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Microsoft Viva Goals brings purpose and alignment to the employee experience

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The workplace has evolved significantly over the last two years as hybrid work becomes a reality and employees' expectations shift toward their employee experience. In a recent Microsoft study, 77 percent of employees said it's important or very important for their employer to provide a sense of purpose and meaning at work. At the same time, 69 percent of employees said it's important or very important to be rewarded for impact instead of hours worked.[1]

Not only do employees want to feel more connected, more aligned to their company's purpose and mission, but they also want to grow, make an impact, and make a difference. Organizations, likewise, are at their best when people and teams have clarity and a shared understanding of their goals and can execute in sync to achieve the desired business outcomes. A clear, consistent business goal-setting process is the missing link between employee experience and business outcomes.

Today, we are excited to announce Microsoft Viva Goals, a new module for business goal setting and management, is now available in private preview. Powered by the acquisition of Ally.io,[2] a leading objectives and key results (OKR) company, Viva Goals brings purpose and alignment to Viva customers—alongside culture and communications, wellbeing and engagement, growth and development, as well as knowledge and expertise.

Introducing Viva Goals

Viva Goals aligns teams to your organization's strategic priorities and unites them around the mission and purpose. It helps provide clarity on employees' work and how that work makes an impact on the business's most important priorities. With that alignment in place, teams then can focus on doing the work, making sound decisions, and driving the desired results for the business.

Business goals connecting employee experience and business outcomes

Having clear goals and measures of success at the highest levels of the organization helps everyone understand what's important and align their work to the most valued priorities. It sets the context for the work of the team and creates a shared vision and a common language, which is especially important in a hybrid work environment. This gives departments and teams a framework to focus their own priorities and define what success looks like together in connection with the business goals.

With clarity around organization-wide and team-wide goals, employees are empowered to think, collaborate, and act at the team and individual level, informed and aligned to the priorities and what others are working on, thus everyday work is moving the business forward in a more agile way. This connection and visibility to the bigger picture enables flexibility and purpose-driven work as employees can determine the best way to reach those goals. Knowing why you show up for work every day, taking a collaborative approach to defining goals, and understanding the progress you are making are all important to enhancing the employee experience.

It also encourages a culture of innovation and growth: according to an Ally.io survey, 73 percent of people who use a goal-setting framework like OKRs feel empowered to take risks at work (compared to 53 percent who do not)—and calculated risk leads to innovation.[3]

In addition, Viva Goals brings business goals into the flow of everyday work, making it easier to stay up to date with connected data and automated reminders as well as to share OKRs and their progress across the organization with customized dashboards and quick links. Viva Goals integrates with Microsoft Teams, Azure DevOps, and other work management and data tools that customers are already using—as well as more integrations to come with Microsoft Viva, Microsoft Power BI, and other Microsoft 365 apps and services. With Viva Goals, OKRs no longer exist in a silo separate from the employee experience and where people work.

Viva Goals will be included with the current Microsoft Viva suite subscription when it becomes generally available later in Q3 Calendar Year (CY) 2022.

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OKRs for everyone

With Viva Goals, we seek to empower teams to use OKRs at all levels. OKRs can help get everyone pulling in the same direction, but not when used only as top-down directives.

Whether you are a C-suite leader, team lead, or individual contributor, you can incorporate OKRs as part of your one-on-one meetings with managers, progress updates to stakeholders, or regular planning process to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and what should change.

In this new fourth installment of our blog series about Microsoft's own employee experience journey, we share how teams at Microsoft are using Viva Goals and the OKR framework across the company at different levels to support new hires, define partnerships between teams, and drive innovation.

Looking ahead

We're very excited about the opportunity to help customers build alignment and bring increased meaning and purpose-driven work into the employee experience as part of Viva. To learn more, explore Microsoft Viva Goals and watch the video below.

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[1]The Work Trend Index survey was conducted by an independent research firm, Edelman Data x Intelligence, among 31,102 full-time employed or self-employed workers across 31 markets between January 7, 2022 and February 16, 2022. This survey was 20 minutes in length and conducted online, in either the English language or translated into a local language across markets. At least 1,000 full-time workers were surveyed in each market, and global results have been aggregated across all responses to provide an average. Each market is evenly weighted within the global average. Each market was sampled to be representative of the full-time workforce across age, gender, and region; each sample included a mix of work environments (in-person, remote vs. non-remote, office settings vs. non-office settings, etc.), industries, company sizes, tenures, and job levels. Markets surveyed include: Australia and New Zealand (ANZ): Australia, New Zealand; Asia-Pacific (APAC): China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam; Europe: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom; Latin America (LATAM): Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico; North America: Canada, United States.

[2]Microsoft acquires Ally.io to improve employee experience by aligning people's work with team goals and company mission, Kirk Koenigsbauer, Official Microsoft Blog, Microsoft. October 7, 2021.

[3]2021 Report: A New Perspective on Goal Management and Company Culture, Kevin Shively, Ally.io. June 8, 2021.