

# Obeya Fundamentals

LEARNING MODULE & PRACTICE GUIDE

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR  
COLLABORATION AND  
DECISION-MAKING IN A  
COMPLEX WORLD



**OBEYA**  
association  
[obeya-association.com](http://obeya-association.com)

**OBEYA**  
BY THE OBEYA ASSOCIATION

## Welcome!

Greetings and welcome to the Obeya Fundamentals training module, your first and most important step into the world of Obeya. Well done!

During this learning experience, you will combine practical Obeya building with foundational Obeya background and theory, all according to the internationally acclaimed Obeya standard.

The Obeya Fundamentals module will:

- get you started with your very own Obeya!
- provide you with professional Obeya credentials
- allow you to develop yourself into an Obeya Builder, Host or Coach

The Obeya Fundamentals accreditation will also allow you to login on the Obeya Association platform and use all its features and attend all the events, through a free Obeya Association membership!

Together, let us become catalysts for change, shaping the future of organizational excellence. We thank you for embracing the opportunity to leave a lasting positive imprint on our world!

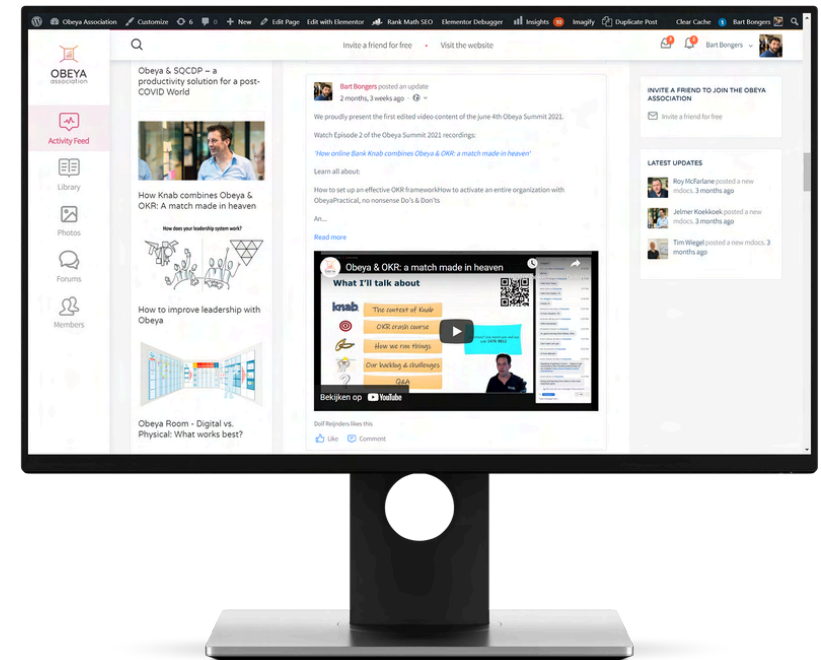
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## About the Obeya Fundamentals Qualification

The Obeya Fundamentals module is the first step in practically boosting your skills in organizational governance and strategy deployment.

The module is also the first step of the full Obeya development trajectory. The Obeya Fundamentals certification provides you with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand and start working with Obeya and unlocks further development towards the Obeya Builder and Obeya Host levels.

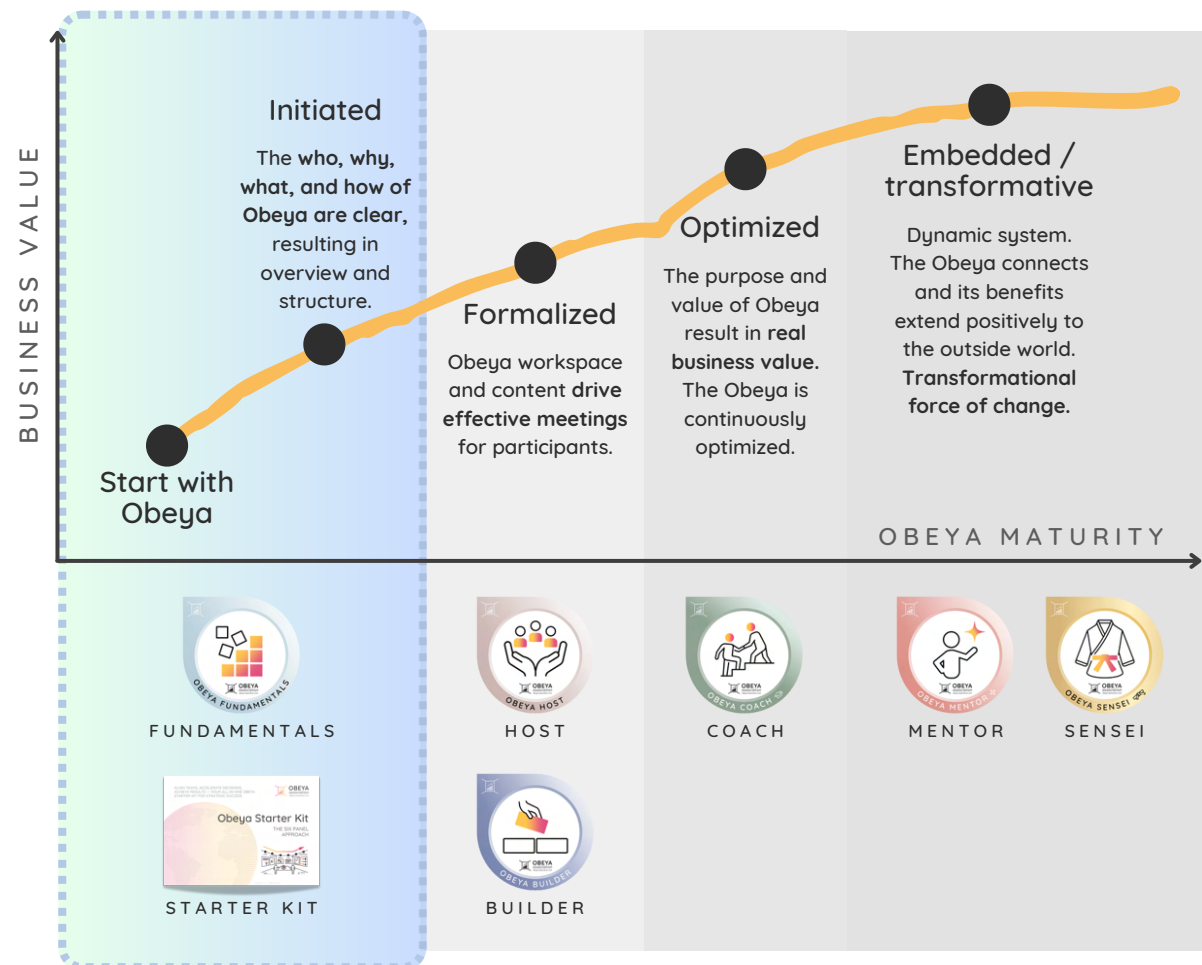
Our Obeya Training Partners are carefully selected organizations that play a crucial role in delivering authentic, high-quality training that align with the standards of the Obeya Association.



FIND YOUR OBEYA TRAINING  
ON THE OBEYA ASSOCIATION  
PLATFORM



Lead change. A development path for professionals that want to master collaboration, leadership, and strategic execution.



The Obeya Fundamentals certification enables you to act as a professional Obeya practitioner with proven knowledge and experience.



## Obeya Sensei

An **OBEYA SENSEI** is the highest honorary distinction, recognizing unparalleled expertise and impact. As visionary leaders, they shape Obeya's theory, practice, and global evolution. Obeya Sensei's embody the pinnacle of Obeya mastery.



## Obeya Mentor

An **OBEYA MENTOR** is a seasoned Obeya Coach with deep expertise. They advance the field through research, publishing, and training Obeya Coaches. As thought leaders, they shape the evolution and dissemination of Obeya knowledge.



## Obeya Coach

An **OBEYA COACH** integrates the skills of both Builder and Host and also trains Obeya Builders and Hosts. Guides organizational leaders in governance and strategic Obeya implementation. They focus on business value and organizational transformation.



## Obeya Builder & Host

An **OBEYA BUILDER** designs and maintains an Obeya room to support collaboration, transparency, and strategic alignment through visual management.

An **OBEYA HOST** facilitates and manages Obeya sessions, ensuring effective collaboration and alignment.



## Obeya Fundamentals

The **OBEYA FUNDAMENTALS** module provides the essentials for setting up and working in an Obeya. A practical approach focused on improving collaboration, increasing transparency and driving alignment from the start.



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THIS ICON IS USED TO INDICATE  
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## ABOUT OBEYA

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### Introduction

In this first chapter, we dive into the heart of Obeya—what it really is, where it came from, and why you should care.

First things first: Obeya isn't just a physical or digital room; it's a complete system of thinking, collaborating, and aligning an organization.

An Obeya is an especially designed workspace that aligns teams across functions around shared goals, make vital information actionable by visualizing it, and drive purposeful business value. Obeya's enable organizations to make better decisions faster, whilst dealing with complex environments.

The story of Obeya, from the Japanese ("large room"), is rich, spanning continents, centuries, and diverse fields.

You'll discover how Obeya integrates Lean Management's efficiency with Agile's adaptive flexibility, creating a method that boosts both organizational performance and continuous learning simultaneously.

All the Obeya history and insights are crystallized in the 11 Obeya Principles, that are structured around the quadrants Mindset, Alignment, Workspace, and Content — which together provide your practical roadmap into building an Obeya that genuinely works.

Let's get started!



*Turning strategy into action: teams using Obeya to make priorities clear and decisions count*

Where people, purpose, and visuals collide — Obeya transforms scattered efforts into focused action and real results.

### Sustainable and inclusive decision making

Most people know Obeya as a physical or digital workspace where strategy meets execution. While this is absolutely true, Obeya guides both behavior as well as a work environment design. This is why Obeya deserves a wider definition than a reference to the workspace only. Obeya's official definition can be found on the next page.

An Obeya can be regarded as a system, a concept or even a philosophy. An Obeya effectively combines behavior and work environment design. It allows communication not only up and down the organizational hierarchies, but also horizontally across teams and departments. The Obeya walls reflect the current state of learning of the people involved, therefore the Obeya room serves as a “single source of truth”. Obeya eventually works its magic through increased quality of decision making.

#### Obeya supports effective pursuit of strategic goals:

- Achieves team alignment
- Promotes coherent, purposeful action
- Helps deliver meaningful results across the organization

A “traditional” organization (designed primarily for stability) is often rigid and slow moving. Governance models are often too complex, displaying many vertical command structures and too little horizontal connections.



**Sustainable decision making means:** decisions are oriented on long term value creation. Every day decisions are constantly weighed according to their longer horizon merits, leading to organizations that are able to shift gradually when needed. They become responsive. Change can become a normal - non intruding - part of every day operations.

**Inclusive decision making means:** including multiple information sources and multiple perspectives simultaneously. Taking broadly supported decisions saves valuable time. Better decisions can be made. Faster.



# O•be•ya

(noun, plural: O•be•ya's)

A structured, adaptive workspace that drives organizational change by promoting *continuous learning* and *collaboration* through safe social interactions, with a focus on Visual Management and cross-functional teamwork.



### Obeya - a long history of learning & improving

The word Obeya has Japanese origins ( ) and literally means: “large room”. The roots of what is now a valuable management practice can be found across continents, with many disciplines influencing each other throughout history. Let’s take you back to the earliest notion of a management philosophy. Meet: Confucius.

Confucius can be considered an educator, encouraging constant questioning in the pursuit of learning. The Analects, written by Confucius 2500 years ago (China, 551 - 479 BC) seem to be the earliest notion of what later developed into different management philosophies. The Analects have been an influential Eastern social and ethical philosophy.

Rich, diverse and over 2500 years old, Confucian tradition teaches about the idea that good life lies in social relations, starting with family and extending into friends and community. Confucianism highlights the question on what roles we occupy in our lifetime and what our obligations are regarding those roles.

More importantly for Obeya, Confucius proposed learning as a cycle of stages, in which early stages are focused around improving understanding. Next, according to Confucius, we need to think critically about what we (want to) learn.

Simultaneously, actual physical places arise where ‘the way’ is practiced, which evolves throughout Eastern history. A central tradition within these places is the use of visual stimulation, another strong link with modern day Obeya use.

Confucianism favors light government, informal means of social control and emotional harmony. All of which are important elements in the way we use Obeya today.



*Confucius' ideas on learning from acting in order to improve can be considered fundamental to modern day Obeya practice. Read more on Obeya's Eastern roots on [www.obeya-association.com](http://www.obeya-association.com).*

“Knowledge without action is useless. Action without knowledge is a - potentially dangerous - waste of effort.”



CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ON  
THE ESSENCE OF OBeya AND  
ITS EASTERN ROOTS ON OUR  
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The pursuit of structured thinking and problem-solving has been evolving for millennia. However, a major turning point in this journey came about in the West during the ‘Scientific Revolution’.

### The birth of the Scientific Approach

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the idea of a systematic, evidence-based approach to understanding the world took hold. One of the key figures in this movement was Francis Bacon (1561-1626), an English philosopher and statesman. He championed inductive reasoning—drawing conclusions based on careful observation, often from nature—rather than relying on assumptions or tradition. His methods for uncovering truth laid the groundwork for scientific inquiry, which, centuries later, would also influence modern management practices, including Obeya.

### The origins of PDCA and Lean thinking

Fast-forward to the 20th century, and Bacon’s approach to observation and systematic thinking can be seen in Plan-Do-Check-Act\* (PDCA) improvement cycles, brought forward by Walter Shewhart and W. Edwards Deming in the 1930s. These cycles became fundamental in quality control and continuous improvement, principles that would later define Lean Management.

### Industrialization and cross-cultural influence

With the onset of the Industrial Age (from the 1800s onward), management practices began to evolve rapidly, influenced by both Western and Eastern philosophies. With one industry in particular: automobile manufacturing.

In Japan, Toyota embraced Deming’s principles of quality control and continuous improvement, leading to the creation of the Toyota Production System (TPS). This approach revolutionized manufacturing, raising quality standards and increasing efficiency. The success of TPS and Lean production methods later pushed American manufacturers to adopt similar statistical quality control techniques.

*Francis Bacons’  
methodological (scientific)  
ways to uncover truth  
influence Western  
management practices  
before blending in with  
Eastern management  
practices.*



### The rise of Visual Management and Obeya

By the 1980s, leading research institutions like MIT (Lean Management) and Harvard (SCRUM/Agile) began studying and modeling management practices, providing empirical data and analysis. It was during this time that visual management and the use of Obeya rooms gained traction as core elements of structured decision-making and cross-functional collaboration in today’s era.

Are you still with us?! On the next page we have drafted a timeline that makes it a lot easier to put all of these developments into perspective.

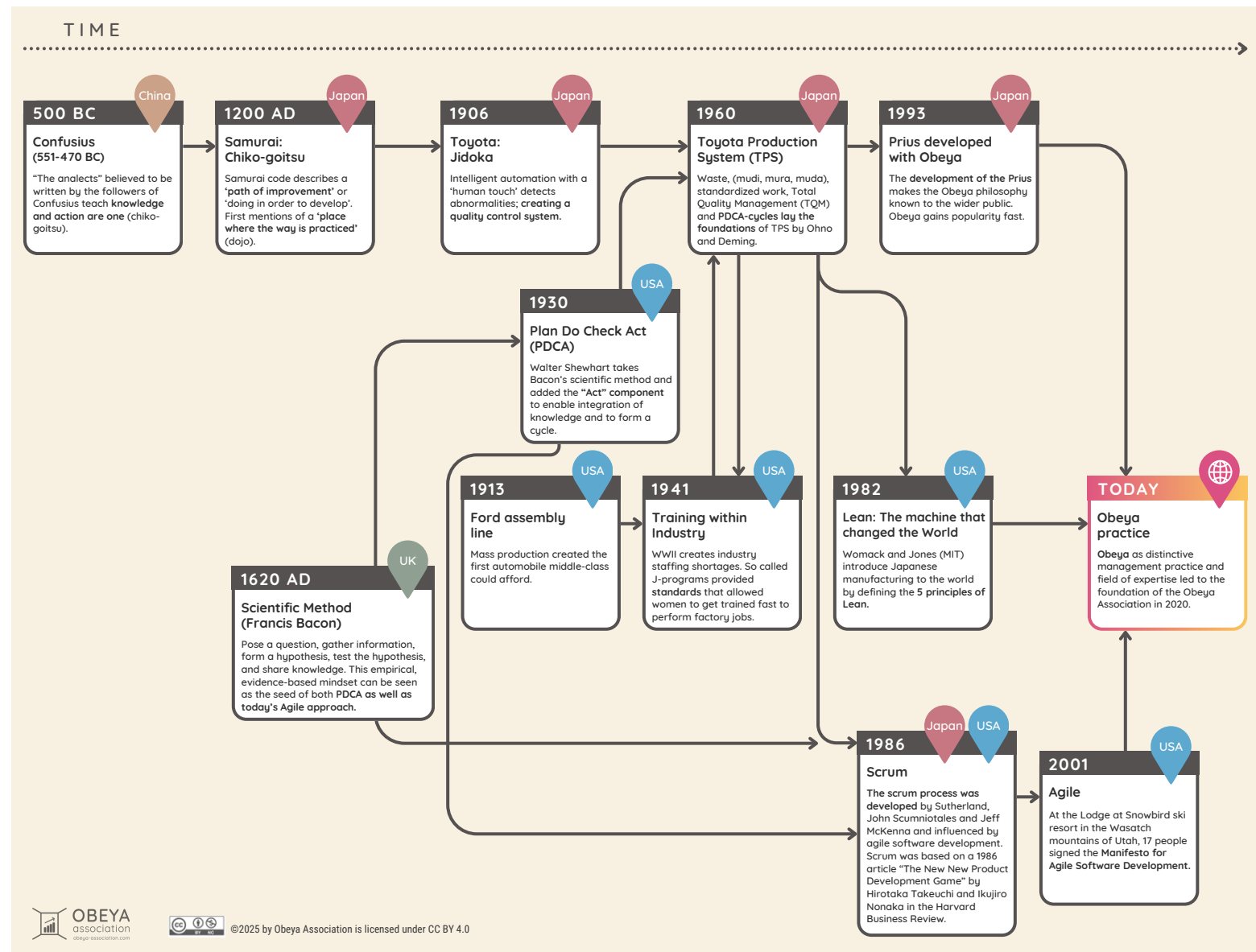
You know why? Because it’s visual!

\*Also known as Plan - Do - Study - Act (PDSA)

## Obeya - Historic timeline

The roots of the Obeya can be found when digging through history.

This narrative is a grave generalization of the total historical picture. Nevertheless, we hope to show some of Obeya's essence by revealing some of its history - certainly not all of it.



➔ CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO ON THE ESSENCE OF OBEYA AND ITS EASTERN ROOTS ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



### Lean, Agile & Obeya are historically linked

Lean management, Agile, and Obeya are historically intertwined because they all share the same origins and principles.

Lean management was first developed by Toyota in the 1930s, and it focused on maximizing value and minimizing waste. The principles of Lean manufacturing were then applied to other industries, such as healthcare and finance, and it evolved into a famous business management methodology.

Agile, on the other hand, was first introduced in 2001 with the publication of the Agile Manifesto, a set of guiding values and principles for software development. Agile was initially used in software development, but it was later adopted in other fields such as project management and product development.

### Researching Obeya's rich historical background we can see:

- Many exchanges between Eastern and Western philosophies throughout history
- Strong link with improvement cycles, especially PDCA
- Obeya practice logically rooted within both Lean and Agile practices
- Both MIT and Harvard have been influential; modeling practices and making them available for broader audiences
- Focus on work floor and human development



All three methodologies share the same origins and principles: Lean management, Agile, and Obeya all focus on customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. They also prioritize communication and collaboration, and they use visual management tools to manage the work.

This historical intertwined connection between these three methodologies is one of the reasons why they are often used together and complement each other, leading to better results for the customer, faster innovation cycles, happy employees and improved overall performance of the organization.

### Benefits of combining Obeya with Lean management and Agile methodologies

- **Efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's processes.** By using visual management in an Obeya room, teams can identify and eliminate waste and improve the flow of materials, information and people. This can lead to cost savings and improved quality.
- **Communication and collaboration.** Obeya creates a centralized location for all stakeholders to communicate, collaborate, and make decisions. This can lead to faster decision making, improved problem-solving and better alignment.
- **Customer satisfaction.** By using Lean management and Agile methodologies, teams can focus on providing value to customers and meeting their needs. In addition, Obeya can help teams to gather customer feedback and use it to improve the product or service.
- **Adaptability to changing requirements.** The ability to adapt to changing customer requirements and feedback is a key benefit. Teams can quickly identify and resolve issues, and make adjustments as needed to ensure that the final product or service meets the customer's needs.

By history, Obeya combines many Lean and Agile elements, making the approach focused on results for the customer whilst improving the overall performance of the organization.





### Things you should know about Lean Management: all about creating value

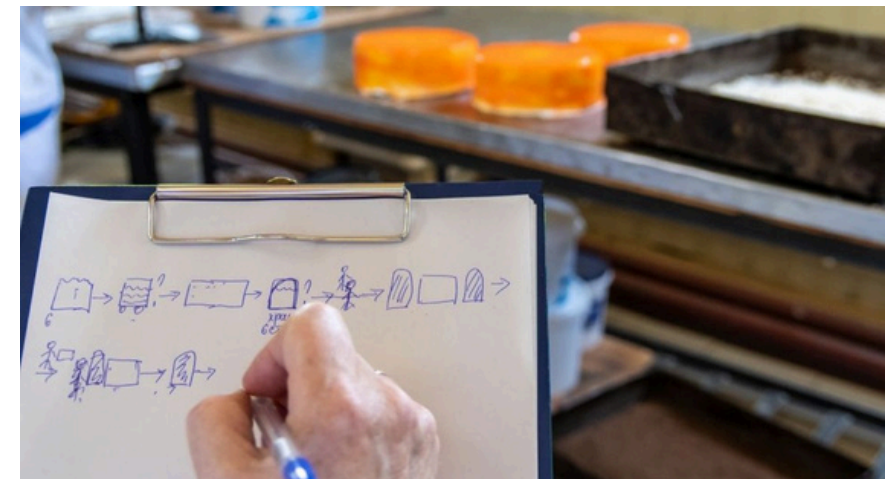
Lean management is a business management methodology that is focused on providing value to customers by maximizing efficiency and minimizing waste. It is based on the principles of Lean manufacturing, which was first developed by Toyota in the 1930s. Lean management seeks to identify and eliminate all forms of waste, such as overproduction, waiting, excess inventory, overprocessing, motion, and defects, in order to improve efficiency and quality.

The core principle of Lean management is continuous improvement, known as Kaizen. Kaizen is a philosophy of continuous small improvements that, over time, can lead to significant improvements in the overall performance of an organization. Lean management also emphasizes the involvement of all employees in the improvement process and encourages them to identify and eliminate waste.

Lean management also prioritizes flow, which means creating a smooth and efficient process from raw materials to the delivery of a product or service to the customer. This is achieved by eliminating bottlenecks and delays and ensuring that materials, information and people flow seamlessly through the process.

Lean management also promotes the use of visual management to visualize the flow of work, and to identify and resolve problems quickly. This helps to keep the team focused on the most important tasks and to keep the process moving smoothly.

Lean management is not only applied in manufacturing but also in various other industries such as healthcare, finance, construction, and many others. Well-known lean management frameworks are Lean Six Sigma and Lean Startup.



Lean management is based around value creation through continuous improvement, the elimination of waste, and the flow of materials, information and people.

### Things you should know about Agile: Deliver working products fast

Agile is a methodology that is focused on delivering value to customers through rapid, iterative and flexible processes. Agile teams work in short cycles, called sprints, usually 2-4 weeks, to deliver working products or services to customers as soon as possible. The team receives feedback from customers on the result of each sprint and uses it to improve the product or service in the next iterations. This approach allows Agile teams to quickly adapt to changing requirements and customer needs.

Agile methodologies also prioritize communication and collaboration between team members. Daily stand-up meetings are used to ensure that everyone is on the same page and to identify and resolve any issues. Agile teams are self-organizing and cross-functional, which means that team members can have different skills and expertises and are empowered to make decisions and manage their own work. This creates a sense of ownership and accountability among team members.

The Agile manifesto highlights four core values, which are:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software (products) over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

These values are the foundation of Agile and provide a clear direction for Agile teams to follow. The key benefit of Agile is its ability to adapt to changing customer requirements and feedback, which results in delivering the right product or service that meets the customer's needs.



Agile prioritizes communication, collaboration, and customer feedback to ensure that the final product or service is exactly what the customer wants and needs.



### Recent history - how Obeya gained momentum

Toyota put Obeya into practice back in 1993 launching their first Prius as a part of the Toyota Lean Manufacturing System. Takeshi Uchiyamada, a Toyota Chief Engineer, was given a difficult challenge: designing the car of the 21st century, with very aggressive fuel consumption targets.

In less than three years, the first hybrid car, the Prius, was brought to market - 15 years ahead of the competition.



If you think of an organization as a nervous system, then Obeya would be the brain of the system.



To pull off such a feat, the Chief Engineer also had to invent a new product and process development approach. He designed a system of visual management: the Obeya.

Analogies have been drawn between an Obeya and the bridge of a ship, a war room and even a brain. It is a place of collective learning. Where information is synthesized and digested, analyzed and actions are prioritized. Finally, the aim of all this information is to take well informed decisions. Obeya uses both the power of information as well as it involves multiple parties perspectives and knowledge simultaneously.

### The framework for modern day Obeya's

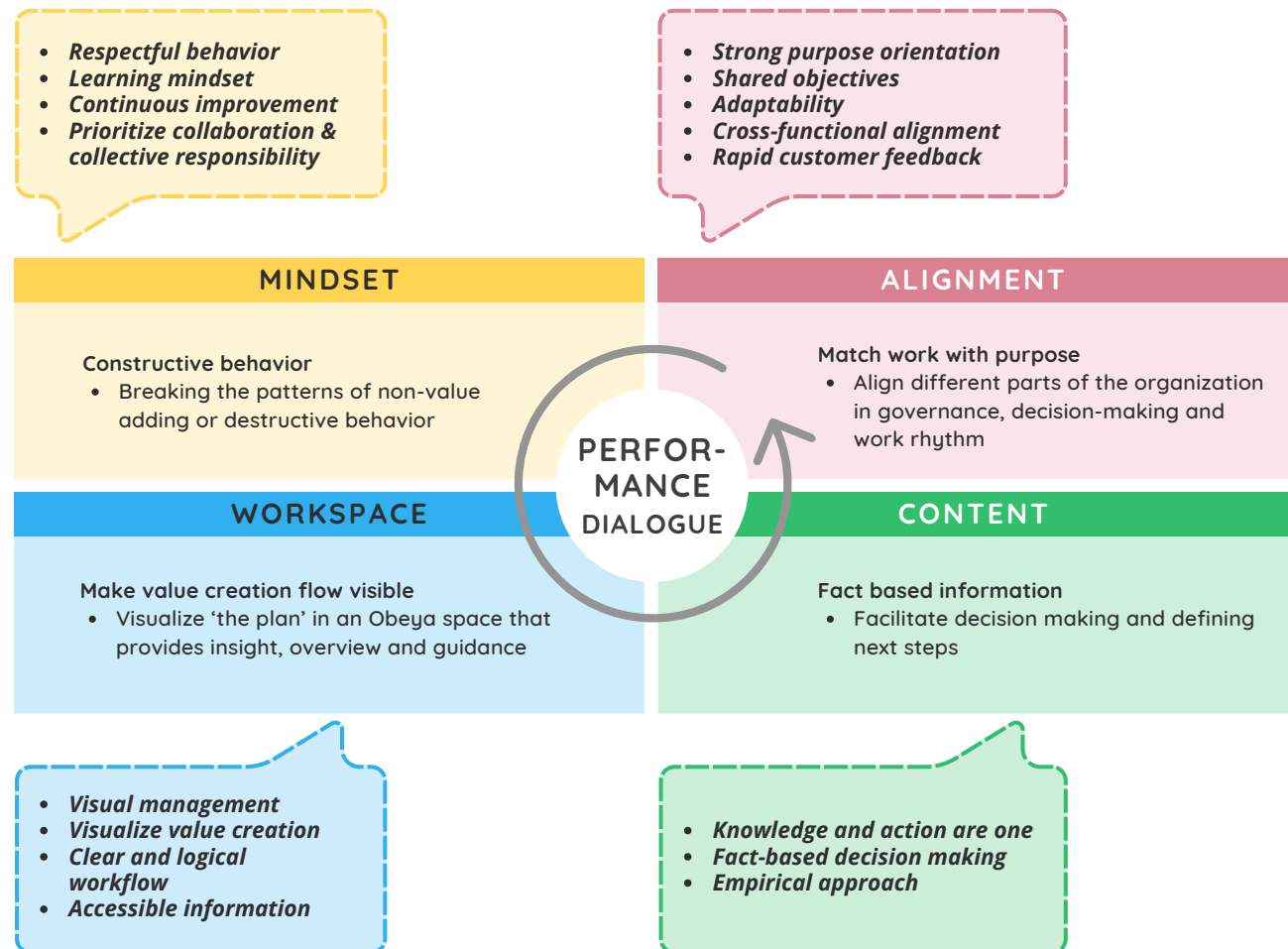
You've just explored how Obeya evolved — from deep-rooted philosophies of learning and collaboration. This context is essential: it shows that Obeya is not just a tool, but a complete system built on tested ideas that stand the test of time.

At its core, Obeya is structured around four key quadrants:

- Mindset
- Alignment
- Workspace
- Content

These quadrants capture everything you've learned so far—linking historical insights to the way modern Obeya's actually work today. On this page, we've mapped key historical foundations onto these quadrants, showing how the past directly informs today's practice.

To complete the picture, you'll soon dive into the 11 Obeya Principles, which bring a further clarification and offer you a more practical guidance for building an Obeya that truly delivers results.



### The 11 Obeya Principles: your Obeya's DNA

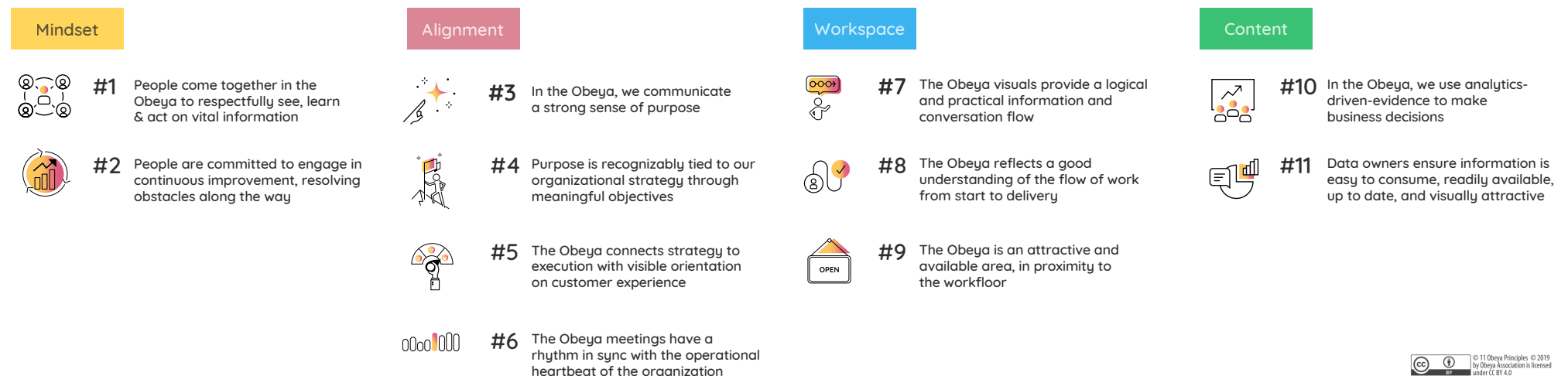
You've now seen how the quadrants — Mindset, Alignment, Workspace, and Content — capture the full essence of what makes an Obeya work. But how do you make sure your Obeya doesn't just look good, but actually works in practice?

That's where the 11 Obeya Principles come in.

Think of them as the DNA of every successful Obeya: they define how people interact, how decisions are made, and how the whole system stays alive and impactful. Whether you're building your first Obeya or fine-tuning an existing one, these principles ensure you're on the right track.

We'll introduce them now so you can start to recognize them in action, like hidden threads running through everything an effective Obeya does. Don't worry if they feel abstract right now; as we move into the **Six Panels Approach**, you'll get plenty of hands-on experience. Later in the module, we'll reconnect the dots and show exactly how the Six Panels fully embody every single principle.

For now? Scan through the 11 Obeya Principles and start thinking: where do you already see these principles in your own work — and where might they be missing?



# 1.6 | The 11 Obeya Principles framework (exercise)



WHICH OF THESE PRINCIPLES DO YOU INSTINCTIVELY FEEL MOST CONFIDENT ABOUT? WHICH ONE FEELS FURTHEST FROM YOUR REALITY?



## Mindset

*Jot down a quick personal note next to each principle:*



**#1** People come together in the Obeya to respectfully see, learn & act on vital information



**#2** People are committed to engage in continuous improvement, resolving obstacles along the way

## Alignment



**#3** In the Obeya, we communicate a strong sense of purpose



**#4** Purpose is recognizably tied to our organizational strategy through meaningful objectives



**#5** The Obeya connects strategy to execution with visible orientation on customer experience



**#6** The Obeya meetings have a rhythm in sync with the operational heartbeat of the organization

## Workspace



**#7** The Obeya visuals provide a logical and practical information and conversation flow



**#8** The Obeya reflects a good understanding of the flow of work from start to delivery



**#9** The Obeya is an attractive and available area, in proximity to the workflow

## Content



**#10** In the Obeya, we use analytics-driven-evidence to make business decisions



**#11** Data owners ensure information is easy to consume, readily available, up to date, and visually attractive

**Note:** Once we start working on designing your Six Panels, you'll encounter these principles over and over again — they are woven into every choice you make.



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## WHY OBEYA?

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### Introduction

#### Why Obeya?

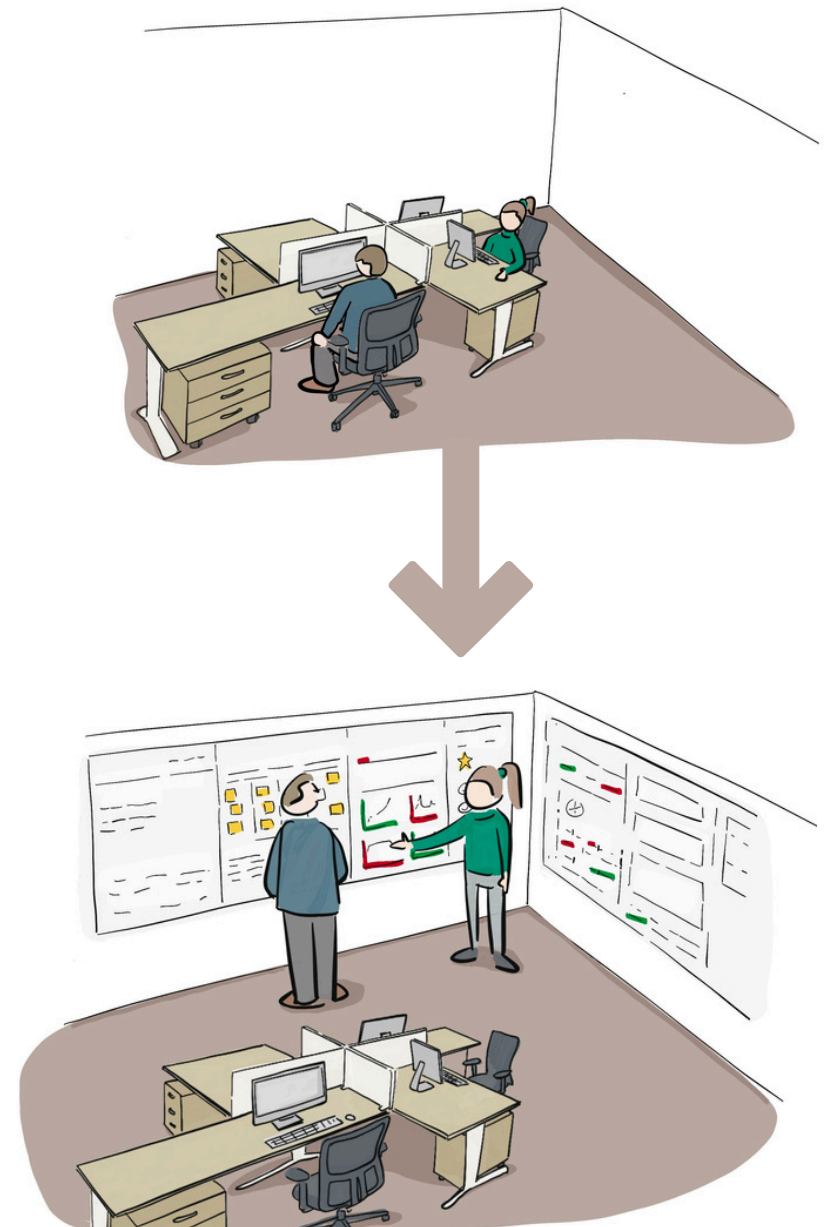
We've all seen it: teams working hard but pulling in different directions, decisions delayed by endless meetings, and vital information buried in inboxes and spreadsheets. Misalignment, silos, and unclear priorities don't just slow things down — they drain energy and stall progress.

In fast-paced, complex environments, these challenges aren't the exception — they're the norm. And they hold organizations back from reaching their full potential.

Obeya offers a clear, structured way to cut through the noise. It connects strategy to execution, brings teams together around shared goals, and makes critical information visible and actionable.

But here's something crucial: if you don't know where you're going, any road can take you there. The real power of Obeya lies in defining upfront what you want it to achieve — because a clear destination is what turns a good Obeya into one that truly delivers.

In this chapter, you'll dive into the realities of your own workflow and identify the specific hurdles you want Obeya to help you clear. After all, if you know what you want to achieve, you can build an Obeya that actually gets you there.







PLEASE PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS  
ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF YOUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE:

Strategy and execution are connected

A LITTLE			A LOT	
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We constantly learn from accurate information

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We decide fast

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other teams / departments work towards the  
same objectives

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I know what other teams / departments  
are doing, why and when

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Insight in our performance leads to clear  
priorities

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I spend my worktime feeling it  
leads to something valuable

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



What can you conclude?

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PLEASE PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS  
ACCORDING TO THE BEST OF YOUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE:

Are we connected?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Is everyone working on the same objective

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Are we meeting delivery/deadlines?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Do our decisions reach everyone?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Are we looking at the right information?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Do we know which problems we want to solve?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐

Are the right people involved to reach objectives?

YES NO UNCLEAR  
☐ ☐ ☐



What can you conclude?

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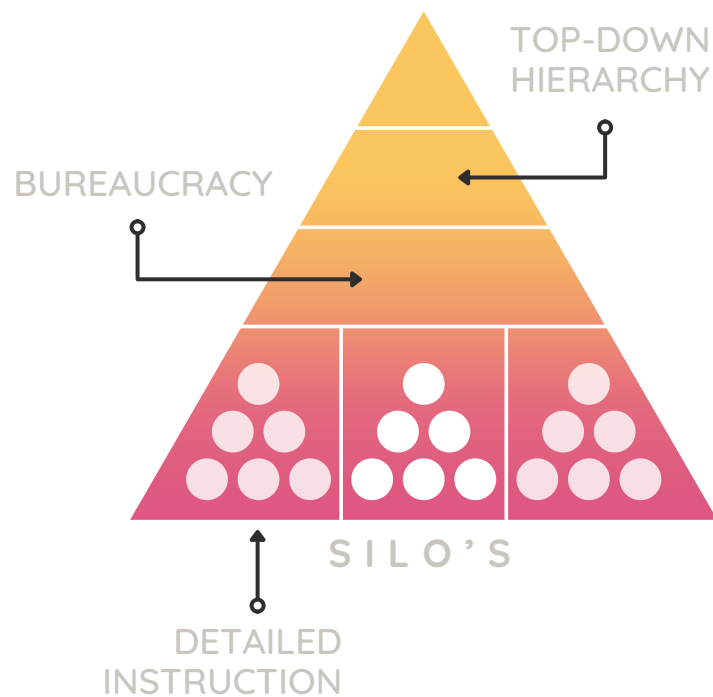
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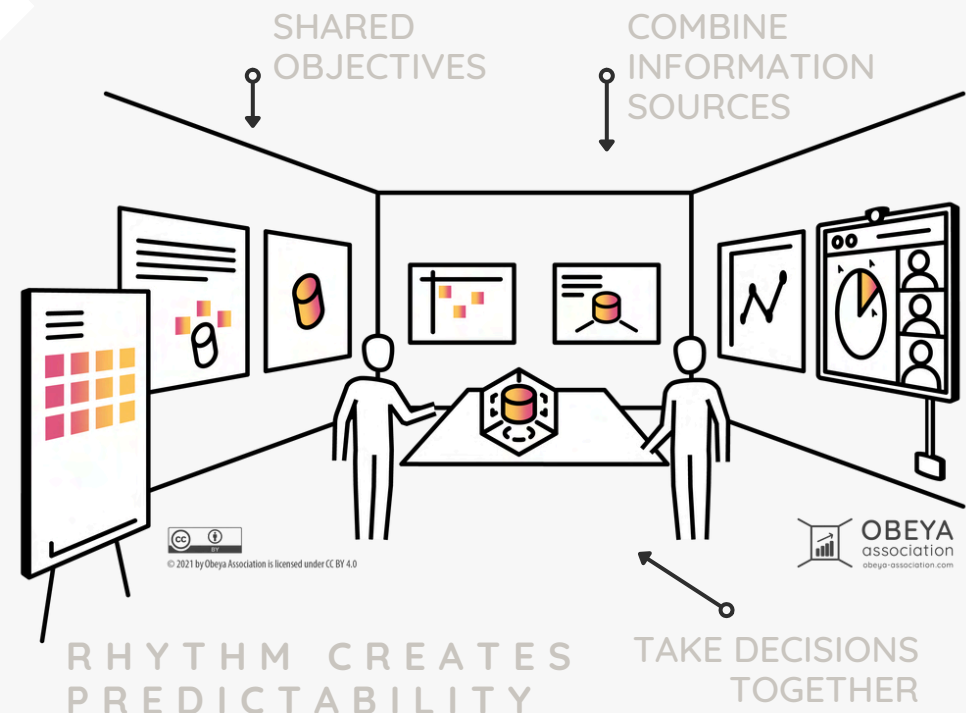
### FROM

- ✗ Disconnected Strategy and Execution
- ✗ Opinions and scattered information
- ✗ Lack of overview needed to make the right decisions
- ✗ Isolated silo's
- ✗ Vertical reporting lines, hierarchies
- ✗ Process focus
- ✗ Time & energy lost on updating, reactive



### TO

- ✓ Focus, set the right priorities
- ✓ Single source of truth, accelerated learning, short communication
- ✓ Transparent progress overview & actual operations status
- ✓ Continuous improvement, organizational development
- ✓ Leadership & team development, fast decision cycles
- ✓ Client focus, ownership on objectives
- ✓ Problem solving, result orientation, proactive



### TRADITIONAL REPORT MANAGEMENT

1. Hierarchical Strategy - Annual plans - Department plans without coherence and synchronization
2. Excel sheets with numbers and unclear (& outdated) status updates
3. Infinite emails with reports and discussions on assumptions and choices to be made
4. Unclear coherence of all the programs, projects and KPI's
5. Long management meetings needed to discuss unclear results
6. Unclear escalations on unclear priorities
7. Hard to receive an overview on total program and change portfolio
8. Board ownership unclear
9. Behaviour not result oriented



### OBEYA VISUAL MANAGEMENT

1. A visual flow from strategy to execution which is synchronized between the people involved and regularly reviewed
2. Visual status overview with the actual status being part of the responsibility of an Obeya attendant
3. Clear performance dialogues with each other leading to an unambiguous base point
4. Clear overview on the coherence of all programs and their results
5. Weekly short meeting on the results of the organization
6. Clear blockages are cascaded to the level on which they can be solved and are accompanied by clear priorities
7. Transparent visual overview on change portfolio and total portfolio
8. Full commitment on change agenda by leadership
9. Result oriented interventions on behavior of Obeya participants

### Why do you exist as a group or as a company?

What binds you? What is the common purpose behind your everyday activities and what is the reason for working together? What is your contribution to the bigger whole?

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### What problems do you want to solve?

What would make your work more effective? What did your conclusions from previous exercises teach you?

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### What information do you need?

Knowing which decisions you want to make and which information is important, benefits fast decision cycles. Similarly, Obeya's with an unnecessary information overload can complicate decision making.

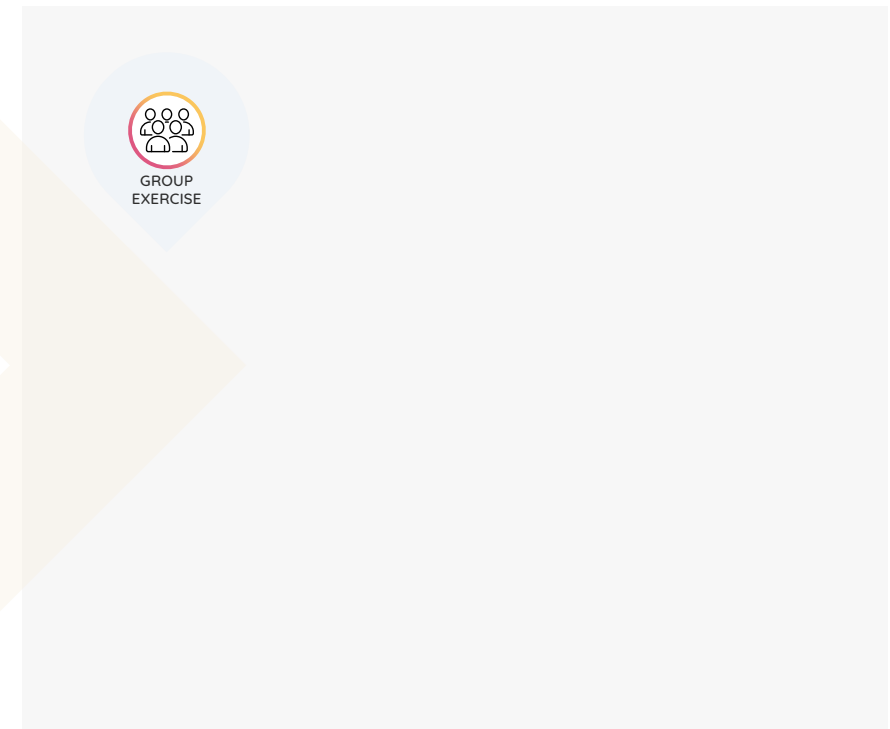
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### Our Obeya purpose:

Taking everything into consideration; **'What do you want your Obeya to result in?'** What should be the ultimate outcome of all Obeya activities and efforts?



### From experience:

*Obeya's that are purposefully designed are more likely to lead to clear (and hopefully measurable) results. Often they are easier to implement. Building an Obeya is always instrumental to achieving a higher purpose.*

### Direction

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

### Success

HOW WILL YOU BE ABLE TO TELL IF YOU SUCCEEDED?

### Measure

CAN YOU THINK OF A WAY TO OBJECTIVELY MEASURE PROGRESS?







PAGE

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## THE SIX PANELS APPROACH

30	3.1	INTRODUCTION
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33	3.4	THE SIX PANELS
33	3.4.1	◦ <i>PANEL 1: VISION</i>
34	3.4.2	◦ <i>PANEL 2: CUSTOMER</i>
35	3.4.3	◦ <i>PANEL 3: PRODUCT</i>
36	3.4.4	◦ <i>PANEL 4: PLAN</i>
37	3.4.5	◦ <i>PANEL 5: PERFORMANCE</i>
38	3.4.6	◦ <i>PANEL 6: IMPROVEMENT</i>
39	3.5	11 PRINCIPES & THE SIX PANELS APPROACH

### From principles to practice: introducing the Six Panels Approach

By now, you've explored why Obeya matters and what makes it work: shared purpose, strong alignment, clear visuals, and fact-based action. You've also unpacked its foundations: the quadrants and principles that define what an effective Obeya is built on.

But understanding why something works and actually building it are two different things.

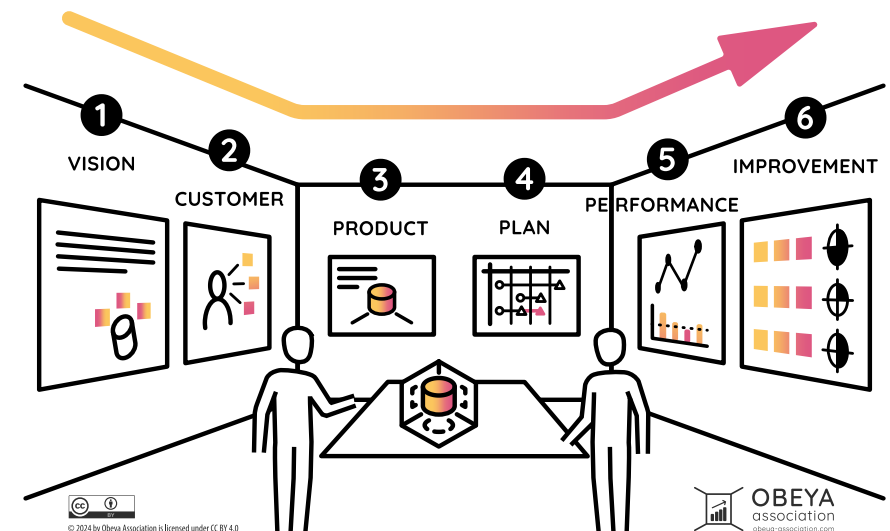
Therefore we introduce: the Six Panels Approach

The Six Panels Approach is an Obeya model that offers a complete, practical framework to get you started with designing your own Obeya. It breaks the Obeya down into six focused, purpose-driven panels — ensuring that everything from vision and strategy to performance and continuous improvement is clear, connected, and actionable.

Think of it as your starter blueprint: structured enough to guide you with confidence, but flexible enough to adapt to your own context and needs. In fact, a good Obeya should evolve — so in time, feel free to adjust and refine as you learn what works best for your organization.

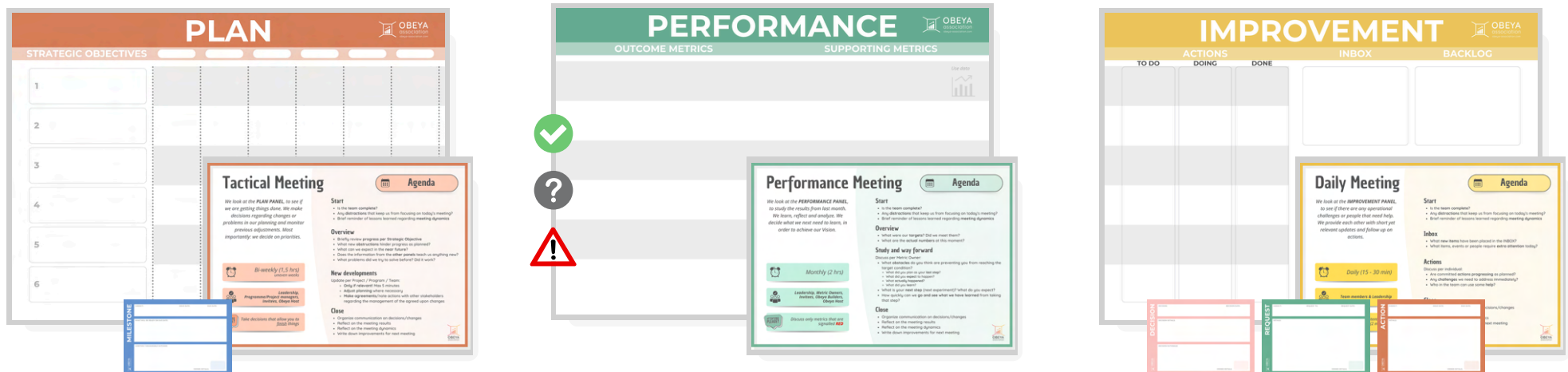
From now on, we advise you to start shaping your own Obeya step by step. While this chapter focuses on the layout and design, upcoming chapters will go deeper into meeting agenda's and visual management options to bring your Obeya fully to life.

Let's start building your own Obeya.



The Six Panels Approach  
provides a practical blueprint for  
all essential elements of an  
Obeya.

## 3.2 | The Six Panels Approach



DOWNLOAD THE HIGH RESOLUTION OBEYA TEMPLATES FOR FREE ON OUR WEBSITE:  
[OBEYA-ASSOCIATION.COM/GET-ACCREDITED/OBEYA-TRAINING/OBEYA-FUNDAMENTALS/](https://obeya-association.com/get-accredited/obeya-training/obeya-fundamentals/)





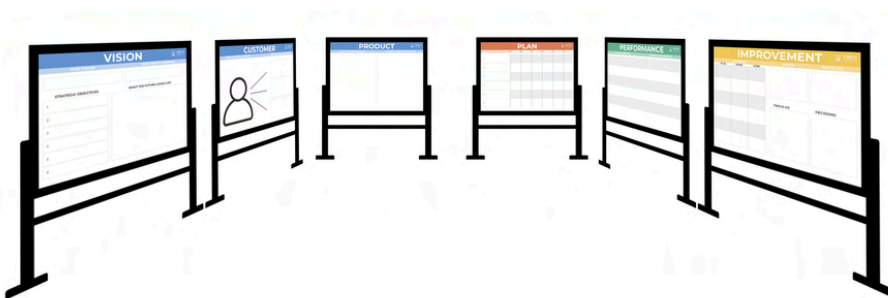
### Download the templates

Download the carefully designed templates and formats from the [Obeya Association website](https://obeya-association.com)



### Choose: Physical or Digital Obeya

The templates can be used for building a physical Obeya or a digital/hybrid Obeya



### Physical Obeya

- Print the 6 Panels on A0 size
- Put on wall/whiteboards

#### SHOPPING LIST:

- Sticky notes “Super Sticky” in various colors
- Visual management artifacts
- Markers in various colors
- Tape (removable)
- Scissors



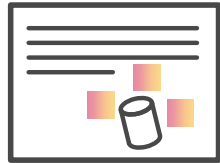
### Digital Obeya

- Upload the 6 Panels and 4 cards to your favorite digital platform
- There, you can set up your own digital Obeya and share it with your team



Microsoft Whiteboard

### VISION



# 1

#### INTENTION

Panel 1 shows your **VISION**. The panel answers questions like "Where do we want to be in 5 years?" or "What problems do we want to solve?" It provides a compelling narrative, giving direction for the intermediate horizon (3-5 years).

### What is it?

A display of the long-term goals and direction of the organization.

### Why use it?

- Goal clarity: do the right things
- Motivate co-workers
- Align activities to strategic goals
- Show how Vision translates to business objectives
- Explain the contribution of the Obeya

### How to do it?

- You could use the following format for your vision: We exist to [impact], by [approach or method], in order to [desired outcome or transformation]
- **Visualize** the future, this helps people to connect
- Drill your vision down into max 6 Strategic Objectives
- revise/update during quarterly Strategy Meetings using the Strategy Meeting agenda

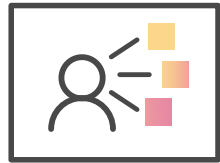
Your vision shows how you realize (business) value

The Obeya Purpose explains how the Obeya will bring the vision to life

Narrow your vision down into strategic objectives

Support your vision by creating a compelling **VISUAL** storyboard

### CUSTOMER



# 2

#### INTENTION

Panel 2 is all about your CUSTOMER. The panel is dedicated to create deep understanding of the needs of your customer(s) and serves as a crucial reminder of whom we are ultimately working for.

#### What is it?

A display of customer-related information and metrics.

#### Why use it?

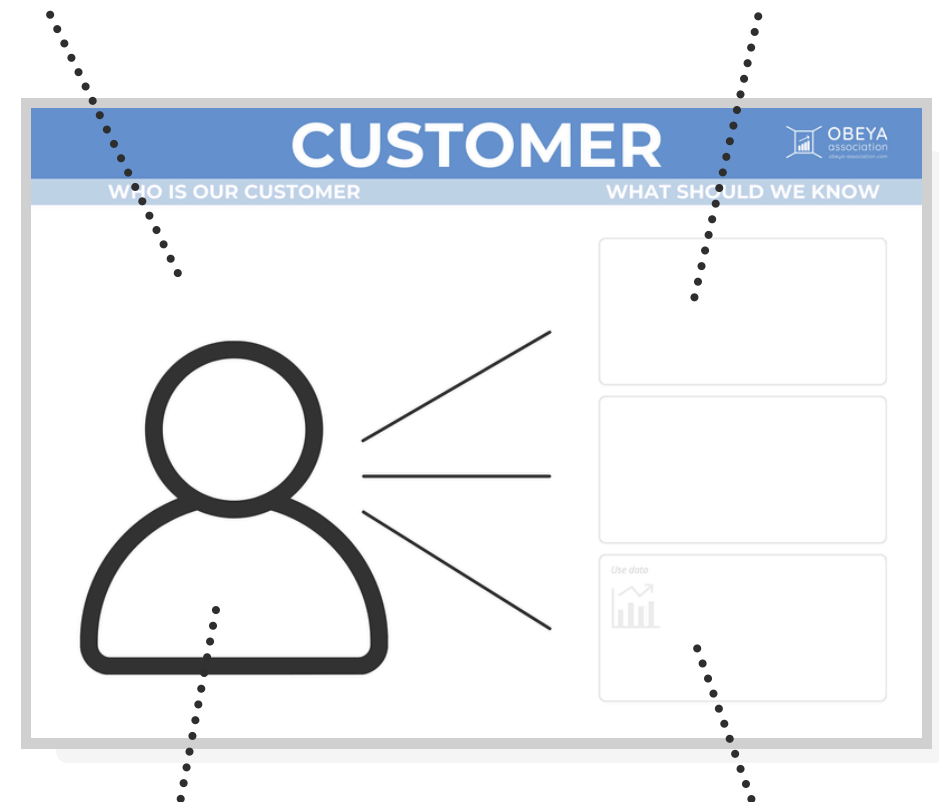
- Customer central in decision-making
- Cultivate deep customer understanding
- Enable customer-centric improvement
- Align customer developments with business objectives

#### How to do it?

- Qualitative: Customer Persona's, Customer Journeys, etc
- Quantitative: Complaint numbers, NPS data, market figures, etc

Provide information about your customer (segments)

Provide information about the market you are operating in



Focus on qualitative information here

Focus on quantitative information here



### PRODUCT



# 3

#### INTENTION

Panel 3 revolves around your **PRODUCT**. The panel shows the value you bring towards your customer. Together with the customer panel they are your value proposition.

### What is it?

A display of product-specific details and product development details.

### Why use it?

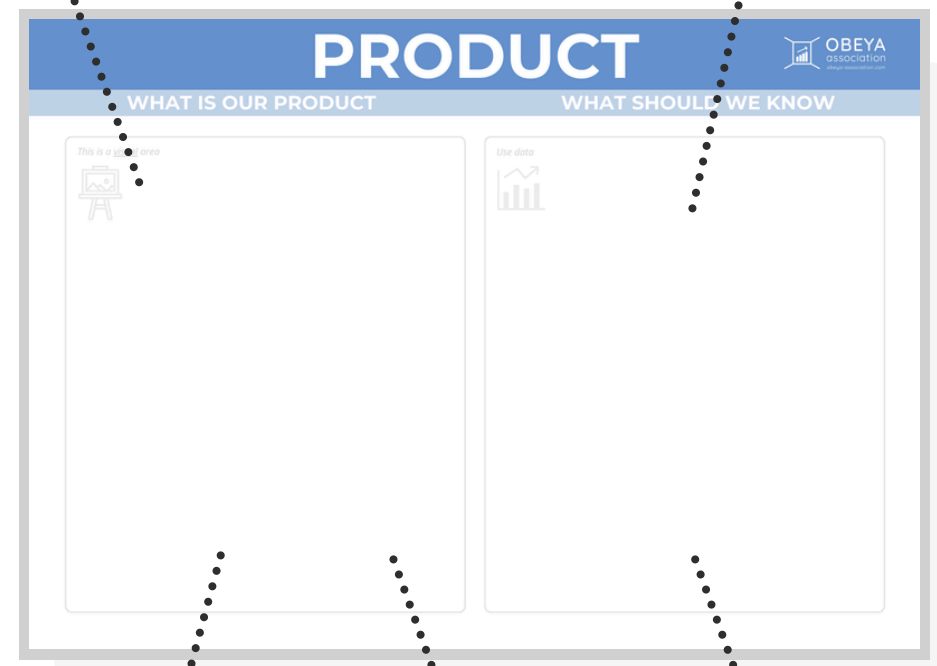
- Know and develop your unique quality traits
- Improve fit between product/service and user
- Focus on product development
- Track product/service performance and issues
- Align product/service strategy with business objectives

### How to do it?

- Define your product(s)/service(s) and its value/USP's
- Get as visual as you can on the left side of the Panel
- Get as numerical as you can on the right side of the Panel (defects, usage data, throughput times, delivery data, etc)

Show your product(s) and their USP's visually

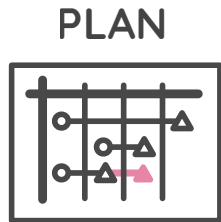
Put numerical information here



Involve 'delivery' as part of the product

Process information such as i.e. value streams are often very useful

Technical details are ok when deemed appropriate



# 4

### INTENTION

Panel 4 shows your **PLAN**. It connects your Vision & Strategic Objectives to execution. This Panel outlines project timelines and important milestones.

### What is it?

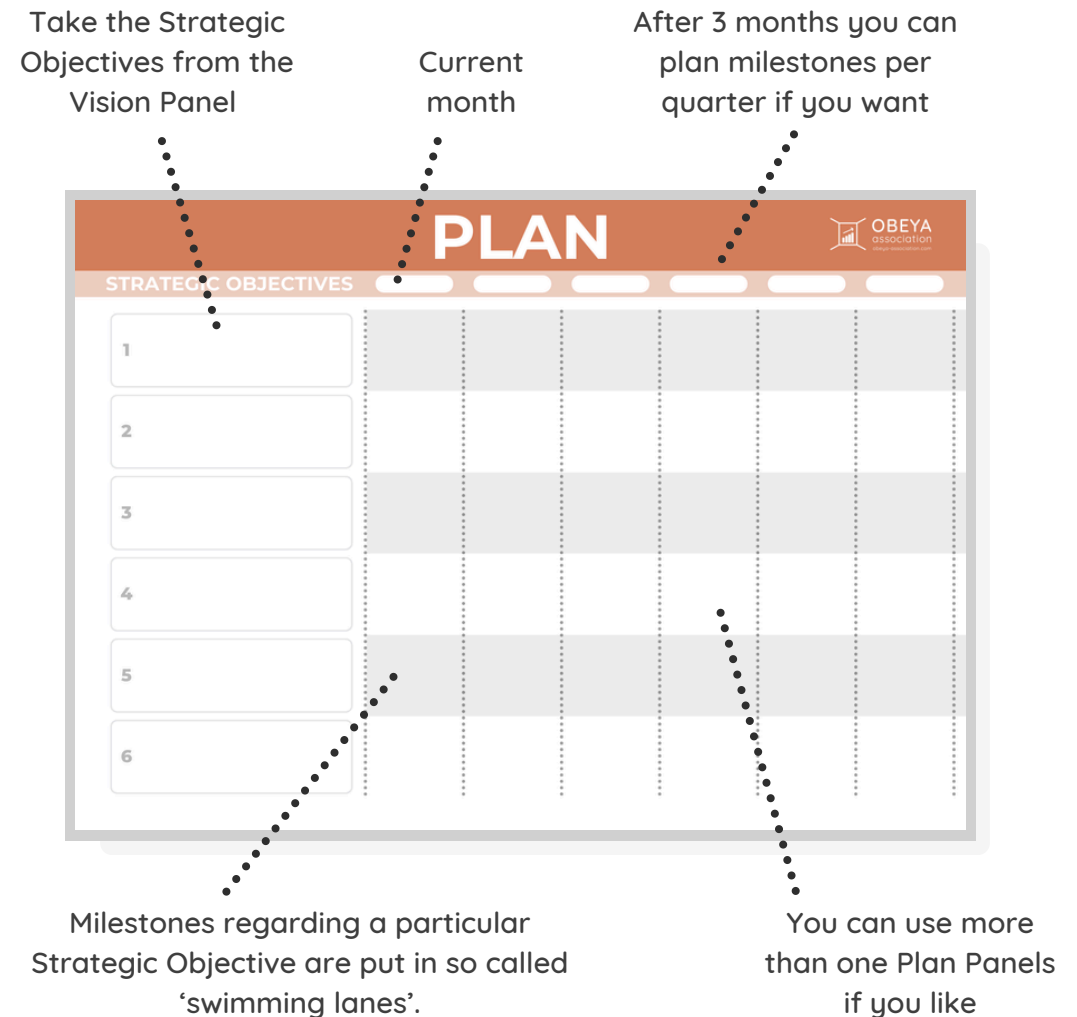
One big visual calendar with all your important projects and milestones, organized per Strategic Objective.

### Why use it?

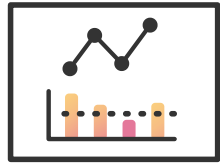
- Visualizes project timelines and milestones
- Helps coordinate activities across different teams
- Enables seamless coordination by showing who is working on what and the interdependencies between projects
- Visually shows planned efforts per Strategic Objective

### How to do it?

- Align on planning during your bi-weekly Tactical Meetings, using the Tactical Meeting agenda
- Plan your milestones per month for the first 3 months. After that you can continue or plan per quarter
- You can use multiple plan panels if necessary
- Your detailed weekly action planning is done on Panel 6: Improvement
- Use the 'Milestones card' on this panel to create clarity on deadlines, ownership, and endresults



### PERFORMANCE



# 5

#### INTENTION

Panel 5 shows your **PERFORMANCE** on the chosen Strategic Objectives. The Panel shows the current status, or the 'engine' of what you are trying to accomplish. This panel allows you to adjust and take action early.

### What is it?

Metrics showing both the result of a Strategic Objective and its supporting factors.

### Why use it?

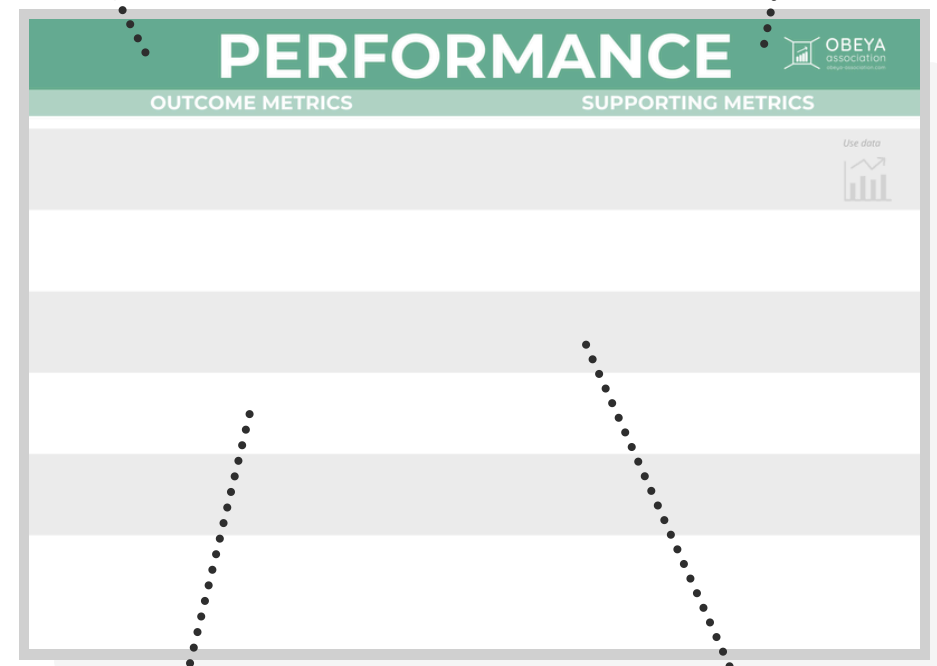
- Up-to-date performance data at a glance
- Enables data-driven decision-making
- Allows for swift corrective action when issues arise
- Forces you to set standards and quantitative aims

### How to do it?

- Define 1 or max 2 outcome metrics per Strategic Objective
- Define max 3 metrics that lead to results in the outcome metrics
- Study both the outcome and supporting metrics monthly during your Performance Meeting, using the Performance Meeting agenda
- Use graphs that show trends for your outcome metrics
- Clearly visualize your aim using color coding. (Below the aim **red**; above the aim **green**)
- Remember: LESS IS MORE! Focus delivers results

Outcome metrics can be hard to influence directly

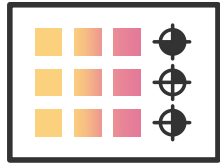
Supporting metrics lead to outcome metrics (forward looking) and should be easy to influence daily or weekly



Organize metrics per Strategic Objective

Connect to the swimming lanes coming from the PLAN Panel

### IMPROVEMENT



# 6

#### What is it?

Dedicated space to manage your workweek.

#### Why use it?

- Make sure you do things right
- Align daily actions with your plan
- Adjust to problems, requests and learnings
- Entrance to small, incremental steps of continuous improvement

#### How to do it?

- Convene at least three times a week using the Daily Meeting agenda
- Collect all daily requests, problems and important updates in the Inbox
- Keep valuable ideas, to do's and reminders in the backlog so you can act on them when appropriate
- Decide on the committed actions during your Daily Meeting and put them in the To Do section
- Navigate progress together throughout the week and help each other where you can

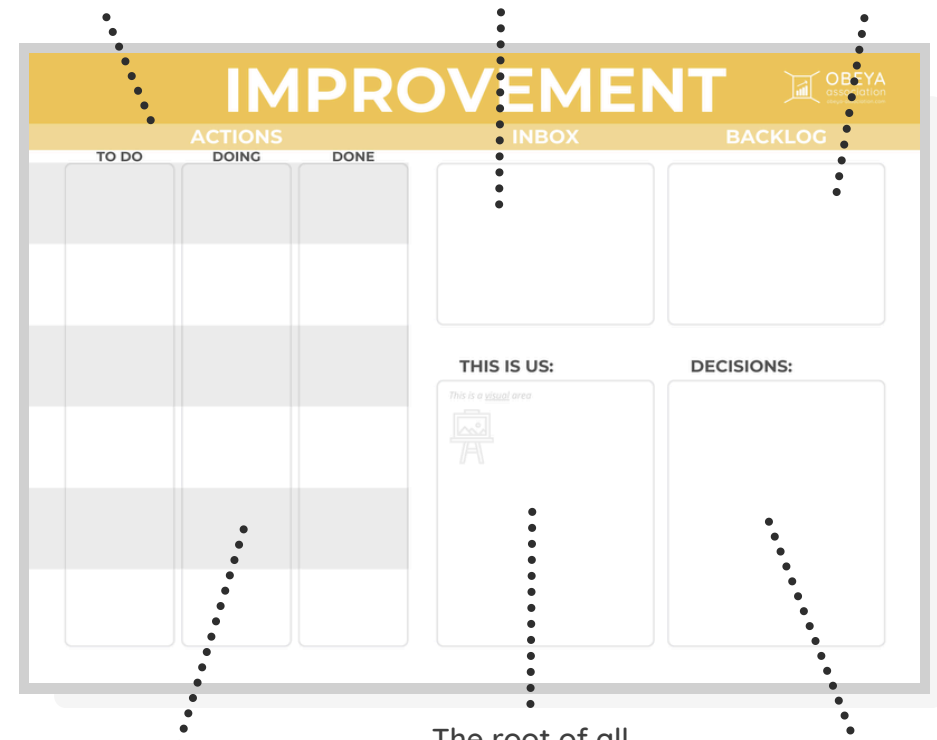
#### INTENTION

Panel 6 is used on a daily basis. The **IMPROVEMENT PANEL** turns all the information from the other panels into daily actions. It also allows you to act swiftly on any other matters that require your immediate attention.

Assign actions at the start of the week and review progress together daily

Anyone can use the Inbox to bring actions, problems or requests to the agenda

Keep important and valuable items in the Backlog to act upon later



Assign the actions to an appropriate Strategic Objectives swimming lane

The root of all improvement: the people involved and what the team stands for

Write down all decisions that need to be communicated

# 3.5 | 11 Principles applied to the Six Panels Approach



REFLECT AND ANALYZE: WHAT PRINCIPLES ARE PRESENT IN WHICH OF THE VARIOUS PANELS? ARE ALL THE 11 OBEYA PRINCIPLES REPRESENTED?



## Mindset



**#1** People come together in the Obeya to respectfully see, learn & act on vital information



**#2** People are committed to engage in continuous improvement, resolving obstacles along the way

## Alignment



**#3** In the Obeya, we communicate a strong sense of purpose



**#4** Purpose is recognizably tied to our organizational strategy through meaningful objectives



**#5** The Obeya connects strategy to execution with visible orientation on customer experience



**#6** The Obeya meetings have a rhythm in sync with the operational heartbeat of the organization

## Workspace



**#7** The Obeya visuals provide a logical and practical information and conversation flow



**#8** The Obeya reflects a good understanding of the flow of work from start to delivery



**#9** The Obeya is an attractive and available area, in proximity to the workflow

## Content

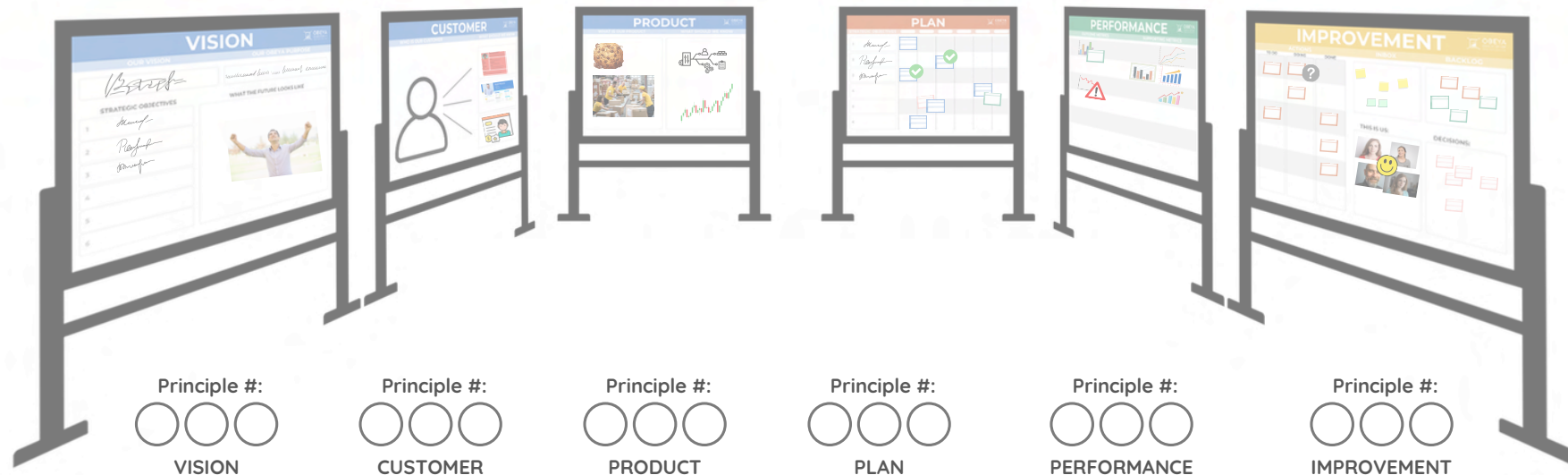


**#10** In the Obeya, we use analytics-driven evidence to make business decisions



**#11** Data owners ensure information is easy to consume, readily available, up to date, and visually attractive

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## ROLES & BEHAVIOR IN THE OBEYA

41	4.1	INTRODUCTION
42	4.2	PARTICIPATING IN AN OBEYA
45	4.3	OBEYA BUILDER & OBEYA HOST
46	4.4	BUILDER, HOST & THE 11 PRINCIPLES

### Introduction

Welcome to the chapter on Obeya Roles. In this chapter, we explore the people who make an Obeya truly work — and why their roles are essential to turning strategy into daily action.

While an Obeya is built on visual management, structured panels, and meeting rhythms, its real power comes from the people who shape, host, and engage with it every day.

At the heart of this are the Obeya Builder and Obeya Host, two core roles that form the backbone of a thriving Obeya. The Builder creates the system — the structure, visuals, and flow — while the Host keeps it alive through dialogue, rhythm, and continuous improvement.

But no Obeya succeeds on design and facilitation alone. The participants — the teams, leaders, and stakeholders — are the true drivers of energy, insight, and ownership, turning shared purpose into meaningful progress.

What's essential to remember is that success in the Obeya depends on shared responsibility. Everyone, from the Builder and Host to every participant, plays a part in creating an environment where collaboration, decision-making, and learning can flourish.

As you move through this chapter, you'll discover how each role contributes to the bigger picture — ensuring your Obeya doesn't just operate, but evolves, improves, and delivers lasting impact.



The different Obeya roles  
accelerate collective learning,  
speed up decision cycles,  
and anchor the Obeya in the  
long run.

### Participating in the Obeya: bringing the Obeya to life

An Obeya's success doesn't rest on the Builder or Host alone — it depends on the people who step into the room each day. To truly make the Obeya work, every participant shares responsibility for bringing in meaningful insights, engaging with the information on the wall, and helping turn dialogue into action.

In a well-functioning Obeya, every participant actively contributes to two things:

1. Understanding what (information) they need to do their job
2. Recognizing what (information) they hold that others need

When everyone takes responsibility for both, the Obeya becomes a space of shared learning, coordination, and progress.

It's easy to mistake an Obeya for its most visible features — the walls, charts, and data. But at its core, the Obeya is not about the walls. It's about the people.

The Obeya is a humane system, built around the way we work as human beings. The participants — and the way they interact, challenge, and support one another — are the Obeya's most valuable asset. Without them, the walls are just decoration.

Recognizing this flips the usual perspective: the walls and panels exist to serve the people, not the other way around.

The true power of an Obeya comes alive when participants build a behavioral system to collaborate.



*An example of what a certain set of Obeya agreements could look like.*

Obeya's need clear behavioral agreements — not as a checklist, but as a shared foundation.

These agreements should be visible and present in the Obeya space as a living reminder of the expectations the team has set for itself. It is the way participants behave amongst each other that is the main constituent to the Obeya's success.

When this happens, the Obeya becomes far more than a tool. It becomes a shared space of alignment, ownership, and transformation — powered by the people who bring it to life.



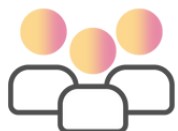
DESIGN YOUR OWN BEHAVIORAL SYSTEM. THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR SHOULD LEAD TO THE DESIRED OBEYA RESULTS - HOW WILL THE GROUP DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN THIS BEHAVIOR OVER TIME?



**Obeya Agreements**

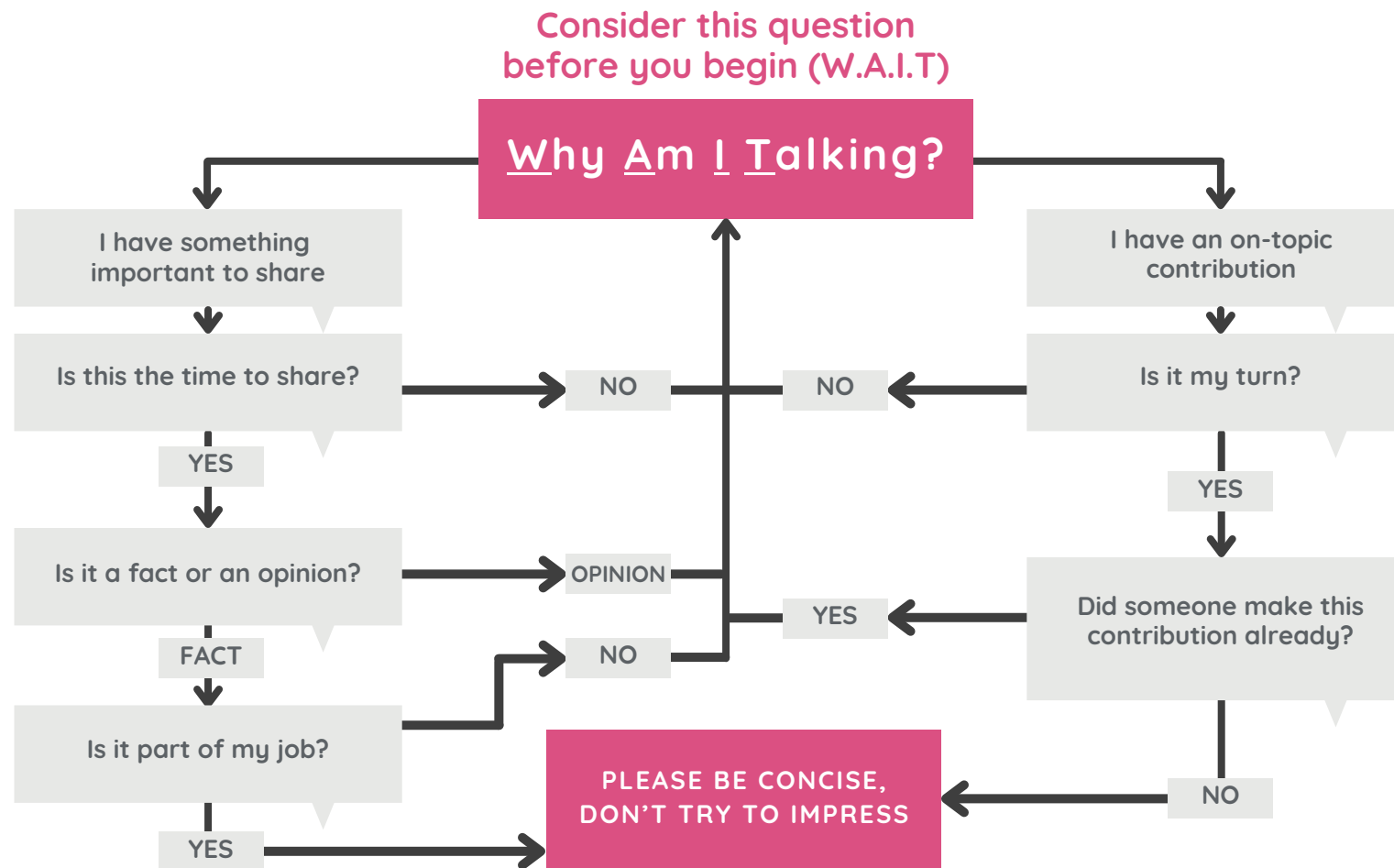
We:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....



### Conversational maturity

In an Obeya many perspectives and information sources are involved in limited timeframes. It is very different from a chat at the coffee machine or even a regular meeting. All participants need to be mindful of their contributions.





### Builder & Host: two different roles, both essential for a thriving Obeya

The Obeya Builder is tasked to build an Obeya that reflects the desired business value. And once the Obeya Host starts the Obeya meeting rhythm, he or she creates a safe environment for dialogue, group learning, and conscious decision-making. An Obeya is never “finished.” In fact, its true value lies in the learning process of its participants. This learning emerges through the continuous development of the Obeya by the Builder, the Host, and the participants themselves. Ongoing evolution of the Obeya is therefore essential to keep the learning process going. The roles of Obeya Builder and Host require very distinct skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Often people automatically feel drawn to either the one or the other.



#### Builder



##### Knowledge

- Policy deployment, a.o.:
  - strategic imaging: OKR, Hoshin Kanri, Balanced Scorecard, valuestreams
  - operational imaging: Kanban, PI planning, Agile portfolio management, Customer Journey, Product roadmaps
  - PDCA cycles

##### Skills

- Analytical thinking: analysis
- Project management
- Continuous improvement
- Technical IT
- Visual management

##### Attitudes

- Accuracy
- Engagement
- Integrity

#### Host



##### Knowledge

- Psychological safety
- Group dynamics
- Meeting design preparations
- Participatory dialogue
- Applying change models
- Continuous learning engagements

##### Skills

- Analytical thinking: evaluation
- Performance dialogue
- Listening
- Facilitation
- Team Coaching

##### Attitudes

- Social & environmental awareness
- Customer orientation
- Organizational sensitivity
- Independent
- Servant leadership

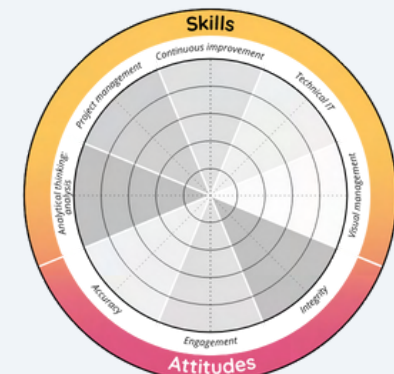


Figure Development instrument  
Obeya Builder

The Obeya Association focuses on two aspects:

- 1) developing worldwide knowledge and expertise about Obeya and
- 2) supporting the professional development of Obeya professionals.

The figure above is an example of how this knowledge is translated into tools as part of the toolkit to train and coach Obeya professionals. Ask your Obeya Mentor or Sensei if you want to learn more about the professional journey to become Obeya Builder and/or Host.

### Mindset



#1

People come together in the Obeya to respectfully see, learn & act on vital information

People coming together in meaningful interaction are the biggest compliment to any Obeya workspace. Integrity of the information presented is important for people to trust the Obeya process.

Obeya Hosts cultivate curiosity. In safe environments, multiple perspectives benefit the sustainability of decisions. Questions that turn insights into action are a Hosts' ultimate superpower.



#2

People are committed to engage in continuous improvement, resolving obstacles along the way

Obeya Builders realize that imperfections provide improvement opportunities. Never cover up bad news or white spots, always provide a genuine representation.

Obeya Hosts challenge status quo and hold the group accountable for their shared responsibility to improve every cycle. Use of factual information and data are vital in this process.

### Alignment



#3

In the Obeya, we communicate a strong sense of purpose

Obeya Builders ensure there is a Purpose or Vision present, periodically revised and clearly presented within the Obeya.

Obeya Hosts refer to purpose and its implications at decisive moments. Purpose is a precondition for a Host to do meaningful work in the Obeya as it enables prioritization and focused teamwork.



#4

Purpose is recognizably tied to our organizational strategy through meaningful objectives

Obeya Builders exhibit a visual and apparent link between purpose and objectives. Objectives are directional and transformational. Visualizing progress on objectives creates clarity during Obeya meetings.

Obeya Hosts cultivate understanding on what business value the Obeya is trying to achieve. Hosts identify progress on objectives to accelerate learning and facilitate action.



#5

The Obeya connects strategy to execution with visible orientation on customer experience

Having a clear strategy benefits operational direction. In turn, work floor experiences provide important feedback on strategic priorities. In this exchange the customer is a central actor.

Strategic ambitions and operational outcomes, including customer experiences, create a cycle in which Hosts seek for improvements in both.



#6

The Obeya meetings have a rhythm in sync with the operational heartbeat of the organization

Through meeting rhythms the Obeya creates systemized engagement with all functions involved. Obeya Builders make sure that all governance rhythms have synced timeframes.

Obeya Hosts coordinate that Obeya meetings take place at the right time and with the right people. Decisions from Obeya meetings are recommended to be timely shared with the wider organization.

### Workspace



#### #7 The Obeya visuals provide a logical and practical information and conversation flow

Obeya Builders continuously improve information flow in the Obeya according to feedback from the Obeya Host and participants. The information flow on the wall needs to guide the conversation during meetings.

Visual Management should guide Obeya conversation flow intuitively. Feedback on how the conversation flows is valuable for Obeya Builders to improve the Obeya visual management structure.



#### #8 The Obeya reflects a good understanding of the flow of work from start to delivery

Obeya Builders exhibit the process or activities by which value is created, showing how and where different parties contribute their work into the larger whole.

Obeya workspaces need to allow an Obeya Host to invest in a shared understanding of 1) value delivery and its challenges and 2) a clear view of workflow dynamics and practicalities.



#### #9 The Obeya is an attractive and available area, in proximity to the workflow

Obeya Builders pay attention to Obeya location, appearance, (smart) tooling and utilities. As a consequence, Obeya budget allocation also needs consideration.

Well sustained, often visited & transparent Obeya's work best. Hosts pick up signals where poor Obeya arrangements complicate Obeya results. Obeya Hosts coordinate with Obeya Builders.

### Content



### #10 In the Obeya, we use analytics-driven-evidence to make business decisions

Obeya Builders organize unambiguous (numerical) evidence. Relevant information (data) can be synthesized into categories. The relative importance between information items deserves consideration.

Obeya Hosts spark the learning process by skillful questioning, advancing insights in (the relation between) statistics. The insights benefit the collective learning process of the group.



### #11 Data owners ensure information is easy to consume, readily available, up to date, and visually attractive

Obeya Builders often work alongside data owners. They aim to distill clear signals from the data. Data collection and visualization should be a formalized process leading to one single source of truth.

Obeya Hosts improve fit between data (representation) and user needs. Hosts may invite experts for explanation. People need some confidence to rely on data for decisionmaking.





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## VISUAL MANAGEMENT

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52	5.2	VISUAL MANAGEMENT
54	5.3	ACTION CARDS

### Introduction

In today's organizations, complexity is not an exception — it's the environment we operate in every day. We face an overwhelming flow of information, data streams, and competing priorities, all demanding attention and interpretation. Yet despite this abundance of data, much of it remains underutilized, as our capacity to process it meaningfully is limited.

This is where Visual Management becomes essential in the Obeya.

Human beings are visual beings, and while visual management does not eliminate complexity — it does help us navigate it. Visual Management enables people in the Obeya to orient themselves, identify what matters, and engage. Visual Management supports shared understanding, as it allows us to focus and intuitively understand what is required from us.

In this chapter, we introduce two core applications of visual management in the Six Panels Approach: visual control artifacts, which help organize and communicate critical information on the panels, and action cards, which translate insights into clear, accountable next steps.

Together, they equip the Obeya to function as a system for intuitive sense-making.



Visual management helps us  
navigate complexity by focusing  
our limited mental capacity  
where it's needed most.

### Visual Management makes critical information intuitively understandable

A good Obeya speaks a visual language where its participants recognize through visual cues when things are not going according to plan. 'Not according to plan' means operational performance, change agenda's etc. are deviating from ambitions, norms or standards.

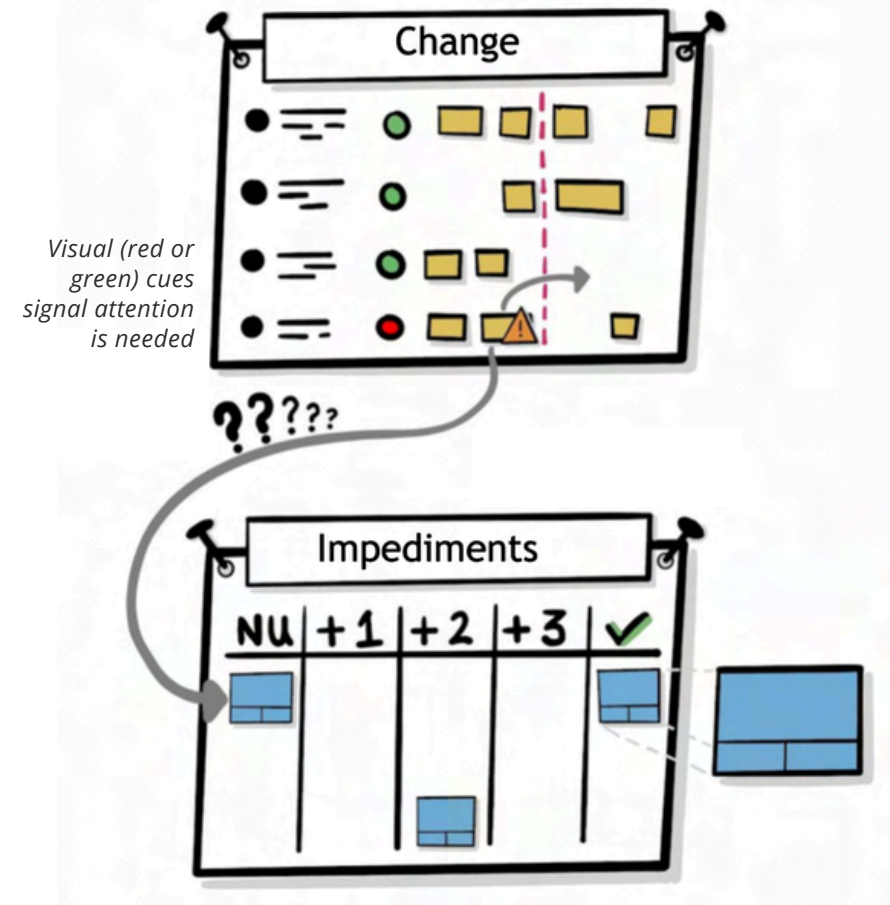
Signalling colors red and green are the most obvious uses of visual management. They are used to show where attention is needed. Red doesn't mean someone did a bad job; it means the system is not delivering what we would expect and that we should investigate. When this happens we often call this an impediment or blockage.

For an Obeya to work it is important that all relevant things that keep us from performing according to plan are communicated.

An effective Obeya taps into our biological strengths: it is designed around how humans naturally learn and process information, reducing cognitive load and freeing up mental space.

The human brain processes visual information much faster and more efficiently than text; visual input increases comprehension and memory dramatically.

An Obeya therefore empowers people to make decisions and take ownership, by making information understandable and available through visual cues, without overwhelming details.






Visual management allows humans to naturally process information, creating the headspace needed to learn and focus.

### Visual Management on the Six Panels Approach

So, Visual Management allows you to navigate complexity, as a group, by knowing where to focus. There are 3 key Visual Management elements often used on the Six Panels Approach. We call them “visual control artifacts”.

- You can use these 3 visual control artifacts anywhere on each of the the 6 panels
- They will indicate whether there is:

-  An important risk or specific focus
-  Something unclear
-  Something finished

- Encourage individuals to use visual control artifacts in the Obeya to point out important things
- For digital use: All digital tools have these visual control artifacts already available within the tool
- For physical use: The visual control artifacts can be ordered online easily in various formats such as magnetic, sticky, and many more. Choose and experiment with what works best for your team
- It is recommended to make agreements within the team on how to use the visual control artifacts - for example agreements on when to put them up or when to remove them

It is recommended to make agreements within the team on how to use the visual control artifacts.



Attention!



Question



Finished

### The cards are only used on the PLAN and IMPROVEMENT Panels

Milestone cards are to be used on the Plan Panel, the other cards on the Improvement Panel.

#### The Action Cards help to:

- Clarify what kind of information to focus on at what time through the color coding of the cards
- Keep your Obeya neat and tidy
- Provide the right kind of detail
- Clarity on “who” and “when”

You can download all the materials in high resolution on the Obeya Association website for free (obeya-association.com).

If you print the cards file on A4 size, the cards will fit into the Panels swimming lanes if the Panels themselves are printed in A0 size. All the materials can be used for professional printing also.

If you work digitally, you can upload all the high resolution Action Cards onto the digital tool of your choice to use them there.



DOWNLOAD THE HIGH RESOLUTION OBEYA TEMPLATES FOR FREE ON OUR WEBSITE: [OBEYA-ASSOCIATION.COM/GET-ACCREDITED/OBEYA-TRAINING/OBEYA-FUNDAMENTALS/](https://obeya-association.com/get-accredited/obeya-training/obeya-fundamentals/)



### PLAN PANEL:

#### Milestone card

**Used when:**  
To indicate important strategic milestones

### IMPROVEMENT PANEL:

#### Action card

**Used when:**  
When an action is assigned during an Obeya meeting

#### Request card

**Used when:**  
Anytime when someone has a request for someone else

#### Decision card

**Used when:**  
When a decision is taken during the Obeya Meeting that needs to be communicated

*The Action Cards in detail:*

**MILESTONE**

SUBJECT:	ISSUE DATE:	DUE DATE:
WHAT WILL BE READY ON DUE DATE:		
AMBITION / MEASURABLE OUTCOME:		
OWNER INITIALS:		

**REQUEST**

SUBJECT:	REQUEST TO:	REQUEST DATE:
DETAILS:		
OWNER INITIALS:		

**DECISION**

DECISION:	DECISION DATE:
DECISION DETAILS:	
DECISION RATIONALE:	
OWNER INITIALS:	

**ACTION**

SUBJECT:	ISSUE DATE:	DUE DATE:
DETAILS:		
OWNER INITIALS:		





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## OBEYA MEETINGS

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### Introduction

Meetings... you better love them if you want to stay sane in the realm of organizations. But let's be honest, sometimes they can feel like a broken record, replaying the same old tune.

You'll notice that Obeya meetings run a little different. Importantly, an Obeya meeting is never meant to come on top of the already existing meeting pressure. It is designed to replace a few of them in one go! Done well, Obeya meetings don't add time, they save it.

An Obeya is only as effective as the conversations it enables. That's why structured, recurring meetings — or routines — are essential to the Obeya approach.

In this chapter, we explore the different types of Obeya meetings — from daily operational check-ins to biweekly tactical dialogues and quarterly strategic reflections. Each has its own frequency and focus, aligned with the nature of the work being done.

Together, the meeting rhythm — including the visual system that is the Obeya room — forms one integrated performance dialogue.

You'll learn how meeting structures activate the Six Panels and how they help your Obeya discussions stay relevant. Because in the end, it's not about having meetings — it's about making them count.



From 'oh no, not another meeting'  
to 'yes, this really matters'.

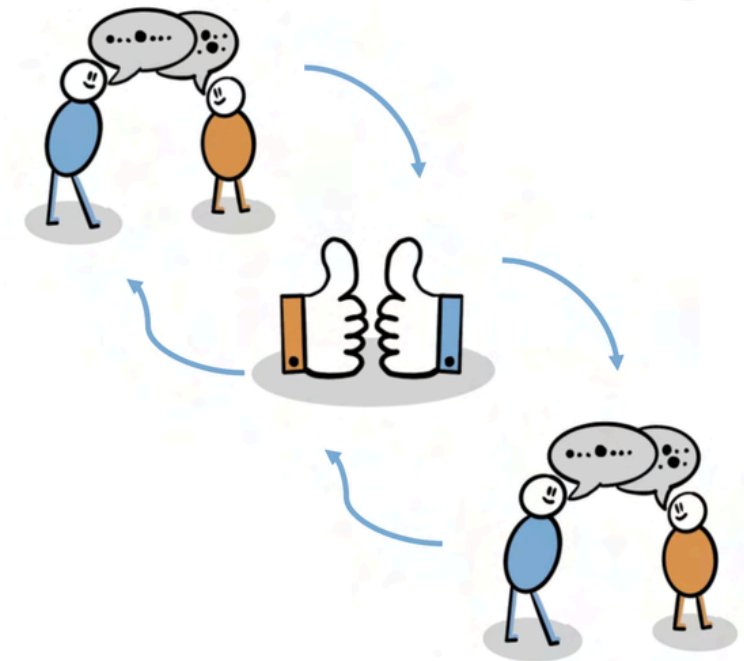
### A performance dialogue is essential to reach goals together

A performance dialogue in the Obeya is a structured, recurring conversation that helps people make sense of complex work — together. The goal isn't just to review performance — it's to enable performance through increased understanding.

Crucially, the Obeya itself — with its meeting rhythms, information flow, and visual structure — becomes the infrastructure for these kind of dialogues. Well executed performance dialogues allow participants to focus on what's essential, surface issues early, and take ownership of progress in a fast-moving, complex environment.

In Obeya meetings, there are several key elements that typically add up to the performance dialogue. These include:

- **Reviewing progress:** This involves reviewing the progress made towards the goals since the last Obeya meeting. This may involve reviewing data or metrics, such as project milestones, productivity, or customer satisfaction.
- **Sharing updates:** Participants may share updates on their work, including any challenges or successes they have experienced.
- **Identifying issues:** The team may identify any issues or challenges that are impacting their ability to perform effectively. This may include resource constraints, technical problems, or other barriers to progress.
- **Brainstorming solutions:** Work together to brainstorm potential solutions to any identified issues.
- **Assigning action items:** Decide on specific action items or tasks that need to be completed in order to address any issues and make progress towards the goals.
- **Reviewing action items:** Review the action items that were assigned in the previous performance dialogue to ensure that they have been completed or are on track to be completed.
- **Setting goals:** Set new goals or targets for the next performance dialogue period.



A performance dialogue is  
about achieving goals  
together.

### The importance of meeting rhythm & routine

We already mentioned that Obeya enables a culture of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement is best achieved in multiple consecutive small steps instead of an approach that aims for a single solution. This is also referred to as ‘short-cyclical’ way of working. A well-designed meeting rhythm and routine are necessary to nurture this way of working.

Obeya meetings have clear agenda's (routines) and are often timeboxed to allow for informed decisions to be made within accepted time frames.

Well-designed meeting routines require the right amount of structure. A structure that is too rigid can lower group energy, limit conversation depth and produces fixed conversations. Too little structure on the other hand, can lead to unclarity, chaotic meetings and lack of focus. People might feel lost and unsettled to make decisions.

A good meeting routine provides structure, rhythm, and focus. It helps ensure the right topics are discussed at the right time and enables fast decision-making — without slipping into chaotic, inefficient meetings.



An Obeya meeting is never meant to come “on-top-of” current meeting structures. It means to replace several of them together thus saving valuable time.



TO LEARN HOW TO FACILITATE AN OBEYA MEETING - CHECK OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL AND THE “OBEYA HOST” TRAINING AVAILABILITIES ON THE OBEYA ASSOCIATION WEBSITE



### 4 Obeya meetings

There are 4 Obeya meetings that run in short or longer cycles. The more operational the nature of the meeting, the shorter the cycle. A daily meeting for example is used to navigate day-to-day operations and takes place several days a week.

Having a set agenda for your meetings will help you spend your time more effectively. The Obeya meetings form a coherent whole in which all panels play a vital part. The Obeya meeting rhythm allows you to connect long term strategy and short term actions.

Cascade problems you can't fix within your team, towards the next echelon or area right after every meeting.

#### DAILY MEETING

**Daily Meeting**

We look at the **IMPROVEMENT PANEL** to see if there are any operational challenges or people that need help. We provide each other with short yet relevant updates and follow up on actions.

**Start**

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

**Inbox**

- What new items have been placed in the INBOX?
- What items, events or people require extra attention today?

**Actions**

Discuss per individual:

- Are committed actions progressing as planned?
- Any challenges we need to address immediately?
- Who in the team can use some help?

**Close**

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting

**Agenda**

- Daily (15 - 30 min)**
- Team members & Leadership**
- Keep content related discussions short (2 min max)**

#### BI-WEEKLY TACTICAL MEETING

**Tactical Meeting**

We look at the **PLAN PANEL** to see if we are getting things done. We make decisions regarding changes or problems in our planning and monitor previous adjustments. Most importantly we decide on priorities.

**Start**

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

**Overview**

- Briefly review progress per Strategic Objective
- What new distractions hinder progress as planned?
- What can we expect in the near future?
- Does the information from the other panels teach us anything new?
- What problems did we try to solve before? Did it work?

**New developments**

Update per Project / Program / Team:

- Only if relevant: max 5 minutes
- Adjust planning where necessary
- Make agreements/raise actions with other stakeholders regarding the management of the agreed upon changes

**Close**

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting

**Agenda**

- Bi-weekly (1.5 hrs) green weeks**
- Leadership, Programme/project managers, Initiates, Obeya Host**
- Take decisions that allow you to finish things**

#### MONTHLY PERFORMANCE MEETING

**Performance Meeting**

We look at the **PERFORMANCE PANEL** to study the results from last month. We learn, reflect and analyze. We decide what we next need to learn, in order to achieve our Vision.

**Start**

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

**Overview**

- What were our targets? Did we meet them?
- What are the actual numbers at this moment?

**Study and way forward**

Discuss per Metric Owner:

- What obstacles do you think are preventing you from reaching the target condition?
- What did you see in your last step?
- What did you expect to happen?
- What actually happened?
- What did you learn?
- What is your next step (next experiment)? What do you expect?
- How quickly can we go and see what we have learned from taking that step?

**Close**

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting

**Agenda**

- Monthly (2 hrs)**
- Leadership, Metric Owners, Initiates, Obeya Builders, Obeya Host**
- Discuss only metrics that are signifier RED**

#### QUARTERLY STRATEGY MEETING

**Strategy Meeting**

We look at the **VISION, CUSTOMER and PRODUCT PANELS** to see if our products and solutions bring maximal value to our customers. We adjust our Strategic Objectives if necessary, so they are better aligned with our Vision.

**Start**

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

**Reflect**

- Reflect as a group for max 1 hour!
- What has been our Vision so far?
- What new have we learned about the needs of our customers?
- How have we developed our products and solutions?
- Did our Strategic Objectives bring us closer to our Vision?
- Did we design the Obeya so it can fulfill its Purpose?

**Adjust**

- Take max 30 minutes to see if you can explain and visualize your Vision even better
- Spend max 30 minutes per Strategic Objective to decide whether to keep, adjust or remove them for the upcoming quarter

**Close**

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting

**Agenda**

- Quarterly (4 hrs)**
- Leadership, Initiates, Obeya Host**
- In essence, you are building a storyboard**

Shorter cycles  
(OPERATIONAL)



Longer cycles  
(STRATEGIC)



### Daily meeting: keep things moving forward

The daily meeting is the operational heartbeat of the Obeya. It's a short, structured stand-up session — typically 15 to 30 minutes — that helps teams navigate day-to-day work, track progress, and respond quickly to emerging issues or needs.

Its primary function is to maintain flow and alignment in the here and now.

Daily meetings revolve around the Improvement Panel, where new updates, problems, and requests are collected in the Inbox, and where team members check in on the actions they've committed to. It's not about long discussions or solving everything on the spot — it's about surfacing the right issues, making sure actions are moving, and helping each other where needed.

The simplicity of the agenda, the regularity of the meeting, and the operational focus allow the team itself to facilitate. A Host may still occasionally support to improve meeting quality or dynamics, but the daily rhythm is designed to be empowering, and self-sustaining.



*Daily meetings support day-to-day flow and team alignment by surfacing progress, issues, and immediate actions.*



### Tactical Meeting: bridge strategy to execution

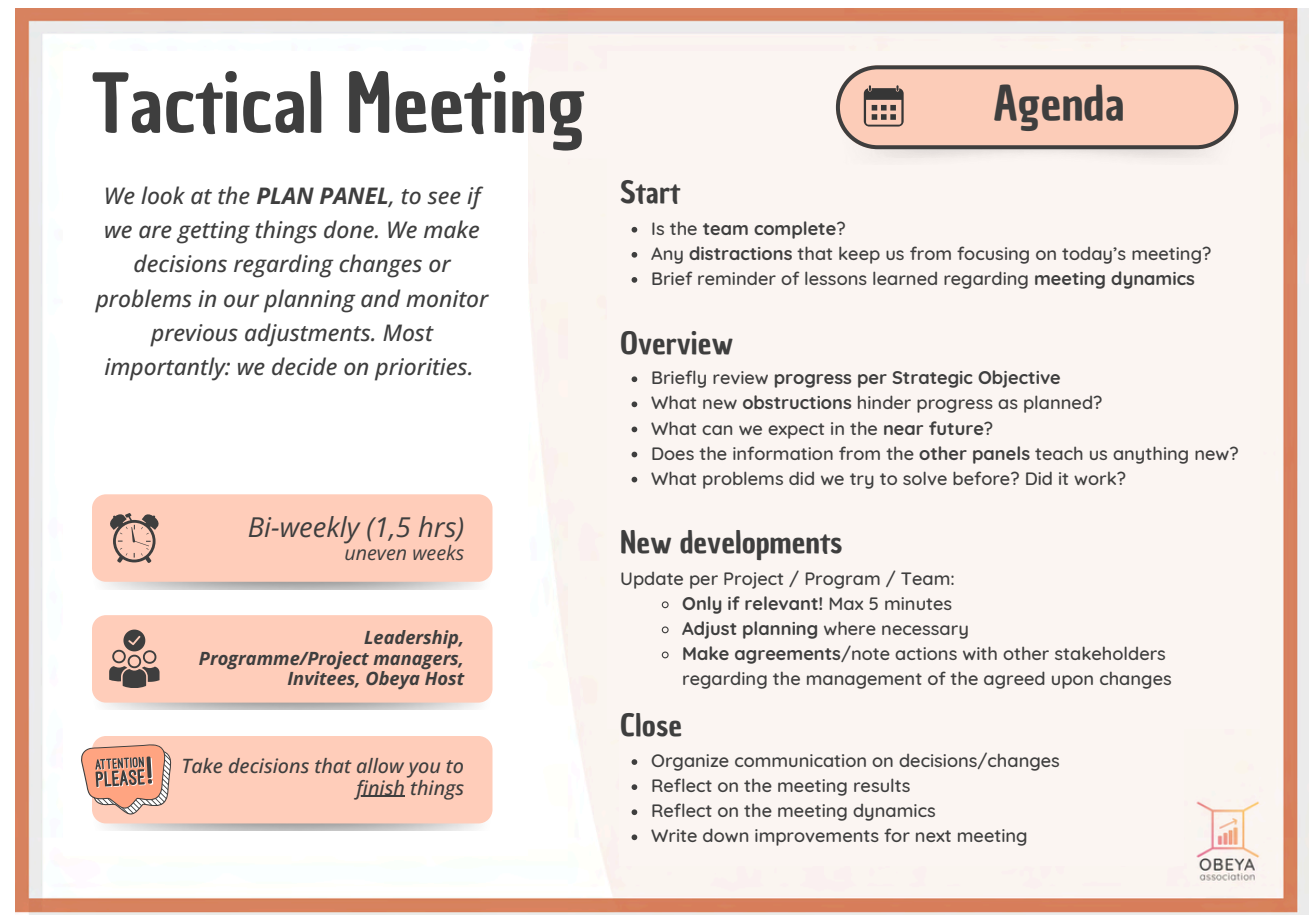
The tactical meeting is the connective tissue of the Obeya. Held biweekly (or weekly depending on the pace of work), it brings focus to what needs to happen now in order to stay on course for where the organization wants to go.

Its primary function is to bridge short-term execution with longer-term strategic intent.

Tactical meetings draws in strategic objectives from the Strategy Panel, which are then made operational with clear milestones on the Plan Panel.

Decent planning is the starting point for meaningful action — and thus essential input for the Daily Meeting. This meeting is where teams assess whether they are on track, align across functions, surface delivery risks, and decide what needs to shift in the plan to get things done.

While mature teams can often self-facilitate, a Host can add real value by ensuring that strategy remains the reference point, that time is used effectively, and that planning conversations don't drift into operational noise.



*Tactical meetings connect short-term execution to strategic objectives through coordinated planning and cross-functional alignment.*

### Performance meeting: take time to learn together

The performance meeting brings structured reflection into the Obeya rhythm. Held monthly, it creates space for teams to pause, look at what has actually happened, and make sense of it together.

Its primary function is to enable learning.

Drawing from the Performance Panel, the meeting focuses on metrics, trends, and patterns — not just to track progress, but to understand what's behind it.


This meeting supports people to zoom out, share observations, surface systemic blockers, and challenge assumptions. The goal is not to judge performance, but to extract insight that informs better decisions going forward.

A skilled Host can play a key role in creating the right conditions to learn.


Done well, the performance meeting builds a habit of curiosity, honesty, and continuous improvement. It's where the Obeya truly becomes a learning system.

# Performance Meeting


*We look at the **PERFORMANCE PANEL**, to study the results from last month. We learn, reflect and analyze. We decide what we next need to learn, in order to achieve our Vision.*



Monthly (2 hrs)



Leadership, Metric Owners, Invitees, Obeya Builders, Obeya Host



Discuss only metrics that are signalled **RED**

## Agenda

### Start

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

### Overview

- What were our targets? Did we meet them?
- What are the actual numbers at this moment?


### Study and way forward

Discuss per Metric Owner:

- What **obstacles** do you think are preventing you from reaching the target condition?
  - What did you plan as your last step?
  - What did you expect to happen?
  - What **actually** happened?
  - What did you learn?
- What is your **next step** (next experiment)? What do you expect?
- How quickly can we go and see what we have learned from taking that step?

### Close

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting



*Performance meetings create space for structured reflection, learning from results, and identifying systemic improvement opportunities.*

### Strategy Meeting: Calibrate your strategic compass

Held quarterly, the strategy meeting creates space to ensure the organization stays focused on the right challenges, with the right intent, in a changing world.

Its primary function is to shape and align long-term direction in service of purpose.


The conversation draws from the Vision, Product, and Customer Panels, helping teams assess whether the value they're creating with the products or services, still fits evolving customer needs. It's where strategic strengths are built or played out. Strategic objectives are refined — or reaffirmed — to stay on course with the vision.

Because of its length and open nature, the strategy meeting easily drifts into passive discussion or abstract debate. A skilled Host helps steer focus, prevent semantic loops, and keep the conversation productive.


Done well, strategy meetings turn the Obeya into a strategic compass — keeping purpose, relevance, and direction clearly in view.

# Strategy Meeting


*We look at the **VISION, CUSTOMER** and **PRODUCT PANELS** to see if our products and solutions bring maximal value to our customers. We adjust our Strategic Objectives if necessary, so they are better aligned with our Vision.*



Quarterly (4 hrs)



Leadership, Invitees, Obeya Host



In essence, you are building a storyboard

## Agenda

### Start

- Is the team complete?
- Any distractions that keep us from focusing on today's meeting?
- Brief reminder of lessons learned regarding meeting dynamics

### Reflect


- Reflect as a group for max 1 hour:
- What has been our Vision so far?
- What new have we learned about the needs of our customers?
- How have we developed our products and solutions?
- Did our Strategic Objectives bring us closer to our Vision?
- Did we design/use the Obeya so it can fulfill its Purpose?

### Adjust

- Take max 30 minutes to see if you can explain and visualize your Vision even better
- Spend max 30 minutes per Strategic Objective to decide whether to keep, adjust or remove them for the upcoming quarter

### Close

- Organize communication on decisions/changes
- Reflect on the meeting results
- Reflect on the meeting dynamics
- Write down improvements for next meeting



*Strategy meetings focus on long-term direction by aligning vision, customer needs, and strategic priorities in a changing context.*

### The ideal situation

In an Obeya you engage in participatory dialogue and experience psychological safety. In a relatively short timeframe information is transformed to learnings and then action/decisions are taken.

Decisions are factbased and committed. Having all relevant stakeholders present saves time in updating each other later.

There is a sense of connection and people get together behind a common goal. Successes are celebrated and problems quickly arrive at the level they need to be dealt with.

The meeting is structured and every perspective is honored. Feedback is provided and healthy friction is allowed to exist.

The Obeya meeting is positive and people are curious. Of course there is a lot of laughter as well!

### Conversation issues

There are a few common issues that prevent participatory dialogue and psychological safety from happening:

- Dominant people take over the meeting
- Time wasted on only updating each other
- Not everyone participates
- No action (too much reflection)
- Quick fixes (too little reflection)
- (personal) judgements
- (unchecked) assumptions
- Fears and limiting beliefs
- Unskillful disagreements
- Decisional powerplay
- Low data confidence

### General issues

There are a few common issues that prevent an Obeya meeting from running smooth even when the conversation is constructive.

- Data/information is not updated
- Data too high level to act
- Data too detailed (confusion)
- People are late
- People not present
- People are unprepared
- Messy Obeya room
- Technical malfunctions
- Lack of leadership involvement

#### From experience:

*An Obeya exposes many things. You might experience a feeling that your Obeya is "unfinished". But actually: creating transparency on what's NOT there is equally important. If the information is not in the Obeya - it is also not present on the workflow. The Obeya has exposed this by not having the information present.*

*Changing the World:  
One Obeya at a Time*



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