



GetSetUp:

A Fast-growing startup turns to Wave Nine to help streamline and refine their OKR rollout

CLIENT

GetSetUp

INDUSTRY

Online Education

EMPLOYEES

50

CHALLENGES

GetSetUp had recently closed \$10 million in venture funding, and the rapid scaling required them to rethink their systems and processes.

What works in a small startup does not often work for larger companies.

RESULTS

GetSetUp's OKR program resulted in:

- Ø **Leaner processes**
- Ø **Better communication**
- Ø **Cross-functional collaboration**
- Ø **Alignment and synchronicity across departments**

GetSetUp, a mission-driven startup that offers an e-learning platform for older adults, found itself in the middle of a massive growth spurt in 2021. They had just received \$10 million in venture funding, and they'd grown overnight from a handful of employees to a company of around 50 people.

While every startup works to achieve these kinds of impressive results, massive growth comes with its share of hurdles—and GetSetUp wasn't immune to those challenges.

Skyrocketing growth often requires:



Recalibrating goals to make them more streamlined and easier to communicate to the larger organization



Rethinking processes to make them simpler and less top-down, encouraging greater ownership among employees and departments



Setting clearer metrics with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are easy to track

Without streamlined goals, scalable processes, and clear metrics, a growing startup can lose its focus and fall short of its potential. This can be especially true of a company like GetSetUp, which had a distributed workforce that needed to collaborate seamlessly. That's where Workboard and Wave Nine entered the picture.



“I was impressed by the Wave Nine team’s engagement from the start. They were highly responsive and they worked to understand our business. They came to serve as an extension of our company, making sure we were doing everything right as we streamlined our implementation.”

Larry Sanford
Vice President of Operations
GetSetUp

FINDING THE RIGHT IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER FOR THE WORKBOARD ROLLOUT

GetSetUp’s VP of Operations Larry Sanford approached Workboard in search of an implementation partner. He had seen an OKR rollout fail at another organization, and he knew it would be difficult to succeed without the right guidance. Workboard referred him to Wave Nine.

Originally, Larry and his team intended to rely on Wave Nine for help implementing the software, then have his staff take over internally. They eventually realized, however, that Wave Nine’s expertise could help them clearly define what success would look like, with precise metrics for success.



OKR ROLLOUT AND RESULTS

GetSetUp’s leadership came to Wave Nine with an extensive, detailed plan for improvement. In fact, the plan turned out to be a little too detailed and extensive—with pages and pages of goals that focused on micro-level outcomes and results. During the first goal-setting workshop with the executive team, Wave Nine helped them focus their goals, identifying a smaller set of measurable, easy-to-communicate OKRs.

“OKRs are not simply better performance measurements for an organization,” says Johannes Glatz, Wave Nine’s primary implementation partner at GetSetUp. “Each OKR should clearly define what success looks like, empowering employees and department leads to act autonomously and hold themselves accountable for reaching the goal.”

Based on that premise, Johannes helped Larry and the other executives to refine their OKRs, with a focus on the following categories:



Member growth



Retention



Revenue growth and tracking



Customer Satisfaction



Throughout the 10 departmental workshops that followed (two workshops per team), Johannes worked with department heads and their teams to identify and work toward clearly defined and measurable OKRs that didn't require constant oversight from the CEO or other executives.

"This is essential to successfully scaling a startup," says Johannes.

Wave Nine provided guidance that made the department-level OKRs:

- Ø **Clearly define what success would look like** in the months and quarters ahead
- Ø **Straightforward:** Easy to understand and communicate
- Ø **Participatory:** Encouraging buy-in and commitment from staff, unlike a series of top-down mandates
- Ø **Cross-functional:** Spanning across teams to break up silos and support

In the end, Larry credits Wave Nine's efforts with helping GetSetUp achieve:



Leaner processes
for greater efficiency



Cross-functional cohesion, with a shared purpose



Better communication
throughout the company



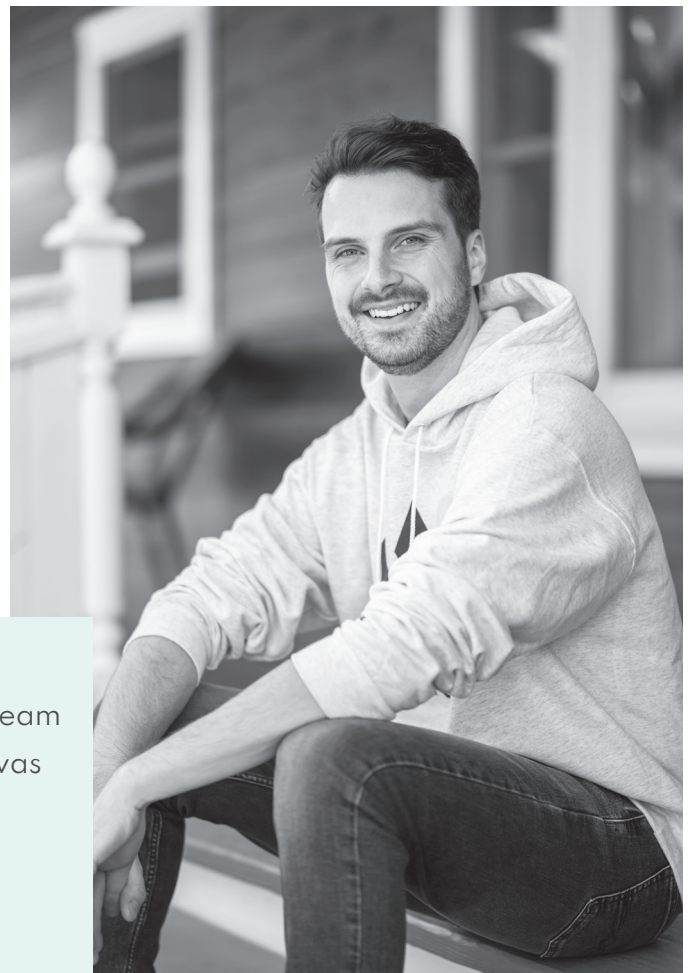
Interdepartmental alignment
—building a collective vision and a common definition for success



SOLUTIONS

Wave Nine worked closely with GetSetUp to develop a lean, focused OKR strategy that involved:

- Ø **Recalibrating and streamlining goals** that were easy to communicate
- Ø **Rethinking and simplifying processes** to make them more distributed, encouraging ownership and buy-in at every level
- Ø **Setting crystal clear metrics** with easy-to-track KPIs



Larry Sanford,
Vice President
of Operations
GetSetUp

“Johannes was the go-to person for everyone on our team who had questions, and he was a consummate professional. It was almost as if Johannes actually worked here.”

3 KEY LESSONS FROM GETSETUP'S OKR EFFORTS

Every Wave Nine engagement is unique and each OKR program requires nuanced guidance. That said, customer case studies tend to highlight some universal lessons that other companies can learn from. GetSetUp's OKR program highlights the following takeaways.

1 **Successful scaling means rethinking systems and processes**

As startups scale to 50-100+ employees, they need to rethink their systems and processes to reduce complexity—that way they can function in a more distributed, less top-down environment. Again, OKRs are not just a better way to report performance. You must tie them to results that are simple to measure and communicate, inspiring ownership and autonomy.

2 **OKR setting is best when it's participatory—as opposed to top-down**

When executives work with department heads, and those department heads collaborate with their staff, the OKRs become easier for everyone to wrap their heads around. This also allows employees to see the big picture, contribute to the strategy, and align their actions with the company's most important priorities—which is what OKRs are all about.

3 **Lean goals and radically honest discussion achieve buy-in**

Tempting as it may be to set dozens of complex goals with intricate details without gathering employee feedback, an OKR program is worthless if employees across departments don't engage with it. Simple, lean, focused goals tend to get company-wide buy-in.

“It was the Wave Nine team's eagerness to help that made them stand out. They were available whenever we needed them, and that made them different than a typical implementation partner. I honestly don't think we could have done this without them.”

Larry Sanford
Vice President of Operations
GetSetUp



// **READY TO SEE WHAT WAVE NINE CAN DO FOR YOUR OKR EFFORTS?**



Wave Nine brings results to OKR programs with your new digital operating rhythm. For startups and enterprises that are serious about OKRs, we built the playbooks, templates, and resources that energize teams, clarify strategies, and drive accountability. We hands-on execute your program in workshops and training from the executives to the teams that make it happen. Headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices in Germany, UK and Australia, we partner with the leading strategy execution platform WorkBoard to make your strategy happen. www.wavenine.com