



**Executive's
Guide to HR and
Payroll Software
for Small Teams**



Introduction

As an executive at a small organization, your people rely on you to not only set business goals and drive growth but also to build a place where they feel they belong and are motivated to reach the goals you set. Ensuring all of that happens — not just one part — is the key to success for small teams wanting to thrive in the modern marketplace.

Getting there starts with HR and payroll technology that makes day-to-day tasks consistent and automatic so you and your team can focus on building experiences that foster belonging, communicate a clear vision for the future, and support employees both inside and outside work. This creates the kind of standout environment that can help you attract and retain the top talent you need to reach your business goals.

This eBook provides actionable insights on the wide-ranging responsibilities of HR, the challenges of the typical HR workload, and the strategic value that comprehensive technology can deliver. We'll also explore the three must-haves for a strong HR and payroll solution and demonstrate how finding the right fit can drive both culture and operations with a single technology purchase. Finally, get practical resources you can use to diagnose your specific HR challenges and evaluate potential HR software vendors.



The HR workload

Although you've probably heard business cases for various solutions or tools from different parts of your organization, you may be surprised to learn that HR likely needs support they're not asking for. If you have dedicated HR resources, they may have just adapted to inadequate software or processes to keep the lights on. If not, and you have someone in another role such as office manager performing HR functions, they may not even know what to ask for. So if you want to put people-centric company standards in place to help you hang on to your best talent and thrive, you need to recognize the full scope of the workload HR is being asked to take on.



This awareness will help you understand the business value of the function and the technology that supports it. When the modern workforce looks at HR, especially in small business settings, they see experts in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; regulatory compliance; benefits; physical and mental wellbeing; payroll and financial wellness; career advising; and a host of other areas — so you must arm the person you trust in that role with everything they need to succeed across that spectrum.

HR administration

Back-office tasks most commonly associated with HR

These are the tasks most executives associate by default with HR: managing records, ensuring forms are submitted, monitoring regulatory compliance, administering benefits, and many more.

This is often where you can make targeted investments to free up time and give your HR teams more time to connect strategically to business initiatives.

Pay and time

Operational processes for paying employees, tracking hours, and paid time off (PTO)

HR is heavily involved even in these baseline operations, especially with small teams. Tapping into HR's expertise here can make a huge difference in making pay and time more competitive and unlocking new insights.

When you take the steps to automate core processes, you can shift your focus to taking action on deeper insights, such as calculating flight risk and fatigue to combat turnover.

Talent

Recruiting, onboarding, and retention

From an executive standpoint, all these efforts from HR translate into culture. Your talent strategy fuels and drives your employer brand.

This is the area where you need to harness your resources and all available data as strategically as possible because it will make a major difference in HR's impact on your business goals.

Giving HR the tools they need to manage these responsibilities will increase operational efficiency and engagement — but the benefits aren't limited to the team. HR professionals who are considered strategy experts are three times more likely to make it easy for leaders to tie people data to larger business goals.¹

Drive both culture and operations

The right HR and payroll technology provides advantages all across your organization that both build the sense of trust and belonging your people expect and deliver the kinds of operational efficiencies your more business-oriented stakeholders are looking to gain. To run a modern, competitive organization where people want to work, you can't think of people and work systems as mutually exclusive. To get there, you need an HR software partner that recognizes both business and people impacts and interaction points both inside and outside work. These are key moments in the employee experience, and they're critical to making your company stand out from the crowd so you can keep your top performers longer and attract the best new talent.

To the right, see how various milestones in the employee experience can impact both your culture and your business operations.

84%

of employees who believe their employers care about their wellbeing report high job satisfaction.²



Key moments in the employee experience

1.

Choose a job

Yusuf browses open positions and finds one matching his skill set, and he applies through the same system.

2.

Choose benefits

Plans are summarized simply and clearly, enabling Yusuf to focus on his specific needs due to chronic illness.

3.

Manage my schedule

Yusuf — a night owl — sets his preferences for evening shifts.

4.

Get paid fairly

When an unexpected car repair disrupts his week, Yusuf can access his accrued wages before payday.

5.

Grow my family

After getting married and adopting a child, Yusuf easily adds new dependents to his HR profile.

6.

Grow my career

Yusuf is ready for a promotion, and he chronicles his goals alongside his training accomplishments.

7.

Become a caregiver

Because his mother requires full-time care and moves in with him and his family, Yusuf transitions to remote work.

8.

Support a team

Yusuf now manages a small team and guides them to internal training resources.

Select the right solution fast

You've got a lot on your plate, so you need to make a fast but well-informed decision on the HR software that aligns best with your organization's business goals and will scale as you grow and offer a good return on your technology investment. Here are three key areas of focus we've identified to help ensure you get what you need.

1



One experience

You need a solution that puts all your people information in a single database and presents it in ways that are easy to understand. This will ensure you can easily automate and transfer data across processes that depend on each other, like payroll and time, while enriching all your operational metrics with consistent processes. Your teams will know that all changes are reflected everywhere instead of questioning which version of the truth is correct.

Look for:

- Rules and calculations that automatically connect to one another, like overtime hours flowing into pay or certifications helping determine who's eligible for a shift
- Reports across multiple areas, like dashboards showing average hours, workforce composition, pay equity, and open headcount in one display
- Changes being applied everywhere at once
- An open platform that lets you integrate your other key tools and reference them in the same place you're managing people and operational processes
- End-to-end employee and manager self-service on any device

2



Clear guidance

Beyond serving up people data in one place, you need a solution that tells you why that data is important to your business and how you can help your people use it. The platform you choose should have built-in, automatic guidance and recommendations delivered proactively to ensure you have time to act before negative impacts on cost, risk, and employee experience occur. A solution built with AI technology automates and streamlines manual, time-consuming tasks such as recruitment, employee engagement, and payroll and benefits administration — resulting in higher productivity, time savings, and fewer errors.

Look for:

- Timely, proactive alerts on key areas like flight risk and employee fatigue that point you to contributing factors and options for action
- Flexible benchmarks that both consider what normal looks like for your organization and compare your results against those of similar companies
- Recommendations in the flow of day-to-day activities to streamline tasks and help people act with confidence
- Help analyzing your people's responses to understand their feelings objectively about key activities like hiring, survey evaluation, and performance so you can nurture positive experiences and keep a finger on the pulse of cultural standards

3



Partner for life

At a small business, neither you nor your HR/payroll managers have the bandwidth to figure out a new solution alone. Make sure your selected vendor will be a partner for life, committed to helping you succeed throughout every stage of implementation, training, and support. This should include best practices, user adoption techniques, and advice that will ensure long-term solution success and closely align with the needs of your growing business and your people.

Look for:

- A launch experience that starts you on the right foot with intuitive, collaborative tools; best practices from implementation experts; and an accelerated time-to-live that doesn't compromise on quality
- A clear transition plan from implementation to go-live with hands-on, tailored support and instruction as well as easy access to instructor-led or on-demand solution training
- A commitment to ongoing support and success efforts, including both proactive and rapid response support, continuous advisory services, trend-mapping exercises, and business reviews
- Anytime, anywhere access to a community of your peers who use the solution, and additional consulting and advisory services as needed
- An emphasis on engaging and empowering employees to help attract and retain top talent motivated to accelerate your organization's growth

Conclusion

Connecting people and business shouldn't be hard and shouldn't feel like another item among the many to-dos you're juggling. It should be a natural part of running your organization, woven into your goals, strategic direction, and day-to-day processes. Supporting your culture with the right technology is table stakes now — to keep growing and thriving, you need a true partner that is going to be in your corner with guidance and timely, actionable solutions.

UKG Ready®, our all-in-one HR, payroll, talent, and time solution for leaner teams, delivers purposeful HR tools through technology, support, and proprietary data that help you create a great place to work for all. Employees are empowered through a modern user experience that makes their day-to-day easier and more productive. And people processes are streamlined through deep, automated compliance and payroll functionality designed to scale and grow with you.

To learn more about how a partnership with UKG can deliver people and culture technology for your organization, check out our UKG Ready demo center.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Appendix

HR Software Worksheets for Small Business Leaders

Workload questions to ask HR

1. How much of your time is spent ensuring employees are paid correctly each pay cycle?

2. How much of your time is spent addressing employee PTO requests?

3. Do you have access to the pay and time data you need to make decisions about workforce trends and talent?

4. What can be done to reduce time to hire when filling an open position or replacing an employee?

Key employee experience moments

1. Can employees easily access all relevant new hire documents on day one?

2. Do you get any complaints about processes getting in the way of employees trying to complete simple HR tasks?

3. How complex is it for employees to make significant life event changes (moving out of state, getting married, adding a new dependent) in our HR platform?

4. How severely are HR operations disrupted by a last-minute PTO request that requires a shift be filled?

5. If an employee had to go from full-time on-site to full-time remote work overnight, how quickly is our technology able to adapt to help this transition?

Appendix

HR Software Worksheets for Small Business Leaders

Vendor evaluation checklist

One experience

- Data that is connected and pooled in one place for simple reporting
- Easy integration with third-party vendors and applications
- Self-service for managers and employees, including on mobile devices

Clear guidance

- Proactive analytics to inform talent decisions
- Industry/peer benchmarking
- Help with analyzing both raw metrics and response data to improve the employee experience
- AI technology to automate and streamline manual, time-consuming tasks

Partner for life

- Commitment to being a partner for life to help ensure the highest-level solution performance
- Accelerated time-to-live support
- Ongoing customer success initiatives, including advisory and consulting services
- Access to a peer community for best practices and expert insights

References:

- 1 Stephanie Overby, *7 Ways CIOs Can Curb Costs before Recession Hits*, CIO (August 2, 2022), found at <https://www.cio.com/article/193267/5-ways-cios-can-curb-costs-before-recession-hits.html>.
- 2 *Aflac WorkForces Report*. Accessed at <https://www.aflac.com/business/resources/aflac-workforces-report/default.aspx>.

About UKG

UKG is the workforce intelligence platform that puts workforce understanding to work. With the world's largest collection of workforce insights, and people-first AI, our ability to reveal unseen ways to build trust, amplify productivity, and empower talent, is unmatched. It's this expertise that equips every worker to deliver experiences that set their brand apart — because great organizations know their workforce is their competitive edge.



HR, Pay, & Workforce Management

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