

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 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 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.](#)

ADP, the ADP logo and Always Designing for People are trademarks of ADP, Inc. All other marks are the property of their respective owners. Copyright © 2025 ADP, Inc. All rights reserved.

