



## FROM GOOD TO GREAT

How a focus on OKR execution rejuvenated Marvin's OKR program and unlocked new levels of innovation and profitability.



### CLIENT

Marvin Engineering Company

### INDUSTRY

Defense Manufacturing

### EMPLOYEES

900

### SOLUTIONS

Wave Nine worked closely with leadership to develop a clear OKR strategy, which involved:

- ∅ **Identifying goals** that all company leaders could prioritize
- ∅ **Establishing ownership of the rollout** by creating a Steering Committee (led by an executive champion) and a Core Team (led by a Business Process Owner)
- ∅ **Conducting over 20 workshops**, working with each team to set goals that contributed to the broader vision of the OKRs set for that quarter and making sure everyone understood the WorkBoard software



**Marvin Engineering Company** is a worldwide leader in defense manufacturing, building key components of military aircrafts, from ejector racks to missile rail launchers. As the flagship business unit of The Marvin Group, the organization has been equipping the U.S. military and its allies with premium, battle-ready products for more than 50 years.

Despite their success, Chief of Staff Craig Snaguski and his colleagues saw significant areas for improvement. When Craig approached Wave Nine in early 2020, Marvin Engineering had already tried to implement an OKR program using a different software solution, but they didn't see the results they were hoping to achieve.

### CHALLENGES



**A low adoption rate** for the software itself along with the OKR methodology



**Fragmented**, siloed processes for each department



**A general lack of alignment** across the organization when it came to goal setting



**Craig Snaguski**,  
Chief of Staff,  
Marvin Engineering



“When we first tried implementing OKRs, we worked with another firm, but they didn't have anywhere near the same level of engagement that Wave Nine would show. **The previous firm only trained us on a different software, told us what a good OKR looked like, and that was it. Set it and forget.**”



Ready to try something new, Craig looked into the **WorkBoard**, the leading strategy execution platform, to enable his organization to overcome these challenges. WorkBoard then recommended **Wave Nine as their preferred WorkBoard reseller** and implementation partner on the west coast.



“ Wave Nine was the only OKR consulting firm we found that really understood manufacturing. We’re in the defense field, and they seemed to have a very good understanding of manufacturing and how it could assist in our environment. We were also really impressed with WorkBoard. ”

**Craig Snaguski,**  
Chief of Staff,  
Marvin Engineering



## COULD MARVIN ENGINEERING FIND PARTNERS WHO TRULY UNDERSTOOD MANUFACTURING?

Craig quickly realized that, while there were plenty of OKR consultants in the high-tech world, he needed to work with someone who had manufacturing experience. The OKR methodology, after all, is extremely popular with technology firms (with companies like Google, Amazon, Netflix, and Adobe singing its praises). Manufacturing, however, is a different beast entirely, and he needed a partner with proven manufacturing chops.

One thing that stood out about the team behind Wave Nine was their experience as management consultants working with manufacturers such as Volkswagen, BMW, and A123 Systems. Impressed by their experience and their systematic approach toward implementing seamless OKR programs, the leaders at Marvin Engineering decided to take the plunge.

### Phase 1: Assessment

**The team at Wave Nine saw a familiar pattern at Marvin Engineering.** When they engaged with executives to identify their top priorities, they found that the company’s leaders prioritized different things.

The first step of the Assessment phase is to determine what the organization hopes to accomplish and how they’re falling short. Once they can identify those areas for improvement, it’s time to specify OKRs that are measurable and outcome-oriented. Based on in-depth meetings with the company’s executives, Marvin Engineering and Wave Nine identified the following, broad OKRs:





1. **On-time delivery:** Creating processes to better ensure on-time delivery to customers
2. **Profitability:** Developing systems to better track ROI, reduce costs, and increase profits
3. **People:** Finding and hiring talent and reducing the OSHA incident rate (i.e., the official measurement of workplace injuries)
4. **Innovation:** Procuring better technologies, implementing better processes, and developing superior products

In normal times, issues of fragmented goals and struggles with business continuity can affect any organization's success, but they were particularly pressing when Wave Nine entered the picture due to the sudden switch to remote working during Covid-19.

## WAVE NINE HAD MARVIN ENGINEERING IDENTIFY:



### A Program Champion

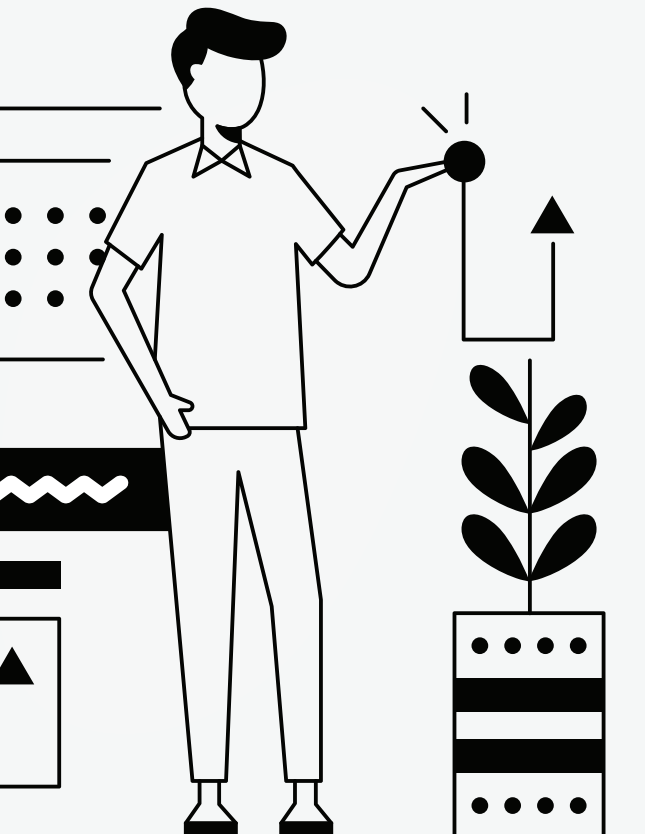
who would oversee the Steering Committee and guide the OKR program throughout its development



### A Business Process Owner

who would head the Core Team, which was responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the OKR program and related strategic initiatives

Craig took on the role of Program Champion, and he worked with Wave Nine to define the scope of the first series of workshops, which involved training in both the OKR methodology and the WorkBoard software. Wave Nine also worked with IT to ensure that everyone in the company had the technical support they needed for a smooth adoption.



“ Wave Nine went above and beyond the requirements set in our contract. They were available 24/7, and the 260 employees who dealt with them were on a first-name basis with the Wave Nine team members. ”

**Craig Snaguski,**  
Chief of Staff,  
Marvin Engineering



## Phase 2: Workshops

In the weeks that followed, Wave Nine and the core team at Marvin Engineering worked with executive leadership to determine how each of the broad OKRs might become relevant to specific departments. Each department had a role to play, and the workshops were designed to help them discover their ideal contributions. Once each department identified its contributions, Wave Nine would drill down, training smaller teams until every employee’s role was clear.

Ultimately, they conducted 20 different workshops across Marvin Engineering, ensuring that everyone was on board with the methodology and the WorkBoard software that supported it.

## IMPLEMENTATION & RESULTS

**A strong OKR program is one where every employee, from every department, understands how their roles are connected to the larger vision.** Here’s how that played out at Marvin Engineering and how each department contributed to Marvin’s four broad OKRs: On-time delivery, profitability, people, and innovation.  
**OKR #1: ON-TIME DELIVERY**

It’s easy to see how on-time delivery is connected to production, but as Craig stressed, every department plays a role. For example:

- ∅ **The Sales team** committed to negotiating contracts with the right lead teams
- ∅ **The finance department** needed to ensure on-time payment for vendors to prevent supply-chain shortages, which involved revamping a cumbersome process
- ∅ **Manufacturing** started a “war on waste” to create more efficient processes

**> The result:** Delivery times improved and customer scorecards showed greatly increased customer satisfaction

### OKR #2: PROFITABILITY

Every department plays a role in a company’s profitability, whether that department is generating revenue or reducing costs. Since Marvin Engineering is a family-owned company, they hadn’t established strict budgeting procedures. However, they knew it was time to evolve.

Here are a few examples of how different departments approached this OKR:

- ∅ **Manufacturing** improved efficiency with new and better equipment
- ∅ **Procurement** focused on improving processes to create a more efficient supply chain
- ∅ **Finance** implemented cost-controlling initiatives, identifying target pricing for different products, setting spending limits, etc.

**> The result:** Each department implemented measures to track profitability, and while the exact figures weren’t available at the time of publication, initial reports suggested significant improvement.



## OKR #3: PEOPLE

The people who make up Marvin Engineering have always been a top priority, so they made “People” one of their high-level OKRs. This involved everything from protecting their employees to attracting the best talent and reducing turnover.

Here are a few ways different departments contributed to these goals:

- ∅ **Manufacturing** improved safety by making their OSHA Incident Rate more visible to everyone in the organization, including executive leadership. They also improved the metric by recording “near misses,” allowing everyone to learn from incidents that almost resulted in injury.
- ∅ **Human Resources** (which Marvin calls People & Culture) is their largest department, and they got to work expanding recruiting capabilities and hiring new recruiters

➤ **Results:** Marvin Engineering managed to improve their Incident Rate, taking it to world-class levels. They also attracted ideal candidates and hired exceptional employees, even in the middle of the largest labor shortage in recent history.

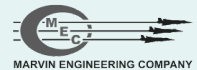
## OKR #4: INNOVATION

Marvin Engineering has always been an innovator in their field, but at times they were slow to adopt new technologies internally. Here are a few of the ways different departments worked toward building a more innovative company:

- ∅ **Operations** started using a new Computer Numeral Code (CNC) system
- ∅ **Human Resources** leveraged technology by using a state-of-the-art Applicant Tracking System (ATS), which greatly improved their recruiting efforts
- ∅ **Research & Development** fielded their first pneumatic program—designing, building, testing, and qualifying new innovations in the most efficient manner possible

“ Our initial goal, when working with Wave Nine, was to hire them as a “train the trainer” service, helping us get up to speed with our program and the WorkBoard software. **In the end, we got so much more from their expertise that it turned into a continuous engagement.** ”

Craig Snaguski,  
Chief of Staff,  
Marvin Engineering



# TOWARD FUTURE SUCCESS

When Craig first approached Wave Nine, he planned to have them help implement the program, train his staff, and forge ahead on his own. He quickly realized, however, that **Wave Nine had become an integral part of his team and their OKR efforts. Wave Nine worked closely with not only his executive leadership, but with individual teams, helping them refine their efforts, master the software, and contribute to Marvin Engineering’s larger goals.**

That’s why Marvin Engineering continues to work with Wave Nine to this day. For the foreseeable future, Craig and his colleagues plan to work with Wave Nine to guide their OKR strategy, rethinking their goals each quarter to become a more unified, successful organization.

**Ready to see what Wave Nine can do for your OKR efforts?**



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## CHALLENGES

Marvin Engineering had previously attempted an OKR rollout, but it didn't stick, due to:

- ∅ **A low adoption rate** for the software and the methodology
- ∅ **Fragmented**, siloed processes
- ∅ **A general lack of alignment** across the organization



## SOLUTIONS

Wave Nine worked closely with leadership to develop a clear OKR strategy, which involved:

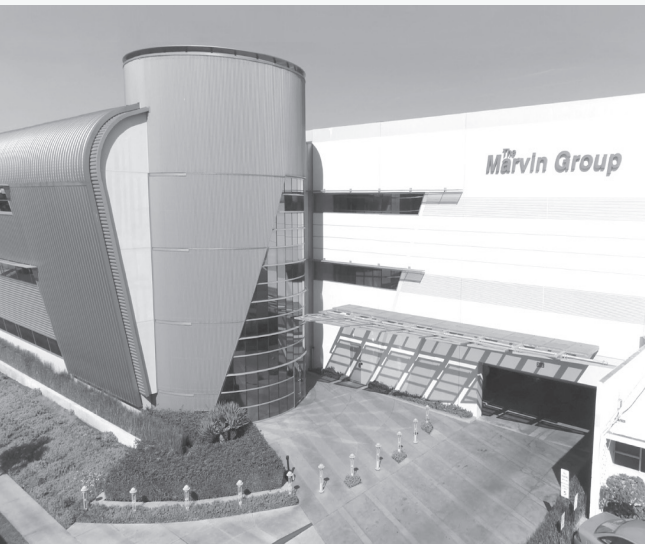
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## RESULTS

Marvin Engineering's OKR program resulted in:

- ∅ **Greatly improved on-time delivery**, leading to higher customer satisfaction
- ∅ **Increased profitability** with improved invoicing, procurement, and manufacturing processes
- ∅ **The ability to attract top talent** in the middle of a labor shortage and achieve a world-class safety rating
- ∅ **Greater innovation** and better use of technology across all departments



**Wave Nine Inc.**  
490 43rd Street  
Suite 90  
Oakland, CA 94609  
United States  
[wavenine.com](http://www.wavenine.com)

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](http://www.wavenine.com)