HR TRENDS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2026

Checklist

Explore actionable steps to enhance your 2026 HR strategy.

1. Align people with organizational goals through skills-based job design

- [ ] Inventory your organization's current and incoming skills.
- [ ] Identify opportunities to match those skills with current business objectives.
- [ ] Determine where artificial intelligence (AI) can automate or reduce the effort of tasks to enable more strategic work.

2. Foster a culture of AI collaboration and augmentation

- [ ] Frame AI as a tool that enhances human work.
- [ ] Provide training on responsible AI use and collaboration.
- [ ] Focus on human connection and emotional intelligence alongside technical upskilling and reskilling.

3. Prioritize employee well-being through trust and empowerment

- [ ] Continually ask your people what makes them feel well and cared for. Respond accordingly.
- [ ] Offer robust benefits that support physical, mental and financial health.
- [ ] Lead by example, reinforcing a culture of trustworthiness, compassion and dependability.

4. Ensure responsible and compliant use of AI

- [ ] Audit all AI tools used in hiring and HR to facilitate explainability and fairness.
- [ ] Maintain human oversight of AI in employment decisions and in other areas where AI impacts people.
- [ ] Partner with human capital management (HCM) providers committed to responsible and ethical AI design and governance.

5. Embrace pay transparency to support fairness and equity

- [ ] Disclose salary ranges and benefits information in job postings and internal communications where required.
- [ ] Regularly audit and update pay ranges using market data and pay equity analysis.
- [ ] Train HR teams and managers on evolving pay transparency requirements.

6. Simplify multijurisdictional compliance through consistent standards

- [ ] Apply the most protective standards across all locations when feasible.
- [ ] Automate policy assignments and maintain a compliance calendar.
- [ ] Work with HR providers that offer robust compliance support and monitoring.

7. Prepare for the rise of agentic AI in HR and business processes

- [ ] Identify specific use cases where agentic AI can support business objectives, efficiency and decision making. Focus less on learning technical details. Focus more on driving business value.
- [ ] Establish governance frameworks that address data quality, privacy and security. Update existing frameworks if needed.
- [ ] Invest in system interconnectivity where feasible to enable seamless, secure data flow between agents.

8. Strengthen the strategic partnership between HR and IT

- [ ] Align with IT on shared goals for responsible AI adoption and data management. Prepare the organization for increased use of AI.
- [ ] Collaborate with IT to ensure AI tools enhance both efficiency and the employee experience.
- [ ] Upskill and reskill HR and IT teams, as needed, to navigate an increasingly interconnected, AI-powered workplace.

Your strategy for 2026 starts here.

For deeper guidance and insights, download the 2026 HR trends guide.

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