

# Benchmarking

*Measuring what matters and why clarity beats comparison*

Benchmarking has a mixed reputation. For some, it's motivating. For others, it feels judgemental or disconnected from reality. Too often, it becomes about comparison rather than clarity, about how you stack up against others, rather than whether you're building the business you actually want. Used poorly, benchmarking creates noise. Used well, it creates focus. Measurement should serve the business, not the ego.

## THE SIMPLE TEST

**If you want to know whether your benchmarking is working, ask: Does this help us make better decisions? Does it align with our aspirations? Does it support the future we're trying to build? If the answer is yes, keep it. If not, let it go.**

Benchmarking Done Poorly	Benchmarking Done Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracks dozens of numbers without clarity on decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracks a small number of meaningful, decision-relevant measures</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becomes a scoreboard of comparison against others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becomes a mirror for self-understanding and improvement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritises last quarter's goals over next chapter's needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starts with context: what stage, what constraint, what's next?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates activity without progress or accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates shared language that reduces emotion and builds trust</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Punishes misses - people stop being honest about them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows misses, learning, and adjustment without penalty</li> </ul>

## Why OKRs Work When Done Properly

<p><b>01 Clarity of Intent</b></p> <p>A good Objective is clear, directional, and human. It answers: what are we actually trying to achieve?</p>	<p><b>02 Evidence of Progress</b></p> <p>A good Key Result is specific, measurable, and honest. It answers: how will we know if it's happening?</p>	<p><b>03 Personal OKRs Matter</b></p> <p>Help individuals articulate what they're growing into. When personal and business OKRs align, accountability feels fairer.</p>	<p><b>04 Discipline Without Rigidity</b></p> <p>The best frameworks are light enough to adapt, clear enough to guide, and stable enough to rely on. They support good judgement.</p>
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## Internal Benchmarks Matter Most

External benchmarks have a role. They provide perspective and challenge blind spots. But they should never override internal clarity.

The most useful benchmarks are often your own performance over time, your own goals clearly stated, and your own agreed priorities.

- Progress against your plan is more meaningful than comparison against someone else's reality
- What matters changes over time. A growing business should not measure the same things as a mature one

Good benchmarking starts with context: what stage is this business in? What is the next constraint?

## How This Supports Long-Term Thinking

Benchmarking done well supports succession, ownership, talent, culture, and vision because it creates shared language.

Instead of: "I feel like we're not moving fast enough."

You get: "We agreed this was the priority and here's what's changed."

That shift reduces emotion and increases trust.

A small number of meaningful measures, reviewed regularly, discussed honestly, and adjusted when necessary, will always outperform a complex system no one really uses.

*"Not everything that can be measured should be. The right measures are the ones that support the next decision, not the last one. Clarity is the goal. Not comparison."*