

How I Use Khorus: **CEO**

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Introduction: Khorus and the CEO

Being a CEO is no cake walk.

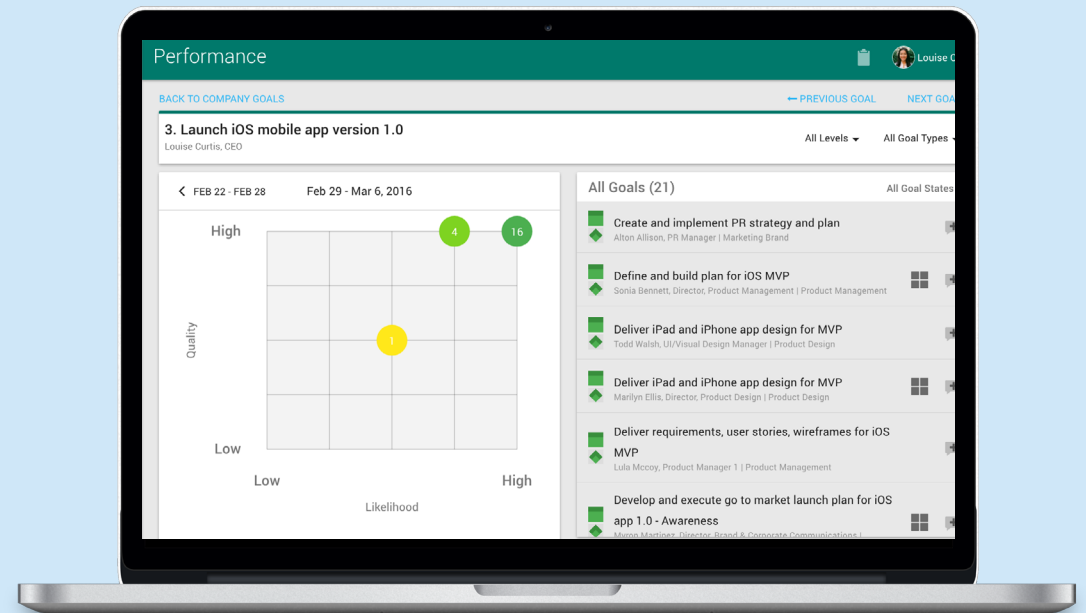
Fortunately, you're not alone. Khorus is here to help you gain maximum insight and influence in your organization. It's a single, holistic system for running your business well.

As CEO of Khorus Software, I of course use Khorus myself—to clarify our strategic objectives, engage everyone in our mission, and understand day by day how we're tracking on our most important goals.

In this ebook, I'll share ten actions I take in Khorus to make sure I'm getting the most out of the platform. I hope this gives you a useful blueprint for using Khorus to drive peak performance in your own organization.

If you ever have any questions about Khorus, don't hesitate to reach out at **1-877-KHORUS1** or **support@khorus.com**. It's our mission to help you run your company better—and we're here to help!

—Joel Trammell, CEO, Khorus



1. I set company priorities.



START OF QUARTER

Before each quarter begins, I meet with the leadership team to decide on our collective priorities for the next 90 days. Then, I enter them into Khorus.

The rallying cry: Seen in the green banner above the company goals, the rallying cry summarizes *what is most important, right now*. Read more about this feature [here](#).

Company goals: These are our 5–7 objectives for the company this quarter. They spell out how we'll get closer to our long-term vision of success.

Once the rallying cry and company goals are final, the cascade begins. Teams and individuals all set goals for themselves in Khorus, most of which directly support company priorities.

Once all goals are in Khorus, both sides of the execution plan are in place: I know everyone is working on the right things, and employees understand what's expected of them and why it matters to the business.

The screenshot displays the 'Company goals' section for 'Q3 2015'. At the top, a green banner reads 'Become The Market Leader Through Unparalleled Customer Service'. Below this, four goals are listed, each with a progress indicator (four diamonds):

- 1. Grow revenue by 30% YoY
- 2. Deliver world-class customer satisfaction
- 3. Launch iOS mobile app version 1.0
- 4. Recruit top talent

The 'Create Goal' modal is open over the first goal. It includes the following fields and options:

- SELECT PARENT** (link)
- NEED HELP DEFINING YOUR GOAL?** (link)
- Title:** Grow revenue by 30% YoY
- Description:** (empty field)
- Measurement:** \$20M annual recurring revenue (ARR)
- Private Goal**
Private goals have limited visibility and cannot be cascaded from.
- Buttons: **CANCEL**, **SAVE DRAFT**, **PUBLISH**

Our plan for the quarter, in Khorus for everyone to see.

2. I look at employee insight



WEEKLY

At the end of every week, all employees rate their goals in Khorus on two dimensions:

- **Likelihood:** how likely they are to complete the goal by quarter-end.
- **Quality:** the quality of the work done on the goal so far.

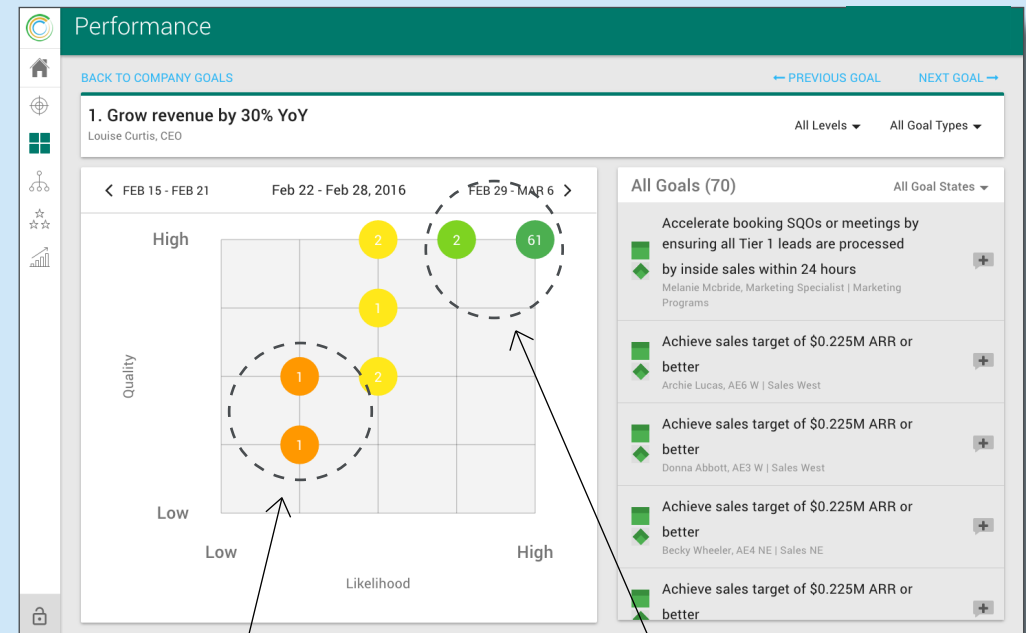
Khorus rolls these color-coded updates into a Performance Dashboard for every company goal.

Once the team's updates are in on Friday, I pull up the Performance Dashboard over the weekend and see how we're doing. (Toggling back and forth between this week and last helps me easily spot changes.)

Do sales and marketing feel good about hitting that customer-growth target? Do we all expect to meet our personal improvement goals?

Now I've done my prep work for our ops meeting on Monday . . .

Performance Dashboard for a customer-satisfaction goal.



Check on these goals.

These goals are on track!

Why We Forecast Every Week

Each week, for every goal, Khorus captures Likelihood: the goal-owner's rating of how likely the goal is to be achieved. We're the only software in the world that asks every employee to forecast outcomes every week. Why do we do it?

I need to see the future. As CEO, I can't just crunch historical data spit out by departments. I'm driving the bus, and I need to look out the windshield. Are we going in the direction we need to? Hearing employees' predictive insight helps me understand this far better than poring over reports would.

On-the-ground prediction trumps my guesses. Creative, complex work doesn't play by the rules of ditch digging. Knowledge workers are far better at predicting the outcome of their work than I am (or HR or the CFO is). They're the ones doing the work, so I need their perspective on how likely we are to meet our goals. I can't look at data on what's been done and come to that conclusion on my own.

We can attack problems before they screw us up. When Likelihood ratings fall, I get the alert before we miss one of our goals entirely. I can talk to those working on the goal about what they need from me or their peers to get it back on track. In short: predicting helps us be agile.

My team gets really good at predicting. Since forecasting and reforecasting is built into the DNA of our operation, my team sharpens its ability to spot future issues the more we predict. They're more likely to bite off the right amount of work at the beginning of the quarter, and are better able to sound the alarm when it's looking like a goal won't be met.

3. I run no-BS ops meetings.



WEEKLY

On Monday at 1:00 p.m., our leadership team convenes for the ops meeting. We have a simple agenda: to review the Performance Dashboard for each company goal and address any new issues.

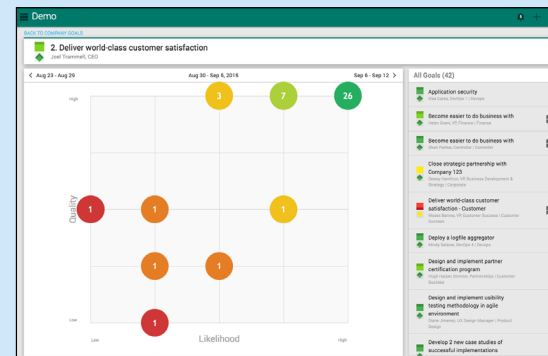
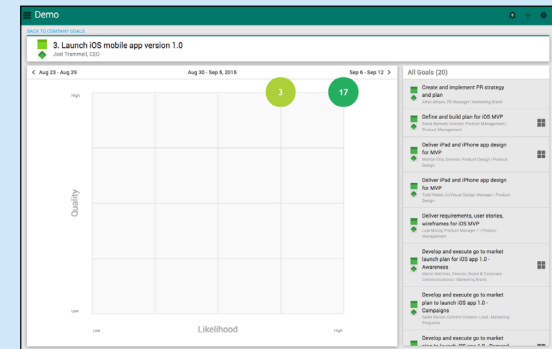
For healthy goals: If our revenue goal is rocking and rolling—most of its supporting goals are rated with high Likelihood and Quality—we can acknowledge that and move on.

For at-risk goals: But, for example, if a goal to secure a strategic partnership is faltering—with many red supporting goals on the lower-left of the dashboard—we can talk about how to get back on track. I might ask our Head of Partnerships to help us (a) diagnose why the goal is at risk and (b) what support she needs from me or anyone else to get back on track.

If we make a key decision, I'll record it in the comment section for the goal. I can also create **Action Items** and assign them to any team member, to ensure that everyone is clear on who's responsible for what—and that the tasks are completed.

Clear benefits: No long reports. No boring monologues. Just future-oriented discussion of our priorities and how we're going to make them happen.

Healthy
Company
Goal



At-Risk
Company
Goal



An Action
Item



4. I post about our mission and priorities.



ONGOING

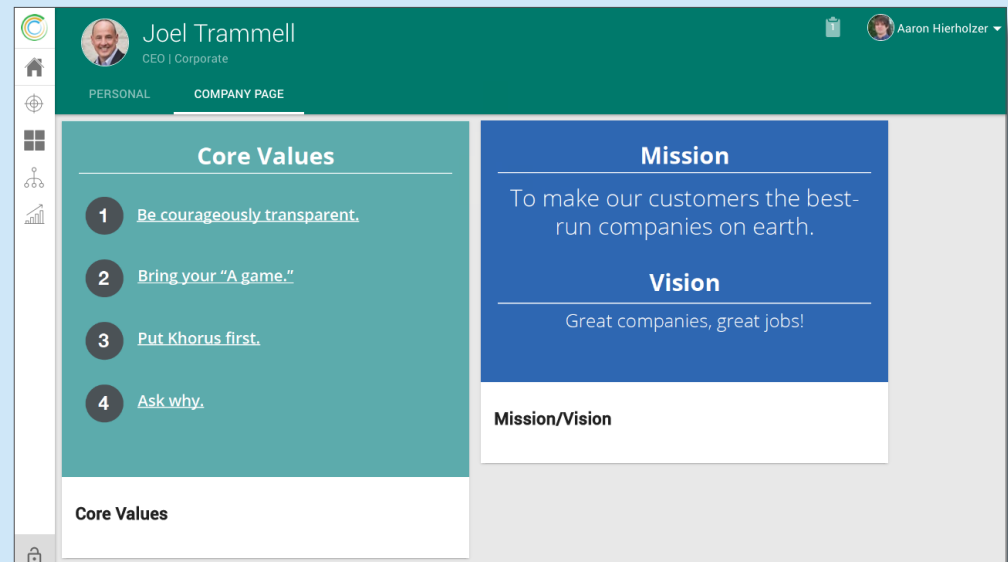
Part of my job as CEO is to make sure that our entire organization is on the same page. If silos develop and various departments stay blind to the bigger picture of what we're trying to achieve, that spells serious problems down the road.

Quarterly company goals in Khorus help us lay out the shared game plan, but I also use the **Company Page** in Khorus to share other key information with the whole organization. In the company page, I post:

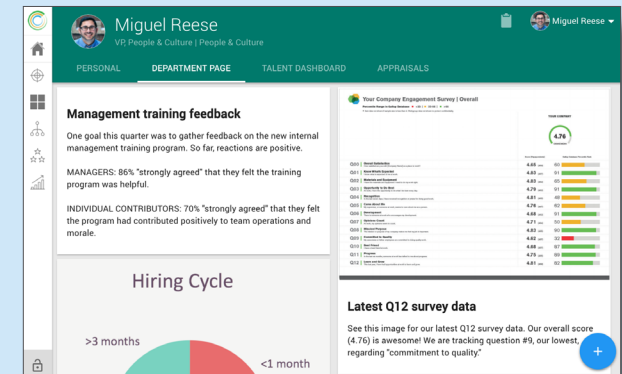
- Our mission and vision statements
- Our core values
- Data relating to any metric that's especially important this quarter

Khorus also empowers all the managers in my organization to post information about what their group is doing, making it visible to the whole company: Each manager has a **Department Page**, where they can market their team's priorities and activities to the rest of the organization, sharing the key metrics they're focused on and how those are going.

Our Company Page, showing our mission, vision, and values.



A Department Page, where a manager has curated key information about his team.



5. I check in on goals as needed.



ONGOING

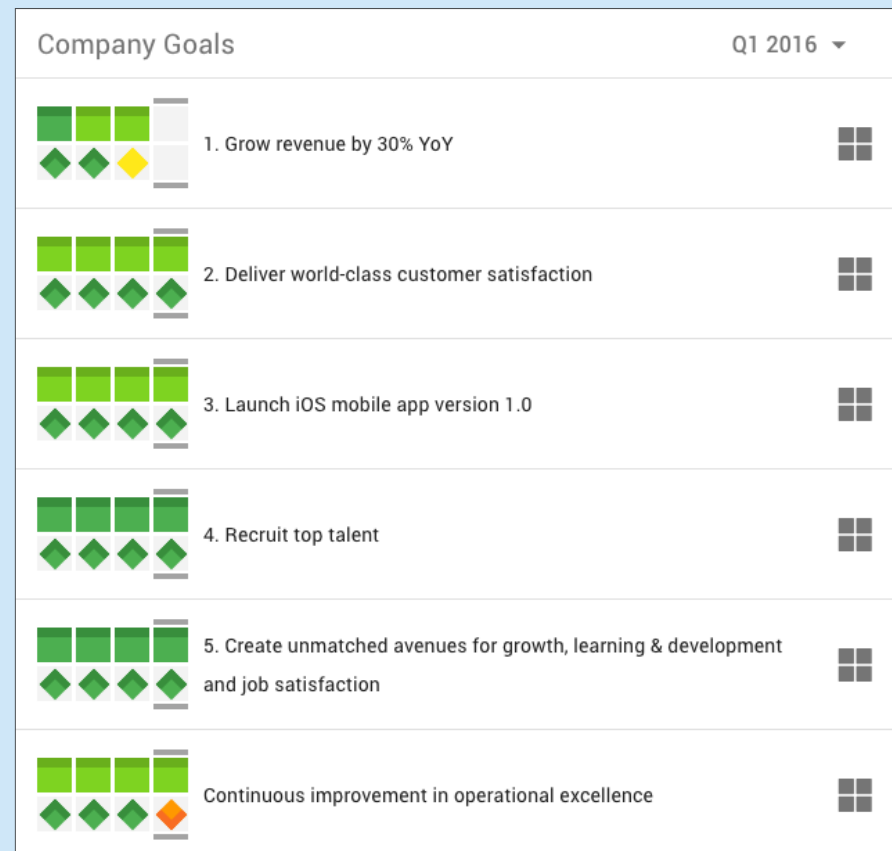
CEOs have a 24/7 job. Khorus helps me stay connected to what's going on, even when I'm not in the office.

Say I'm on the couch on a Sunday afternoon watching a football game, feet up on the coffee table—when suddenly thoughts intrude:

- How is Meg doing on that project?
- Is that new sales guy working out?
- Are we still tracking to hit our revenue goal?

Rather than either (a) trying to push away these thoughts or (b) going into data-collection mode, shooting off emails and rooting through reports, I can pull up Khorus and quickly check the goal in question.

If most of its supporting goals have high Likelihood and Quality, I can get back to my game. If some supporting goals are off track, I can check out the comments to understand why. More on that next.



I can see performance at a glance, no matter where I am.

6. I read and write comments.



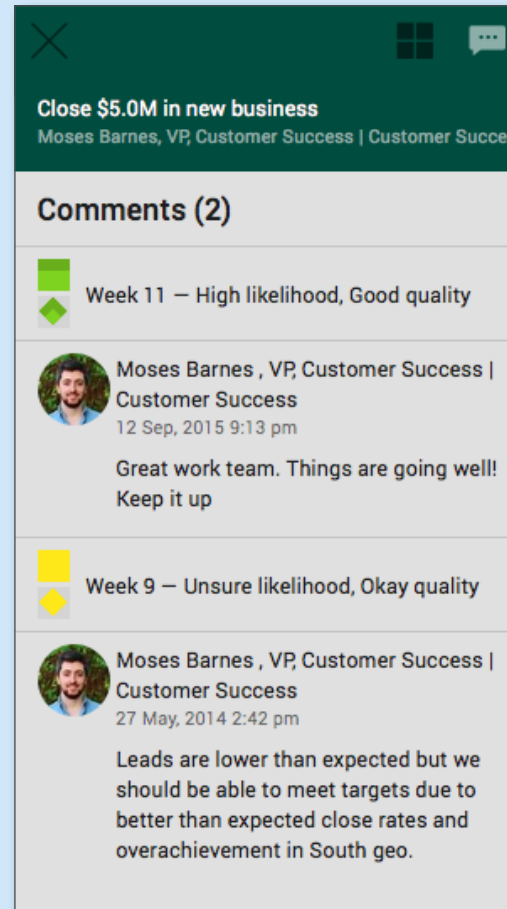
WEEKLY

Reading comments: When I see a red or orange supporting goal, I want to understand why it's faltering. Khorus allows me to click on the goal, read comments its owner has left, and drill further down to see how other employees are commenting on further supporting goals.

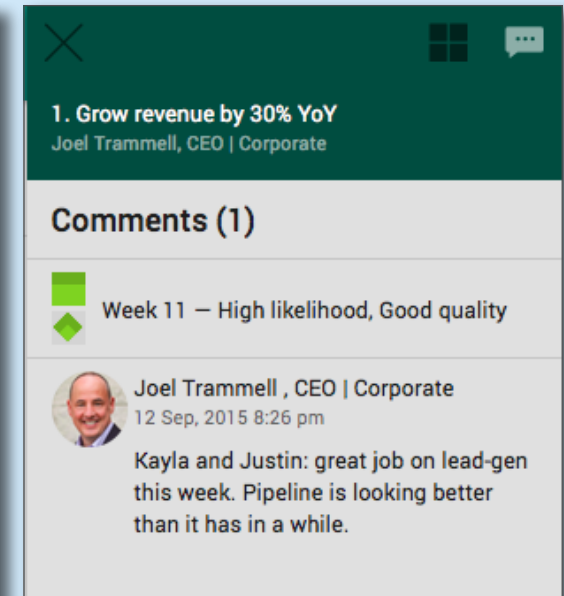
These running week-by-week logs tell me the story of each goal, and often contain gems of insight. A-players tend to be especially good at surfacing issues I need to pay attention to. And if I'm seeing a lot of high-quality conversations in Khorus, this is also a good indicator that our employees are engaged.

Writing comments: I can also comment on company goals, which, as I mentioned earlier, I do in the ops meeting. These comments let me inform the whole company:

- When we make a key decision on a goal (maybe the scope of a feature has changed).
- When a goal is at risk (maybe I'll communicate that we expect an overrun).
- When someone has a big win (maybe one of our salespeople closed a great new customer after months of effort).



A VP giving color to his weekly Khorus update.



Me commenting on a company goal.

7. I take a pulse on talent.



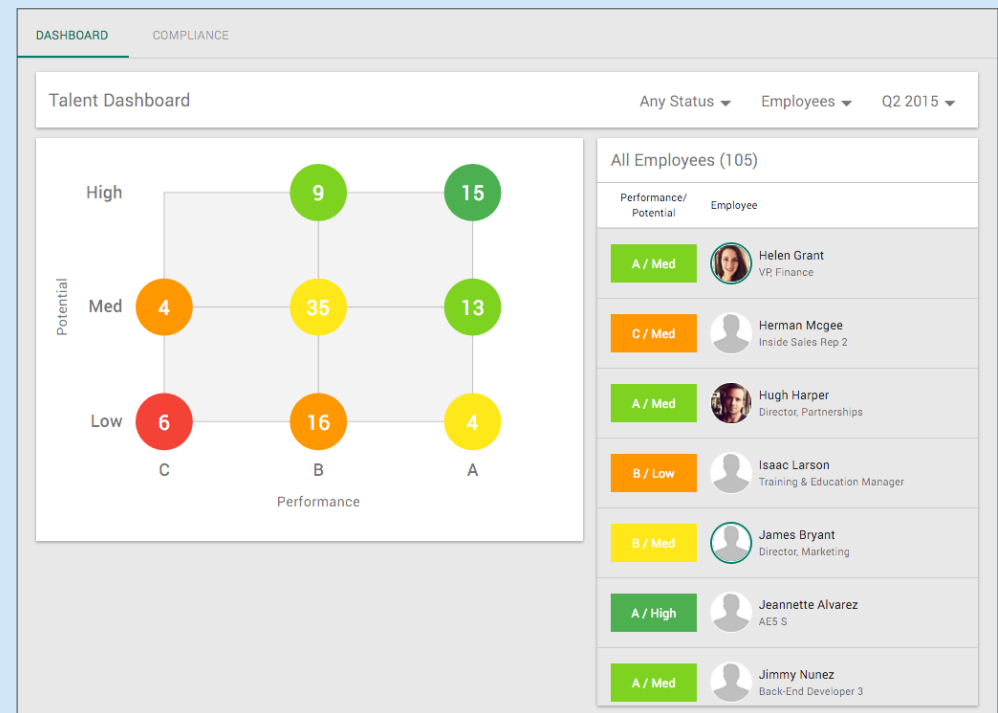
MONTHLY

I also use Khorus to make sure we have the right people on the bus—and to help develop our A-players and future leaders. In the Talent section of the application, I can:

Spot top performers. Employees on the far right of the Talent Dashboard (see image, opposite) were identified by their manager as having exceptional performance in the previous quarter. If a new employee on our customer team knocked her goals out of the park, I might reach out to congratulate her on a job well done. I'll know, going forward, that she's an asset to her team and the company.

Spot future leaders. Employees along the top of the Talent Dashboard have been identified by managers as key to the company's future. If we expect a lot of growth in one department, or if a key leader is departing, I can check our bench strength in that department and make sure we have strong leaders on hand.

Spot and address problems. If an employee moves to the lower left of the dashboard, I can attend to the issue. I might take that person to lunch and find out what's going on. Is this just a blip, or does he need support from me or anyone else?



The Talent Dashboard, a heat map of my company's workforce.

8. I model transparency.



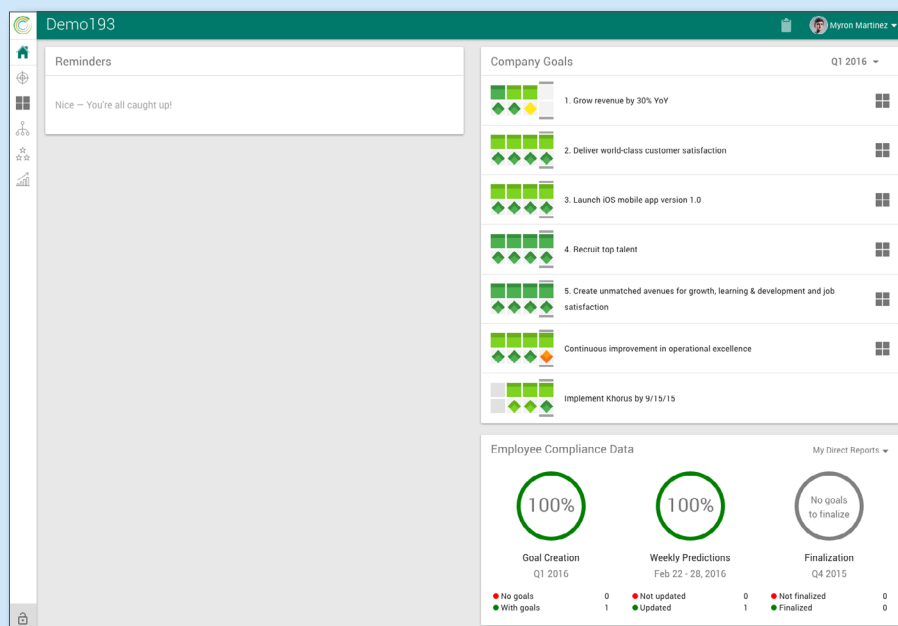
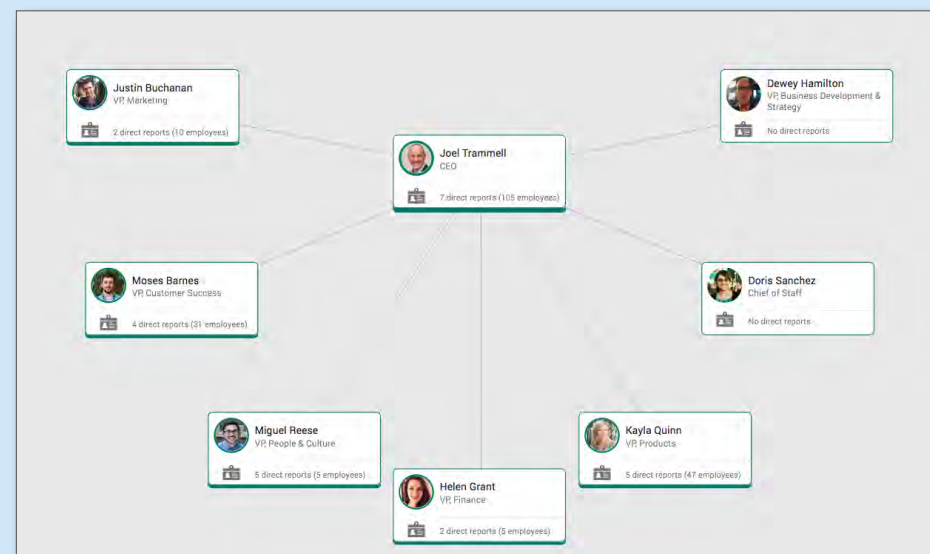
ONGOING

Khorus is totally transparent. Everyone can log in and see everyone else's goals, along with their weekly updates and any comments they've left . . . and that includes my goals, my updates, and my comments.

By using Khorus every week, I show that I'm committed to transparency and honesty. I build my credibility with the team by showing them I apply to myself the same rules I apply to them.

For the A-players on my team especially, this kind of instant access to how the top levels of the company are performing builds engagement and trust.

The interactive org chart, where we can all easily navigate the team and see each other's goals and performance.



The Khorus homepage, seen by all employees when they log in. Everyone can instantly see all company goals and how we're doing on them.

9. I hold employees—and myself—accountable.



QUARTER-END

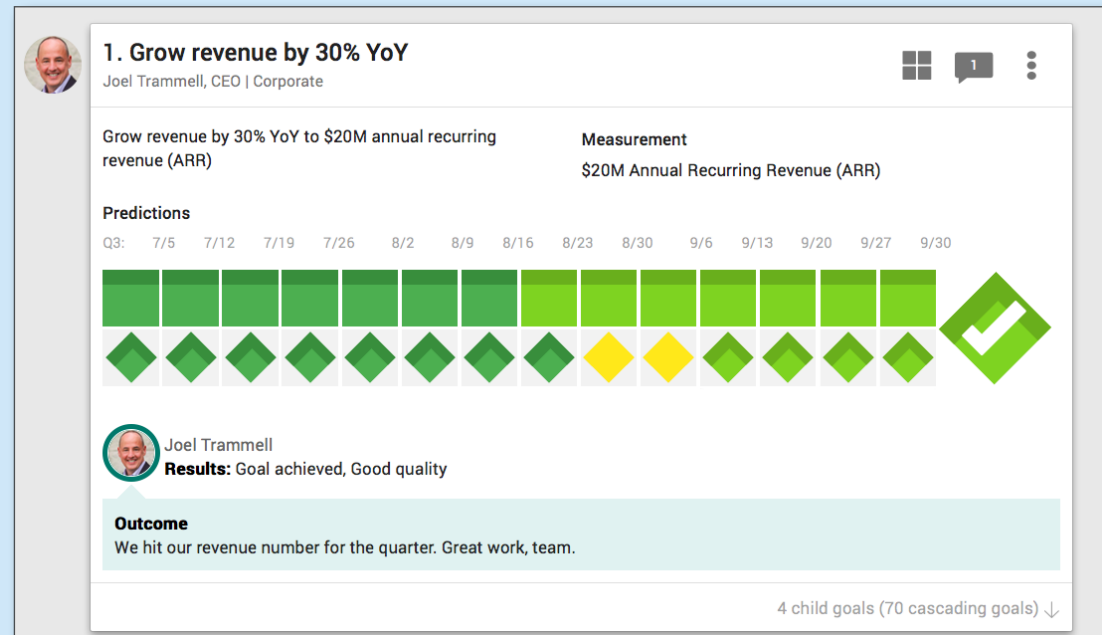
When the quarter wraps up, everyone in the company marks their goals achieved or not achieved, and indicates the quality of the work done. This process holds us all accountable for what we said we'd do in the quarter.

We've all seen the grand corporate initiative that somehow vanishes without a trace after a few weeks. With Khorus, though, no one in the company (least of all me) can wiggle out of an agreed-upon commitment.

If we missed a goal, we can talk about whether it's still a priority for next quarter, and be intentional about renewing or cutting it.

The goal close-out also presents a chance to sharpen our predicting skills. If my product team marked its goal "Release Feature ABC" with high Likelihood all quarter but then missed the release date, I know to have a talk with them. What can we do next time to get more accurate predictions? Were we tracking the right metric?

With an honest picture of how we performed this quarter, I have some insight into what's realistic for next quarter, and we reinforce the entire organization's accountability, starting with me.



Every goal is closed out every quarter, and we all see whether it was achieved, and with what quality. With that information, we can make an informed plan for next quarter.

10. I show the board what's really going on.



QUARTER-END

The CEO-board relationship is odd: They're technically your boss, but you have to play a leadership role with them. Plus, you know so much more about what's actually going on in the business than they do.

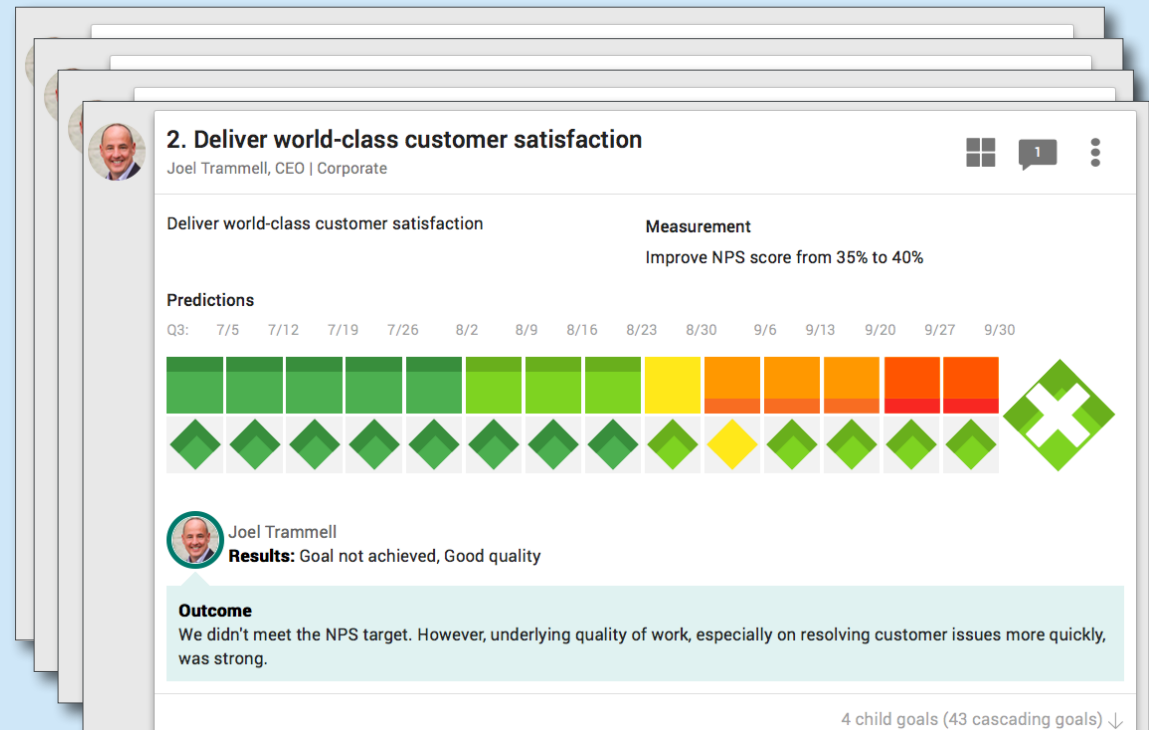
Turns out that Khorus is a great way to share key insights with the board and drive critical conversations in the short time you have with them each quarter.

We get more value in less time.

By basing board meetings around our goal achievement last quarter and our priorities for next quarter, we cut to the chase. I get high-value input from them on our strategy and on obstacles we face, rather than bogging them down with irrelevant details.

I show the board the reality of the business.

Using Khorus with the board also keeps me honest. I can't hide how my executive team updates their goals. I can't quietly delete a goal that didn't go well. The board greatly appreciates us shooting straight with them. They get a chance to actually help where their help counts the most, not just watch the leadership team tap-dance around issues.



The Khorus-driven board meeting cuts down prep time, builds trust with the board, and keeps us all focused on what matters.

Conclusion

As CEO, Khorus is how I stay in touch with people and performance. It's how I keep tabs on everything we're doing, without having to get into the weeds or micromanage. It's how I make sure we stay engaged, agile, and committed throughout the quarter.

If you're not already using Khorus, we'd love to talk with you about how this enterprise leadership platform can help you get your whole team on the path to exceptional performance.