUTION WITH OKRS AND AI

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

[wavenine.com](https://wavenine.com)



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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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