# HR Trends and Toolkit for 2026

What's changing in HR and the toolkit you need to lead through it



deel.

# Introduction

2026 won’t be defined by a single disruption, but by the convergence of many: AI that learns and acts autonomously, demographic shifts that reshape the labor pool, new expectations from workers at every stage of their careers, and global complexity that places unprecedented pressure on HR systems.

These forces aren’t arriving one at a time. They are advancing together, interacting with one other, and altering how organizations must be built, structured, and led.

> HR sits at the center of this convergence. The function that once focused on administration is now responsible for preparing companies to navigate the most volatile operating environment in a decade.

This guide focuses on five trends shaping that reality, and more importantly, what HR can do about them. Each section pairs research with a practical toolkit, giving HR teams solutions to respond with confidence.

HR’s responsibility has never been broader than it is in 2026. Your influence has never mattered more. This guide is designed to match that scale.

# 2026 HR trends at a glance

| Trend | What's changing | Why it matters for HR |
|---|---|---|
| **HR as the architect of the human-AI enterprise** | Autonomous, agentic AI reshapes work, governance, and skills. | HR must design the human-machine enterprise and manage global AI risk. |
| **Strategic metamorphosis of HR** | HR shifts into a data-rich strategic partner, shaping org direction. | CHRO scope expands; leaders expect insight, foresight, and modeling. |
| **Cultivating resilience** | Rising conflict, culture strain, and role disruption undermine organizational stability. | HR must strengthen leadership capability, skills, and mobility. |
| **Macroeconomic and demographic forces** | Five generations, global hiring, and fluid workforces reshape labor markets. | HR needs global consistency, local compliance, and total-talent visibility. |
| **HR as the engine of change management** | Organizations undergo continuous transformation with fatigued workforces. | HR must lead adoption, communication, and leader enablement. |

# Contents


5–10 **Trend 1: HR as the architect of the human-machine enterprise**

11–14 **Trend 2: The strategic metamorphosis of the HR function**

15–17 **Trend 3: Cultivating resilience: Leadership, culture, and skills for a volatile world**

18–22 **Trend 4: Demographic and macroeconomic forces on the horizon**

23–27 **Trend 5: HR as the engine of change management**

28–31 **Building your HR toolkit for 2026**

32–34 **Your HR toolkit in your forever people platform**

35–42 **Appendices: Ready-to-use tools for 2026 trends**

Trend 1

# HR as the architect of the human-machine enterprise

With 62% of CEOs calling AI the defining force of the next business era, the spotlight turns to HR. In 2026, their role is to architect environments where humans and machines can live and thrive, side by side.



# Entering a new phase of AI

Since ChatGPT arrived on the scene in November 2022, it has caused excitement, anticipation, and disruption in equal measure. HR has jumped at the opportunities presented by generative AI, which has largely acted as a background engine completing tasks such as interviewing, scheduling, and automating onboarding documentation. As this initial phase draws to a close, the next phase focuses on how to make use of agentic AI, the functionality that has the potential to support HR teams as a co-pilot.

In this more strategic role, agentic AI is autonomous. Given a goal, it can create its own plan, execute multi-step workflows, and iterate based on real-time feedback.

For example, an agent could be instructed to “Find the best path to move a high-value software engineer from the London office to the New York office.” The agent would autonomously plan and execute a multi-step process, checking visa requirements, estimating costs, coordinating with external mobility vendors, and kicking off the necessary internal HR workflows.

While undeniably groundbreaking, few organizations are truly ready to benefit from agentic AI’s full potential. According to nearly 60% of the AI leaders and representatives surveyed by Deloitte, their organization’s primary challenges in adopting agentic AI are integrating it with legacy systems that are simply not ready. Risk and compliance concerns are also at the forefront of conversations.

# HR’s mandate in ethical AI deployment

As we approach the third anniversary of the Future of Life Institute’s open letter calling for AI labs to “pause for at least 6 months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4,” AI safety is still top of mind.

As AI becomes deeply integrated into high-stakes HR processes such as hiring, learning, and performance management, it introduces a new frontier of organizational risk. According to a study by Boston Consulting Group, talent acquisition is the top use case for AI in HR, an area where every decision made by machines has a direct impact on people's access to opportunity and long-term career trajectories.

Unsurprisingly, then, more than a third of workers have concerns about the explainability and fairness of AI systems. The deployment of any AI solution means HR must evolve from being a consumer of AI technology to being the primary steward of its ethical and responsible implementation across borders.

> "AI is another inflection point, like big data or mobile engineering, where HR must think about talent, cost, and skills. We don't have all the answers, but we do know that work is changing, fast."
>
> **Casey Bailey**
> Head of People, Deel

Governance becomes a global, heterogeneous mandate that directly impacts HR's operational ability to scale and manage talent. The varying international approaches to AI safety and skills create a complex web of compliance and training requirements for multinational organizations:

1. **According to the EU AI Act**, HR systems that impact employment, like CV-sorting software and performance management tools, are classified as High-Risk AI. This classification mandates explicit training requirements for all staff involved in their development, deployment, and use, forcing HR to manage a new, intensive compliance and training burden.
2. **The US AI Action Plan** focuses on empowering the workforce through apprenticeships and specialized skills development programs. This pushes HR to prioritize non-traditional talent pipelines and skills-based hiring, moving beyond reliance on traditional educational degrees and focusing on work-based learning like Registered Apprenticeships.

3. **In Asia**, countries like Singapore are adopting a “people-first strategy,” driving national AI literacy initiatives across the public and private sectors. HR’s role is to align internal upskilling programs with this national fluency goal, so employees gain the practical, hands-on experience necessary to work alongside AI.
4. **The UK government** has partnered with industry to train 7.5 million workers in essential AI skills by 2030, recognizing AI literacy as a baseline capability for a fifth of the workforce. HR must integrate these externally driven upskilling resources into their corporate Learning & Development strategies to maintain a competitive and productive workforce.

Wherever you’re based, championing ethical AI is a core component of your global compliance strategy. HR is uniquely positioned to lead the internal effort to reduce algorithmic bias and define the necessary checkpoints where human judgment and empathy both override an algorithm’s output.

## Redesigning work and careers in the human-machine era

We can’t ignore the accusation that AI is displacing human work, and it’s understandable that people feel threatened by machines taking their jobs. Yet, the prevailing trend we’re seeing is profound transformation rather than replacement. AI is indeed eliminating repetitive workloads. But it’s also creating entirely new categories of high-value roles that require uniquely human skills.

This shift has created a dual labor market challenge for HR: a hyper-competitive hunt for specialized AI creators and an urgent mandate to re-skill the existing workforce for collaboration.

> “We must consider how to hire behaviorally for AI curiosity. There are too many unknowns, but the one certainty is that AI will fundamentally change the way work is done, and we must be flexible, proactive, and curious to ensure we build these capabilities in the workforce.”
>
> **Casey Bailey**
> Head of People, Deel

In particular, the market for AI builders is soaring: Deel’s data shows a 40% increase in the share of companies opening new AI roles in 2025. Contracts with “AI” in the job title grew 585% from 2023 to 2024; roles like AI Engineers grew 340%, while senior AI leadership roles tripled. The market reflects this value, as median AI salaries are 120% higher than all other roles, with an additional 6% year-over-year increase.

**Get more insights**

The Role of AI in the Global Workforce: Learn how AI is creating more demand for specialists and shifting talent hubs to evolve skills, hiring practices, and career paths.

The 2025 State of Global Compensation Report: Discover how global compensation is evolving, from AI-driven pay surges to equity democratization across borders.

Here’s how HR can build and manage this new operating model:

- **Defining new roles in the age of AI:** For example, Deel has created the role of AI Librarians, responsible for training and maintaining the knowledge systems behind conversational AI tools.
- **Focusing on human potential:** The greatest value of AI for the People function lies in its ability to remove friction and free teams to focus on the high-impact, human moments.

> “When I think about the future of the people tech stack and how AI will play into it, what I'm really excited about is the way in which AI can make connections between constellations of people data, and then serve up insights, recommendations, red flags—all of the predictive analytics pieces that currently just aren't necessarily easily, humanly, surfaceable.
>
> I think one of the true benefits of AI is allowing People teams to get more creative, more connected, even more curious, as teams are unblocked from manual work and given access to better predictive insights.”
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

## Toolkit: Getting ready for AI in HR

To operationalize AI safely and effectively, HR teams should assess their readiness across three areas:

- AI literacy (skills and training)
- Compliance exposure (risk, bias, governance)
- Technical integration (data quality, system compatibility).

Use the **AI readiness checklist** and **Vendor evaluation guide** in the appendix (pages 36-38) to identify gaps and plan next steps.

Trend 2

# The strategic metamorphosis of the HR function

AI has entirely changed the lens through which company leaders view the people function. Once seen as a back-office support center, HR is now stepping into territory traditionally reserved for the CFO, COO, and CTO: shaping organizational strategy.



# The CHRO's role is expanding faster than any other C-suite position

The CHRO of 2026 holds responsibilities that didn't exist a few years ago. Boards now rely on HR leaders to guide transformations that affect the entire enterprise. AI adoption, workforce design, leader readiness, skill shortages, cultural durability, and organizational change all fall within the CHRO's domain because they depend on human behavior, not technology alone.

This shift has given rise to a new identity for the role. A modern CHRO is expected to understand the organization's commercial priorities, manage risk, and shape long-term capability. They're no longer evaluated on policy management or operational smoothness, but on whether the organization can adapt at the speed required.

> "In 2026, the most urgent shift is the strategic metamorphosis of the People function, from its inaccurate reputation as a support function to a truly data-driven business catalyst. This transformation is fuelled by artificial intelligence, and the unlock that AI tooling provides to People teams."
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

Gartner has identified four top priorities for CHROs in 2026, based on insights from 426 CHROs across 23 industries and four global regions. These are:

- **Harnessing AI to revolutionize the HR operating model**, which has the highest predicted impact on AI productivity gains at 29%.
- **Growing a blended workforce** that will thrive in the human-machine era
- **Mobilizing leaders for growth in an uncertain world**. Those equipped for change have a three times higher probability of adopting healthy change.

- **Connecting culture to performance.** Organizations that successfully embed culture in employees' daily work see up to a 34% increase in their performance.

Strategic metamorphosis relies heavily on intelligence, not in the abstract sense, but in the day-to-day ability to turn fragmented information into meaningful direction. This is where the modern People function is being reshaped most visibly. AI may be the catalyst, but the real shift comes from what leaders now expect HR to deliver: clarity, foresight, and partnership in every major decision.

Deel's People team sees this shift firsthand:

> "In a company scaling across 120+ countries, like Deel is, the People function owns the business infrastructure that allows that growth to happen. Our challenge (and opportunity) is to capture and transform (sometimes messy!) data into predictive insights to inform hiring, performance, and culture decisions in real time."
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

This is the new bar that company leaders set for HR. They want teams that make intelligent predictions and deliver insights with the same rigor used in financial planning.

> "The expectation from leaders has also evolved here: they want People teams to work with them to forecast capability gaps, model different org structures, and measure/develop talent ROI – not just serve up reports, or function as policy administrators."
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

The thread running through all of this is strategic metamorphosis. The People function shifts away from an administrative identity and toward a role that shapes how the business adapts to compete. AI accelerates this shift by unlocking the partnership between HR and the business.

> "AI will force some HR teams to become strategic and elevate the ones already operating that way."
>
> **Casey Bailey**
> Head of People, Deel

## Toolkit: Modernizing your HR tech foundation

To operate as a strategic, data-driven function, HR needs a tech stack that is integrated, compliant, and capable of scaling globally.

Read our Guide to Creating the Ideal HR Tech Stack to learn more.

Trend 3

# Leadership, culture, and skills for a volatile world

Workplaces are feeling the strain of constant change. Conflict is rising, psychological safety is thinning, and employees are navigating an “empathy recession” that’s making collaboration harder. Observed conflict has increased by 10%, driven by social and political tensions between co-workers and a rise in insensitive remarks.



# The resilience imperative

HR enters 2026 with a clear task: build an organization that can bend and recover in the face of economic, political, or technological shocks. That requires people, leaders, and systems to operate with resilience, no matter what arrives next.

> “We’re already seeing job scopes shift and junior roles erode. HR needs to lead the move from static job titles to fluid skills, and prepare workers to grow, not just survive.”
>
> **Casey Bailey**
> Head of People, Deel

## Culture buckles under pressure

“Culture atrophy,” so-called by Gartner, directly affects an organization’s ability to respond to disruption. When employees hold back ideas because they’re unsure how they’ll be received, innovation is destroyed, and growth becomes slower and more fragile. HR’s job is to identify leading indicators of culture breakdown and intervene before disengagement or attrition takes hold.

## Skills become the anchor during times of change

Teams look to their managers for clarity and direction when conditions shift, but many leaders aren’t equipped for that responsibility. They need the skills to communicate under pressure, address concerns before they become problems, and reinforce behaviors that keep teams steady when the environment is anything but.

HR can support here by building leadership capability into daily routines, coaching, and performance expectations. When managers know how to guide teams through ambiguity, the organization responds faster and absorbs less disruption.

From there, the focus expands to capability at the workforce level. As AI reshapes roles and eliminates many early-career stepping stones,

employees need clear development paths that help them stay relevant.

A skills-based operating model is a commitment for HR, who need to map skills to roles across the entire org chart. But by doing so, HR can understand where the organization is strong or exposed, and how people can pivot without losing momentum. Alice Burks, Director of People Success, describes how this shift is taking shape at Deel:

> “We’ve re-anchored our talent and performance philosophy around skills, results, and behaviors rather than static roles. We are mapping core skills across the company, supporting internal mobility so people can pivot, and hosting career frameworks in Deel Engage. The real unlock is cultural, helping people view their careers as portfolios of skills, not ladders of promotions.”
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

## Toolkit: Building a skills-based, resilient workforce

Resilience depends on knowing the skills your workforce has, and the ones you’re missing. Get these free competency mapping, skills matrix, and skills gap templates to build a clear view of current capability.

Take the next step with Deel HR’s job architecture functionality, which helps you operationalize this: job families, profiles, and compensation bands flow directly into hiring and workforce-planning workflows, supporting mobility, re-skilling, and consistent decision-making.

Trend ④

# Demographic and macroeconomic forces on the horizon

In 2026, HR leaders must navigate a workplace shaped by five generations and fast-moving shifts in the talent market. The challenge is to design systems that keep the organization agile in any market and give workers the stability and support they need to thrive within it.



# A workforce that no longer fits one mold

The demographic makeup of the workforce is fragmenting. Older workers are staying longer: the 75+ workforce is projected to grow 96.5% by 2030. Meanwhile, Millennials and Gen Z already represent more than half of the global workforce. At the same time, birth rates are falling in many economies, shrinking the long-term labor supply and intensifying competition for talent.

This creates real exposure for HR in the following ways:

- Succession pipelines thin out faster
- Knowledge transfer becomes harder
- Differences in expectations widen

Younger workers value development speed and flexibility. Older workers prioritize stability and meaningful work. A single employer value proposition (EVP) can’t satisfy all of them.

# Early-career roles are changing beyond recognition

AI is absorbing many of the tasks that used to give early-career employees their first real experience of work. Research or admin tasks weren’t necessarily glamorous. Still, they gave entry-level workers a foot in the door and taught them how the organization works and who makes decisions.

As these tasks are handed off to robots, new employees ramp faster but develop more slowly. They may gain efficiency, but not the depth of judgment that comes from working through real problems. Casey Bailey describes how companies risk creating new workers who can execute tasks but struggle to step into roles that require independent reasoning:

> “We know that the percentage of augmentation or efficiency found for a new worker when using AI is significantly higher than that of a tenured worker because the tenured worker has so much more experience. But if you don’t hire and raise an entry-level worker, then how do you get a seasoned worker who can manage AI and be the human required in AI workflows?
>
> This is a problem to consider in how we deal with new workers coming out of college, tenured workers, and knowledge transfer. Some of the greatest worker traits in the AI era will be empathy, reason, and wisdom.”
>
> **Casey Bailey**
> Head of People, Deel

This challenge lands squarely with HR. Workforce plans can no longer assume a steady pipeline of “growing” talent. Instead, HR teams need mechanisms like these to build depth intentionally:

- Structured rotations that expose new hires to complexity
- Apprenticeship-style models that accelerate real-world learning
- Explicit knowledge-transfer practices between tenured and early-career employees

Resisting automation isn’t the aim here. Instead, HR must redesign how experience is generated. Companies that build deliberate pathways for early-career employees to gain context and learn directly from experienced colleagues will maintain internal strength as work evolves.

## The rise of the fluid workforce ecosystem

The definition of “the workforce” now stretches beyond traditional headcount. Organizations combine full-time employees (FTEs) with contractors, freelancers, consultants, and on-demand teams.

In fact, 65% of businesses plan to increase their use of contingent labor over the next two years.

AI also plays its part in accelerating this trend because workers can manage multiple roles, clients, or revenue streams at once. With these efficiency gains, people win back time, and many choose to diversify their income instead of committing solely to a single employer.

For HR, this means workforce planning must extend beyond the scope of permanent roles. Legal risks increase, often requiring contingent workers to sign non-disclosure agreements and other binding contracts that protect the organization.

At the same time, cultural cohesion becomes harder when organizational line-ups are filled with people who don't fully "work" there. Quality control is another area that needs to be scrutinized, ensuring that every person who contributes to a workflow hits the same standards.

But regardless of any of these challenges, the opportunity is significant: access to global, specialized talent at speed, often in days, not months, is now a necessity.

"AI might make it easier for people to work across multiple employers. That opens new questions about loyalty, engagement, and how we support a fluid workforce."

**Casey Bailey**
Head of People, Deel

# Global operations demand consistency and local nuance

As companies operate across dozens of countries, HR must manage:

- Different employment classifications
- Local labor laws
- Currency changes
- Compliance obligations
- Varied expectations around flexibility, benefits, and career development

This complexity requires frameworks that hold up at scale but still allow for local interpretation. Anything rigid breaks; anything ad-hoc becomes unmanageable.

HR teams that thrive in this environment build one global blueprint for how the company hires, manages, develops, and pays people, and then localize at the point where law or culture requires it.



## Toolkit: Global HR readiness and compliance

Use the **Global HR readiness checklist** in the appendix to assess gaps in your cross-border hiring, compliance, and total-talent processes (pages 39-40).

Operating across borders demands consistency, accuracy, and local compliance. Deel's Compliance Hub provides HR with a single platform to manage hiring, payroll, worker classification, and statutory requirements across 150+ countries, eliminating the risk of fragmented processes.

Trend 5

# HR as the engine of change management

Organizations in 2026 face shifts in technology, customer demand, regulation, and strategy—often, these shifts overlap or collide. Traditionally, HR has been involved as the “department brought in to help” manage change. But in 2026, HR must be the function that guides and stabilizes change across the entire business.



# The new reality: Continuous, not episodic change

In today's landscape, change isn't a special event. Change is a default operating condition. AI rollouts, org redesigns, compliance shifts, and tool migrations are all happening at once, not sequentially. That means HR can no longer treat change management as a side project.

In 2026, episodic support no longer works. HR must act as the architect of organizational adaptability, guiding, enabling, and embedding change capability across the entire business. This means helping teams navigate change every day, embedding habits and routines that make resilience part of the operating model.

# HR moves from supporter to architect

SHRM's Body of Applied Skills and Knowledge has long classified change management as a core HR competency. But recent data from Gartner highlights some of the specific change management problems that organizations face today:

- 54% of CHROs say their current change communication methods fail to engage employees
- Only 41% of managers are willing to adapt their own behaviors during periods of change
- 90% of HR leaders believe managers are not equipped to support teams facing change fatigue

Each of these is a structurally fundamental fault that slows transformation and damages employee trust. HR must close the gap by building real, organization-wide change capability through repeatable routines embedded into daily work.

> “Change is hard, and often scary. HR worries, ‘Will we disrupt the business by changing this thing that employees love?’ But that’s exactly why HR needs a clear vision and strategy. With the right change management support, HR can lead successful transformations that scale their organizations.”
>
> **Pete Tiliakos**
> HR tech analyst and strategic advisor at Payroll Influences

# Managers become the frontline engine of adoption

During times of uncertainty, employees turn to the person they report to, not to corporate memos. Yet most managers are overwhelmed by the volume of change landing on their plates. Many do not have the skills to interpret shifting priorities or respond to anxiety in their teams. And some will fail to adjust their own behaviors quickly enough to model the stability people look for.

HR’s role in 2026 is to make change leadership a clearly defined part of the manager’s job. That includes:

- Continuous coaching over episodic workshops
- Clear expectations for how managers communicate during transitions
- Playbooks that help managers translate company priorities into team-level action
- Regular feedback loops that highlight where confusion is taking hold

When managers can steady their teams, the organization absorbs change with far less disruption.

> “When industries and businesses are moving as fast as they are moving now, we need agile managers who are equipped to not wait for the dusty drawer moment, maybe not even wait for the quarterly moment, but actually have this focus on expectation setting, clarity of goals, clarity of expectations, strong feedback muscles. That's about how we help people keep pace with change, perform as roles and expectations might shift.”
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

In traditional performance models, feedback often sits untouched until a formal review cycle, which Alice refers to as the “dusty drawer moment.” But in fast-moving environments, waiting even three months to reset expectations or give directional feedback is too slow.

Building change capability means fostering regular, real-time dialogue about goals, progress, and shifting priorities, not just during periods of transformation, but as a core management habit.

## Building change capability across the entire workforce

Leaders and managers are not the only ones who need to adapt. Employees also need to build change fluency, the ability to interpret, respond to, and navigate shifts in work, tools, or priorities.
HR can start focusing on:

- Cognitive resilience: Dealing with ambiguity and change fatigue
- Learning agility: Picking up new tools or workflows quickly
- Feedback literacy: Giving and receiving updates in real time

These capabilities can be developed through:

- Learning and development tracks
- Role modeling by senior leaders
- Reflective practices like retros and post-mortems
- Transparent comms and goal alignment

# HR becomes embedded in decision-making

To run change well, HR needs visibility into decisions as they're being shaped, not after they're announced. Deel's Alice Burks describes what this looks like in practice:

> "Over the past year, the People function has continued on its trajectory of integrating more directly into business decision-making loops, not just as advisors but as co-designers."
>
> **Alice Burks**
> Director of People Success, Deel

## Toolkit: Building change leadership capability

HR can only guide transformation when change is a built-in skill, not a crisis response. Get Deel's Leadership Competency Framework to define the behaviors managers need during transitions.

Additionally, use the **Change readiness assessment template** in the appendix (pages 41-42) to evaluate how prepared your teams, leaders, and organization are to absorb ongoing change. Use this resource to spot weak points before major shifts.

# Building your HR toolkit for 2026

Every trend in this report points to the same reality: HR must operate with stronger capability and a clearer view of their workforce. This section brings together the tools that help HR teams act on those demands.



## Core frameworks that guide decisions

- Skills-based architecture that links roles, skills, mobility, compensation, and workforce planning
- Internal mobility programs that give employees structured pathways to move and grow
- Ethical AI and governance frameworks to manage risk and set standards for safe deployment

## Technology that supports scale and global operations

- A unified HRIS/HCM that manages all worker types across countries
- AI-enabled workflows, learning systems, and analytics that remove admin load
- Global payroll, compliance, and mobility tools that adapt to local laws without losing consistency

> “With Deel, we get fast support, an easy-to-use platform, and a partner we can rely on to keep our workforce running smoothly. It’s the flexibility and speed we need to keep up with our growth, so we can focus on scaling our business. Our leaders want to spend time with their teams, not completing mundane and thankless administration.”
>
> **Emily Curtis**
> CPO, Directional Pizza

Learn more about how Directional Pizza uses Deel as their single HR platform covering HRIS, payroll, IT, and compliance, eliminating the need for additional platforms or manual data entry.

## Data and insight engines

- Skills inventories and mapping systems for visibility into strengths and gaps
- Workforce-planning dashboards that connect cost, capability, mobility, and demand
- Predictive people analytics (retention, attrition, performance, engagement) that inform decisions early

## Capability building inside the HR team

- AI literacy and fluency in human–machine workflows
- Talent analytics skills that help HR interpret patterns and recommend action
- Leadership development for hybrid work, distributed teams, and global complexity

## Change management infrastructure

- Communication frameworks that make change clear and actionable
- Adoption playbooks for new tools, systems, or processes
- Manager enablement resources that prepare leaders to guide teams through transitions

# Vendor selection criteria that prevent future headaches

- Integrations and data-model compatibility
- Global readiness (compliance, currencies, worker types, mobility)
- Transparency in AI, governance, and bias controls
- Scalability, reliability, and documented ROI

> “The Deel team feels like an extension of our team. That partnership matters just as much as the platform.”
>
> **Diane Pezzuto**
> Global Head of HR, PartnerOne

Discover how PartnerOne’s lean HR team manages global HR with Deel

# Your HR toolkit in your forever people platform, Deel

HR can’t meet the demands of 2026 with fragmented systems or manual processes. Deel brings your global workforce, your data, your compliance, and your AI capabilities into one platform, giving HR the infrastructure to act strategically in every environment.



# Future-proof HR with Deel

Deel helps businesses hire, manage, and pay global teams with unparalleled scalability, compliance, and efficiency. With HR, compliance, and AI operating in one place, HR leaders gain a single source of truth for their global teams, making it easier to manage complexity, reduce risk, and plan strategically.

## How Deel achieves the AI imperative

HR must operationalize AI, not just experiment with it. Deel embeds AI across workflows so you get real-time insights and human-machine processes that scale based on automation. Expect:

- AI-powered insights: visa eligibility, cost-to-hire per location, global salary benchmarks
- Deel AI chat for HR and employees, available 24/7
- A unified data model that enables multi-step human+AI workflows
- Prebuilt AI agents with the option to build custom ones

## How Deel supports the strategic metamorphosis of HR

To shift from administrative to strategic, HR needs clean data and the ability to model decisions end-to-end. As a unified system, Deel becomes your operating backbone, offering:

- A global HRIS for employees, contractors, and EOR workers
- Consolidated HR + payroll + compliance in one platform
- Real-time dashboards and reporting
- Deep integrations that reduce tech-stack sprawl

## How Deel cultivates resilience

Resilient organizations grow through skills, mobility, and clarity. Deel gives HR the structure and tools to build, measure, and move talent with confidence, through:

- Learning and performance management tools
- Job architecture built directly into our global HRIS

- Compensation management linked to job profiles
- Global mobility and immigration support

## How Deel helps you manage macroeconomic and demographic forces

Global teams, mixed worker types, and shifting expectations demand a system built for scale and compliance. Optimize your workforce planning from Deel's comprehensive HR platform, enabling you to:

- Hire, pay, and manage talent in 150+ countries
- Manage employees, contractors, and EORs in one system
- Offer benefits with tax compliance and statutory coverage built in
- Use tools that adapt to different currencies, laws, and labor expectations

## How Deel supports HR as the engine of change management

Change succeeds when HR has visibility, workflows, and manager capability. Deel equips HR to lead adoption, not chase it, with:

- Workflow automation to standardize and sequence change
- Self-service tools that free HR and empower managers
- Training and competency-building via Deel Engage
- Centralized data to track adoption, sentiment, and impact

> "Deel is more than a platform; it's my strategic partner. For a one-person HR team navigating complex cross-border labor laws, that's invaluable."
>
> **Shawnda Kohr**
> HRBP, Beatgrid Media

If you're ready to see how Deel can become the backbone of your modern People function, book a free demo, and we'll walk you through exactly how it fits your team, your goals, and your global footprint.

# Appendices: Ready-to-use tools for 2026 trends

Whether you’re evaluating AI systems, expanding globally, or preparing your organization for continuous change, these resources help translate strategy into clear next steps, enabling you to move forward with confidence, alignment, and rigor.



# AI readiness checklist (for Trend 1)

Use this self-audit before adopting agentic or advanced AI systems.

**1 Strategy and purpose**

- [ ] We've defined why we need AI and the outcomes we expect.
- [ ] We've identified which HR processes will benefit most from AI.

**2 Compliance and risk**

- [ ] We maintain an inventory of all AI-enabled HR tools (internal + vendor).
- [ ] We understand which HR systems fall under High-Risk AI classifications (e.g., EU AI Act).
- [ ] Human oversight is built into all automated or AI-assisted decisions.

**3 Data quality and governance**

- [ ] HR data is structured, accurate, and accessible through a unified platform or integrations.
- [ ] We have a clear governance model for data ownership, updates, and system-of-record rules.
- [ ] Vendors meet our standards for transparency, explainability, and bias mitigation.

**4 People and skills readiness**

- [ ] HR and managers have baseline AI literacy and know how to explain AI-supported decisions.
- [ ] Employees understand when and how AI is being used in workflows that affect them.
- [ ] We have a plan to build workforce AI skills (training, coaching, apprenticeships).

**5 Implementation and adoption**

- [ ] We pilot AI tools before scaling, with clear KPIs and success criteria.
- [ ] We maintain feedback loops to identify adoption issues or unintended consequences.

# Vendor evaluation guide for AI-enabled HR tools (for Trend 1)

Use this guide to assess whether an AI-enabled HR tool is safe, reliable, and fit for long-term scale.

1

**AI capabilities and performance**

- [ ] Does the tool automate relevant HR workflows (TA, onboarding, mobility, analytics)?
- [ ] Can it generate insights, recommendations, or predictions?
- [ ] Does it offer agentic capabilities (autonomous tasks, multi-step actions)?
- [ ] Does performance degrade under scale or complex org structures?

2

**Data quality and integration**

- [ ] Does the tool integrate with your HRIS, payroll, ATS, performance, and learning systems?
- [ ] Is the vendor transparent about data sources powering models?
- [ ] Are data governance standards (access, retention, auditability) documented?

3

**Transparency, bias, and explainability**

- [ ] Does the vendor provide clear explanations of how decisions or recommendations are made?
- [ ] Have bias-mitigation methods been applied and validated?
- [ ] Can HR override outputs easily?

4

**Compliance and security**

- [ ] Does the solution meet international standards (e.g., GDPR, SOC 2, ISO 27001)?
- [ ] If the tool touches hiring or performance, has the vendor mapped compliance to the EU AI Act's High-Risk requirements?
- [ ] Is employee data encrypted end-to-end?
- [ ] Are there clear audit logs?

**5**

**Change management and usability**

- [ ] How quickly can managers and employees adopt the tool?
- [ ] Does the vendor offer onboarding, training, and internal comms support?
- [ ] Is the interface intuitive enough to avoid change fatigue?

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**6**

**Scalability and global readiness**

- [ ] Can the tool support multiple countries, currencies, and worker types?
- [ ] Does the vendor have a roadmap aligned with global HR needs (e.g., mobility, compliance, local pay insights)?
- [ ] Can AI models adapt to local regulatory differences?

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**7**

**Vendor stability and roadmap**

- [ ] Does the vendor invest actively in AI development?
- [ ] Is the roadmap transparent, with regular feature releases?
- [ ] Is customer support responsive (SLAs, global coverage)?

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**8**

**ROI and value**

- [ ] Does the vendor articulate clear, measurable outcomes (e.g., time saved, cost avoided, accuracy improved)?
- [ ] Can they show case studies from organizations similar to yours?
- [ ] Do they provide a total cost of ownership estimate?

# Global HR readiness checklist (for Trend 4)

Use this simple, actionable list to check whether your organization is set up for compliant, scalable cross-border operations.

**1**

### Global hiring and worker classification

- [ ] We have a consistent process for determining whether someone should be hired as an employee, contractor, or via EOR.
- [ ] All worker classification decisions are documented and reviewed for risk.
- [ ] Local hiring restrictions, probation rules, and contract requirements are known before extending any offer.

**2**

### Payroll, taxation, and statutory compliance

- [ ] Payroll is run in full compliance with each country's tax, social contribution, and statutory benefit rules.
- [ ] We have a reliable way to update payroll when local laws change (or a partner that guarantees this).
- [ ] All contractors receive legally compliant contracts, invoicing terms, and IP/ownership protections.

**3**

### Local employment practices and benefits

- [ ] We understand what "minimum compliant benefits" look like in each country where we hire.
- [ ] We know when local benefits should be topped-up to stay competitive (e.g., statutory leave vs. market norms).
- [ ] We have visibility into local holidays, working-time rules, overtime requirements, and paid leave policies.

**4**

### Data governance and documentation

- [ ] Employment documents (contracts, amendments, NDAs) are stored centrally and can be retrieved quickly.
- [ ] We comply with regional data-privacy laws (GDPR, PDPA, etc.) and limit who can access employee data.
- [ ] Our HRIS (or equivalent) correctly maps workers across multiple countries, currencies, and contract types.

5

**Total-talent visibility**

- [ ] We can see all worker types (employees, contractors, EOR workers, consultants) in one place.
- [ ] We track costs by country, worker type, and team for workforce planning.
- [ ] Our headcount planning process incorporates local hiring timelines, notice periods, and mobility constraints.

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6

**Global HR operations and workflows**

- [ ] Onboarding is standardized globally but flexible for local laws.
- [ ] Offboarding workflows include local compliance requirements (notice, severance, equipment return, benefits termination).
- [ ] Managers understand the key differences between countries and know when to involve HR or Legal.

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7

**Cross-border mobility**

- [ ] We have clear processes for visas, relocations, and temporary cross-border work.
- [ ] We know where employees are physically working, especially digital nomads, to manage tax and PE risk.

# Change readiness assessment template (for Trend 5)

Use this assessment to evaluate how prepared your organization, leaders, and teams are to absorb ongoing change. Score each statement from 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Lower-scoring areas become your priority focus.

## 1. Organizational foundations

| Statement | Score |
|---|---|
| We have a clear, consistent narrative for why change is happening. | _____ |
| Employees understand how this change aligns with business priorities. | _____ |
| Major decisions are communicated early enough for teams to plan. | _____ |
| We have defined roles and responsibilities for managing change. | _____ |
| Our systems and processes are flexible enough to adapt without major disruption. | _____ |

**Subtotal: ____** / 25

## 2. Leadership capability

| Statement | Score |
|---|---|
| Managers feel confident explaining change to their teams. | _____ |
| Leaders proactively address concerns and questions, not just react to them. | _____ |
| Managers model the behaviors expected during the transition. | _____ |
| Leaders have visibility into how employees are responding. | _____ |
| Managers receive coaching or guidance from HR during major shifts. | _____ |

**Subtotal: ____** / 25

## 3. Employee experience

| Statement | Score |
|---|---|
| Employees feel comfortable raising concerns about changes. | _____ |
| Teams report feeling informed, not blindsided, by new initiatives. | _____ |
| We actively monitor indicators of change fatigue (engagement, turnover risk, workload spikes). | _____ |
| Employees trust that decisions are made with their wellbeing in mind. | _____ |
| Communication channels are open and two-way, not top-down. | _____ |

**Subtotal: ____ / 25**

## 4. Operational readiness

| Statement | Score |
|---|---|
| We have a clear plan for sequencing changes and avoiding overload. | _____ |
| Change impacts are assessed before rollout (process, workload, systems). | _____ |
| Feedback loops help us refine or adjust the approach quickly. | _____ |
| Training and resources are provided before new expectations take effect. | _____ |
| Success metrics are defined and monitored throughout the change. | _____ |

**Subtotal: ____ / 25**

**Total score: ____ / 100**

**80-100: Strong readiness:** You have the foundations, leadership capability, and employee alignment needed for smooth implementation. Focus on refining high-impact behaviors and scaling best practices.

**60-79: Moderate readiness:** Change can succeed, but friction points will appear. Target the lowest-scoring areas before launching major initiatives.

**Below 60: At risk:** The organization may struggle to absorb major changes. Strengthen communication, leadership capability, and operational planning before proceeding.

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