



HR Business Consultants

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

The 2026 Edition



Welcome from Jane



As we approach the end of 2025, it's the perfect moment to pause, reflect, and prepare for the opportunities a new year brings. In this edition, you'll find practical insights, timely reminders and strategic guidance designed to help you step confidently into 2026 and make the most of everything the year ahead has to offer.

Here's what's inside:

- 5 things I'd tell you to do next year
- Measure employee engagement in 2026
- End of Year HR Review
- 4 things to remember this December
- HR trends coming in 2026

As you wrap up the year and look forward to what's next, we hope this edition gives you the clarity and direction you need to start 2026 strong. Whether you're refining your HR strategy, boosting engagement, or planning your priorities, let these insights support a successful transition into the year ahead. Here's to a productive, purposeful and inspiring New Year!

2025

2026



5 things an expert HR consultant would tell you to do next year

December's the time to plan ahead. Get your people strategy sorted now, before the year-end rush takes over. 2026 brings the same challenges: rising costs, new legislation, retention battles.

Focus on these five areas:

1) Stay compliant with 2026 changes

New minimum wage rates hit in April. Employment law is changing rapidly. If your contracts and policies aren't updated, you're exposed to claims.

2) Use HR tech to do more with less

Connect your payroll, holiday tracking and contracts in one system. Let AI handle recruitment screening and onboarding. Three hours less on admin each week is 150 hours a year back into your business.

3) Audit where you are now

Run HR audits and staff surveys now to spot risks early. Find the gaps in training, policies and culture before they cost you. You need facts about why people leave, not assumptions.

4) Focus on retention, not just recruitment

Keeping someone costs far less than replacing them. Invest in wellbeing and development. Employees who see a future with you deliver better work and better customer service.

5) Build a 2026 people plan

Map out how you'll recruit, retain and manage your team next year. Link it directly to your business goals. Know your team structure for March, June and December now.

Want to get ahead and make 2026 your strongest year yet?

Why you need to measure employee engagement in 2026

What's my expert HR advice for you in 2026? To improve employee engagement. Why? Because this will prevent so many headaches for you.

January is typically a terrible month for everyone and employee engagement can significantly drop. Employee engagement is the HR term we use to describe how connected and committed employees feel to their work and the business.

It's whether they:

- ✓ Care about your company's success
- ✓ Are motivated to give their best effort
- ✓ Feel valued, supported and part of the team
- ✓ Intend to stay rather than look elsewhere

If you have employees who aren't 'engaged', you have lower productivity, higher turnover and a team culture that drags everyone else down.

A drop in employee engagement is a really big red flag and an indicator of big problems in the future.

How can we help you?

There's two HR metrics we'd track and benchmark for you:

1) eNPS (employee Net Promoter Score)

This is a quick way to see how your team feels about working for you and helps us to measure employee engagement.

2) Retention rate %

This is a quick way to measure if you have a costly retention issue, typically caused by low employee engagement.

We can calculate these two metrics for you easily by completing a short employee survey and looking at your employee records.

End-of-year HR review

What went well this year and what didn't?

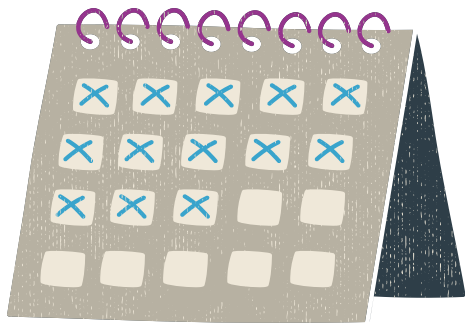
Every business has data from the past year, even if it's just absence notes, leavers or recruitment costs.

We've highlighted 4 key areas to check before the year ends.

What's your data telling you?

Don't just file it away. Use it to spot patterns and decide where to focus in 2026.

What do this year's numbers tell you?



Absence

How many days lost?
Any patterns?



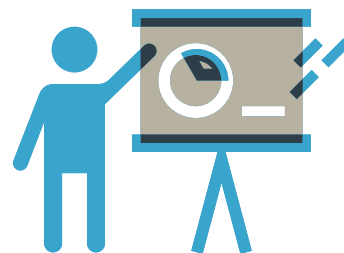
Staff turnover

Who left and why?




Hiring

How long to fill roles?
What did it cost?



Performance and development

Were reviews done?
Training gaps filled?



4 important things to remember this December

December can be a busy month for small business owners and it often brings a few extra people issues to manage.

If you're dealing with challenges this month, here's how to handle them and survive the festive season (relatively) unscathed.

1: Party problems

If someone's behaviour at Friday's event has led to a complaint, deal with it like any other workplace issue: get the facts, speak to everyone involved separately and keep clear notes of what was agreed. Remember: work social events count as an extension of the workplace. If behaviour there affects working relationships, you need to address it properly.

2: Stressed staff

Money worries peak in December. Family pressures build. Some employees feel isolated while others celebrate. You can't fix their personal situations, but here's what helps: check in with people who seem withdrawn, be flexible, where possible, with hours or workload and remind staff about any support services you offer. Small adjustments make a real difference.

3: Monday morning no-shows

When one or two people don't show up the morning after the night out, stay consistent. Follow your usual absence procedures. If someone doesn't follow the right process, address it. If lateness triggers a conversation, have it. Apply your rules fairly across the board, whoever's involved. December doesn't mean standards should slip.

4: Keeping it inclusive

Not everyone celebrates Christmas and forcing participation or assuming everyone shares the same traditions creates problems. The solution: keep work events optional, acknowledge different perspectives and focus on closing the year well rather than one specific celebration. This helps to avoid resentment and keeps morale steady across your whole team.

Don't forget

You can't prevent every December challenge. But you can handle them fairly, keep good records and protect your team's working relationships.

If it feels overwhelming, we're here to help you to sort through the tricky conversations and get back on track.

LATEST NEWS

Digital IDs likely coming for Right to Work checks

The Government has proposed making Digital IDs mandatory for Right to Work checks. While this still needs legislation and consultation, it looks likely to happen in the next few years.

When it comes in, it should simplify the process, though fines for mistakes will still be significant. Nothing to do now, but worth keeping an eye on as plans develop. Getting familiar with changes early will save admin time when they arrive.

Financial stress affecting younger workers

Research shows that one in five Gen Z workers say that money concerns affect their performance at work. It's a reminder that financial wellbeing matters to productivity.

Consider offering practical support: signposting to resources, being open to conversations about financial wellbeing and sharing simple money management tools. Small steps can help to reduce stress and improve focus, particularly for younger team members.

2026 TRENDS...



HR trends for 2026: What business owners need to know now

2026 is weeks away. The changes coming to your workplace can either slow you down or give you an edge.

Here we set out what's actually shifting in the world of HR and whether you need to do anything about it.

AI becomes part of everyday work

Your team might already be using ChatGPT without telling you. They want to know how it affects their role and how you'll support them through changes. Being open about AI helps. Tell them where you might use it and where you won't.

This matters most when: You're introducing new technology or hiring younger staff who expect transparency about AI.

HR tools become more accessible

Affordable HR tech is now within reach. The basics that save you hours of time include:

- Staff book their own leave (no more forms to file)
- See who's off at a glance
- Spot patterns before they become problems
- Set up in minutes, not months

This matters most when: Your admin takes too much time or mistakes keep happening with rotas and holiday bookings.

Flexibility means more than working from home

Your mechanic might want 4 longer days instead of 5. Your receptionist could handle bookings from

home on quiet afternoons. The talent pool grows when you're flexible.

This matters most when: You're struggling to find staff or keep them.

Digital skills become essential across all roles

Your delivery driver uses route apps. Your cleaner logs jobs on a phone. These aren't IT jobs, but they all need basic digital skills now. The same upskilling that helps with tech also identifies who could step up when someone leaves.

This matters most when: You're introducing new systems or worried about key people leaving.

What to do right now

Quick check

- Ask your team what would make their job easier
- Note which tasks waste your time every week
- Think who could cover if someone left tomorrow
- List any skills gaps that concern you

Try one thing

- One simple digital tool (booking system, rota app)
- Different hours for one person who's asked
- Proper training for someone promising

Get basics right

- Write down your flexibility rules
- Explain any tech you introduce
- Plan cover for key roles
- Listen when people tell you what's not working

Making it work for your business

These trends will shape 2026. They won't all affect your business equally, but understanding them helps you to choose what matters.

The businesses that identify which changes affect them and prepare thoughtfully will find the transition smoother. You don't need to tackle everything at once. Start with what will make the biggest difference to your team and your time.

Will your best people stay in 2026?



January is often the busiest month for resignations. When good people leave, you don't just lose skills, you lose time, money and momentum.

We help business owners to keep their best people by:

- Running stay interviews before it's too late
- Putting simple recognition and development steps in place
- Making sure managers are consistent and fair

If you'd like to hold on to your best staff next year, it's worth a quick chat about retention strategies that actually work.

Need a confidential chat?

If you have a problem brewing in your business, you're worried about something or you simply need some expert HR support then please get in touch with us for a confidential chat.

A quick conversation could save you from a very costly mistake and we could give you the clarity you need to decide your next steps with confidence.

Whether you're a new or existing client, we offer a free 30 min chat (without any obligation to buy from us in the future).

Get in touch to arrange.

