

BUYER'S GUIDE

How to Make Your HR Software Implementation a Success



Introduction

Implementing new HR software is no small task, especially if you're moving from spreadsheets or disconnected systems to a centralised platform.

Leading a digital transformation across a business of any size takes preparation, planning and perseverance. But as you consider the different HR software vendors on the market, it's also important to understand what goes into a successful implementation.

83% of HR software buyers regret their decisions



This stat, from a recent [Gartner](#) report, is staggering and is entirely avoidable.

We believe the process you follow matters just as much as the product you choose. This guide will help you understand what goes into a successful implementation, what pitfalls to look out for, and how to set your team up to get the best results.



Why do implementations fail?

There's no single reason why implementation projects fail. No doubt if there was a sole explanation, failure would be far less common.

Every organisation is different but the same traps can pop up time and again. **Here's what to watch for.**



Poor team preparation

Helping employees adjust to the new system is incredibly important. While training people is clearly vital, helping them see *why and how* change is happening is what drives real adoption. Teams that understand the purpose behind the new system are more likely to embrace the change.

Securing ironclad executive support is also vital. When your leadership is 100% onboard, it's easier for the whole business to get behind the change. In fact, according to Forbes, a lack of C-suite buy-in is one of the main reasons [IT implementations fail](#).

Underestimating budgets

Your budgeting must be truly on point. If you're planning a large scale HRIS implementation, ensure you understand all the costs involved with your chosen vendor and the level of support included.

It's all too common to only budget for the obvious factors like software licences and forget about the internal time and expertise needed to set it up properly. We prefer to talk about planning *realistically and thoroughly*, not simply over-budgeting and hoping for the best. Ensure you have considered:

- Software licensing
- Implementation and configuration
- Internal resource time and project ownership
- Ongoing account management support
- Training and change management
- Any external consulting required
- Provide mental health and wellness support to prevent burnout.

An upfront investment of time and effort pays off with a smoother, more hands-off experience post go-live. Proper planning and foresight will give you the flexibility to handle the unexpected and stay in control.

Not having the right people

Budget is only part of the equation. Do you have the necessary talent to carry the project from start to finish?

Key available talent may include:

- Payroll specialist
- Change management lead
- IT specialist
- Talent acquisition lead
- HR manager
- Leadership team

It's vital to ensure you have the right talent pool (with availability!) to assist the entire project lifecycle. This may even involve bringing in short term outside consultants.

However, this isn't something you do in isolation. A good vendor will work with you, not just for you, so your team feels confident and equipped to own the system once you're up and running.

4 fundamentals of a successful HRIS implementation

"My advice to anyone would be that an in-depth implementation process is worth the time because once you get there, all the work you've done has given you the toolkit to continue to evolve that process."

Emma Liston, Human Resources Manager, Lipman

Gartner's statistics on the potential for HR software regret may seem daunting, but with the right planning, an HRIS implementation will set you up for long-term success. The key is to be deliberate, thoughtful and ready to invest time upfront.

Jatin Puri, Regional Implementation Manager for ELMO in New Zealand, has guided many organisations through this process. For him, success isn't just about delivering a project on time and on budget. It's about equipping customers with the confidence and capability to take full ownership post go-live.

"I know it's been a success when the client is able to demonstrate their knowledge of the product and the modules they've implemented," he says.

"We always want clients to be able to build new workflows and use the ELMO system post go-live without relying too much on their support team".

"We also want our clients to feel confident in running workshops or knowledge sessions with users in their organisation to facilitate the change management for their internal staff members."

So, what makes a successful implementation? These four steps create a strong foundation.

STEP ONE

Identify your pain points



To get the most from your HRIS, start by clearly mapping out your pain points.

While Implementation Consultants bring deep expertise, every business is different and without clarity on your current pain points, those issues may persist even after go-live.

In fact, many organisations still rely on manual workarounds post-implementation because the system wasn't configured with their real needs in mind.

For many organisations, this step begins during the buying or vendor comparison process. It's a smart move that not only helps you choose the right vendor, but ensures you're clear on what you want to solve with your new platform.

Not sure where to start? Our guide [7 Questions to Ask Before Buying HR Software](#) can help you kick off the conversation.

USE CASE

Construction company **Lipman** identified inefficient learning management as a key pain point. Before using ELMO, delivering learning courses to staff was a manual process that was tracked in a spreadsheet and involved printing hard copies. The organisation required software that could automatically enrol new hires in training, track the progress of each employee's learning, and enable staff to self-select training courses.



Review your processes

An implementation can also be used as an opportunity to review your processes and change elements that aren't working.

Implementation Consultants are there to support you with best practice guidance to improve processes that are no longer working. They are the experts you lean on.

A great implementation consultant will lead you through reviewing your processes and can be the difference between success and failure, As Laura Malone, Director of People and Culture for the Australian Dental Council tells us,



"Our ELMO implementation consultant was incredibly supportive throughout the process. She took the time to understand our needs and provided practical solutions that made the transition smoother. Her guidance was invaluable. She was like an extension of my team."

Laura Malone, ADC's Director of People and Culture



STEP TWO

Dedicate sufficient time



There's no way around it. Implementation takes time and should not be rushed.

However, it's important to develop a realistic project timeline that allows you to keep other business activities running smoothly.

To assist, vendors should provide a clear project plan with milestones to guide the process. But internally, someone still needs to carve out the time.

Jatin stresses the importance of dedicating enough time for implementation each week, or ensuring you have someone in your team who can.

"It's important to understand that implementing HR software is a two way street. Anyone considering an implementation needs to carve out time each week for training, building workflows, etc."

Jatin Puri, ELMO Implementation Manager

The exact time requirement depends on both the vendor and the complexity of the modules you choose to implement, but ultimately, it is worth the investment.

"I would absolutely tell others to take their time with the implementation and make sure you fully understand each module before moving to the next. ELMO's flexibility allows you to scale at your own pace, and it's worth investing the time to get it right."

Ellie Hutton, HR Advisor at Neumann Steel

STEP THREE

Involve the right people



The importance of involving the right people in your HRIS implementation cannot be overstated. This includes not only ensuring you have a large enough talent pool to draw on, but that leadership throws their weight behind the implementation.

Without the right skill sets, implementations risk delays, budget blowouts, or worse, failure to launch.

Talk to your vendor about the capabilities you'll need at different stages. Depending on your modules and business structure, you may need support from payroll, IT or data experts.

If you don't have those resources in-house, it may be worth bringing in external consultants. ELMO works with a range of specialist partners who can support you through implementation. [Click here](#) to explore our full range of partners.

Just as important is securing solid executive sponsorship. When leaders are visible and vocal about building a culture of innovation and embracing change, it helps build trust and momentum.



STEP FOUR

Don't forget the change management element



One of the most common reasons your implementation failed? You overlooked behavioural change.

A new HRIS is a major change and team adoption needs to be taken seriously. To encourage maximum uptake of your new software and get people comfortable with the system, think about how you plan to communicate the roll-out and provide training for staff.

To drive adoption, you'll need a simple, well-timed communications and training plan. Your plan should be:

Easy to understand

avoid jargon, keep language plain

Consistent

repeat key messages often

Accessible

use the channels your people already rely on (Slack, Teams, email)

Top-down

get execs and managers talking about the change

If you've got internal comms support, bring them into the project early. They can help shape cadence, channels and format, whether that's a step-by-step guide or a lunchtime learning session.

You should also consider developing a 'frequently asked questions' document, and offer both hands-on training and self-service resources. That way, employees can learn at their own pace.

One common challenge? HR teams get flooded with help requests post-launch because staff aren't confident using the new system. The more you invest in change management now, the more self-sufficient your teams will be later. But rest assured, over time, the behavioural change will take effect as the software becomes fully embedded within the organisation.

A typical implementation process

The digital transformation journey can feel daunting, especially if you're not sure what to expect from a new software implementation. **Here's what a typical HRIS implementation involves.**





Step 1: Scoping and requirements gathering

Start by reviewing your existing HR processes. Look at the employee lifecycle and decide what to keep, improve or redesign. Focus on where an HRIS can deliver efficiency and value.

Example: Recruitment

Audit your current recruitment process with stakeholders. Ask:

- Where are the bottlenecks?
- Who needs visibility and when?
- What's the applicant experience like?

Take these insights into your implementation to ensure the platform is tailored to your needs.

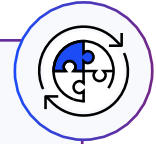
Step 2: Project planning and timeline

With your pain points clearly defined, the next step is to build a project plan and timeline. This will typically be developed in partnership with your software provider.

Your timeline will depend on a few factors, such as the complexity of your processes, the size of your organisation and the modules being implemented. Some vendors roll out modules one at a time, while others take a concurrent approach. Either way, your project plan should set clear expectations and outline key deliverables for both your internal team and the vendor.

You'll also need to carve out time in your plan for learning. Self-paced education during implementation can help your team get familiar with the product early, making go-live smoother and more successful.





Step 3: Configuration

At this stage, you'll work with your Implementation Consultant to configure the platform and establish core functionality for each module.

The focus is on replicating your current processes, but importantly, with the flexibility to adapt as your needs evolve. A solid baseline also allows you to start testing sooner, using real feedback to optimise the setup before go-live.

This phase may also include integrating with your existing systems and importing employee data to ensure a smooth transition.

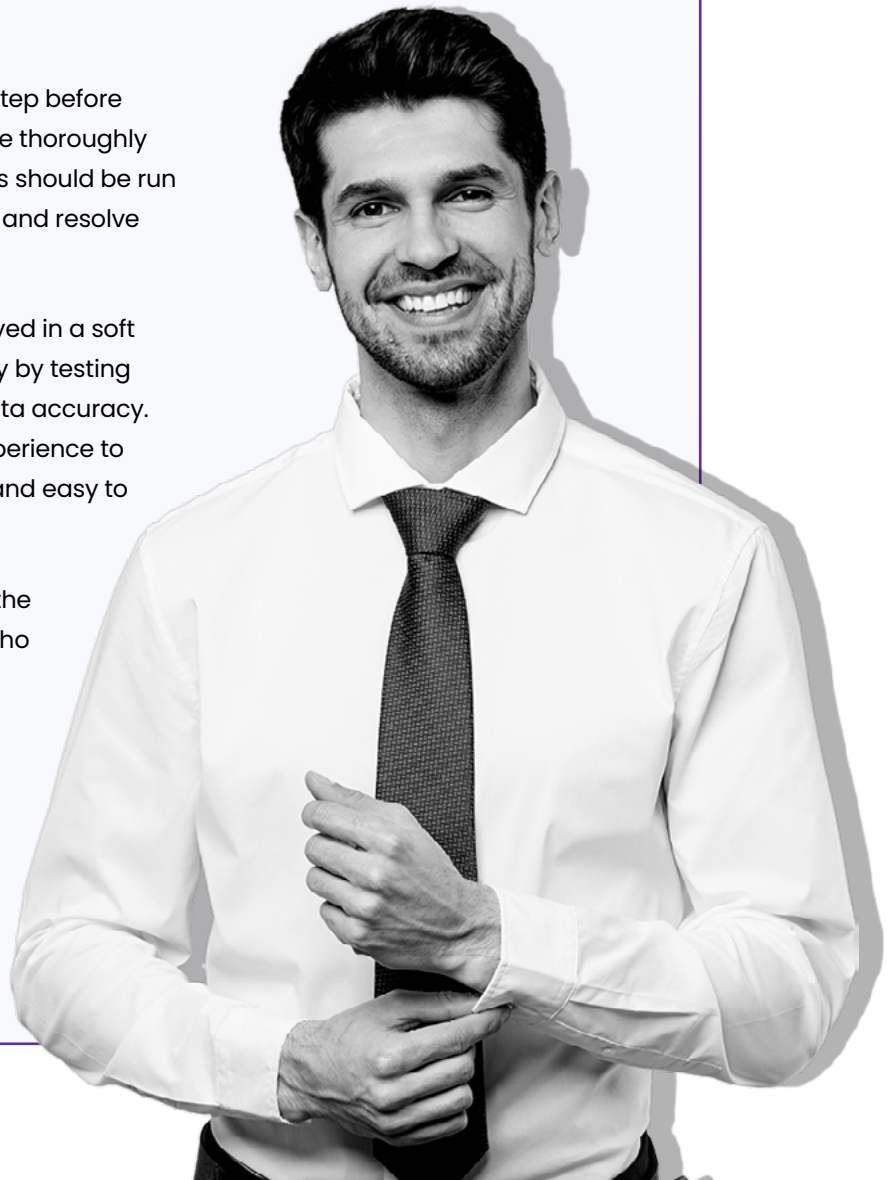
Step 4: Testing

Testing is an utterly essential step before go-live and it needs to be done thoroughly and carefully. All key processes should be run through the system to identify and resolve any issues.

Typically, a pilot group is involved in a soft launch to validate functionality by testing workflows, automation and data accuracy. They'll also assess the user experience to ensure the system is intuitive and easy to use.

Feedback is then shared with the Implementation Consultant, who uses it to address issues and optimise the setup.

This is also when your change management process should also begin to help employees get ready to adopt the new software with confidence.





Step 5: Go-live

Once testing is complete, it's time to launch! You may choose to do this gradually or all at once.

No matter how you roll it out, at this point you'll need a very clear communication plan to help your team understand what's changing, why it matters and how to get started.

Whether it's a Town Hall, an email from leadership, a Slack message or a live training session, every touchpoint should build confidence and clarity. A simple FAQs document can also go a long way.

Change can be daunting, but with the right go-live plan in place and great communication, you'll maximise your chances of success and uptake from day one.

Step 6: Iterate

Depending on the software, you should be able to tweak workflows or add new ones without needing deep technical knowledge.

This flexibility means you can take feedback on board as the system becomes embedded in your business.

Unlike earlier phases, this final step isn't a tick box, it's an ongoing process. Continually refining your workflows helps keep the system fit for purpose and supports sustained usage. Without it, engagement may drop off over time.



ELMO's implementation process

With over 20 years in the HR software space, we've helped thousands of customers across ANZ bring their systems to life.

Our implementation process is collaborative by design. We work alongside your internal team to provide proven methodology, templates, training and expert guidance at every step.

It starts with configuring a baseline module that fits your requirements. From there, we support you with coaching, consultation and practical advice as you embed the software into your business.

That support continues throughout the implementation and training journey, until you're ready to self-administer your ELMO system with confidence.

We take a comprehensive approach to ensure you get the most from your software, not just at go-live, but well into the future.



The right support makes all the difference



Having the right level of support during your HRIS implementation can make or break the experience.

Whether your organisation has 50 or 5000 employees, digital change can feel like a monumental task. That's why it's important to have expert guidance to help you navigate each stage with clarity and confidence.

By preferencing a collaborative approach, you'll stay in control of your system's configuration while benefiting from professional support when and where it counts.

Your Implementation Consultant can walk you through a project plan for each module, helping you map timeframes and track milestones throughout the process. This ensures you stay on course and can monitor project health as you go.

With ELMO for example, you'll also have access to over 200 best-practice workflow templates, so you can get started sooner, without needing to build everything from scratch.

"Initially it was a little daunting when preparing for the implementation, but I really enjoyed the process, once I started. If you follow ELMO's implementation approach you should have no issue fitting it in amongst whatever else is keeping you busy."

**Tegan Vincent, People & Culture Manager
at Viatek**

Last but not least

Leading a successful digital transformation is going to be a challenge, but the rewards for your organisation are worth it.

Armed with the insights from this guide, you should now be better prepared to make your next HR software implementation a roaring success.

Remember, adequate preparation, effective change management and efficient budget oversight are vital to your success. Moreover, the talent at your disposal plays a crucial role throughout the project life cycle.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to implementation and every organisation has its own set of needs and constraints. But by asking the right questions, being mindful of common pitfalls, and sticking to the fundamentals of strong HRIS implementations, you'll set yourself up for a massive organisational upgrade.

At ELMO, we're here to support you. Our robust implementation process, forged by our experiences and continuous learning, is designed to help you reach your goals.

Let's make success the rule, not the exception.



Watch the Gartner webinar to avoid buyer's remorse

Before you make any final decisions, hear directly from the experts. In this on-demand Gartner webinar, Harsh Kundulli, Senior Director Analyst, explains how to:

- Understand the different HR tech strategies and what they mean for your business
- Select the right approach for your organisation
- Build a roadmap that achieves the outcomes you want, not buyer's remorse.

[Watch the webinar](#) to see how you can make implementation success the rule, not the exception.

Frequently asked questions

Q: How do I know if my organisation is ready to implement HR software?

A: Look at the complexity of your HR processes, the size of your workforce and your strategic goals. If manual processes are slowing you down or error-prone, it's a strong signal you're ready.

Additionally, having the necessary resources, executive support and IT infrastructure, are also key indicators of readiness.

Q: How long does implementation take?

A: It depends on your organisation's size, the complexity of your HR processes and the scope of the modules you're implementing. You'll need to consider activities like data migration, configuration, training, testing and more.

A structured plan and regular collaboration with your vendor will help ensure a smooth and timely rollout.

Q: Is data security a concern?

A: Yes, this is a very legitimate concern as it involves handling sensitive employee data. Reputable vendors make security a serious priority and will implement robust measures to protect confidential data. For example, ELMO demonstrates this with its ISO certified and commitment at all levels of business to protect your data.

When evaluating software, be sure to ask about encryption, access controls, backup procedures and compliance with data protection regulations.

Releasing HR's Full Potential

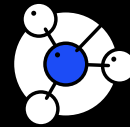
The **only** HR platform that truly fits the needs of mid-sized businesses in Australia and New Zealand.



Onboarding



Recruitment



HR Core



Payroll &
Remuneration



Performance
Management



Learning
Management

Founded in 2002, the ELMO Group comprises ELMO Software, Breathe HR and RotaGeek. ELMO Group is a multinational provider of category-leading people management solutions, trusted by over 18,000 organisations across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

ELMO Software empowers businesses to manage the entire employee lifecycle with confidence. With a modular platform that's backed by ISO-certified security, Australian-based data hosting, and a local support model, ELMO is a trusted partner for organisations seeking reliable, scalable and future-ready people management solutions.



Find out how ELMO can help your organisation.

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