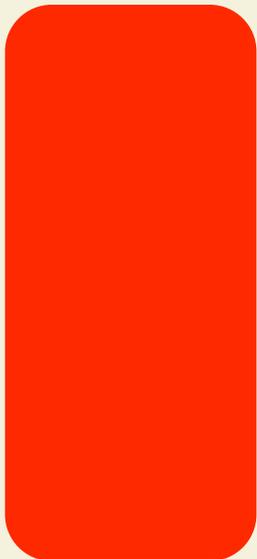


WELEARN

# From SOAP to KPIs

A practical guide to turning your strategy  
into measures that matter



# What this guide is for

You've built your Strategy on a Page (SOAP), now comes the question your team is probably already asking: *how do we know if it's working?*

That's what this guide helps you do. We'll walk through how to take each piece of your SOAP and translate it into KPIs: measures that tell you whether your strategy is on track, where to adjust, and what to prioritize next. By the end, you'll have a working set of KPIs you can bring to your next team meeting or executive conversation.

Here's what we'll walk through:

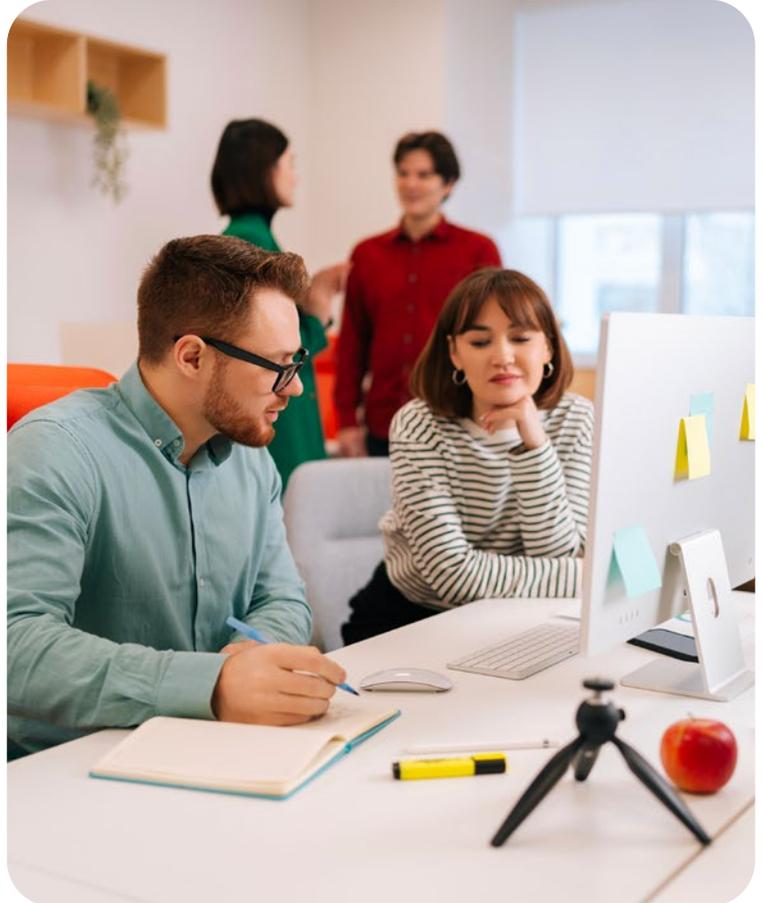


# The gap between activity and decisions

Most L&D teams measure what's easy to count: completions, attendance, satisfaction scores. That data has a place, but it doesn't help your executives make decisions. It tells them what happened. It doesn't tell them what to do about it.

A KPI should change someone's behavior. If a number moves and nobody acts differently, it's not a KPI. It's a data point. The measures on your executive dashboard need to answer one question clearly: **what should we do next?**

If you're familiar with Kirkpatrick's four levels, think of it this way. Most L&D dashboards live at Levels 1 and 2 (reaction and learning). The KPIs we're building here push into Levels 3 and 4 (behavior and results). Similarly, if you use LTEM (the Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model), we're moving past attendance and activity into the higher tiers where you can see whether learning is actually changing how people work and what the organization achieves.



# Start with your SOAP

Pull out your SOAP. Look at your strategic initiatives: the key focus points and the targets underneath them. Each one represents a bet you're making about where learning can move the business forward.

For each initiative, ask yourself two questions:

**1 What decision will this measure inform?**  
Will it help someone decide where to invest, who should act, what capabilities to build, or what outcomes need to improve?

**2 What would you expect to see if this initiative is working?** Not what you'd count. What you'd notice. Faster readiness? Fewer escalations? Stronger bench depth? Better decisions at the front line?

If you can answer both, you have the raw material for a KPI. If you can't, the initiative may need sharper definition before it's ready to measure.

That second question is where most teams get stuck. We default to counting what's easy (completions, hours, attendance) rather than identifying what would actually look different if the strategy were working. Here are a few common initiatives with the contrast:

SOAP initiative	What teams usually measure	The signal
Accelerate onboarding	Completion rates, time in LMS	New hires reach their first independent task faster
Build leadership pipeline	Number of people in programs	Critical roles have ready-now candidates to fill them
Improve compliance training	Pass rates, completion %	Fewer incidents, faster corrective response
Support digital transformation	Course enrollments	Employees adopt new tools without escalating to support
Strengthen manager capability	Training hours per manager	Direct reports report clearer feedback, fewer HR escalations

Notice the pattern. The left column is Kirkpatrick Levels 1 and 2. The right column is Levels 3 and 4. Every signal column describes something observable in the business.

# Four types of decisions your KPIs should support

Every measure on your dashboard should connect to at least one of these:

Decision type	What it answers	Example
Investment	Where should we spend, scale, or stop?	Cost per role-ready employee across programs
Governance	Who decides? When do we step in?	Escalation rate when readiness drops below threshold
Capability	What must people be able to do?	% of critical roles with verified skill coverage
Performance	What business outcomes need to improve?	Time from hire to full productivity

If a metric doesn't clearly connect to one of these, it may be useful for your team's day-to-day work, but it probably doesn't belong on an executive dashboard.



# One KPI, three views

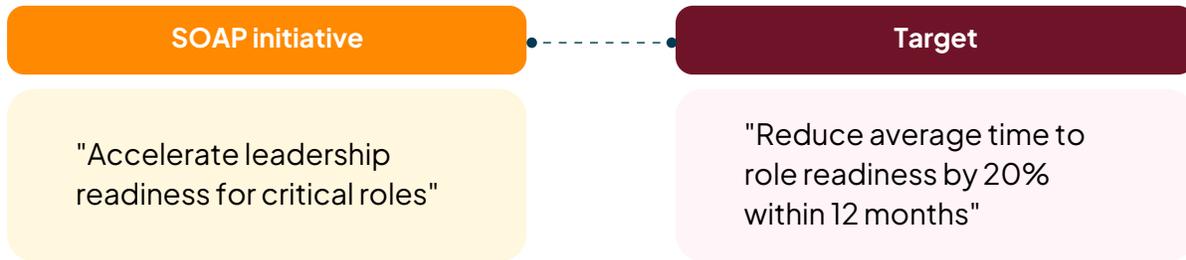
A good KPI isn't a single number on one report. It's the same measure viewed at three levels of detail, like zooming in on a map. Everyone uses the same definitions and the same data. The difference is how much detail they see and what they do with it.

View	Who uses it	What it shows	Question it answers
<b>Enterprise</b> 	CLO, executives	Direction and trends over time, tied to business risk or growth	Are we reducing risk and building capacity?
<b>Portfolio</b> 	L&D leaders	Comparisons across programs and functions, diagnostic detail	Why does the enterprise number look the way it does?
<b>Practitioner</b> 	Execution teams	Short-cycle, actionable metrics linked to specific behaviors	What do we do this week?

**Why this matters:** When an executive clicks into a dashboard number and finds different definitions or unexplained gaps, trust erodes fast. One aligned system, same definitions, clean rollups, no surprises, builds confidence that learning is managed with the same rigor as any other business function.

# Worked example: from SOAP to KPI

Here's what the process looks like end to end for a single strategic initiative.



## Defining the KPI

 **Decision type:** Investment + Capability (helps leaders decide where to allocate development resources and which capability gaps to close first).

 **Expected signal:** Leaders reach full role readiness faster, with fewer early-tenure escalations and stronger manager confidence ratings. In Kirkpatrick terms, you're looking for evidence at Levels 3 and 4 - observable behavior change on the job and measurable business results - not just course completions or learner satisfaction.

## Three views of this KPI

View	Practitioner	Portfolio	Enterprise
Measure	% of programs with defined performance outcomes; manager reinforcement follow-through rate; time from design to deployment	Readiness variance across business units and programs; adoption vs. effectiveness gap by development track	Median months to role readiness for critical leadership roles (trailing 12-month trend)
Review cadence	Monthly	Quarterly	Quarterly

# Test every KPI before you publish it

Before any measure goes on a dashboard, put it through two questions:



**"So what?"** If this number moves — up or down — what decision changes? If the answer is "nothing specific," the metric is informational. Keep it in your team's working files, but don't give it executive dashboard space.



**"Now what?"** Who acts on this, and how quickly? If nobody has clear ownership or a defined response, the KPI will generate reports but not action.

This is where most dashboards break down. They're full of numbers that look important but don't change anyone's behavior.



# Match your review schedule to reality

Different measures move at different speeds. Reviewing a six-month retention metric every two weeks creates noise, does not create insight. Match your review cadence to how fast the measure can realistically change:

Cadence	What you're tracking	Why
Monthly	Behavior and adoption (tool usage, manager reinforcement)	These shift relatively quickly and give early warning signs
Quarterly	Capability and readiness (skill coverage, role readiness)	Meaningful change takes time. Monthly reviews create false signals
Every six months	Pipeline and retention (succession depth, post-development retention)	These are slow-moving and need a longer lens to interpret accurately



# Lock governance before you share

Before you take your KPIs to stakeholders, get clear on four things:

Question	Why it matters
Who owns interpretation of this KPI?	Without clear ownership, every stakeholder reads the number differently and draws their own conclusions.
Who has authority to act on it?	A KPI without an accountable owner generates conversation but not change.
What triggers an escalation?	Define thresholds in advance. Waiting until a number looks bad to figure out the response plan is too late.
What will you choose not to optimize for?	Every KPI creates pressure. Name the trade-offs up front so your team doesn't chase one number at the expense of something equally important.

Skip this step and your KPIs risk becoming political. Cited selectively, interpreted loosely, and disconnected from real action.

# How many KPIs do you need?

Fewer than you think.

Level	How Many
Executive dashboard	5-7 core KPIs
Portfolio leaders	5-10 per major portfolio
Practitioners	3-5 leading indicators per role

More than this dilutes focus. People stop looking at dashboards that feel overwhelming. Less than this risks blind spots on areas that matter.



# Worksheet: build your KPIs

Use this with your team. Start with one strategic initiative from your SOAP and work through each row. Repeat for each initiative.

Step	Your answer
SOAP strategic initiative (copy from your SOAP)	
Target (what does your SOAP say you're trying to reach?)	
Decision type (investment, governance, capability, performance)	
Expected signal (what would you notice if this is working?)	
Enterprise measure (directional, tied to business risk or growth)	
Portfolio measure (comparative, diagnostic)	
Practitioner measure (short-cycle, actionable)	

Step	Your answer
Review cadence (monthly, quarterly, semi-annual)	
Who owns interpretation?	
Who has authority to act?	
What triggers escalation?	
What will you choose not to optimize for?	
"So what" test: if this moves, what decision changes?	
"Now what" test: who acts, and how quickly?	

Your SOAP gave you clarity on where you're going. Your KPIs will tell you whether you're getting there, and help you course-correct when you're not. Start with one initiative, build the habit, and expand from there. **We're here if you want to work through it together.**