

WHITE PAPER · 2024

# Selecting HR Technology to Enhance Employee Experience.

How to choose the right HR technology for your organisation, with a focus on the employee experience and a practical four-part selection framework.

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# The selection process is where HR technology projects go wrong most often. Not during implementation.

A great employee experience drives engagement, and engagement drives retention. HR technology has a significant role to play in building that experience. But only if you choose the right system for your organisation, and that requires a rigorous, structured process.

Too often, selection is driven by a compelling vendor demo, a recommendation from a peer, or pressure to make a decision quickly. The result is a system that looked good in a sales context but doesn't fit the way your organisation actually works. This paper sets out a four-part framework that avoids that outcome.

## KEY FINDINGS

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- 01 HR technology selection must start with a clearly defined business need. Without that, the selection process has no filter and every vendor looks like a good fit.

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- 02 Internal research is as important as external research. Employee journey mapping reveals where the experience breaks down and what the system actually needs to solve.

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- 03 Written requirements, not just verbal ones, protect you from being swayed by a polished demo. Open-ended statements invite honest responses from vendors about how their platform performs.

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- 04 You are evaluating the vendor, not just the software. The quality of implementation and support matters as much as the features. Choose a partner, not just a product.

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# HR technology is a vehicle for employee experience. Treat it that way.

A great employee experience drives engagement, and engagement drives retention. These are the metrics that matter most in our current labour market. HR technology has a critical role to play in enabling that experience.

Historically, the primary role of HR technology was automation and process streamlining. The technology was there to support day-to-day work and reduce admin burden. That is still true. But today, HR technology can do considerably more than that.

Employees want to work in ways that mirror their digital lives. Using Spotify, Netflix, or any consumer app doesn't require a training manual. The experience is intuitive and effortless. HR technology that delivers that kind of experience changes how people feel about their employer. The onboarding process is the most common example: a new employee who receives a welcome email, clicks a link, and completes all necessary information on their mobile device has a fundamentally different first impression than one who is asked to print, complete, and scan forms.

**"It is not faith in technology. It is faith in people."**

**STEVE JOBS**

The question is not whether technology can improve the employee experience. It can. The question is how to choose the right system for your specific organisation. This paper sets out the four components we believe are essential to getting that decision right.



SECTION ONE

# Business Need & Research.

The first two components of a successful HR technology selection. Most selection processes skip these. That is why they fail.



Business Need

Research

Requirements

Demonstrations



# Component 1: Business Need

In an ideal world, every system selection is driven by a well-defined strategic roadmap with clear alignment to the business strategy. Technology can be a powerful tool for achieving strategic goals: increasing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving the employee experience. It is critical to understand exactly how the technology you are looking to acquire will solve the business problem you have identified.

We often look to solve HR problems in isolation. To build a business case and secure the necessary investment, think about the bigger picture. Frame your need in terms leadership recognises: time lost, compliance risk, inability to scale.

# Component 2: Research

There are two key areas of research: internal and external. Internal research is focused on gathering data and insights from within your organisation. External research is focused on gathering information from outside sources. Both are essential.

Employee journey mapping is an effective internal research method. It reveals where the employee experience breaks down and what the technology actually needs to address. Talk to a wide range of employees, not just HR or head office staff. If you have a manufacturing or retail workforce, the frontline experience will be very different from what desk-based employees describe.

External research requires caution. A significant proportion of available content is vendor-produced and presents one system as the obvious answer. Use it carefully. Where possible, use:

- Conversations with similar organisations about the systems they use and what they would do differently.
- Independent, vendor-agnostic advisory firms who work across multiple platforms and have no commercial reason to favour one.
- Research from Gartner or Bersin as a starting point, with the caveat that these are not New Zealand-specific.



# Business Requirements & Demonstrations.

## Component 3: Business Requirements

Detailed requirements feel time-consuming. They are also the most effective way to prevent a costly mismatch. Written requirements give you something to hold vendors to, and make it harder for a polished demo to carry the room on aesthetic appeal alone.

- Requirements should be open-ended statements, not yes/no questions. "Describe how your platform supports a performance review cycle" is more useful than "Does your system have performance reviews?"
- Cover non-functional requirements: security, data residency, single sign-on, payroll integration. Get your IT team involved at this stage, not after you have chosen a vendor.
- Separate must-haves from nice-to-haves. If everything becomes a must-have, the scoring becomes meaningless.
- Include requirements that assess vendor fit: how they implement, how they support, what their customer success model looks like.

## Component 4: Demonstrations

Demos are where selections go wrong most often. Vendors will naturally demonstrate what their platform does well. To mitigate this, build scenario-based scripts that cover your actual processes. For example: "A new employee is hired. Demonstrate the employee receiving a welcome email, logging in, completing a New Employee Details form, and show that information appearing on their record."

Use a scoring template so everyone evaluates on the same criteria. And remember: you are evaluating the vendor, not just the software. The vendor is not an adversary. You want a win-win relationship with a technology partner who will still be engaged twelve months after go-live.



# What good HR technology actually does for your people.

When HR technology is implemented well, it relieves pressure on managers, creates efficiency for HR staff, and gives employees a genuine sense of empowerment and engagement.

Well-designed HR technology should shift power toward the employee. It should reduce the number of things an employee needs HR or Payroll to do for them, and increase the number of things they can do for themselves. That is not just better for efficiency. It is better for the employee experience.

## Employee self-service

Employees should own and update their own information. No more waiting for HR or Payroll to change an address or update a bank account. It is their data.

## Autonomy and mobility

Employees should be able to update their skills, view and apply for internal roles, and access learning, without needing to schedule a conversation with HR or their manager.

## Communication and recognition

The ability to communicate, provide feedback, and recognise peers is increasingly important in remote and hybrid environments. Good HR technology builds this in rather than bolting it on.

## Personalised journeys

Onboarding, leave, offboarding. These experiences should be customised for individual employees based on their role, location, and circumstances, not a one-size-fits-all approach.

# Our recommendations.

Selecting a new HR system is time-consuming and potentially costly. It is also fundamentally important to the future of your business. Take the time to do it properly.

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## **01** Define your business need in two sentences before you look at a single vendor.

If you cannot do that, you are still scoping the problem, not selecting a solution. That is an important distinction that will save you considerable time and money.

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## **02** Talk to your employees before you talk to vendors.

Employee journey mapping is the most direct route to understanding what the technology needs to solve. Talk to people across roles, levels, and locations.

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## **03** Write your requirements before demos begin.

Requirements protect you from demo fever: the phenomenon where a polished presentation overrides rational evaluation. Write them down and use them to evaluate every vendor on the same scale.

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## **04** Evaluate the vendor as rigorously as the software.

Ask to speak to existing customers of a similar size. Ask specifically about what post-go-live support looks like. The vendor who is engaged and responsive after the contract is signed is the one worth choosing.

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# TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

## ABOUT TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

New Zealand's first specialist HR technology consultancy. Founded 2017. Vendor-neutral, human-centric, and a little done with the nonsense.

We help mid-market HR and operations leaders choose and implement the right HR technology. Vendor-neutral advice, partner-level delivery, and strategic advisory through to implementation and optimisation. We have been in this industry long enough to know that the best technology decisions are not really about technology.

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