



A Monthly Guide for People Leaders

15Five's 2026 Strategic HR Calendar



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Introduction

As people leaders, we start every year by asking “Where can our work make the greatest impact?”

Not more activity, not more programs—impact.

This calendar is meant to be your partner in that work. Each month highlights one essential lever of performance like goal clarity, engagement, manager effectiveness, compensation, AI adoption, and data literacy. The organizations that outperform their peers are the ones that treat these practices as disciplines, not one-time initiatives.

Every month includes practical steps you can implement right away, with or without a big team or budget. My hope is that this becomes something you refer back to throughout the year to keep you grounded in the work that actually drives results.

Here’s to a year of clarity, smarter decisions, and stronger managers because when we support our people well, the business follows.



Karina Young
VP of People, 15Five



January

The new year brings fresh energy and possibilities. But instead of making resolutions that fade by February, let's focus on building something that lasts: a performance system that actually connects what people do every day to what your business needs to achieve.

This month is about setting up the foundations that will carry you through 2026. Start by syncing your HRIS data with 15Five to create your baseline metrics. Where does engagement stand today? How are your teams performing? What's your current manager effectiveness score? You can't improve what you don't measure, and January is the perfect time to establish your starting point.

RESOURCES

[OKRs vs. SMART Goals: How They Differ and When to Use Each](#)

[Inspiring Team Success: How to Align Employees With Company Goals](#)

This Month: Make Goals Matter

When people understand how their work connects to company success, engagement goes up, performance improves, and retention gets stronger. But too many organizations still set goals in isolation, hoping somehow they'll magically align.

This year, try something different. Work with your leadership team to identify two organizational outcomes you want to move by Q2. Not ten. Not five. Just two.

Then create draft action plans that show exactly how different teams will contribute to those outcomes. When managers can see the direct line from their team's work to company goals, they can help their people create objectives that feel both meaningful and achievable. Use engagement and performance baselines to identify which outcomes will create the biggest impact by Q2.

January Priorities

- Set up your HRIS sync and establish baseline metrics for engagement, manager effectiveness, and performance
- Define two organization-level outcomes to improve by Q2
- Create draft action plans with clear team contributions
- Enable weekly 1:1s and check-in cadences for all managers
- Schedule your Q1 engagement survey



January

JAN 1
New Year's Day

JAN 8
Clean Off Your Desk Day

JAN 19
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

JAN 21
Thank Your Mentor Day

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February

February is Black History Month, making it a time to reflect on and work to better understand the experiences of your Black employees. While more organizations have created more space for discussions about race in the workplace, we have a long way to go to create truly inclusive work cultures and equal opportunities for Black employees.

As Stephanie Creary wrote in the [Harvard Business Review](#), “To support your Black colleagues, amplify their experiences—the good and the bad. Recommend them for highly visible opportunities. Volunteer to provide them with feedback on their work. Introduce them to influential colleagues. Openly acknowledge their accomplishments to others. Reward them for doing DEI work alongside their formal work. And most of all, share their more challenging experiences with those who have the capacity to create systemic change.”

What investments will your organization make in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in 2026? It's important that DEIB efforts aren't treated as temporary projects but as long-term initiatives that bring about real systemic change.

This Month: Build AI Readiness Across Your Organization

AI is showing up everywhere, but most organizations don't have clear expectations for how it should be used. HR is uniquely positioned to lead the way because HR understands both the people side and the process side of work. You already manage policies, workflows, communication norms, and change management. Those same skills are what organizations need to introduce AI safely and consistently.

Before AI can be used responsibly across your organization, employees need to understand what AI is good at, where human judgment must remain central, and how to experiment safely without creating risk or confusion.

This month is about putting lightweight, practical structure around something your teams are already doing: using AI day to day. HR can help the organization decide where AI actually adds value, where human judgment has to stay central, and how to ensure people use AI in ways that reduce workload instead of creating more cleanup.

This month is about building that foundation. Good AI practices depend on three things: a culture where people feel safe trying new tools, processes that are clear enough for AI to follow, and shared expectations about how AI supports real business outcomes.

Focus on practical AI applications that make an immediate difference. Think about where AI can support your organization, like helping managers write more objective performance reviews, using predictive analytics to identify which engagement drivers matter most, or providing real-time coaching support during difficult conversations. Tools like AI-assisted review writing and predictive impact models are becoming standard in modern HR tech stacks.

Focus on practical AI applications that make an immediate difference. Think about where AI can support your organization, like helping managers write more objective performance reviews, using predictive analytics to identify which engagement drivers matter most, or providing real-time coaching support during difficult conversations. Tools like AI-assisted review writing and predictive impact models are becoming standard in modern HR tech stacks.

Building AI Literacy Across Management

Your managers don't need to become AI experts, but they do need to understand how AI can support their work. Start with a pilot group – perhaps first-time managers who could benefit from AI coaching support, or experienced leaders ready to experiment with predictive analytics.

If you're using AI coaching tools like Kona, measure whether manager confidence improves. If you implement AI-assisted reviews, track feedback quality. The key is starting small, measuring impact, and scaling what works. Schedule your Manager Effectiveness Survey for March to establish baselines.

The goal isn't to automate management. It's to augment human capabilities and help managers spend less time on administrative tasks and more time on what matters: developing their people, removing obstacles, and building high-performing teams.

February Priorities

- Choose 1–2 predictable, low-risk HR tasks (like summarizing open-text feedback or drafting internal communication and make them approved AI use cases.
- Select pilot groups for AI initiatives
- Establish measurement baselines for any AI implementations
- Check out [Kona Coach for AI manager coaching](#)
- Meet with legal and IT to align on privacy, approved tools, and how AI output will be reviewed before larger rollout.
- Brief your CEO or executive sponsor on why you're starting with focused, well-scoped use cases instead of broad adoption.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

[Join us for HR Superstars Summit Live on February 11th for real conversations about AI in HR](#)

RESOURCES

[AI Is Here—Now What?](#)

[How to Convince Your Legal Team and CEO to Get Started With AI](#)



February

FEB 1
First Day of Black History Month

FEB 2
Groundhog Day;
Deadline to give employees W-2s and 1099s
Deadline to file Form 941 for Q4 2025

FEB 4
Rosa Parks Day

FEB 14
Valentine's Day

FEB 16
President's Day

FEB 17
Ramadan begins

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March

Did you know women today still earn just 82 cents for every dollar men make? Despite the progress we've made in the past 100+ years, many women remain unable to achieve their professional goals and are underrepresented in many industries and occupations.

This Women's History Month, consider how gender bias may be creating roadblocks for the women in your organization. How many women hold leadership positions in your company compared to men? Do women feel they must work twice as hard as their male counterparts to get ahead? HROD helps to spot these patterns by showing you exactly how engagement, performance, and retention differ between male and female employees, helping you identify gaps.

As a people leader, you can help shine a light on inequality, which is the first step in creating a more fair workplace for all current and future employees. Consider organizing gender equality training sessions, creating policies against gender-biased behaviors, and encouraging company leaders to actively discuss and promote equality across the organization.

This Month: Make Fair and Useful Performance Reviews

A good performance review gives everyone a shared understanding of what's going well, what needs attention, and what to do next. But reviews only work when managers and employees have the right structure. Most issues show up when expectations are outdated, feedback is vague, or managers aren't sure how to write comments that are both honest and supportive.

Start by ensuring everyone is working from the same foundation. Managers should review job descriptions, goals, and past performance notes before they write anything. It prevents surprises and keeps feedback grounded in the role, not in opinion. Then focus on raising the quality of written feedback.

One of the biggest challenges in any review cycle is that managers struggle to capture accurate examples of performance throughout the year. Feedback ends up rushed, vague, or influenced by whatever happened recently. If you use [Kona Meeting Assistant](#), this is the moment to lean on it. Because Kona automatically pulls performance insights from weekly 1:1s, managers already have the context and examples they need — strengths, progress, challenges, and goals — without scrambling for notes. It helps HR ensure evaluations are based on a full picture of performance, not memory or bias.

Finally, help managers end reviews with clear next steps. Whether that means setting a SMART goal, identifying a development area, or outlining expectations for the next quarter, every review should produce actions employees can take.

March Priorities

- Refresh job descriptions, goals, and expectations so reviews reflect the actual role.
- Share examples of strong, specific feedback to help managers raise the quality of written reviews.
- Align leaders on how review outcomes connect to development, calibration, or compensation later in the year.

RESOURCES

[15Five's Performance Review Playbook](#)

[How to Write Effective Employee Performance Reviews](#)

March

MAR 1
First Day of Women's History Month

MAR 2
Deadline to file OSHA FORM 300A

MAR 6
National Employee Appreciation Day

MAR 8
International Women's Day

MAR 10
Daylight Saving Time begins

MARCH 14
Pi Day

MAR 17
St. Patrick's Day

MAR 20
First day of spring

MAR 31
Transgender Day of Visibility

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April

April is National Autism Acceptance Month, a time to promote acceptance and celebrate differences. The neurodiversity movement aims to help people with autism and other neurodifferences lead more fulfilling lives rather than being treated as though they have an illness.

How inclusive is your organization of neurodiverse employees? Read our blog: [Why Neurodiversity Should Be Part of Your DEIB Program.](#)

April Priorities

- Identify top 3 development priorities per manager segment
- Create targeted manager development plans with clear outcomes
- Provide scripts, examples, and short refreshers on essential skills like coaching, feedback, and difficult conversations
- Set aside some time to [Explore Kona AI Coach](#)

RESOURCES

[Setting Strong Objectives for Managers](#)

[15Five's Manager Enablement Playbook for HR Leaders](#)

This Month: Focus on Managers

Managers shape the day-to-day experience of work more than any other role, yet most step into management without the training or support they need. They're expected to coach, set priorities, run effective meetings, navigate conflict, and give clear feedback — all while juggling their own workload.

Managers succeed when they know what great management looks like: consistent 1:1s, structured conversations, clear goals, timely feedback, and the ability to surface challenges early. But skills alone aren't enough. Managers also need habits.

A manager who attends a workshop but doesn't apply the concepts week to week won't see meaningful progress. HR's role is to set expectations, provide simple tools, and create the routines that make good management more automatic.

This is also where [Kona AI Coach](#) can make enablement more scalable. Instead of relying solely on workshops or periodic training, Kona gives managers personalized, real-time coaching inside their actual meetings. It helps them spot opportunities to ask better questions, run more effective discussions, and navigate tough moments with confidence. Over time, Kona tracks changes in behavior so HR can see what's improving, where managers need more support, and how enablement efforts are landing across the organization.

When HR pairs clear expectations with practical tools and in-the-flow support, managers build competence faster, teams feel more supported, and performance improves across the board.



April

APR 1
First Day of National Autism Acceptance Month,
April Fool's Day; Passover begins

APR 5
Easter Sunday

APR 7
World Health Day

APR 11
National Pet Day

APR 15
Tax Day

APR 19
SHRM Talent Conference & Expo begins

APR 22
Earth Day
Administrative Professionals Day

APR 23
Take Your Kids to Work Day

APR 24
Arbor Day

APR 30
Deadline to file IRS form 941 for Q1 2026

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May

It's Mental Health Awareness Month, and for HR leaders, this is a critical time to prioritize mental health, make resources accessible to employees, and reduce the stigma of getting help when it's needed. Workplace stress plays a huge role in our mental health. [A study by UKG](#) found that a person's manager has more influence on their mental health than their doctor or therapist, and an equal impact as their spouse.

May is also Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, and unfortunately, Asian Americans are 50% less likely than other racial groups to seek mental health services. As Dr. Brandon Ito shared in an article for [UCLA Health](#), "We know that within the Asian American populations, the stigma around mental health is really significant. Asian Americans are more likely to be fearful about a diagnosis or accessing mental health services. They worry about it affecting their jobs or their ability to maintain employment, and also the perception among their peers."

This Month: Address Psychological Safety

Psychological safety means people can speak up with ideas, concerns, questions, and mistakes without worrying about negative consequences. It's not about being soft or avoiding accountability. It's about removing the fear that keeps teams silent.

When psychological safety is low, information gets buried, issues surface too late, and employees take fewer risks. When it's high, people raise problems early, ask for help sooner, share ideas more freely, and learn faster.

Micro-Actions, Major Impact

A few behaviors matter more than anything else. First, managers need a consistent way to respond when someone brings them bad news or admits a mistake. The fastest way to shut down honesty is to react with blame. The fastest way to build safety is to respond with curiosity: "Thanks for flagging this, let's look at what happened and what you need next."

Second, managers need to build the habit of inviting input. People rarely volunteer concerns at random; they speak up when they're asked good questions. Even one or two prompts like "What feels unclear right now?" or "What risks aren't we talking about yet?" can shift the entire dynamic of a team.

Finally, psychological safety requires clarity. If someone doesn't know the expectations, the priorities, or what "good work" looks like, they won't take risks because they don't know the boundaries.



May Priorities

- Give managers a simple “mistake response script” they can use to replace blame with curiosity.
- Share a short guidance sheet on clarifying expectations so employees aren’t guessing what success looks like.
- Train managers to pair direct feedback with forward-looking next steps, so criticism doesn’t shut down honesty.
- Create safe spaces for honest feedback

RESOURCES

[Creating Psychological Safety Through HR Leadership](#)

[How Leaders Can Create Psychological Safety In The Workplace](#)



May

MAY 1

First Day of Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Month, First Day of Mental Health Awareness Month, May Day

MAY 4

Star Wars Day

MAY 5

Cinco de Mayo

MAY 10

Mother's Day

MAY 20

International Human Resources Day

MAY 25

Memorial Day

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June

Happy Pride Month! While the spirit of LGBTQ+ pride should extend all year long, June is an excellent time to renew your organization's commitment to inclusivity. Prioritizing inclusivity strengthens teams, enhances collaboration, and fosters innovation by ensuring that every voice is heard.

Carve out some dedicated time this month to review your policies, communications, and job postings for inclusive language. Check your job postings and employee communications for inclusive use of pronouns and scan for gendered terms.

These small but impactful changes can help create an environment of belonging.

This Month: Evaluate your Compensation Strategy

Compensation is one of the biggest drivers of trust in an organization and one of the fastest ways to lose it. Employees want to know that pay decisions are made consistently, based on clear criteria, and aligned with the organization's goals.

Many organizations intend to pay fairly but haven't clearly documented how decisions are made or what the company prioritizes — market competitiveness, performance differentiation, internal equity, or some combination of the three.

Compensation can't be fair if roles, expectations, and levels are inconsistent across teams. Pay equity hinges on having consistent, documented role definitions and performance criteria. Updating leveling now makes calibration and merit decisions clearer later and reduces the risk of inequities that emerge when managers design roles independently. Clear expectations here help avoid confusion when the compensation cycle begins.

The CFO Partnership

Your CFO needs to be your ally in compensation decisions. They care about retention (because turnover is expensive), performance (because it drives revenue), and fairness (because lawsuits are costly). Frame your compensation strategy in terms they understand: ROI, risk mitigation, and competitive advantage.

Use your performance ratings to inform calibration sessions. Build reward recommendations based on actual contribution, not just tenure or negotiation skills. And most importantly, prepare managers to have honest compensation conversations with their teams.

June Priorities

- Complete mid-year performance reviews
- Run compensation analysis with equity lens
- Conduct calibration sessions with leadership
- Build pay-for-performance recommendations
- Train managers on compensation conversations
- Partner with finance on budget planning

RESOURCES

[15Five's Compensation Playbook](#)

[Compensation Planning Based On Performance](#)

June

JUN 1
First Day of Pride Month

JUN 5
National Donut Day

JUN 14
Flag Day

JUN 16
SHRM Annual Conference begins

JUN 19
Juneteenth

JUN 20
World Refugee Day

JUN 21
Fathers Day
First day of summer

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July

Did you know people with disabilities have lower rates of employment than the general population? If your organization isn't hiring people with disabilities, you're missing out on a huge pool of high-potential talent.

Many workers with disabilities have highly sought-after competencies like adaptability and problem-solving skills that can give your company a competitive edge. In fact, companies that are leaders in disability inclusion are 25% more productive than their competitors, according to Accenture. This Disability Pride Month, think about how your team can be more intentional about hiring people with disabilities and making work tasks more accessible for all employees.

This Month: Focus on Building Sustainable Systems for Self-Care

HR's work has always involved people, but the emotional complexity of the role has expanded far beyond traditional expectations. HR leaders are holding more than policies and programs — they're holding people's fears, frustrations, burnout, and uncertainty. The last few years have accelerated this shift, turning HR into a blend of caregiver, strategist, mediator, counselor, and crisis manager, often all at once.

Why HR Burnout Is So Prevalent (and So Often Invisible)

HR has evolved into a multi-function role. Today's HR leaders are part IT, part finance, part therapist, part strategist.

Compassion fatigue and caring for others all day can erode your ability to feel care. Emotional exhaustion reduces empathy, which makes the job even harder.

HR is often expected to deliver difficult decisions they didn't make — layoffs, policy changes, reorganizations — and manage the emotional fallout alone. When organizational challenges can't be clearly assigned, they get dropped into HR's lap. Lack of role clarity and the "catch-all" nature of the job are major contributors to HR burnout.

How HR Can Care for Themselves and Why It Matters

While empathy is part of the role, you're not a therapist. It's appropriate — and necessary — to set boundaries around what HR can support and where professional help or manager ownership is more appropriate.

It also means putting the right systems in place simplifies that work — reviews run cleanly, follow-ups stay on track, and insights are easier to access — which frees HR from the constant cycle of manual cleanup.

And finally, caring for yourself requires having support. HR leaders handle sensitive, emotionally complex situations that can't always be processed internally. Connecting regularly with trusted peers or communities gives HR a place to get perspective, pressure-test decisions, and feel less alone in the work. When HR has clear boundaries, lighter admin load, and real support, they're able to approach the hardest parts of the role with clarity instead of exhaustion, and that makes the entire organization stronger.

July Priorities

- Identify situations HR is handling today that should be owned by managers, and create simple guidance so they can step in sooner.
- Automate feedback collection instead of chasing people manually.
- Schedule a therapy appointment or mental-health check-in if you've been putting it off.
- Build one physical reset habit this month: a daily walk, a weekly yoga class, or a morning meditation.

RESOURCES

[Overcoming HR Burnout: The Guide to Self-Care for Strategic HR Leaders](#)

[How to Help Employees with Burnout: 4 Ideas for Leaders](#)

July

JUL 1
First Day of Disability Pride Month

JUL 4
Independence Day

JUL 19
National Ice Cream Day

JUL 24
International Self-Care Day

JUL 30
International Friendship Day
National Intern Day

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August

August is back-to-school time for the kiddos in many parts of the world! For working parents and guardians, the school year can be a hectic time—hours spent at the kitchen table helping with homework, driving kids to and from practices and extracurriculars, volunteering for the latest PTO event, and the list goes on.

Are parents in your organization getting the support and accommodations they need to balance it all? If you want to retain your best people, you have to consider all the aspects of life that can impact their ability to do great work. That means providing working parents the flexibility to put their kids first and continue to be A+ employees.

This Month: Step Into Your Strategic Role

HR's role at the executive table is clearer than ever, but influence doesn't come just from having a seat. It comes from knowing how to communicate in a way that resonates with CEOs, CFOs, and other leaders. Strategic HR leaders must connect people initiatives directly to accelerating growth, reducing costs or risk, and enabling the organization's long-term vision.

Building Your C-Suite Partnership

Your executives and board want to see the connection between people initiatives and business results. They need to understand not just what you're doing, but why it matters to the bottom line. Experienced executives are not the enemy of people initiatives.

Set the context, be reasonable with projections, name the specific business impact, and approach it as a partnership. Your CSuite will ask hard questions because that's their job. Don't take it personally. They're helping you make the best decision for the organization.

But you need to speak their language. When presenting initiatives, frame them in business terms:

- Show how your people strategy maps to business strategy
- Present realistic projections (not “1000% returns”)
- Include both upside potential and downside risks
- Connect everything to metrics that matter: regrettable turnover costs, time-to-fill impacts, engagement ROI

Show progression, not just snapshots. Demonstrate how predictive analytics helped prevent problems, how manager development reduced turnover in critical roles, and how engagement improvements connect to customer satisfaction.

Use your HR Outcomes Dashboard tiles combined with downloaded engagement datasets to create compelling visuals. But don't just show data, tell the story behind it. Why did engagement improve in product development? What caused the performance uptick in sales? How did that manager effectiveness training impact team retention?

When You Get a “No”

Sometimes, even with a perfect case, the answer is no. When that happens, find out why. Ask about the objections. Take time to think through their concerns. Then come back with solutions that address those specific issues. Be methodical, thoughtful, and logical.

Building this mutual respect creates the foundation for getting more “yes” answers in the future.

Strategic HR Checklist

- Connect each HR initiative to revenue growth, cost reduction, risk mitigation, or your company's vision and strategy.
- Build CSuite-friendly business cases with realistic projections
- Present both upside and downside scenarios
- Prepare responses to common objections and refine messaging with Finance or trusted peers before presenting to the full team.

RESOURCES

[The Executive Buy-in Playbook: Getting C-Suite Support For Your Strategic HR Initiatives](#)

[How to Get Executive Support for Your HR Initiatives](#)

August

AUG 4
National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day

AUG 8
International Cat Day

AUG 19
World Humanitarian Day

AUG 26
Women's Equality Day
International Dog Day

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September

Strong performance depends on regular, useful feedback, not once-a-year conversations. Feedback that is specific, timely, and grounded in observable behavior helps employees grow, strengthens trust, and prevents issues from compounding.

But many teams avoid feedback because it feels uncomfortable or because managers aren't confident in how to deliver it. When feedback is vague, delayed, or unsolicited, it loses its impact. When it is consistent, well-prepared, and respectful, it becomes one of the most powerful tools for improving performance and engagement.

This Month Focus On: Strengthening Feedback Loops

Managers need practical guidance to build this habit. Effective feedback prepares for the conversation, uses real examples, and focuses on behaviors and outcomes rather than personality. It's delivered close to the event, so it's relevant, and it avoids common pitfalls like the "feedback sandwich," public criticism, or lecturing instead of having a two-way dialogue.

Strong feedback conversations also require empathy. Employees may be surprised, disappointed, or unsure how to respond. Giving them space, checking in on how the message is landing, and following up after the conversation makes feedback something people can use rather than fear.

Teams that normalize frequent, honest feedback solve problems faster, collaborate more effectively, and enter review cycles with fewer surprises.

September Priorities

- Provide managers with examples of specific, behavior-based feedback
- Share guidance on avoiding ineffective approaches like unsolicited advice, the “sandwich method,” or public criticism.
- Offer simple scripts for opening feedback conversations and making them two-way rather than one-directional.
- Encourage managers to give feedback weekly to reduce recency bias and support ongoing improvement.

Strategic HR Checklist

- Connect each HR initiative to revenue growth, cost reduction, risk mitigation, or your company’s vision and strategy.
- Build CSuite-friendly business cases with realistic projections
- Present both upside and downside scenarios
- Prepare responses to common objections and refine messaging with Finance or trusted peers before presenting to the full team.

RESOURCES

[Feedback Loops: The Secrets to Improving Manager Effectiveness](#)

[How to Give Feedback to Employees: 9 Tips for Better Feedback](#)

September

SEP 7
Labor Day

SEP 10
World Suicide Prevention Day

SEP 11
Patriots Day; National 401(k) Day

SEP 13
Grandparents Day

SEP 18
International Equal Pay Day

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October

Turnover has been rising for more than a decade, and employees are staying in roles for shorter periods of time. Some attrition is expected, but losing high performers or critical talent is avoidable when HR has a clear view of what's driving people out and what helps them stay.

Research shows that employees most often leave because they're unsure about the company's future, feel underpaid, experience negative team culture, or struggle in their manager relationships. When these conditions go unaddressed, small issues compound into disengagement, and disengagement turns into resignation.

This Month Focus on: Improving Retention and Lowering Regrettable Turnover

Improving retention starts with understanding the underlying causes, not just the exit interview narratives. Engagement results, performance trends, turnover data, workload signals, and manager feedback all provide clues about where the employee experience is breaking down. Patterns often show up long before someone decides to leave: role ambiguity, stalled growth, burnout, or a lack of recognition.

Stay interviews can surface these issues earlier and give managers actionable insights to improve conditions before they become costly departures.

Regrettable turnover deserves special attention. Identifying who you can't afford to lose and why their role or experience may be at risk helps HR and leaders focus on the interventions that matter. Whether the root cause is pay, career mobility, workload, or manager dynamics, October is the moment to clarify the biggest risks and prepare recommendations for the year ahead.

October Checklist

- Review turnover and engagement trends to identify patterns in why people leave and which teams are most affected.
- Conduct stay interviews or gather qualitative insights from high performers to understand early warning signs.
- Analyze root causes behind regrettable turnover and identify the 2–3 issues most damaging to retention.
- Prepare recommendations for leadership on where to focus next year: manager support, growth pathways, workload, compensation, or culture.

RESOURCES

[How to Improve Retention: 10 Strategies to Support Employees and Reduce Turnover](#)

[What Is a Good Retention Rate and How Do You Achieve and Maintain It](#)

October

OCT 1
International Coffee Day

OCT 10
World Mental Health Day

OCT 12
Indigenous Peoples Day

OCT 16
National Boss's Day

OCT 27
National Mentoring Day

OCT 31
Halloween; Deadline to file
IRS Form 941 for Q3 2026

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November

What are you thankful for this year? Before you take off to gather with family and friends around the table this holiday season, spend time embracing gratitude at work and let your colleagues know how much their efforts are seen and appreciated—and encourage others across the organization to do the same.

Showing gratitude not only gives us the warm fuzzies but is also a valued practice in highly engaged, high-performing organizations. According to research by [Harvard Business Review](#), gratitude improves well-being, reduces stress, and builds resilience. Get tips for creating a culture of gratitude in [The Ultimate Guide to Gratitude in the Workplace](#).

Showing gratitude through recognition

Employee recognition programs can boost engagement, productivity, and retention when done well. Recognized employees often feel more valued, leading to stronger individual performance and better overall business outcomes.

According to Gallup, only one in three employees regularly receives recognition, and those who don't are twice as likely to plan to leave their jobs within a year. Formalizing recognition programs with clear objectives can help solve this issue. Tie recognition to company values and ensure it's inclusive and meaningful.

Technology can enhance these programs by reminding managers, prolonging the impact of recognition, and providing actionable data to improve equity. Platforms like 15Five allow leaders and peers to share real-time recognition, bridging gaps in remote or distributed teams.

This Month: Develop Role Clarity and Core Competencies

When roles aren't clear, employees spend as much time guessing as they do working. They duplicate tasks, miss responsibilities, or focus on the wrong priorities because expectations were never aligned. Role clarity gives employees, managers, and collaborators a shared understanding of what the role is for, how it contributes, and what success looks like.

Clear roles also reduce the friction created by hybrid and remote work. When teams aren't physically together, ambiguity compounds quickly: two people may unknowingly work on the same task or a critical responsibility may fall through the cracks. Defined responsibilities, documented expectations, and shared processes prevent this drift.

When responsibilities, goals, and expectations live in a shared system like 15Five, it becomes easier to keep roles current, connect expectations to performance conversations, and ensure employees aren't learning their role through trial and error. These clear definitions make performance reviews fairer, reduce bias, and help employees understand how their strengths connect to the work that matters.

Strategic HR Checklist

- Review and update each role's responsibilities and expected outcomes
- Ensure managers and employees have a shared understanding of what "good performance" looks like for key responsibilities.
- Document roles and expectations in a central system
- Identify where ambiguity is causing duplicated work, missed deadlines, or friction

RESOURCES

[Guide to Creating High-Performing Teams](#)

[How Role Clarity Can Help Maximize Employee Performance](#)

November

NOV 2
Deadline to file IRS Form 941 Q3 2026

NOV 8
Diwali

NOV 11
Veterans Day

NOV 13
World Kindness Day

NOV 26
Thanksgiving Day

NOV 27
Native American Heritage Day

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



December

Happy Holidays! Thanks for sticking with us for all 12 months. We truly hope this calendar has been useful and provided you with a few actionable steps for this year.

As you plan your holiday party, themed lunches, or other in-office events this month, don't forget about your remote workers, who might miss out on the festivities. Consider a virtual gift exchange or a Zoom happy hour with ugly holiday hats instead of sweaters! There are plenty of creative ways to make the holidays special for all employees.

This Month: Set the Stage for 2027

It's time to compare where you started in January with where you are now. What moved? What didn't? And most importantly, what did you learn that will shape 2027?

Maybe that manager development program had a huge impact on retention. Perhaps the AI tools improved feedback quality but didn't affect engagement. Or, the predictive model revealed insights you never would have found otherwise.

Building Your 2027 Roadmap

Use everything you've learned to build a data-driven 2027 strategy. Which experiments should become programs? Which pilots should scale? Where should you double down, and what should you stop doing?

Reset your action plans and survey cadences for the new year. But this time, you're not starting from scratch. You have baselines, you know what works, and you have the credibility that comes from a year of measurable impact.

Most importantly, you've built something sustainable: a performance management system that connects individual growth to organizational success, managers who are equipped to lead, and a culture where people can do their best work.

December Checklist

- Complete year-end impact analysis
- Identify top wins and lessons learned
- Build 2027 strategic plan with data-backed priorities
- Reset baselines and measurement cadences
- Celebrate wins with your team
- Prioritize the issues that will have the highest impact on performance, retention, and execution in 2027.

RESOURCES

[The Ultimate Glossary of Performance Management KPIs](#)

[How 15Five Can Help with Strategic HR Initiatives and Management](#)

December

DEC 3
International Day for People with Disabilities

DEC 4
Hanukkah begins

DEC 10
Humans Rights Day

DEC 21
First day of winter

DEC 24
Christmas Eve

DEC 25
Christmas Day

DEC 26
Kwanzaa begins

DEC 31
New Year's Eve

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



Get a Demo

Ready to drive extraordinary performance? Find out for yourself how 15Five can help you increase employee engagement, maximize employee performance, decrease regrettable turnover, and improve manager effectiveness. Visit 15five.com/demo to get started.

About 15Five

15Five is the AI-powered performance management platform that drives action and impact, helping businesses and their people thrive. HR leaders can diagnose and address specific strategic issues with easy-to-use analytics on employee performance, engagement, and retention. Leaders become changemakers with strategic action plans and dynamic manager enablement that lives within the flow of work. 15Five combines the power of AI and analytics into a complete platform that includes 360° performance reviews, actionable engagement surveys, action planning, robust goal & OKR tracking, customizable manager coaching and training, and ongoing manager-employee feedback tools like guided 1-on-1s.

For more information, visit www.15five.com