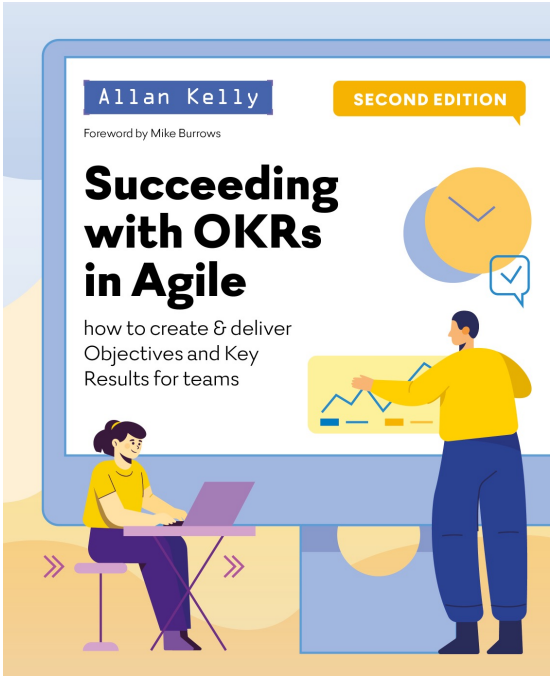
5 Lessons from working with OKRs



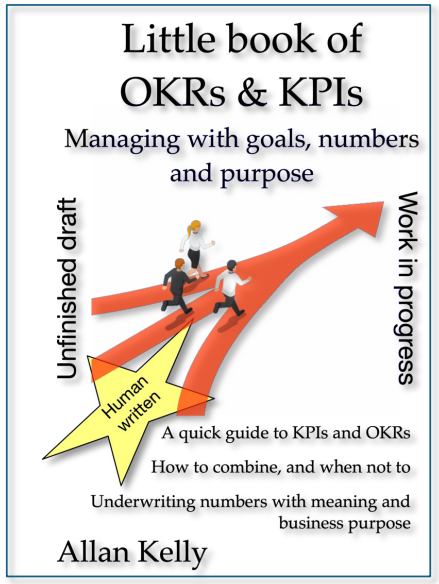
Allan Kelly
allan@allankelly.net
https://www.allankelly.net

OKR World Summit
November 2026

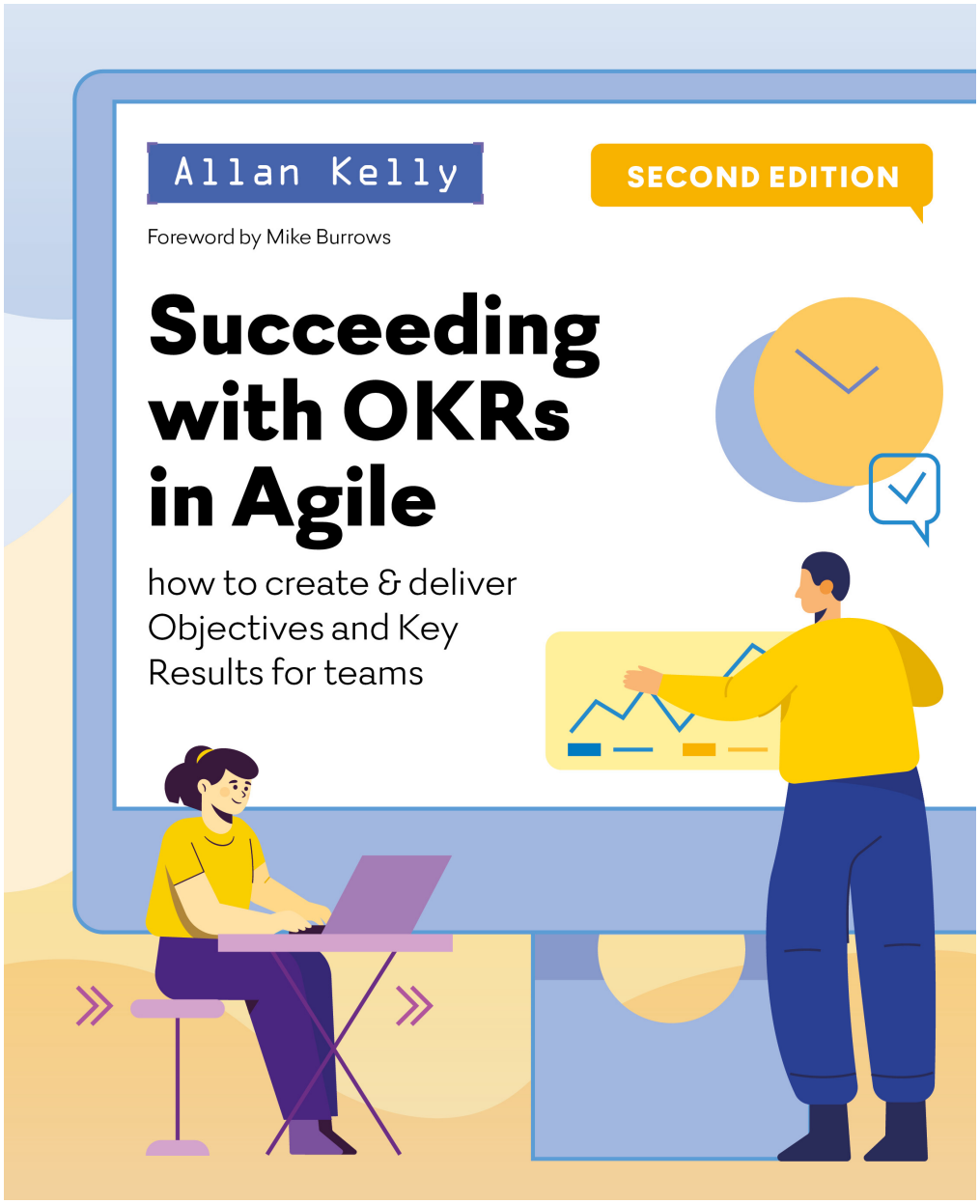
I’m still learning

I may have written a book but there is more!

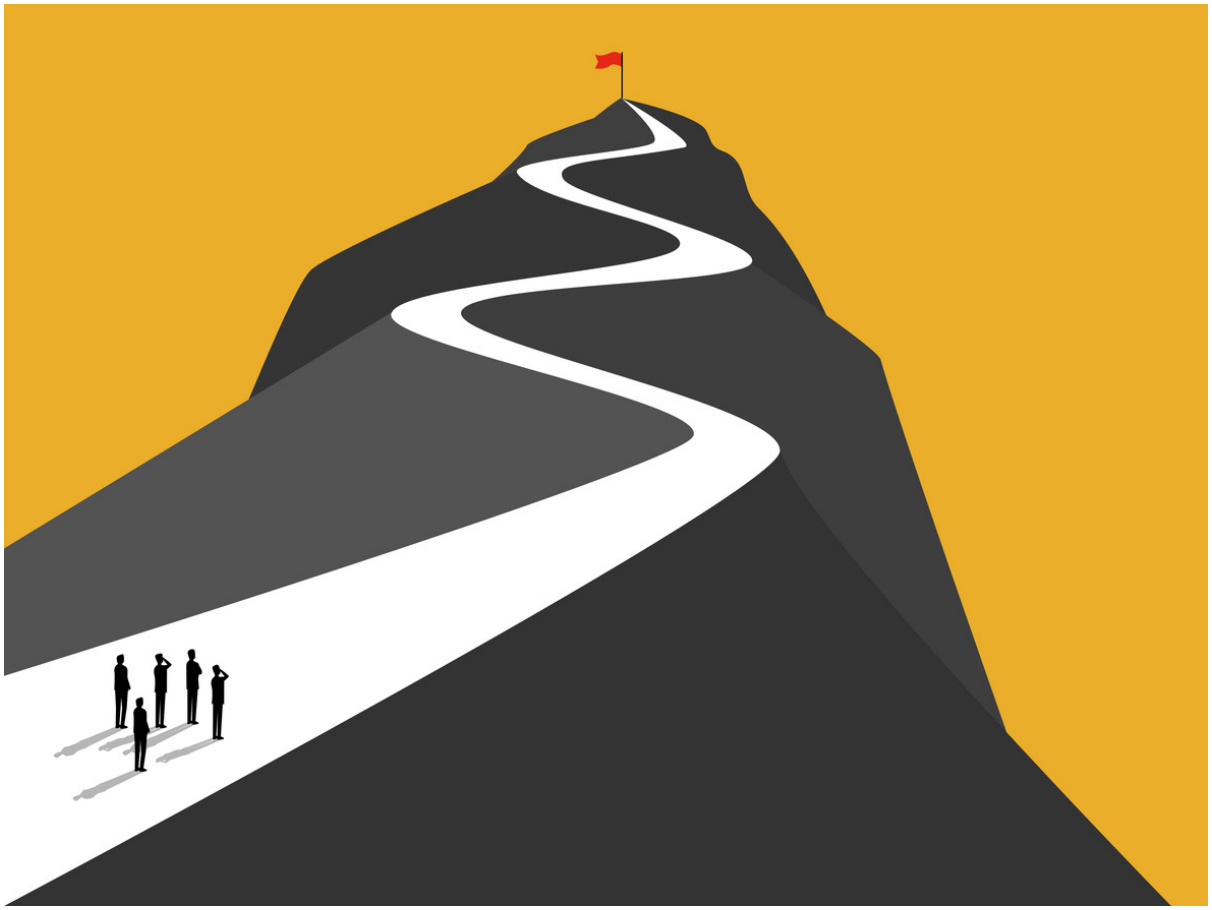
Work in progress



https://leanpub.com/OkrsKpis



1 Ambition





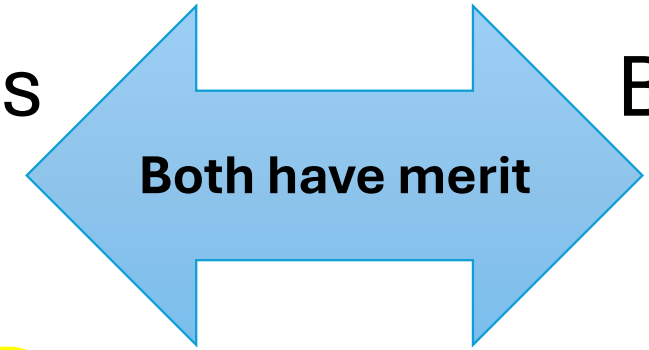
or Predictability?

Lesson: Be clear what you are aiming for

OKRs celebrates

Moonshot goals

10x Growth



Business values predictability

Delivery on schedule

Meeting goals

Ask your stakeholders & leaders
Which do they want?

Don't hide the conflict – name it
And state your intention

Mark objectives as
Ambitious or Predictable

Gut feel, then manage to the date

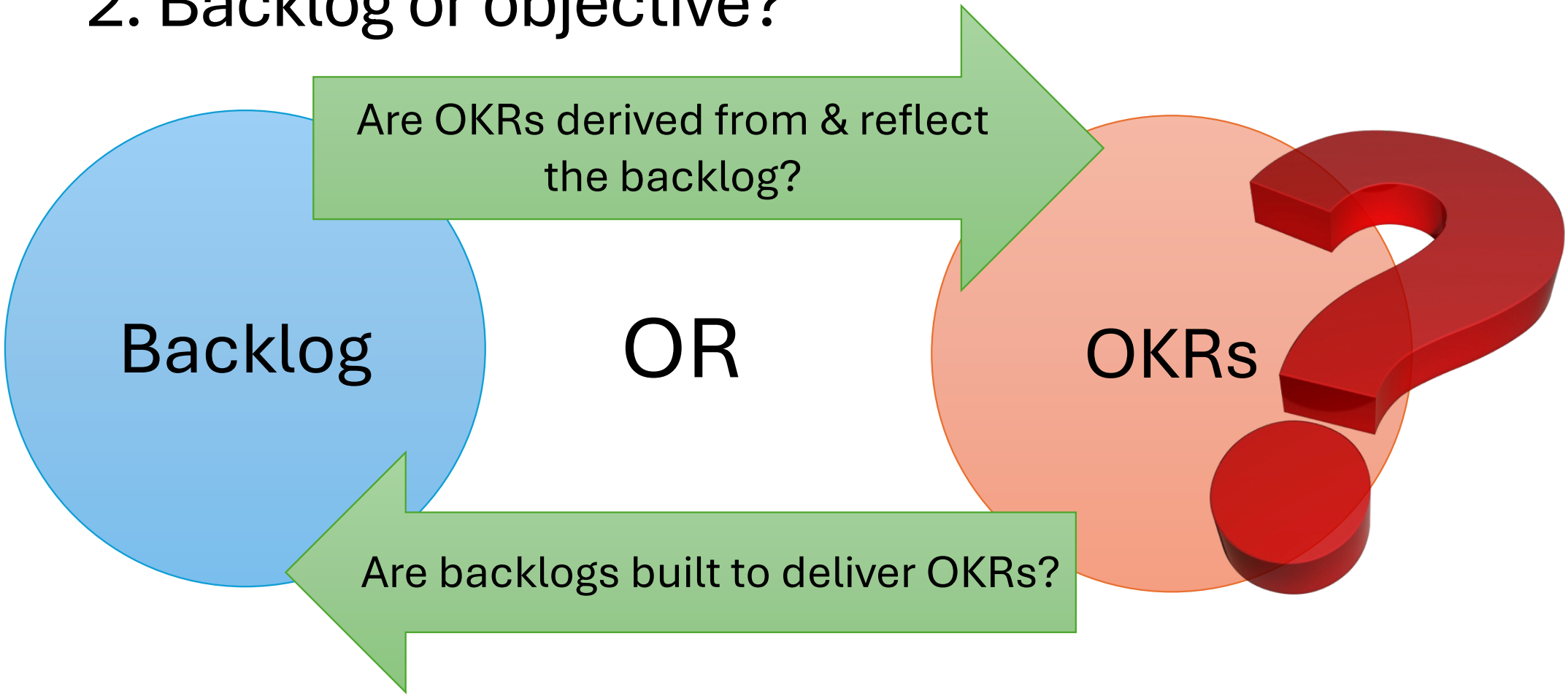
You are **not** building the best solution ever

You **are** building the best solution possible **within the time you have** with the resources you have

Flex functionality/features



2. Backlog or objective?



3 options

1. Start with backlog & reverse engineer OKRs
2. Start with OKRs and build just enough backlog
3. Different objectives

OKR 1: **BAU Support**, incident tickets
OKR 2: **Build out**, reversed from backlog
OKR 3: **Business Initiatives**, outcome drive backlog
OKR 4: **Sustaining**, outcome drives backlog

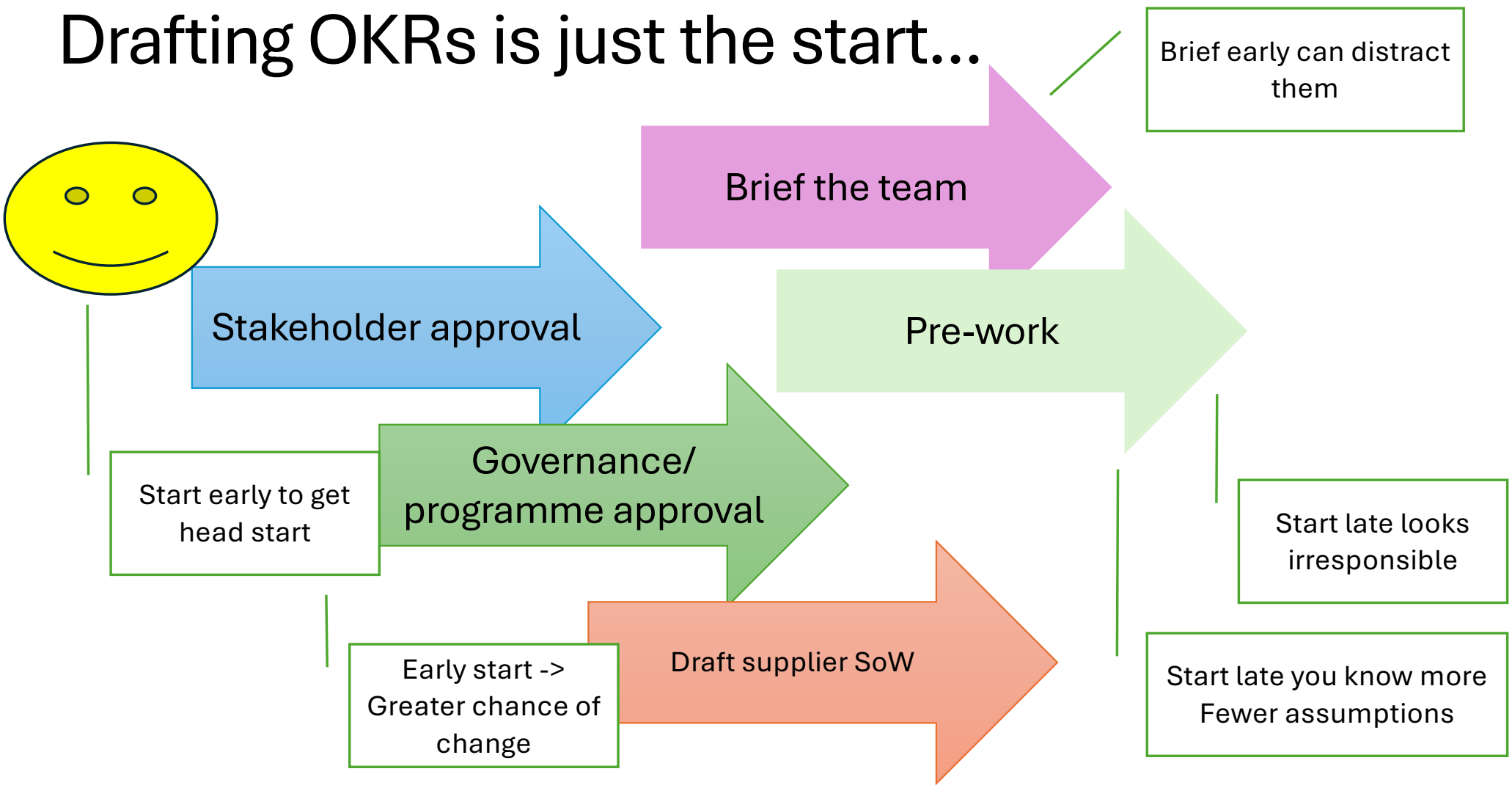
3. Planning ahead: No perfect time to start thinking about the the next ¼

Start too early and its not meaningful

People don’t internalise till it is near

Start too late and you are time crushed

Drafting OKRs is just the start...



3. Use a *Lean roadmap*

	Now	Next	Everything else
1 Support/DevOps	60% inside 1 week	60% inside 1 week	60% inside 1 week
2 Backlog build out	Billing	Reporting (23456) or Usability (23457)	23458, 23459, or 23460
3 Business initiatives	Client onboarding	New pricing structure	More client onboarding, localisation, …
4 Sustaining	Data sync improvements	Technical debt	DB changes, AI integration, Platform Uplift, …

OKRs in place this quarter

Ideas for next quarter

Start firming up @ half-way point

Future possible stuff

4. Know your audience

Who are your OKRs speaking to and why?



Your team
To guide their work
Or, motivate and enrol them

Your executives
To explain what you are doing
Or: get their permission



Who else?



Your stakeholders
To get their feedback and their support



5. Searching for meaning

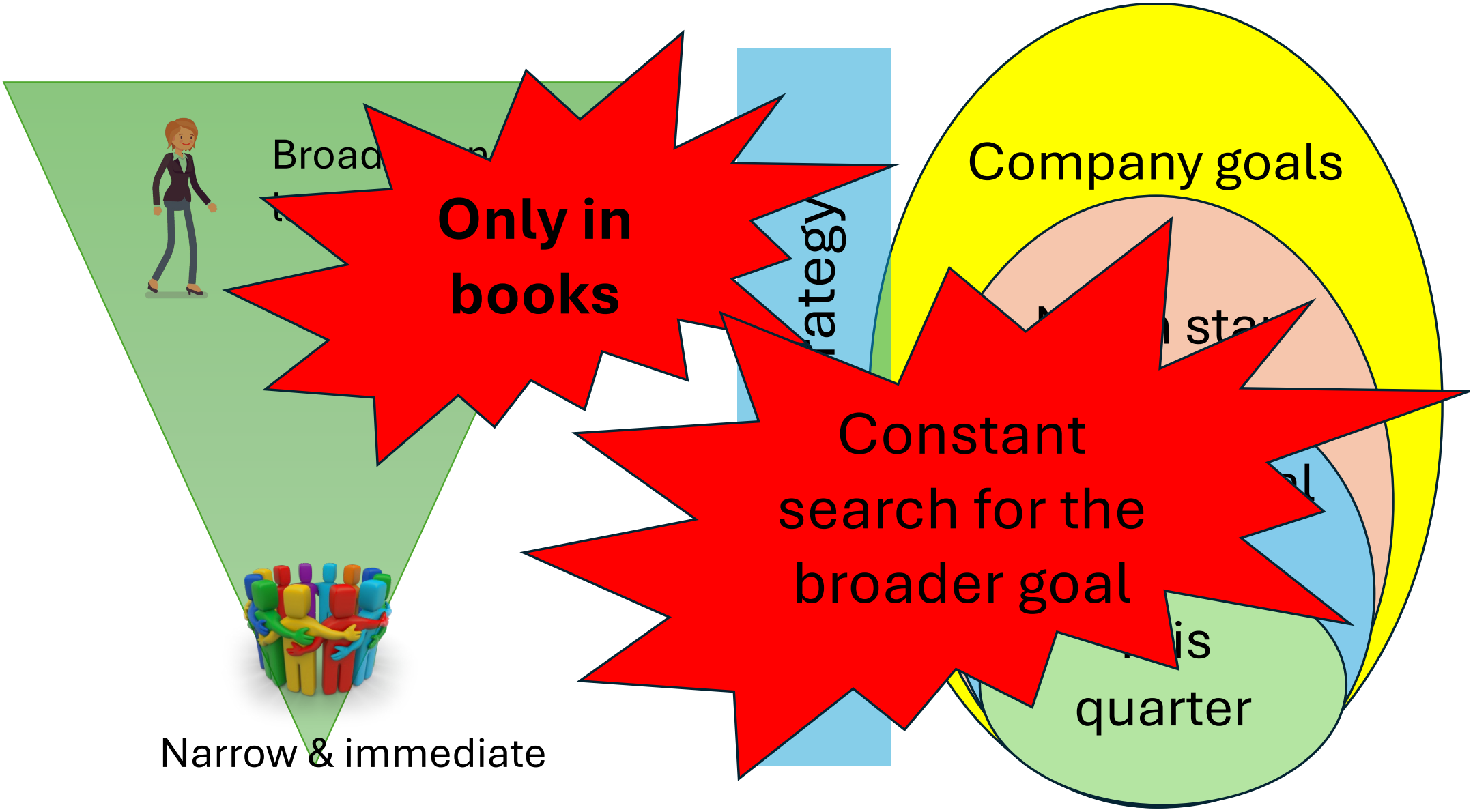
Rationally,

- Every OKRs feeds into a Product goal
- Product goals feeds into a North Star
- North Start contributes to company purpose



Nested goals give meaning & guidance

- Companies with purpose are more successful


Broad
Only in books
rategy
Company goals
Constant search for the broader goal
is quarter
Narrow & immediate

Searching for meaning with OKRs



By consulting with others

By getting feedback on OKRs

Probing and exploring the bigger goals and strategy

OKRs as a Strategy Debugger

Bonus lesson

6. Say no to Baselines

Set key results target from what the customer wants

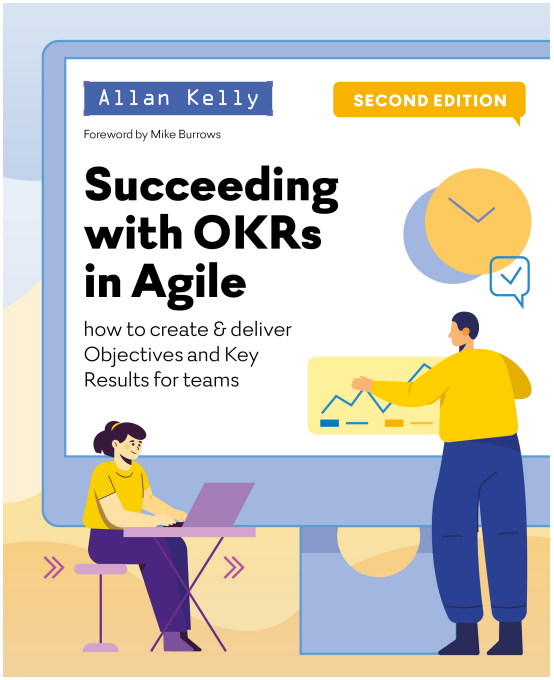
Target is what makes a difference in the market

Do not start with a baseline

Target is NOT “current score plus 10%”



5 Lessons of OKRs



1. Declare Ambition or Predictability
2. Decide on your backlog
3. Use a lean roadmap
4. Know who your audience
5. OKRs are a search for meaning
6. Result customers want (not baseline +10%)

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