



OBAGI

How a strong process and thoughtful change management helped these skincare innovators use OKRs to become a strategy execution powerhouse

CLIENT

Obagi

INDUSTRY

Cosmeceuticals

SIZE

~200

CHALLENGES

Obagi was looking to improve their OKR approach with:

- o More clarity into the strategy
- o Teams aligning OKRs to strategic priorities
- o Increased alignment, focus and speed

Obagi is a cosmeceutical company that provides transformational skin care products worldwide. Their 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 starting to face some 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 entered the Obagi scene as their CEO in 2023. And with him, 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 amount of time, teams became less aware of what the leadership team's long-term goals were and required a stronger sense of direction.



SOLUTIONS & RESULTS

Wave Nine aided Obagi by implementing an OKR program with a strong OKR process tailored to the company's needs, and ensuring its adoption through thoughtful change management.

This yielded to:

- o Strategic Clarity
- o Better Organization
- o Cross-functional Synergy
- o Alignment, Focus & Speed
- o Full Transparency

“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'S FIRST TANGO WITH OKRS

Jordan realized that even though the leadership team had a great strategy for the cosmeceutical juggernaut, they needed more transparency and alignment to make sure teams were working toward that strategy. They had the vision. They had skilled people. Now, they just needed to execute. That's when they turned to the OKR framework.

The information flow was not super efficient. **What Obagi needed was an OKR program that expanded beyond the leadership level and involved every department, team, and team member.** The company recognized the need for a more structured approach to implementing an impactful OKR program to align Obagi's teams with the new strategic direction and improve overall performance. Not only that, but with over 75 employees in the scope of the initial OKR rollout and with plans to expand in the future, they also needed software to keep track of progress and give everyone complete transparency.

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

THEY SAID, 'IT CAN'T BE DONE'

Obagi wasn't wasting any time. They wanted this implementation to be fast, and for the OKR program and software to be up and running in only two weeks, with teams crafting their own OKRs immediately.

"I did a lot of independent research to determine how to launch an OKR program," explains Lu. "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.**"

Upon making this decision, Lu interviewed a number of freelance consultants; however, those consultants all confidently informed her that “Obagi’s timeline is impossible.”

Lu pushed forward; doubling down on finding an expert that believed in Obagi’s aggressive OKR deployment timeline. After starting her initial search on Wednesday evening, Lu was on the phone with Wave Nine’s CEO by Friday. Wave Nine had the team, experience, and software to reach Obagi’s tight deadline and ambitious vision, far surpassing the capabilities of any single consultant.

On the following Monday, the plan was set in motion. Obagi was not only going to have an OKR program specifically tailored to the organization, but also WorkBoard, the leading strategy execution software - all within just two weeks.



ESTABLISHING A STRONG OKR PROCESS

Wave Nine partnered with Lu to assemble a program team that would be responsible for managing the implementation process. Once this program team was in place, it came time to analyze Obagi’s current OKR approach and strategy execution maturity. Based on these assessments, in close collaboration with the skincare innovators, Wave Nine was able to develop OKR parameters and establish an approach that worked for Obagi, not against them.



This new OKR process was then documented in the Obagi OKR Playbook that everyone in the company could easily reference. With this playbook published, there was now a unified structure in place for the OKR process. But what good is a strong OKR process if nobody knows it’s happening?

“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

COMMUNICATING THE OKR PROGRAM

An organization can’t just throw a playbook on everyone’s desks 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 how to effectively communicate 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, it was important to have a comprehensive project overview that the program team could follow. OKR rollouts are complex by nature with so many workshops and training sessions to schedule. Wave Nine’s single-document project overview simplified this and made keeping track of the implementation’s progress easy.

“The project overview was extremely helpful,” says Lu. **“It provided the structure and helped facilitate our seamless deployment.”**

KICKOFFS

Wave Nine held three separate kickoffs; for the program team, executive leadership, and everyone else in scope. These kickoffs went into detail about the rationale behind the implementation, how each group plays a direct role in its success and what to expect. These kickoffs not only built excitement, but provided an open forum where individuals had the opportunity to ask questions and gain a fundamental understanding of the methodology. To prepare them for what lies ahead, each step of the implementation was explained along with how their active participation was crucial. The program was communicated in a way that showed how it would benefit each group specifically and improve their ability to perform.



CUSTOM COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

For each step of the implementation, such as the OKR workshops and software training, custom communication material was drafted that would prepare the participants and get the most important information across to them. This included the reasoning behind each step, the agenda, what to expect, and how to best prepare.

COACH CERTIFICATION

There's a common misconception that an OKR coach certification session only involves learning how to create great OKRs, when in fact, it's about much more. OKR coaches not only gain a deep understanding of the methodology, but they also learn how to be impactful change agents. By certifying a number of employees spanning various departments and empowering them with advanced change management tactics, Wave Nine made sure that Obagi had a community in place that would champion the new program and support the change going forward.

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 Obagi's OKR rollout with:

- o Executive & Team OKR Workshops to set high quality OKRs
- o WorkBoard Training to quickly achieve high adoption of the OKR tool
- o Regular 'Ask-Me-Anything' Sessions to ease the shift into a new process
- o OKR Rituals Training to drive OKR behavior and value in everyday work

WHERE OBAGI STANDS NOW

The successful implementation of a strong OKR process and meticulous change management strategy has transformed Obagi into a strategy execution powerhouse. The results of this transformation are a testament to the power of a structured process and effective change management when it comes to OKR rollouts.

“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



“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

OBAGI IS NOW BENEFITING FROM:

STRATEGIC CLARITY

The first significant impact of the new OKR program was the enhanced clarity into Obagi's strategic priorities. Every team member now has a clear understanding of the company's long-term goals and how their individual efforts contribute to these objectives.

BETTER ORGANIZATION

The introduction of a structured approach to setting, tracking, and reviewing OKRs has brought order and clarity to the management of projects. This has reduced ambiguity and provided a clear direction for project execution that's aligned with Obagi's strategic goals.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SYNERGY

Teams are now more aware of each other's goals and progress, leading to increased cross-functional collaboration. As a result, projects that require multi-departmental input are executed more efficiently, with each team contributing their unique expertise towards common goals.

ALIGNMENT, FOCUS & SPEED

With the establishment of quarterly OKRs and the regular updating of progress, Obagi has experienced an improvement in focus and execution speed. The weekly updates have created a rhythm of accountability, enabling swift identification and resolution of issues that arise.

FULL TRANSPARENCY

The introduction of a structured approach to setting, tracking, and reviewing OKRs has brought order and clarity to the management of projects. This has reduced ambiguity and provided a clear direction for project execution that's aligned with Obagi's strategic goals.

OBAGI IS READY FOR ANYTHING

Obagi's journey is a powerful example of what can be achieved by setting the foundation with a strong OKR process and managing change to coincide with its implementation. **By partnering with Wave Nine, Obagi not only transformed its approach to strategy execution but also laid the groundwork for long-term success and more innovation in the cosmeceutical industry.** As Obagi continues to grow and evolve, their OKR program will remain pivotal in driving the company's future achievements.

“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



LOOKING TO BECOME AN OKR ORGANIZATION?

Let's Talk

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Wave Nine empowers companies to achieve business goals through the OKR framework and the OKR rhythm. For enterprises fully committed to the OKR process, we provide comprehensive playbooks, OKR templates, and resources that invigorate teams, clarify strategies, and enhance accountability. Our hands-on approach involves consulting, coaching and multi-modal education, engaging executive and teams alike. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, with additional offices in Germany, the UK, Australia, and Portugal, our international team can bring your strategy to fruition.