

TOMORROW'S
PEOPLE

A TOMORROW'S PEOPLE PLAYBOOK

The HR tech playbook.

From decision to done. A practical guide to choosing and implementing HR technology for people leaders in Australia and New Zealand.

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Most HR platform implementations go wrong before they even start.

Not because the software is bad. Not because the HR team didn't care. But because the decision was made without a clear view of what the organisation actually needed.

We've seen the pattern enough times to know it. A platform gets selected on a demo that looked great. Implementation gets underway. Somewhere between configuration and go-live the scope blows out, the timeline slips, and the team that was meant to champion the system is exhausted by it. A year later, half the modules are unused and someone is quietly asking whether they chose the right thing.

This playbook is for HR leaders who want to avoid that. It covers how to make a good decision in the first place, how to set up an implementation that actually lands, and what the difference looks like when you get it right. Because the most expensive outcome isn't the cost of the software. It's the cost of doing it twice.

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01

THE LANDSCAPE

The state of HR tech across ANZ.

How HR technology is actually working across New Zealand and Australia, not how vendors say it should be.

STARTING FROM A FRAGMENTED MESS

Most teams don't start from nothing. They start from a tangle.

Tomorrow's People has worked with HR teams across New Zealand and Australia since 2017. In 2024 we surveyed organisations across industries to understand how HR technology is really working on the ground.

Most organisations aren't starting from nothing when they implement a new platform. They're starting from a fragmented mess: multiple systems that don't talk to each other, data spread across

spreadsheets, and a team that's already stretched.

The consequences are predictable. Teams spend **15 to 60 hours a week** on system administration. Data lives in spreadsheets. Managers can't get answers to basic questions.

When a new platform lands in that environment without proper groundwork, it often just adds to the noise rather than cutting through it. That shapes what a good implementation needs to look like.

“

Our data is full of errors and none of our systems talk to each other, so the problem keeps getting worse.

NZ HR LEADER · HR TECHNOLOGY TRENDS IN NZ 2024

WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

The fragmentation, in four figures.

Drawn from our 2024 survey of organisations across New Zealand and Australia. The appetite for change is real.

91%

RUN MULTIPLE HR SYSTEMS RATHER THAN ONE INTEGRATED PLATFORM

21%

STILL HAVE NO HRIS AT ALL, INCLUDING SOME MEDIUM AND LARGE ORGANISATIONS

15–60

HOURS A WEEK TEAMS LOSE TO SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

33%

ARE ACTIVELY PLANNING TO SWITCH SYSTEMS IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

02

THE DECISION

How to choose the right platform.

Selection is where most implementations are won or lost. Get this right and everything downstream is easier.

Start with the problem. Then do the research.

1

Start with the business problem, not the software.

Before you look at a single demo, get clear on what you're actually trying to solve. Not at a surface level ('we need a new HRIS') but meaningfully. What decisions can't you make because you don't have the data? Where are managers frustrated? What's falling through the cracks?

Write it down, then pressure-test it with people outside HR. The case lands better framed in terms leadership recognises: time lost, risk exposure, inability to scale. Be honest about what you **don't** need yet. Trying to solve everything at once is one of the most common reasons implementations fail.

GATE CHECK

Before you go any further, write your problem in two sentences. If you can't, you're not ready to choose a platform yet, you're still scoping one.

2

Do your research properly.

Internal research means talking to the people who'll actually use the system: managers, frontline staff, people in different roles and locations. Employee journey mapping helps. Where does the experience break down?

External research is trickier. A lot of vendor-produced content presents one system as the obvious answer, so use it with caution. One thing to investigate specifically: how well does the platform integrate with your payroll system? Across Australia and New Zealand, payroll is complex and non-negotiable.

Set the rules before the demos start.

3

Build requirements before you look at demos.

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. Write open-ended statements, not yes/no questions: instead of 'does the system have performance reviews?', write 'describe how your platform supports a performance review cycle'.

Separate must-haves from nice-to-haves before you start, or everything becomes a must-have and the scoring is meaningless. Include the non-functional requirements too: security, data residency, single sign-on, integration. Get IT involved at this stage, not after.

4

Run demos on your terms, not theirs.

Build scenario-based scripts for each demo. Give vendors a specific situation: 'A new employee starts on Monday. Show us everything from the offer being accepted to their first day!' Now you're comparing the same process in every platform. Use a scoring template so everyone evaluates on the same scale.

And evaluate the vendor, not just the software. How do they implement? What's the support model? Ask to speak to existing customers of similar size. **You want a partner, not a sales team that disappears after go-live.**

03

THE DELIVERY

How to implement without it becoming a disaster.

Most things that go wrong are predictable. They aren't software problems. They're people, process and planning problems.

Clean the data. Protect the time. Phase the work.

1

Get your data in order before you start.

Bad data going in means bad data coming out. If your records are inconsistent, incomplete or spread across places, clean them up before migration begins. Audit what you have, document every system and where data lives, then decide what you actually need to migrate and what can be left behind.

2

Protect time for the project.

The single biggest predictor of success is whether someone has genuine dedicated time. Not 'doing it alongside everything else', actually protected time. If no one has capacity, that's an important data point: either delay until it exists, or factor in external support from the outset.

3

Implement in phases, not all at once.

The most common mistake is doing everything simultaneously: core HR, hiring, performance, engagement, onboarding, integrations. It overwhelms the team and makes problems impossible to troubleshoot. Start with the core, get your people data into one accurate, single source, and build on that.

TOP TIP

Ask the vendor exactly how much of your team's time the project will need, then double check it. Validate those hours on your reference calls before you commit, not after kick-off.

Bring managers along. Plan for the day after launch.

4

Bring managers along, not just HR.

HR often runs the implementation and then surprises managers with a new system on go-live day. That reliably creates resistance. Managers are the primary users of much of the platform. Involve a small group early: invite two or three managers to a working session before configuration is locked. Not a demo, an actual working session where their input changes something. They help shape the build and become informal advocates before launch.

5

Plan for post go-live before you go live.

Who owns the system after launch? Who keeps data clean, trains new people, manages releases and handles support? If you can't answer that before go-live, the system drifts from the state it launched in. It doesn't need a full-time hire, it needs someone with defined responsibility and enough time to do it properly.

TOP TIP

Name the person who owns the system after go-live before you sign, not on launch day. A platform with no clear owner drifts back to a mess within a year.

04

THE PROOF

What it looks like when it goes right.

Mighty Ape, one of New Zealand's largest online retailers, went from scattered spreadsheets to live in six weeks.

From scattered spreadsheets to live in six weeks.



The Mighty Ape people team at their fulfilment hub.

Mighty Ape runs over a million products with hubs in Auckland and Christchurch. When Jason Blackmore joined as Head of People, the entire HR function was running on Excel. They partnered with Tomorrow's People to implement HiBob, a modern people platform, covering Core HR, Hiring and Performance. Six weeks later, they were live.

- 01 15 active roles being recruited through the platform

- 02 Performance reviews completed across the business

- 03 Engagement survey launched and analysed

- 04 Org chart and directory became daily tools for managers

- 05 One communication hub replaced siloed team messaging

Six weeks, for work that usually takes eleven.

What typically takes 11 weeks for Core HR alone, Tomorrow's People delivered in 6 weeks, while simultaneously implementing the Talent module.

TIME TO GO LIVE · CORE HR PLUS TALENT



The key was focus. Ella's time was protected, the team committed, and momentum was maintained throughout. Zero pushback from managers.

“

If we'd spread it out over months, it never would've happened. We freed up Ella's time, and she made it her day job. That's how we got it done in six weeks.

JASON BLACKMORE · HEAD OF PEOPLE, MIGHTY APE

ARE YOU READY?

A practical readiness check.

Implementation success has far less to do with the software than most people expect. Be honest with yourself about where you're starting from.

One rule before you start: if you can't tick the items under Organisational readiness, you're not ready. Those are the blockers. Everything else on this page is preparation you can work through along the way.

DATA & PROCESS FOUNDATIONS

- Your employee data is reasonably clean and centralised, even if it's in a spreadsheet
- You have a clear view of core HR processes: who does what, when, and why
- You can articulate what's broken about the current state, and what you want the future state to be

DECISION CLARITY

- You know which modules you need to go live with first
- You have a realistic timeline and aren't implementing everything at once
- You've thought about change management for managers, not just HR

ORGANISATIONAL READINESS

- At least one person has set aside dedicated time, and their normal role is backfilled or put on hold
- You have senior sponsorship to champion the change
- Your IT team is aware and engaged

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

- You have access to implementation expertise that knows the platform deeply
- You've thought about who owns the system, data and training post go-live



Organisations with dedicated resources report 42% higher satisfaction with their HR systems.

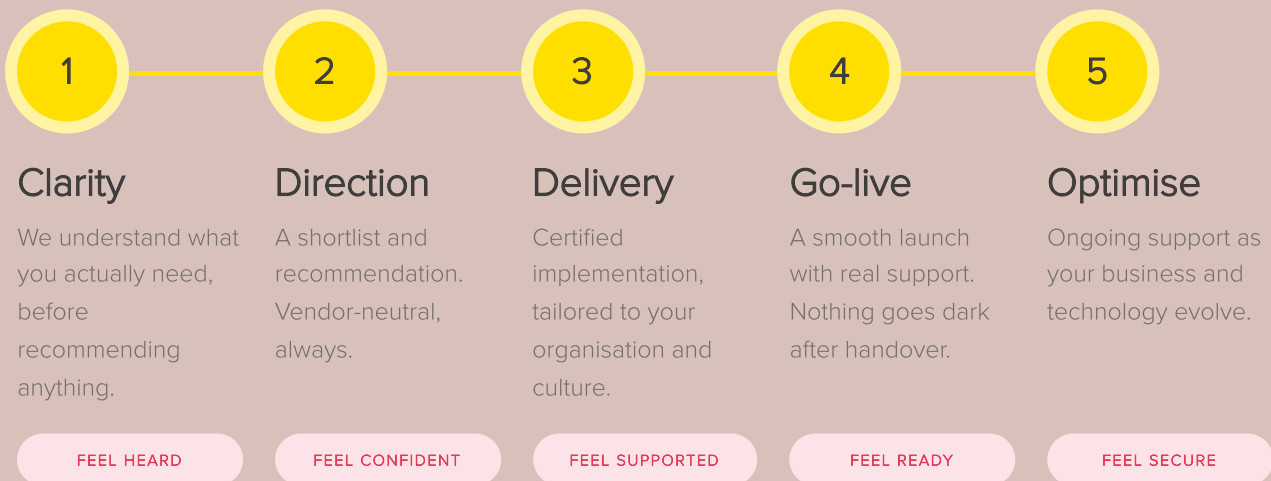
ABOUT TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

We're in it with you until it works.

We're New Zealand's first specialist HR technology consultancy, helping organisations across ANZ select, implement and get the most from their HR platforms since 2017. Our team comes from HR backgrounds, so we understand what you're trying to achieve, not just how the technology works.

We're vendor-neutral. We work for our clients, not for the software companies. When we recommend a platform, it's because it's the right fit for the organisation in front of us. We cover the full lifecycle: scoping and readiness, selection, implementation, change management, and ongoing support.

HOW WE WORK · THE FULL LIFECYCLE



200+
HR TECH IMPLEMENTATIONS
ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NEW
ZEALAND

9
YEARS AS ANZ'S SPECIALIST HR
TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANCY

TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

WORK WITH US

Ready to talk about your HR platform?

Book a no-pressure conversation. We'll be honest about what you need, what it will take, and whether now is the right time.

BOOK A CONVERSATION

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BASED IN

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