

The logo features a stylized mango fruit icon. The mango is depicted with a yellow-to-orange gradient, a green stem, and a single green leaf. It is positioned to the left of the brand name.

mangoapps®



# Supporting Frontline Employees in 2026

How HR is adapting systems, skills, and support to meet the realities of a distributed and frontline workforce

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# Executive Summary

## **Supporting employees has become one of HR's most difficult responsibilities.**

As work becomes more distributed and frontline-heavy, HR teams are expected to support employees across shifting roles, locations, and expectations—often using disconnected systems that weren't designed to work together.

## **This report looks at the realities behind that challenge.**

It explores how fragmentation across HR, communication, and work systems creates friction for employees and managers, and how that friction shows up as higher turnover, burnout, and slower response when change happens.

## **The trends outlined here reflect how HR teams are adapting in 2026.**

From embedding intelligence into everyday employee support, to improving visibility into skills and mobility, to simplifying the systems employees rely on, these shifts point toward more practical, adaptable ways to support people at scale.

### **Who this is for:**

HR leaders and people teams supporting desk and frontline employees



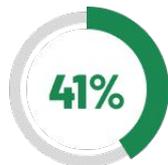
# The Numbers Behind the Shift

As we get into the swing of 2026, HR leaders are increasingly responsible for keeping daily work running—often across systems not designed to work together.

**5%** of HR teams feel fully prepared to implement AI effectively.<sup>1</sup>



**68%** of companies operate with disconnected HR systems, leading to inefficiencies.<sup>2</sup>



**41%** annual turnover remains the average, with frontline industries seeing rates nearly double that.<sup>4</sup>

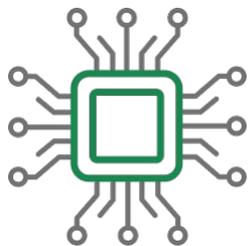
**12 MILLION**

U.S. workers may need to switch occupations by 2030 due to AI.<sup>3</sup>

**Key Takeaway:** Fragmented systems make it harder to support employees, retain talent, and keep work moving efficiently.

# Eleven Trends Shaping 2026

We identified critical shifts redefining people management across four categories:



**Technology  
& AI**



**Talent  
& Skills**



**Culture  
& Work**



**Strategy &  
Leadership**

# Technology & AI

## Trend 1

# Embedding AI Into Everyday HR

As AI adoption accelerates, HR teams are being pulled into deploying and managing AI within everyday workflows. Success requires partnering with IT to deploy ethical AI strategies while urgently upskilling HR teams to manage these new tools.

The Challenge:



**40%** of CHROs cite a **lack of AI skills** within HR as their top barrier.<sup>1</sup>

## Trend 2

# Solving Disconnected Systems

Fragmented technology stacks create barriers to efficiency. Organizations must move from siloed tools to unified systems that connect communication, coordination, and employee support—so work doesn't break down between platforms.

The Challenge:



**68%** of companies operate with **disconnected HR systems**.<sup>2</sup>

# Talent & Skills

### Trend 3

## Internal Mobility & “Re-Recruiting”

With external hiring slowing, companies are turning inward. With more employees needing redeployment, HR must improve visibility into skills and experience so talent can be reassigned quickly—without slowing work or relying solely on external hiring.

#### The Challenge:



**1 in 5 employees** will need to be redeployed by 2030, yet internal hire rates remain flat due to poor visibility.<sup>6</sup>

### Trend 4

## Upskilling as Retention

Continuous learning is now a primary driver of retention. Skills development is increasingly tied to retention, with employees more likely to stay when learning is accessible, relevant, and connected to real work.

#### The Challenge:



**60% of employees** would stay in a disliked job if it offered better skills training.<sup>1</sup>

## Trend 5

# Reinventing Performance Management

Tolerance for underperformance is waning in a tighter economy. As productivity gaps widen, organizations are simplifying performance processes so managers spend less time collecting inputs and more time addressing real performance issues.

The Challenge:

**25%** Approximately **25% of the workforce** is **20% less productive** than the average.<sup>6</sup>



# Culture & Work

## Trend 6

### The Hybrid Work Tug-of-War

The battle over Return-to-Office (RTO) mandates continues. As location mandates continue to divide the workforce, organizations are shifting focus from where work happens to how well teams stay informed, aligned, and supported.

The Challenge:



25% of employees prefer **full remote work**, and rigid mandates are damaging trust.<sup>1</sup>

## Trend 7

### Well-Being as Business Critical

Wellness has evolved from a “nice-to-have” perk to a strategic retention lever as managers are being trained to spot burnout early. Well-being initiatives are becoming more targeted, with organizations focusing on reducing burnout that directly drives turnover and productivity loss.

The Challenge:



Voluntary turnover due to **burnout costs 15%–20%** of total payroll annually.<sup>7</sup>

## Trend 8 Renewed DEI Commitment

2026 requires a recommitment to DEI, focusing specifically on intersectionality and extending inclusion to frontline and operational workers by giving them equal access to information, recognition, and growth opportunities.

The Challenge:

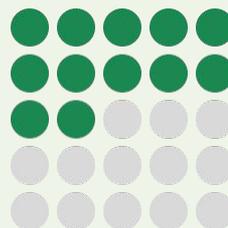


**Only 50%** of companies are actively **prioritizing women's career** advancement. <sup>8</sup>

## Trend 9 Change-Ready Cultures

Constant disruption is the new normal. Leaders must “routinize” change, treating agility and resilience not as emergency responses but as core competencies.

The Challenge:



**Less than half** (47%) of CHROs believe their current culture drives performance. <sup>5</sup>

# Strategy & Leadership

## Trend 10

### CHRO as Strategic Partner

The CHRO role has elevated to a key driver of business transformation. As HR's influence grows, leaders are increasingly responsible for designing systems that enable managers and employees to operate effectively during change.

The Challenge:



**61% of CHROs**

now actively advise CEOs on strategy.<sup>1</sup>

## Trend 11

### Efficiency—Do More With Less

Economic uncertainty is driving a focus on consolidation. With workloads increasing and hiring constrained, HR must reduce complexity and consolidate systems to maintain productivity without accelerating burnout.

The Challenge:



**62% of managers**

report heavier workloads due to staff freezes.<sup>3</sup>

# The Solution

# A Unified Workforce Platform for Frontline Teams

Fragmented tools cannot support the agility that 2026 demands.

**MangoApps** gives managers one place to communicate, run daily work, and support their teams — so work keeps moving when plans change.





# Ready to future-proof your workforce?

Join the forward-thinking organizations using MangoApps to drive engagement, retention, and efficiency in 2026.

[Schedule a Personalized Demo](#)

Learn more at [mangoapps.com](https://mangoapps.com)

## References

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