

E-BOOK

# How to choose an HR system in 2021: The ultimate guide

*A guide to choosing HR technology for  
HR, IT, Finance and business leaders*



# Overview

## Who this guide is for

The world of work has never looked so different. With profound disruptions and unprecedented challenges to navigate, organisations are facing more pressure than ever to create a safe environment for their employees and to make sure they remain engaged, connected, and productive. As a result, technology is now even more mission-critical than ever before for organisations as they work to build agility and resilience.

However, the HR system of today has multiple users across the business. It's no longer just HR and People teams who benefit from HR software. Key stakeholders such as the c-suite, IT and Finance can all reap the rewards of an integrated HR cloud system. From business planning and scaling, to meeting compliance regulations; and from streamlining and automating manual processes, to enabling remote working and enhancing insights across the business—each department has a vested interest in choosing the right tech to meet your organisations' needs.

This guide is intended to help you find an HR system that meets your specific needs and requirements and supports your organisation's biggest asset—its workforce.

This guide is for you if you are an **HR or People leader**—CHRO, CPO, HRD, or equivalent; an **IT head**—CTO, CIO, or equivalent; a **finance leader**—Finance Director, CFO, or equivalent; or a business owner or **the CEO**. This is your chance to be a little bit selfish and make sure that your HR system investment does what you and your team needs it to do.

The guide is split into sections for each of these functions: there is a section for HR leaders; advice for IT heads; recommendations for finance leaders; and a section for CEOs. So, you can read the guide in full, from the beginning, or you can jump ahead to the section that is most relevant to you and your function. If you're a HR leader, the sections of this guide for other function leaders may help you when presenting the business case for HR technology to your peers – knowing what your CEO or CFO are looking for in a system can [help get that all important buy-in too](#).

Read on for the ultimate guide in choosing the perfect HR solution to meet your business needs and start delivering great employee experiences.



**HR and People leaders**



**IT leaders**



**Finance leaders**



**CEOs**

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# *Introduction*

## **The explosion of HR tech**

HR tech is hot property. Employers are spending \$483 per employee per year on HR technology<sup>1</sup>, and 75% of HR leaders say they are already using some form of HR tech. Of those, 67% are planning to invest in more<sup>2</sup>.

Company bosses are realising that technology is the key to business survival in this new world of work. The sudden, almost overnight, requirement for remote working has seen HR technology play a vital role as organisations scrambled to respond to the pandemic. In fact, 59% of c-suite and HR leaders say HR is even more focussed on digital transformation as a result of the crisis<sup>3</sup>, our '[HR in the moment: Changing expectations and perceptions of HR](#)' report reveals. Investing in HR technology has never been more mission critical.

What's more, HR technology is no longer solely the preserve of HR and People teams. Offering a range of functionality and features, an effective cloud HR and People system significantly benefits multiple parts of the business - from employees and managers, to the IT and Finance departments, as well as the c-suite, and of course the HR and People team.

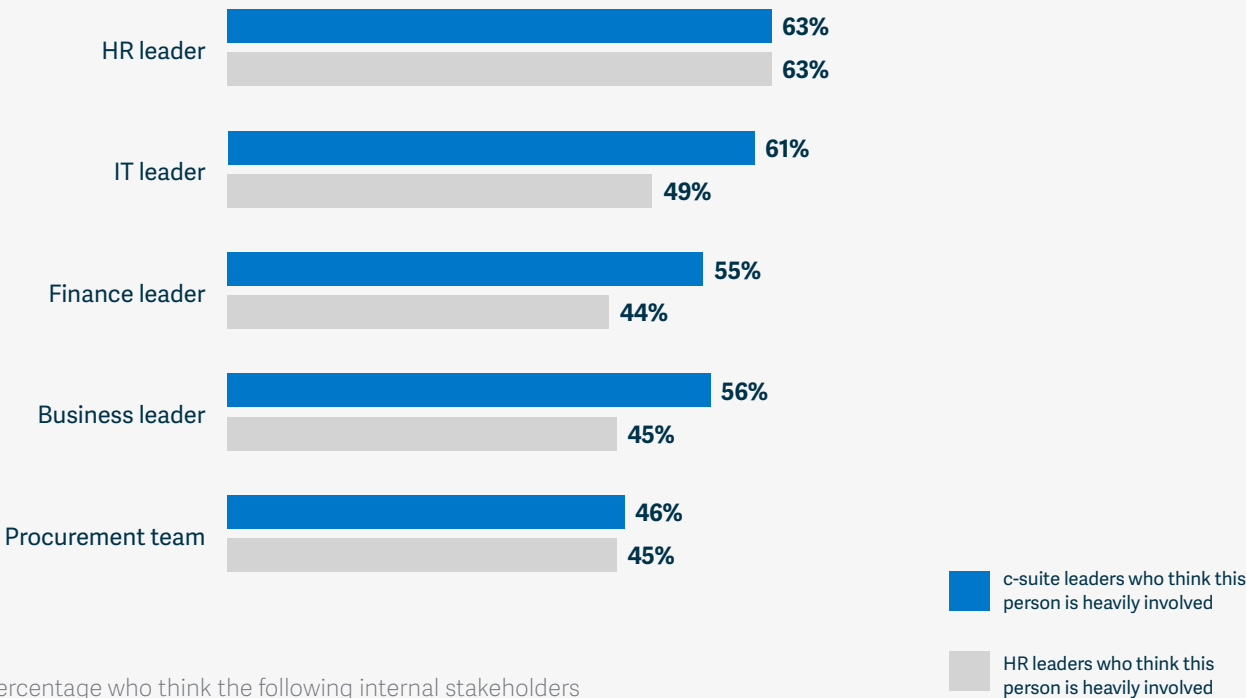




### Are leaders really working together to choose HR tech?

Our latest research report series, 'HR in the moment', found that, while there are multiple stakeholders involved in the procurement process, HR leaders are less likely to recognise their involvement. Given the impact HR tech can have, it's vital teams work together to make sure they're choosing the right HR tech for their organisation. HR and People leaders need to bring other internal stakeholders into the process early, and make them an integral part of choosing and buying HR technology.

#### HR leaders are less likely to recognise the involvement of other stakeholders



Percentage who think the following internal stakeholders are heavily involved in the buying of HR software<sup>4</sup>

### 36% of HR leaders see lack of investment as a barrier to digital transformation

Choosing and buying the right HR technology is vital for HR teams and organisations that want to get ahead in the new world of work.

A fully integrated, end-to-end HR and People system delivers the tools to transform the way your organisation manages and engages with your entire workforce. In practice, cloud and mobile enable organisations to manage and engage their workforce remotely. Automation and self-service empower employees to own their data and eliminates admin for HR teams, freeing up their time for more strategic initiatives. Actionable insights from people analytics means organisations are equipped to make business-decisions based on data quickly, so they can react to changing circumstances as and when they need to.

However, with over a third (36%)<sup>5</sup> of HR leaders seeing lack of investment from the company as a barrier to digital transformation and bringing their organisation into the new world of work, it's more important than ever to not get left behind.

Making the all important business case for HR technology investment, therefore, is vital. Download Sage's [10 step guide to building a compelling business case in HR](#).

# Recognising the signs

## When it's time to buy a new HR system

60% of HR leaders have experienced an increase in both admin and strategic tasks since the pandemic, and less than half (45%) feel they're fully equipped with the right tools<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, with a dramatic increase in remote working and businesses having to quickly shift and adapt to ever-changing priorities, HR data has never been more important for the whole c-suite to drive insight-based business decision-making. Often, it can take something like a merger or acquisition, or the arrival of a new business leader to be the final catalyst for much-needed change. But progressive people-focussed companies don't leave it that late, and want to get ahead now. Take a look at the pain points here - are there any that sound familiar? If you're nodding your head in recognition, then it's probably time to look at a new HR system.



### Disconnected workforce

No sense of belonging due to disparate systems, processes and policies, and no way of communicating effectively across the organisation. Almost **75% of HR leaders** wished they had capabilities that provided better support for workforce wellbeing before COVID-19's arrival.<sup>7</sup>



### Lack of workforce visibility

Unable to instantly see how many employees work in each location and their reporting structures. Employee records and other important data could also be spread across multiple and disparate systems, which is out of date and inaccurate. Just **33% of HR leaders** say they have a single system of record for their people data.<sup>8</sup>



### Difficulty managing your remote workforce

The shift to remote working has meant old ways of managing your people are no longer fit for purpose. **46% of HR leaders** report that organisational design and change management is a top priority for them in 2021.<sup>9</sup>



### Low employee engagement

Inability for workforce to self-serve and find key information when they need it. Just **36% of US employees** were actively engaged in 2020.<sup>10</sup>



### Wasted productivity

Time consuming manual data entry across multiple systems causing human error and duplicated effort. **44% of HR leaders** report that cloud technology has increased efficiency and productivity.<sup>11</sup>



### Struggling to stay on top of compliance rules

Manually staying up-to-date with latest employment laws and policies, as well as other rules such as GDPR, puts the company at risk of fines and litigation. **21% of records** compromised in data breaches in 2020 involved employee's personally identifiable information.<sup>12</sup>



### Admin burdened HR team

Repetitive, time consuming admin means HR aren't free to be strategic and people-facing, and ultimately, looking after the company's biggest asset-your employees. **57% of the c-suite** see HR as largely an administrative function, despite expecting HR teams to pick up more strategic work.<sup>13</sup>



### Slow to react

Unable to respond quickly and make informed decisions as HR data isn't up-to-date. Only **38% of HR leaders** say their data is instantly accessible in real time.<sup>14</sup>

# Compelling cost savings

## Return on investment

As with any investment, evaluating the ROI of software is a crucial factor in the buying decision. A trusted, established HR technology provider with a strong customer focus should be able to demonstrate a clear quantifiable ROI for your business when investing in their system.

Financial success metrics to look out for include:

- Total cost of ownership e.g. support, training, licenses
- Return on investment (ROI) e.g. increased workforce productivity and retention, reduced costs
- Net present value e.g. resource savings in time spent on tasks such as admin, reporting, recruitment and people management
- Time to value
- Competitive advantage

The metrics will always speak for themselves and are an invaluable tool in helping you choose the right HR technology for your organisation. For example, Sage People's ROI has been proven through independent assessment by Forrester Research, whose composite organisation Acme based on 1,000 employees illustrated the quantifiable benefits and costs of investing in Sage People's global cloud HR system.

Discover the full ROI savings Sage People can deliver to your business by downloading our independent [Economic Impact Study](#).

### Return on investment in numbers<sup>15</sup>



**90% ROI**  
over three years



**33%**  
reduction in time  
spent on recruitment



**18%**  
reduction in HR admin

# Meet the four key buyers

## Choosing the right HR technology



### HR and People leaders

#### Job role

CPO, HRD, CHRO or equivalent

HR leaders have evolved to focus less on admin and more on the company's best asset—its people. People management functionalities are vital, but tools to truly create great workforce experiences are even more important.

#### Tech need

To streamline and automate manual processes to reduce the burden of HR admin, freeing up your team's time to be more people-focussed and strategic. To enable flexible remote working across the company, and gain visibility of your entire workforce with actionable data driven insights.



### IT leaders

#### Job role

CTO, CIO, IT Director or equivalent

Leading and managing the service provision of all IT systems across the business, IT leaders' focus is on managing security risks, setting the organisation's technology roadmap and digital strategy, and ensuring the company has the right tech to serve the business requirements.

#### Tech need

To cut costs, improve security, bolster privacy, reduce the number of suppliers and systems, and simplify IT complexity. Focus on ensuring systems work well together. 61% of the c-suite say IT leaders are heavily involved in the buying of HR software to meet these needs.<sup>16</sup>



### Finance leaders

#### Job role

Finance Director or CFO

Responsible for managing the financial and commercial success of the business, as well as playing a central role in shaping, implementing, and executing the company's strategy.

#### Tech need

To achieve cost savings, increase productivity, maintain compliance, improve risk management, and enhance visibility and insights across the organisation. Ensuring the organisation can meet its business objectives is also paramount. 55% of the c-suite say finance leaders are heavily involved in the buying process of HR software as a result.<sup>17</sup>



### CEOs

#### Job role

Head of the organisation, decision-maker

Responsible for the growth of the business, its strategic direction and ensuring the organisation is successful. What is important to the CEO, becomes the focus of any organisation – whether it's efficiency, your people, gaining a competitive advantage or all of the above.

#### Tech need

A future-proof investment that drives outcomes and performance, ultimately and tangibly contributing to business success. 56% of c-suite say CEOs are heavily involved in the buying process of HR software to meet the needs of the organisation.<sup>18</sup>





# HR and People leaders

## What HR leaders want in an HR system

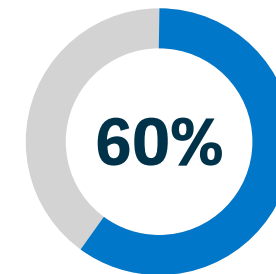
Recent events have shifted the HR landscape and agenda. And that's probably an understatement. The pandemic saw HR and People teams become more influential, with the c-suite relying on them to lead the charge to adapt and support the organisation to succeed throughout this new challenging environment, [our research](#) found.

Acting as an unforeseen catalyst for change, 72% of HR leaders say the crisis has helped them demonstrate their value; and 57% of c-suite executives now see HR as equal leadership partners in the organisation, according to our ['HR in the moment: Changing perceptions and expectations of HR' research](#).

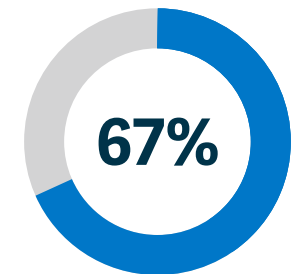
However, embracing HR's new found ownable space has come at the expense of a bigger workload, with 60% of HR leaders experiencing an increase in both administrative and strategic tasks. HR's remit was already vast before the pandemic and now, previous challenges have been bolstered up the chain of importance, to join new pressing priorities, such as delivering great remote working experiences and ensuring an effective employee communication strategy.

To meet the additional demands of this uncertain future, HR and People leaders must strive to find newer, more agile ways of managing their people. Making sure the workforce can flex and align to shifting priorities is essential, along with new ways of working and adapting to the 'new normal' with minimal friction and further disruption.

The right technology is key to supporting HR's new agenda, and 94% of c-suite and HR leaders say digital transformation was already important before COVID-19, with 67% of HR leaders telling us they want to invest more in HR tech.



of HR leaders have experienced an increase in both admin and strategic tasks since the pandemic hit<sup>19</sup>



of HR leaders want to invest more in HR technology and digital transformation<sup>20</sup>

## Deliver amazing workforce experiences

You need to keep your workforce connected, engaged, informed, and aligned. Maintaining employee engagement and productivity levels – let alone boosting them – is a challenge in the current remote working environment. But what if you could deliver a new kind of employee experience for today's world through self-service tools, strong two-way communications, and effective performance management and recognition tools?

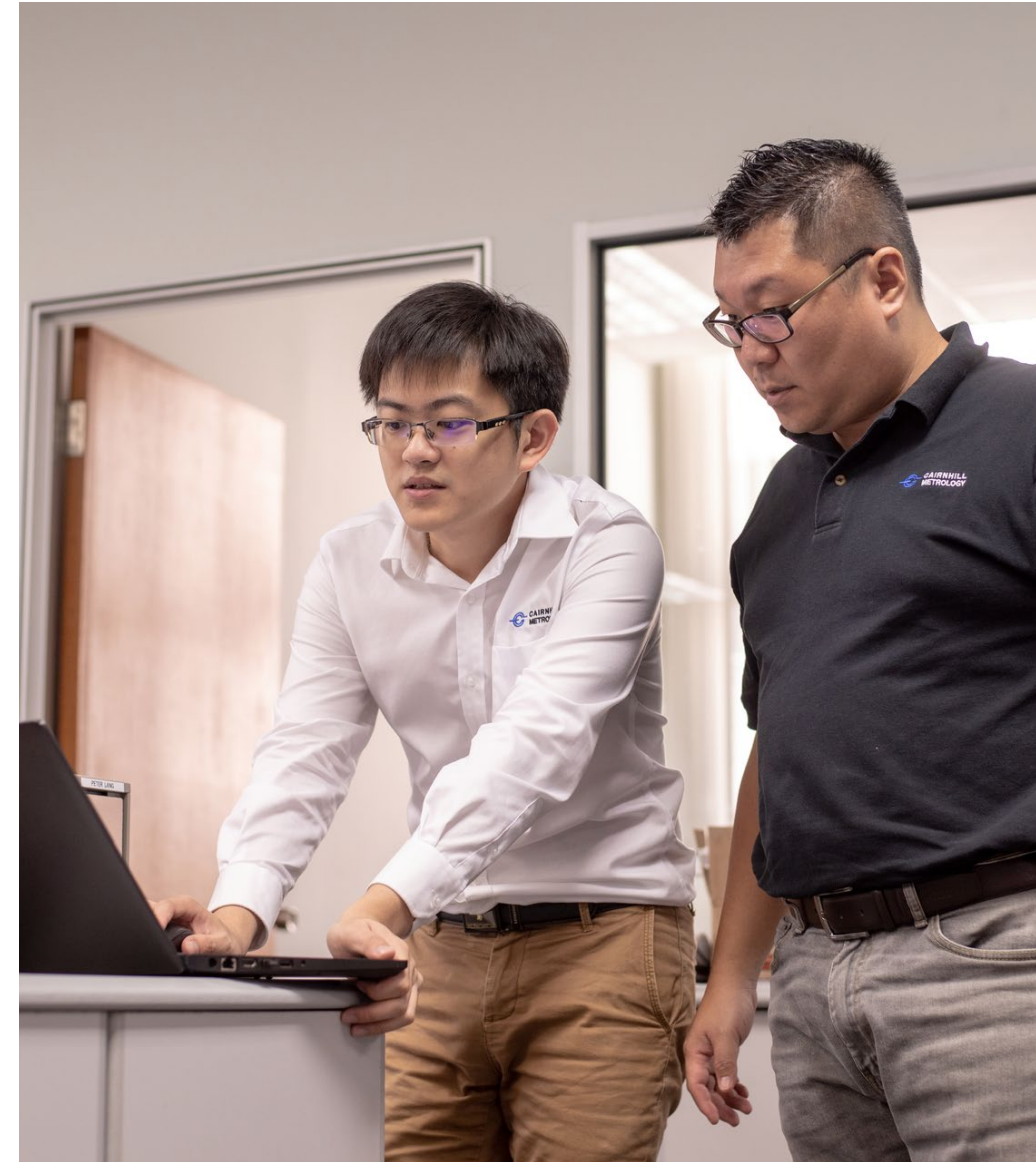
Look for HR systems that allow employees to view and amend personal data, make requests for leave, and access company information through an employee self-service portal. With a people management system that puts employee experience front and centre, you can find and hire quality talent faster and reduce attrition rates. You also need an HR system with flexible pulse surveys, continuous conversation tools and data driven insights to help you understand employee sentiment in real time.

## Achieve complete workforce visibility

Relying on spreadsheets or having multiple disparate systems and processes means it can take weeks to get an accurate view of the workforce, which is then immediately out of date and inconsistent. Now more than ever, HR and People leaders must be able to understand and report on what's happening across the workforce with confidence, and as quickly as the c-suite require the information.

Gain control and visibility of your entire organisation from one, secure global cloud HR platform. Get up-to-the-minute, reliable data with built-in People analytics to make informed, data driven decisions as the business grows.

Look for a system that gives you highly configurable reports and dashboards on demand, that are visually appealing and ready to share with the c-suite. You also want a system that lets you gather feedback using surveys and polls, so you always know what's happening.



## Tech that benefits everyone

The right cloud HR solution should benefit everyone in the organisation. So as HR and People leaders, your solution should help you drive widespread user adoption; something that delivers a similar user experience to the apps and tech that your workers use at home and outside of work. It needs to be user-friendly and easy to get up and running with. Equally, as HR and People leaders, you don't want to have to spend hours understanding how the system works, and then more hours training everyone on it. That said, you do want a system that has strong customer support and offers virtual on-line help and training.

## Boost business resilience with flexibility

Finding more agile ways to work is a key priority for companies wanting to survive and thrive in this new landscape of business. Your HR system should allow employees to work flexibly and remotely, and stay digitally connected to the entire organisation, wherever they are logging in from.

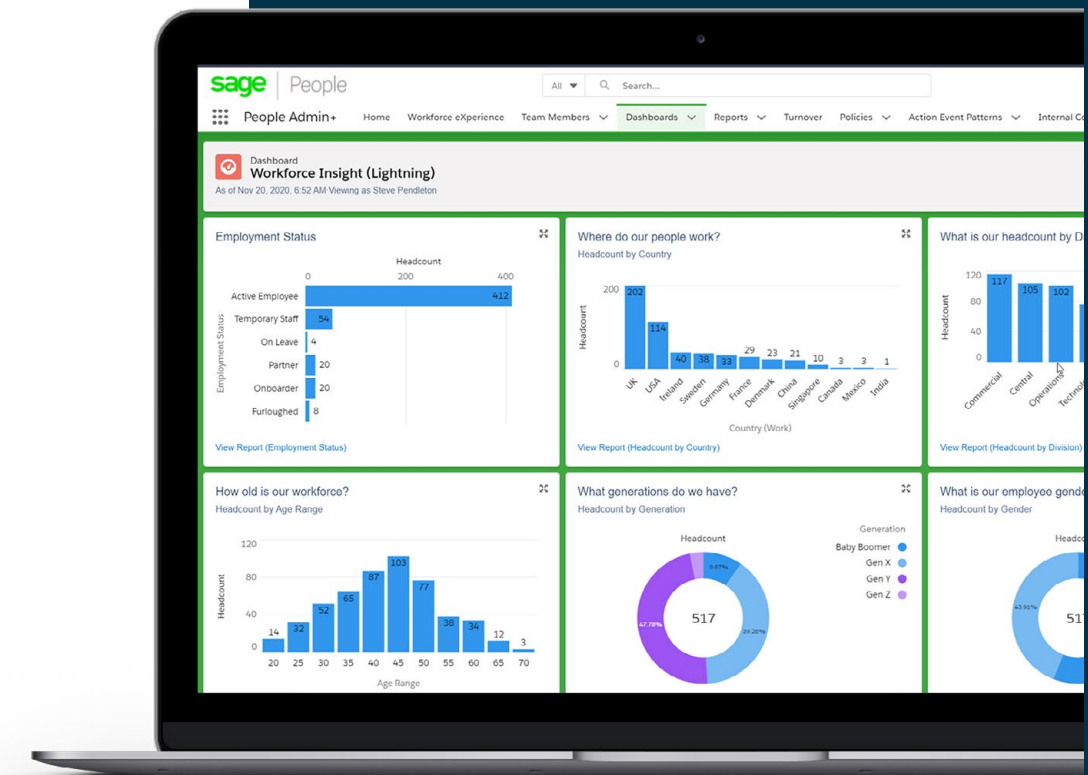
A cloud HR solution will allow you to drive resilience by responding to shifting priorities faster with instant people insights to inform decisions, two-way communications, and flexible goal setting. As the gatekeepers and master users of the system, HR will be administering the software, so look for a user-friendly, intuitive system.

You'll want a highly flexible system that will allow you to easily configure workflows, create custom fields, and tailor reports, communications, branding and more, all managed by you through clicks, not code. You don't want to have to keep asking IT every time you want to make a change.

## Increase workforce and HR productivity

With your bigger remit and new more pressing priorities, choosing HR technology that can streamline processes and improve ways of working—both for you and your employees—is an essential. A cloud system liberates HR teams from time consuming admin and paperwork, enabling you to concentrate on building greater workforce experiences for your people, whilst supporting HR teams with automatic system and compliance updates.

The right HR system will enable you to consolidate all your people data into one, single version of the truth to manage your global workforce more effectively. Look for tech with automated onboarding and talent acquisition capabilities to speed up the recruitment process; effective time tracking across the entire workforce to help you easily monitor productivity; and smart performance management that supports managers to have continuous conversations with their direct reports.





# HR buyer's checklist

**Employee self-service** enables your workforce to easily and flexibly submit requests and manage their own data 24/7 from any device, including mobile, such as timesheets, absence requests, salary information and employee profiles.

**Performance and talent management** allows you to deliver continuous conversations, pulse surveys, 360 feedback, instant peer recognition and standardised performance metrics.

**Workforce experience portal with your company's branding** keeps your employees better informed, with one hub for employees to access company content, communications, videos, social updates, policies and more.

**One global cloud automated system of record** provides a complete picture of your entire workforce in a moment's notice.

**Data visualisation** tools enable rapid identification of trends using charts, tables, and other graphics.

**Customisable dashboards** give management a clear view of performance across the business, as well as tailored dashboards created by role and function, to only show relevant metrics.

**A system that automates core HR processes**, freeing up time for the things that matter.

**Provide flexible and mobile workstyles**, such as remote working and alternative contracts, and easily transition employees between business segments or locations, ensuring employees can access the system anywhere, any time.

**Easily configurable workflows** allow you to effortlessly make changes and adjust the system to suit your business needs as you grow – without the need for IT's input.

**Multicurrency and multilingual support**, with out-of-the-box languages to support employees across the globe.

**Automated hiring and onboarding process** to streamline the creation and approval of new requisitions, with electronic signatures and automated reminders.

**Dynamic org charts** that seamlessly update as people join, making it simple to find colleagues, see reporting lines and access contact information.

**Tailored surveys and polls** to continually gather feedback across all stages of the employment journey.

**Tools for continuous conversations** enable managers and reports to provide feedback and act iteratively throughout the employee life cycle - not just at annual reviews.



## *IT leaders*

# Tips for IT leaders

The companies of tomorrow are investing in new technologies, big data, and digitisation today. The pace of change is fast, and organisations expect their IT leaders to be masters of transformation, to future proof the business and keep it secure.

Data protection and security are always major concerns when considering a cloud HR solution—especially when it comes to your company’s sensitive HR data. IT leaders will be looking for the most secure systems to protect the business and its reputation.

Whether you’re a CTO or CIO, you have responsibility for digital transformation across the business, collaborating with other departments to drive digital change. At its core, IT is pretty well aligned with HR when it comes to top level goals—both want to drive innovation and increase productivity.

However, there are specific factors IT leaders will want to consider when choosing the right HR software for the business. You will definitely want an HR system that the HR and People team can easily control, configure, and manage themselves. As the technology gatekeepers for the business, you are likely already managing multiple systems for multiple departments, so choosing an HR system that requires minimal intervention and support from the IT team will be crucial.

Another consideration is maximum uptime. You want a secure system that is always available and easily accessible from any device, to support remote working.

Finally, for ease and simplicity you really want to work with just the one HR platform from one vendor. A single, global platform that easily integrates with your other core systems is going to save you time and energy and create efficiencies across the business.

“Sage People has helped refine our auditing process which means the auditors - and now our customers - are fully reassured that we manage our data, our security and our people to the highest possible standards.”

Geoff Hughes, HR Director,  
Enigma Industrial Services



## Reliable security and regulatory compliance

Powerful HR software with unparalleled security and privacy, accessible from any internet-connected device, will give you total peace of mind. You want it to be built and hosted on a secure and trusted platform to give you the confidence that your employee data is in the safest of hands. You need a robust HR system that follows industry-leading operational, physical, network, hosting, and database security best practices.

Look for a cloud solution with a fail-safe disaster recovery plan as standard. Sage People's data, for example, is replicated in real-time to a 100% full-scale replica disaster recovery data centre, and then backed up to primary and secondary disaster recovery data centres.

Additional layers of security should also be on your checklist, such as all connections protected with Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (version 1.2 or higher) to prevent data being intercepted or hacked.

## Strong and ongoing customer support model

Investing in a global cloud HR system is a big undertaking for any business. That's why vendor support and customer community is an important aspect in the buying decision. Choose a vendor that establishes an ongoing relationship with its customers and supports you throughout your technology journey. A great HR systems provider will be committed to providing exceptional customer support by sharing the latest HR tech insights, knowledge, and resources to make sure you get the most out of your HR and People system.

Online support via a helpdesk and virtual training is something you would expect from any decent cloud provider, but does your vendor of choice have an established customer community? Look for an online users hub where customers can access helpful resources and support each other.

Find an HR and People system with a dedicated customer success team, who are on hand to support and find out what success means for your business, for as long as you are a customer. Having a customer support team on hand to support the HR team will take away a lot of the queries that traditionally might go to the IT team to triage.

## Security and support considerations



# TLS encryption 1.2+

Connections should be protected with TLS encryption version 1.2 or higher



# Online Hub

Find a system with access to helpful resources and support



## Powerful integration and flexibility

Ultimately, as IT leaders you want to simplify software management. You need a cloud HR solution that integrates with your existing systems and third-party applications efficiently and securely.

Compensation and benefits are critical for retaining and motivating your workforce, and attracting top talent. Look for cloud technology that provides you with a single system of record to effectively manage remuneration packages, with seamless integrations to payroll and benefits carriers, as well as other third-party providers. You also want a system that has the flex to grow and scale with you as your business and workforce grows, and can be easily adapted in-house to suit your future requirements.

## Readily available and real-time data

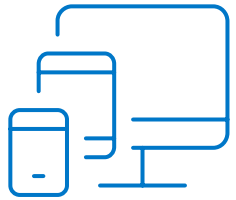
You want a secure, reliable and robust system to ensure maximum uptime, and no loss of productivity. To replicate a similar user experience to your employees' at-home tech use, you need a centralised HR and People system which is 'always on', so employees can access information at any time, from any device, anywhere.

Hosted in the cloud, your people data is stored and collated in one central 'always on' hub which means your data is always up-the-minute, giving the business a single source of truth.

**“What we really like about Sage People is its configurability and flexibility. We have people in different geographies, different business units with different needs and processes, and Sage People’s platform allows us to configure functionality according to each employee or contractor profile whilst providing a consistent experience across the global workforce.”**

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Stacie Alexander, Senior Director, Human Resources, Worldwide Clinical Trials



# IT buyer's checklist

**Strong data recovery protocols**, with data being backed up in real-time to primary and secondary disaster recovery data centres.

**Multi-factor authentication** to restrict when and from where users can access the system, providing another layer of protection.

**Sophisticated permissions and profiles** to ensure sensitive HR data is accessible only to those who should have access.

**Built-in compliance** with current and future standards, such as GDPR and ISO 27001, that's updated regularly to help you mitigate risk and remain compliant.

**Online customer portal** offering self-service access to how-to videos, support guides, case management reports, release notes, and product experts.

**Dedicated customer success manager** to work with you to continually review your tailored success plan to help achieve your goals.

**Ability to raise, view and track the status** of your support cases as well as access up to date resources from a single point of log-in.

**Peer to peer community hub** for customers to share knowledge and inspire one another with tips, resources and chat groups to ask product related questions and offer advice.

**Powerful built-in integration** to connect to other systems via multiple means, such as programmable interfaces, file transfer, synchronisation, embedding or linking.

**Accurate payroll integration** that's secure, highly configurable, and seamlessly passes salary and benefits data to one or more payroll systems.

**Intuitive, configurable design** that empowers core users, such as HR, to self-manage the system, minimising the input required from IT.

**Flexible workflows** that give local teams the flexibility to meet local legislative requirements and are easy to adapt to evolving regulations.

**Robust and secure infrastructure** giving you peace of mind that your organisation's data is secure and 'always on' with high up-time rates.

**A core centralised HR system** with a full suite of HR and People functions, meaning you only deal with one system and one vendor.

**One global system of record** that pulls all your people data and HR policies into a secure hub that everyone can trust.

**Built-in compliance** with security standards like GDPR, Privacy Shield, ISO 27001, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and more.



## *Finance leaders* **What finance leaders should look for**

As CFOs and Finance Directors, COVID-19 has transitioned you from an explainer of the past to a foreseer of the future, pivoting and adapting the business plan to meet the challenges of the 'new normal'.

Your top priority is still to put in place best practice systems, processes and controls that are proportionate to the needs of the business, and deliver the information the leadership team needs to make informed decisions. However, the pandemic has accelerated the need for you to embrace new technology and introduce flexible working and smart data.

The finance department is the heart of a growing thirst for information across the whole of the company. Having up-to-date People data, readily available and easily accessible gives you confidence in your numbers and helps control labour costs.

The right HR system can support the business by providing instant access to reliable workforce insights through People analytics, helping the business make informed decisions and react to changing circumstances as and when they're taking place, rather than after the event. When it comes to choosing the right HR software, there are four key things Finance leaders should want an HR system to offer.







## Actionable insights

Organisations struggle to make quick, informed business decisions in real time, due to a lack of data and actionable insights. This impacts their ability to respond to change and flex to new priorities quickly, especially during times of rapid change and uncertainty.

The real game-changer with a cloud HR system for finance leaders, is the ability to drill down into the numbers at the touch of a button. Investing in a cloud HR system with built-in People analytics will help you spot trends such as attrition rates, understand the time it takes to hire and cost to hire, and measure performance and productivity metrics. People analytics puts you ahead of the curve to best control your people costs.

With the right cloud HR system, you can get a clear view of what's going on across your workforce in real time through comprehensive HR and People analytics, employee survey feedback and by capturing continuous conversations.

Ultimately you want an HR system that lets you report on your global workforce with up to the minute, accurate data and adapt for local insights when needed.

## Increased productivity

A key driver for investing in a modern global cloud HR system is the high level of automation that it can deliver, simplifying processes and improving productivity across the business.

For your HR and People team, the right software will streamline processes and improve ways of working to free HR from repetitive, time consuming admin. Sage People is proven to reduce HR admin by 40%<sup>21</sup>, enabling HR leaders to be more strategic and people-focussed. Areas such as employee self-service, automated job posting and screening, and smart performance management are key tools to look for.

You can also increase the productivity of your workforce through intelligent automation and self-service, and improve collaboration across teams with better team tools and colleague visibility. The right cloud HR system will accelerate digital transformation across your business by automating processes and connecting the workforce digitally.

**55% of the c-suite say finance leaders are heavily involved in the buying process of HR software.<sup>22</sup>**



### HR and payroll compliance

One of the many roles of an HR professional is to ensure the company is compliant with employment, labour and tax rules. With laws and regulations constantly changing, this is a never-ending challenge for HR and Payroll teams.

A global cloud HR system helps avoid costly fines and litigation by standardising and consolidating your HR and People data into a single global instance for accurate compliance reporting. What's more, it allows HR and People teams to enforce and manage global policies with ease, while giving you the flexibility to allow for local variations in legislation and regulation.

An HR system that can seamlessly integrate with your third-party payroll software will take the hassle out of managing the complexities of pay, such as furlough, for your payroll manager.

### Total cost of ownership

Assessing the cost of a global cloud HR system is a vital part of the buying process. But gaining a true understanding of the total cost of ownership is critical in making your buying decision.

There are other costs associated with the lifetime of using the solution besides the licenses – such as support, implementation and training – that also play into the total cost of ownership. Take a close look at exactly what is included in the implementation. Does it cover all of the integrations needed? When it comes to your customer success manager, is there a limit to how often you can engage with them? Is eLearning complimentary or an additional charge? Taking a careful look at all these nuances, plays a vital role to understanding the true cost of your investment.

**“When we looked at the business case, the benefits of getting rid of our disparate systems and having the one system from Sage People added up. From a support and integration perspective, we have just one supplier, one system to support, and one user experience.”**

Jane Edison, Program Manager, Channel 4

### Compliance and ownership considerations



## Cloud HR

Manage global policies with the flexibility to allow for local variations



## The true cost

Consider other costs associated with the solution besides the licenses



# Finance buyer's checklist

**Real-time People analytics** enabling consolidated global reporting to give you actionable insights across your entire workforce.

**Data visualisation tools** to enable rapid identification of trends using charts, tables, and other graphics, as well as creating beautiful reports that are easy to share with the rest of the business.

**One click refresh** to let you view pre-built global reports and dashboards in real-time on-demand.

**Alleviated administrative burden** on HR so they can spend more time making strategic decisions and developing the company culture.

**Sophisticated permissions and profiles** to ensure sensitive HR data is visible to only those who need it.

**A system that benefits the whole company, not just HR.** Look for sophisticated analytics capabilities that can be linked to business goals and financial performance, to driven insight-led actionable decision-making across the whole organisation.

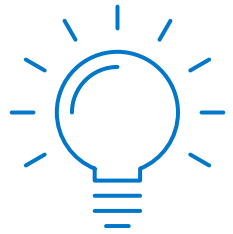
**Efficient compensation management** to manage, record and allocate salary, HR guidelines and manager recommendations; and autogenerate compensation communications.

**Secure and integrated payroll** to seamlessly pass salary and benefits data to one or more payroll systems.

**Understand what level of support** you will need from an implementation perspective – factor that into the cost.

**Work out your training requirements** – number of staff and on which product areas.

**Consider the number of licenses** needed to get the most value for money.



# CEOs

## What CEOs look for

The pandemic has forced an abrupt shake up of how employees work, how customers behave, how supply chains function and ultimately, what business success looks like in this new landscape.

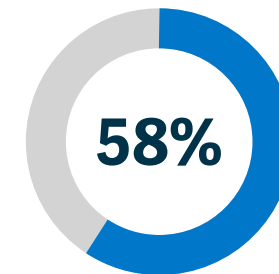
As the person at the helm, you're facing more pressure than ever to create a safe environment for your employees and to make sure they remain engaged, connected, and productive, all while trying to drive the organisation to be agile, resilient, and still growing.

HR has played a vital role in leading this transformation, and you're recognising that. In fact, 58% of c-suite executives told us they have developed more knowledge of, and appreciation for, HR during the pandemic; and 57% of the c-suite strongly believe HR are equal leadership partners within the organisation. This is welcome news for HR and People leaders looking to accelerate digital transformation across the business, as they need the right tools for the job. Ultimately, however, often the final sign off on the purchase decision for an HR system rests with you.

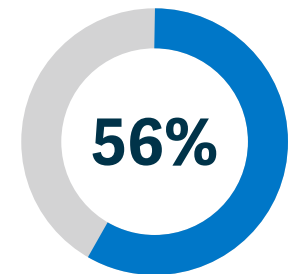
As with any investment, you will expect a future proof investment that drives outcomes and operational performance and has clear ROI. You will want an HR system that provides actionable insights, builds great experiences for your people, and makes the business nimble and responsive.

As CEO, you'll also want technology that enables HR to become more strategic so they can advise you on what is going on across your entire workforce, and total transparency of your global workforce through one centralised system will no doubt be music to your ears.

For many of our customers, we find that it is just as much the CEO driving a focus on people as HR – and sometimes more. Progressive people-focussed companies are led by business leaders who know that, more than anything, your people are one of your most important assets. As a result, CEOs are often also looking for a system that reflects the culture and values of an organisation – and empowers them to build on that culture and those values even further.



of c-suite executives  
have developed more  
appreciation for HR  
during the pandemic<sup>23</sup>



of c-suite say CEOs  
are heavily involved in  
the buying process of  
HR software<sup>24</sup>

## Investing in your people for competitive advantage

Your people are your biggest asset. So investing in the best people software out there to help your HR and People team deliver a people strategy that's aligned with your organisation's business goals is a smart move. A system that helps attract and retain the best talent by giving your employees the same digital experience they receive at home with their consumer tech is also savvy.

Your chosen HR system should support flexible and remote working by ensuring employees are always connected, able to self-serve, and have real-time data at their fingertips.

A core cloud HR system will have employees at its heart, with features such as branded workforce experience hubs, continuous feedback, colleague recognition and self-service tools for employees to manage their own people data.

Your system should have built-in tools to improve employee engagement, boost performance, and build great workforce experiences, wherever your employees are.

## Data-driven decision making

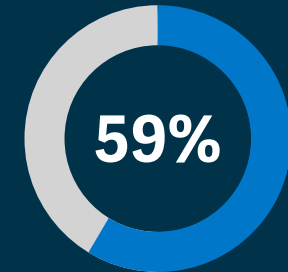
Are you getting the leading metrics you need to make the right decisions for your organisation? 59% of HR leaders say they're unable to spot trends that help make future related decisions, with a third (32%) unable to make any data driven recommendations at all.

Yet, analysing and turning data into actionable insights is key for thriving in this new world of work.

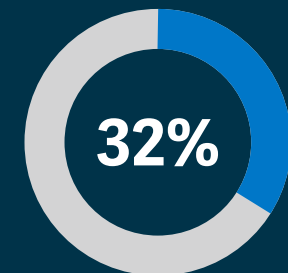
The right cloud HR system will enable you to make reliable, data driven decisions quickly and easily with a complete and instant view of your workforce, and provide senior management with comprehensive and tailored insights they can rely on.

A centralised approach to collecting, reporting, and analysing people data helps align HR with the business needs. It also gives you instant visibility into your organisation's overall health, so you can track and spot trends before issues arise.

## Key decision making in numbers



of HR leaders are unable to spot trends that make future people-related decisions<sup>25</sup>



of HR leaders can't make any data driven recommendations at all<sup>26</sup>

## Creating a more resilient workforce

CEOs around the world are looking to revive and build a stronger, more resilient business that meets the new demands of the future. Ensure your organisation is resilient, adaptive and can change quickly, with an always on, reliable cloud HR and People system that lets your organisation access its People data from anywhere at any time whilst remaining highly secure.

Your technology should enable your workforce to be agile and responsive, as well as responding to shifting priorities faster with instant people insights to inform decisions. Look for built-in People metrics that can help prepare managers by providing insights into which teams might be a flight risk, what areas of the business need a succession plan and what the current total time to hire is.

You also want software that is designed for flexibility to evolve with your business, so that your HR team and other core users can make immediate changes to the system without needing the assistance of IT or the software provider.

## Building company culture and values

The pandemic has disrupted everything on the HR agenda and created a rapid pace for change. It has accelerated certain business priorities up the chain, pushed others down, and created entirely new priorities too. Yet building and maintaining your company culture and values remains as important as ever.

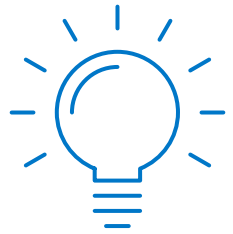
Company culture is the secret sauce that defines the flavour of the business and builds loyalty and trust. It is a vital ingredient for creating great employee experiences. The right HR system can bring your culture to life with company branding throughout the system for a more meaningful experience – and extend this to multiple brands where applicable.

Your technology should enable you to send tailored communications and empower your teams to self-serve wherever they are. Develop and coach your people with flexible performance management, and ensure you're continually striving to enhance their experiences by capturing regular feedback through two-way conversations and pulse surveys.

Reward and recognition is a big part of company culture and values. Effective reward planning should be flexible so that recognising and rewarding employees can be set up to align with the organisational goals and contribute to a thriving company culture.







# CEO buyer's checklist

**Workforce experience portal** to build your culture and give employees access to all of your content, communications, videos, social updates, policies and more.

**One global system of record** to have a complete picture of your entire workforce at your fingertips.

**Intelligent performance management** with continuous performance conversations, 360 feedback and instant peer or colleague recognition.

**Employee self-service** enabling 24/7 remote access for employees to manage their own data, as well as digitally submit and track leave requests, expenses, and salary information.

**Succession plan in real-time** with an accurate and up to date view of multiple successors, level of readiness and supporting development plans, along with peer recognition to call out great work.

**Up-to-the-minute insights** to plan hiring, analyse attrition, manage absence trends and more.

**Personalised dashboards** for different leaders and functions, so they're instantly updated on matters that are relevant to their role.

**Customised diagnostic insights** to establish trends and identify potential problems before they occur.

**Monitoring of metrics and KPIs** for your entire leadership team in tailored views, by role and function.

**Visible skills and competencies** across multiple locations - important for upscaling, global expansion and succession planning.

**Highly flexible** system that can evolve with the changing needs of your people and business.

**Centralised global system** that pulls all your people data and HR policies into one secure hub that everyone can trust and access remotely.

**Tailored communications and pulse surveys** to take the temperature of how your workforce is doing and to pivot when it makes sense.

**Automated alerts** to stay one step ahead by notifying managers of exceptions or conditional circumstances, such as high absence levels.

**Easily plan and reward** consistent, compliant salary increases and bonus amounts for the entire global workforce.

**Design better ways of working** using pulse surveys and the ability to change or create processes quickly and easily.

**Raise employee engagement** with a branded user experience, including multi-entity branding.

**Straight to mobile communication** lets you send information to employees on any device they are using, and instantly connect with team members using the built-in directory.

## Conclusion

# Realising the true benefits of HR technology on your business strategy

Companies are undergoing a major reset as they take stock and respond to the effects of recent disruption. It's no longer enough to be responsive and effective; the key for business survival is to transform the business model to one of resilience and adaptability.

HR, IT, Finance, CEOs, and other departments must collabourate and find new ways of working that will create strong foundations long into the future. Cloud-based HR technology enables openness and collabouration across the organisation in new and innovative ways, driving agility, boosting productivity and most importantly increasing employee engagement.

When choosing the right HR system to fit your business, it's important that the needs of IT, Finance, the c-suite and your core employees are all considered, along with HR. Your chosen system will have multiple touch points across every aspect of your organisation and understanding what your key stakeholders and users want and need from the system will pay dividends in the long run.

Whether you are an HR and People leader, an IT boss, a Finance head, or a CEO, you now know what you need and what to look for when choosing the perfect cloud HR solution for your business. You have your own buyer's checklists of what to look for to unlock your core needs; along with our handy cheat sheet to download and use when comparing different software.

It's worth remembering that whilst HR and People leaders are always going to be the master users and beneficiaries of the system, the CFO and CEO are often the ultimate decision makers, as they hold the purse strings. They will want to ensure they are making a sound investment and will be guided by the IT leader's views too. Building a strong business case that addresses their requirements is critical to obtaining buy in and investment. Our 10-step guide for building a compelling business case for HR tech sets out more detail on this and is free to download.

Are you ready to take the next step in your HR to People journey and get ahead of the competition today? [Download the business case guide](#) and start comparing vendors right now.

Or, if you'd like to discuss any of these topics further with an experienced HR technology expert, then our team are ready to support. Get in touch by scheduling a [demo](#) call today to get started.



Take the next steps in your HR technology buying journey and download our eBook **10 ways to make a compelling business case for a global HR solution.**

# Buying an HR system: Why choose Sage People?

Organisations around the world are investing in their people and solving business challenges, thanks to Sage People.



*"I don't think there's another product on the market that could do for us what Sage People has done. Some systems are great at payroll, or performance management or benefits, but they don't have the holistic view of the employees' experience that I get from using Sage People."*

**Christine Sheedy,**  
Head of HR,  
**GAIN Capital**

*"Sage People has helped us with the visibility of our employee data and it's created a single source of truth. We're confident that our data is up-to-date and accurate."*

**Eleanor Simmons,**  
HR Business Partner,  
**CRU**

*"The platform has become a piece of our everyday life to develop strategies to hire, grow and nurture talent, for the future of our business."*

**Patricia Provot,**  
President,  
**Armstrong International US**

*"We needed to find a better way of operating – using a system that would support our performance, succession planning and talent mapping, and keep all the data in one place and cross referenceable, taking GDPR into account. That's what Sage People has given us."*

**Claire Webber,**  
Head of HR,  
**Lovehoney**

*"There's meaning behind the data so we can make decisions based on facts, and efficiently manage risk within the business."*

**Lee Shaw,**  
Head of HR Service and Delivery  
**Shawbrook Bank**



## Take the next steps in your global HR journey

Take the next steps in your HR journey. Explore Sage People with an [interactive self-guided product tour](#) to discover how our global cloud HR and People system can transform the way to manage and engage your workforce.



People

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