



The 9 Must-Have Tools for Your HR Tech Stack

These cutting-edge solutions empower you to be a more effective people leader

Introduction

HR teams have a lot on their plates. Everything from employee development to workplace culture falls within HR's purview, not to mention core payroll and benefits administration. That's a lot of pressure for one department.

Having the right tools in place makes the job easier. Thankfully, there are more HR technology solutions available than ever before. Cutting-edge software has the potential to positively impact every phase of the employee lifecycle.

Call it too much of a good thing. Cutting through the noise and figuring out which technology solutions are must-haves for your organization and its specific needs can be a challenge. What's the difference between an HCM and an HRIS? Should I use standalone solutions for performance and surveys, or just try to bundle everything under an "all-in-one" solution?

Consider this your roadmap to all things HR technology. In this ebook, we'll help you settle on what your company's ideal "tech stack" looks like, even naming specific vendors to consider. Supercharge your employee experience with these nine must-have solutions.

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Applicant Tracking Systems

The job market has never been more competitive. For fast-growing companies, attracting top talent is priority number one. The problem? No matter your size, sourcing candidates, reviewing resumes, and scheduling interviews just isn't tenable without the help of technology.

Enter the applicant tracking system (ATS). This software equips even the leanest HR team with the tools they need to be a world-class recruiting operation.

Your ATS acts as the company's hub for all things talent acquisition. You'll have a bird's-eye view of open roles, candidate sources, pending interviews, and more. Within your ATS, you'll be able to move applicants through the recruiting pipeline, from the initial application to reference checks and the final offer.

Below are some specific features to look for when evaluating an ATS. Note that a growing number of vendors offer diversity and inclusion-focused functionality as well. Some ATS vendors go as far as to anonymize candidate details that could trigger unconscious bias.

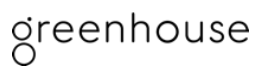
- Resume storage
- Interview scheduling
- Social sharing
- Career page hosting
- Interview question banks
- Automated communications
- Custom scorecards
- Reporting dashboards for offer-acceptance rate, time-to-fill, and other metrics
- Support for anonymized resumes

Don't forget to be mindful of design and user experience when evaluating solutions. Your HR team won't be the only ones with access to the ATS, as hiring managers, interviewers, and even job candidates will use it. Interviewers will log into the tool to submit their feedback or refer candidates from their professional network. Candidates will submit their applications and interview time preferences through the ATS as well.

Tip: Your ATS was built to help you hire top talent. But once you've successfully made it past the offer stage, manually moving their information into your HRIS can be a drag. When evaluating vendors, prioritize those that integrate with your existing systems. That way, new hires' information automatically syncs with your HR, payroll, and benefits systems.

Example Systems:

The ATS segment is among the most active in HR technology, and there are a lot of options to consider. Below are some of the industry's top solutions.

 greenhouse Hire JazzHR™ LEVER



Single Sign-On and Identity Management Tools

Companies use an average of 37 different tools. For HR and IT teams, that's a lot to keep track of as employees join and depart the company.

Using a single sign-on (SSO) and identity-management solution makes life easier for employees, IT, and HR teams alike. Once an employee signs in, they'll have access to all the tools they need. If someone transitions into a new role or leaves the company, your team can remotely and securely update their access.

SSO vendors generally share the same suite of features. At a minimum, they should give employees access to an intuitive portal where all relevant apps are listed. They should also give your HR and IT team a means of presetting access by department or employee type. For example, if your designers all use the same tools, there should be a way for you to automatically give them access without manually selecting each application.

Here are a few other features to look for when evaluating your next SSO and identity management solution:

- Single sign-on functionality
- Multi-factor authentication
- Employee lifecycle management
- Mobile support

Multi-factor authentication is another important benefit to using an SSO solution. Rather than relying on a single password, multi-factor authentication requires a second piece of evidence to verify an employee's identity. This usually takes the form of a second, temporary code that a user can access from their mobile device.

Tip: One of the biggest benefits to having a SSO solution is that it can help streamline your onboarding process. Rather than spend hours of their first week configuring logins and writing down passwords, new hires can hit the ground running and get upfront access to the tools they need.

Example Systems:

Companies today have several SSO and identity management systems to choose from. Here are some industry leaders to consider:

okta G Suite onelogin



Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS)

Today's HR teams spend much of their time focusing on things like employee engagement and workplace culture. Even so, they still need to fulfill core responsibilities like ensuring employees get paid and are enrolled in benefits.

That's the kind of important back-end work that an HR information system (HRIS) is built for. This is where your team will handle a broad range of tasks, from payroll processing to logging employee time and attendance. It's also where employees can update their home address, direct deposit information, and other personal details.

Sometimes you'll hear "human capital management software" or "HCM" being used to describe this kind of system. Historically, HCM solutions covered a broader range of HR disciplines, like talent acquisition. Today, both of these terms are generally synonymous with HRIS.

Here are the core features you should expect from a leading HRIS. Depending on your company's needs or industry, certain features (like timekeeping if your workforce is hourly) carry added importance.

HR

- Easy onboarding
- Profile management
- Time off management
- Custom reporting
- Employee mobile app
- Employment verification letters

Payroll

- Quarterly and annual tax filing
- Integrated timekeeping
- Multistate taxation
- Electronic paystubs
- Form W-2 and 1099 generation
- Automated benefits deductions

Benefits

- Paperless enrollment
- Affordable Care Act (ACA) reporting
- Integrated carrier feeds
- Support for traditional and voluntary plans

Some HRIS vendors go a step further, giving administrators a place to store important documents like handbooks or employee work authorization forms. Others might come bundled with HR consulting or benefits brokerage services.

Either way, be sure to do your due diligence when evaluating vendors, as selecting an HRIS is a high-stakes decision. The system will serve as the company's source of truth for all things HR, payroll, and benefits. Keep that in mind as you integrate your HRIS with other systems, as you'll want to ensure employee information doesn't get overwritten.

Tip: Some vendors purport to be “all-in-one” but are actually separate solutions cobbled together. Their HR and payroll modules might not be integrated, for example, meaning you’ll have to enter employee information twice. Get the whole story by surveying your network or professional communities.

Example Systems:

HR professionals have a wide variety of HRIS vendors to choose from. Let’s help you distill the list. Here’s a breakdown of some industry leaders.





Performance Management Software

Investing in performance management helps employees drive business results and develop in their roles. While most associate “performance” with annual reviews, there’s a lot that falls under the term. Feedback, goals, 1:1 meetings, and even employee-to-employee praise are important aspects of performance management.

While it shouldn’t come as a surprise that those items matter, companies don’t always have a dedicated tool in place. They might be using performance modules bundled within their HRIS — or worse, loose spreadsheets and documents. Learn why that’s not a good idea [here](#).

Having a performance management tool makes it easier for HR teams to build, roll out, and iterate on reviews, 1:1s, and more. The best options are flexible, empowering you to use the approach that makes the most sense for your company. If you want to experiment with ongoing feedback or 360 reviews, you can. Want to roll out company-wide or departmental OKRs? You should be able to do so with ease. The best solutions also offer built-in, custom reporting that allows you to measure and track employee performance over time.

As you evaluate performance management solutions, look for some of these key features:

- Manager, direct report, peer, and self-reviews
- Goal setting and administration
- Anonymized feedback
- Manager summaries
- 1:1s with built-in agendas
- Review cycle automation
- Company status updates
- Employee praise
- Built-in analytics and reporting
- Review questions and templates

Tip: Writer's block? If you're not ready to draft your own performance review questions or need a little inspiration, look for vendors that come prepackaged with templates you can use. Having those at your disposal makes it easier to kick off your performance process.

Lattice is a holistic performance management software that aligns all your management needs, including goal setting, performance appraisals, check-ins, 360 feedback, and more — all in one user-friendly HR solution. Our software integrates with your HRIS so employee data stays in sync.

We've built an award-winning employee performance management system that's easy to use for HR teams, managers, and individual contributors. See how our solution complements your overall HR tech stack and [schedule a demo](#) today.



Employee Engagement Surveys

Going into the new decade, business leaders' top concern is attracting and retaining talent. Those worries might be well-founded, as two-thirds of employees report being disengaged in their workplace and 85% say they're open to new opportunities. Staying on top of employee sentiment and engagement should always be a top priority.

In the past, companies relied on simple, one-off surveys that were easy to build but short on insights. There wasn't an easy way to automate survey send out and results had to be exported and analyzed manually. Benchmarking results against other companies just wasn't possible.

Those days are over. The HR technology market offers a variety of survey solutions that cater exclusively to companies and their HR teams. These tools empower you to run structured, quarterly surveys or more frequent "pulse" surveys to get real-time insights. They allow you to filter by department, manager, or traits like gender. What's more, because historical reviews all exist within the same place, you'll be able to monitor responses over time.

Here are some features you should look for in an employee survey tool:

- Configurable survey cycles (e.g., quarterly, semi-annually)
- Real-time pulse surveys
- Company benchmarking
- Custom reporting by department, manager, performance score, and more
- Pre-built templates and question banks
- Integration with your performance review data

If you're at a loss for what constitutes a good employee survey, check if the vendor has any built-in templates you can use. [Lattice](#) comes pre-loaded with a question bank vetted by organizational psychology experts and professors.

Tip: Consider a platform that manages both employee engagement surveys and performance reviews. Doing so empowers you to gain deeper insight into your engagement data and at-risk employees. For example, are your high performers the least engaged? Do they feel included in company culture? These added insights could help you get ahead of costly turnover and help employees do their best work.

Lattice makes it easy for your HR team to build surveys, collect feedback, and drive results. We're the first employee engagement software that integrates with employee performance data, making Lattice your all-in-one talent management and real-time feedback system. [Schedule a demo](#) and see how Lattice empowers your team to engage and inspire employees.



Communication Tools

We all want to stay in the loop. Messaging and communication tools help everyone stay connected, no matter how large or distributed your team is.

A messaging platform like Slack is an extension of your company's culture. It's where teams can discuss ideas and make suggestions on the fly, without getting bogged down by long email chains. It's also where remote workers can easily connect to other employees.

Depending on your performance tool, you may also be able to give feedback within Slack. Lattice's feedback and praise software integrates with Slack, so users don't have to log into a separate system to see what's been written. Integrating your performance and communication tools can also help employees across departments see what their peers are working on, making even the largest organizations feel small.

Tip: Tools like Slack do a great job of fostering a sense of community. Peers can connect in channels to discuss mutual interests or hobbies, share lighthearted updates with the broader team, and more. This benefit is particularly important to satellite offices and remote workers, who no longer need to feel like they're on the outside looking in.

Example Systems:

Here are a few communication tools that are worth looking into:





Travel and Expense Management Platforms

Today's employees aren't tied to their desks. There's a good chance that members of your team need to travel, be it for client meetings or to visit satellite offices. Hotel and airfare costs can quickly add up and waiting for reimbursements can be a financially risky proposition for employees.

Travel management platforms allow employees and even job applicants to book business travel without using their own credit cards. From within the platform, your team can easily browse through options that fit within your company's budget. Because the tool is connected to a corporate card, employees never have to worry about incurring upfront costs themselves. In cases where they need help with a flight change or cancellation, most platforms come bundled with 24/7 assistance.

Here are some key features to look for:

- Configurable travel policies and maximums
- Reporting on travel spend
- 24/7 concierge support
- Custom fields to organize expenses by departments or business units
- iOS and Android mobile app

Still, there are non-travel related occasions where employees might have to temporarily foot the bill, as can happen when hailing a taxi or paying a client's dinner tab. In cases like these, an expense management tool can bridge the gap. Built-in receipt scanning, expense cards, and even chat support make it easy for employees to get reimbursed quickly and without hassle.

Tip: Many travel and expense management tools integrate with your HRIS, meaning that new hires can be automatically added to the system on their first day. These tools can also be accessed from your company's SSO and identity management solutions.

Example Systems:

HR professionals and finance teams have a variety of travel and expense vendors to choose from. Here are some industry leaders.

TripActions



Expensify

SAP Concur





Learning Management Systems and Coaching Services

Today's employees are looking for meaningful work that not only pays the bills but helps them grow their careers. A LinkedIn survey found that 94% of employees would stay at their companies longer if they invested in their professional development.

Implementing a learning management solution (LMS) can help your team hone the skills they need for their current role and whatever comes next. These tools connect employees with interactive courses, videos, and even podcasts structured to develop professional skills. An LMS also gives your HR team the ability to customize training course content by role, department, and other criteria. You'll also be able to monitor participation and overall course engagement.

Here are a few features to look for when considering an LMS:

- Configurable learning tracks
- “Gamification” through points and leaderboards
- Customizable interface
- User engagement monitoring
- Custom reporting and analytics
- HRIS integration

In addition to traditional LMS features, a number of vendors also offer coaching services. Employees get paired with a dedicated coach or behavioral scientist to help them become better leaders, managers, or even public speakers. That could come in handy, as nearly half of all newly-promoted leaders fail within their first 18 months.

Example Systems:

Learning management systems and coaching services can help you invest in your employees’ development and foster new leaders. Here are some of the industry’s top vendors:

SAP Litmos 

LifeLabs⁷
Learning

 degreed.

 LUMITY

BetterUp 

 TORCH



Rewards and Recognition Tools

Rewarding employees for a job well done goes beyond traditional compensation. And in a market where employees and job candidates have the upper hand, it's never been more important to ensure top performers feel recognized.

That's where rewards and recognition vendors come in. Using one of these, employees will be able to reward their peers for a job well done. These rewards might come in the form of a gift card, company swag, corporate discounts, or charitable donation. Some vendors even feature more experiential rewards, like scuba diving trips, photography lessons, and glass blowing classes.

Some vendors take an entirely different approach, making it easy for companies to set up monthly stipends for employees. Sometimes called "lifestyle spending accounts," these can be used to pay for learning and development, gym memberships, or even just lunch. These accounts allow you to manage employee perks efficiently and from a single platform.

Rewards and recognition tools vary widely in their approach. That said, here are a few features to look for when evaluating vendors:

- Engaging “social feeds” for sharing recognition
- Gift cards and charitable donations
- Experiential rewards
- A “points” system where kudos can be redeemed for rewards
- Concierge service for employees
- Customizable lifestyle spending accounts and pay cards

As you consider your options, be sure to confirm if they integrate with your existing HR software. That’ll make it easy to maintain an accurate list of users as employees join or depart your company. Recognizing new hires is also a great way to put some pep in their step on day one.

Tip: Sometimes even just a little public recognition goes a long way. Lattice’s praise feature makes it easy for peers to acknowledge each other’s work and celebrate wins with the whole company. Authors can even tie praise to specific company values.

Example Systems:

Unlike some of the other tools mentioned in this ebook, rewards and recognition vendors vary widely in their approach. Some offer experiential rewards while others just serve as perk-based debit cards. Here are some solutions you should consider:



Conclusion

The HR technology landscape is crowded with solutions that represent every touchpoint of the employee experience. ATS vendors help you get all-star talent through the door — and performance management software helps them grow. Thanks to technology, even small HR teams don't have to feel overwhelmed.

Let's make it even easier. Lattice empowers you to check two boxes at once: performance management and employee surveys. By combining these two critical functions, we give you access to insights you wouldn't otherwise have. Are your high performers in danger of leaving? Are certain teams feeling less connected to your culture? Our software integrates with the other tools you love using, including your SSO solution and HRIS.

Developing engaged and high performing teams is priority number one for your HR team. Our HR software, complemented by the rest of your tech stack, empowers you to deliver. See Lattice in action and [schedule a demo](#) today.