

The Complete HRIS Buyer's Guide

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of all-in-one human resources information systems (HRIS) and everything you need to know when choosing the right HRIS for your organization.



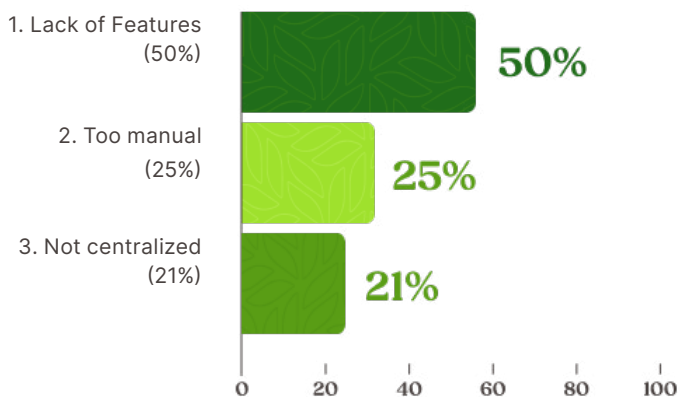
Finding an All-in-One Solution

Not every HRIS can call itself all-in-one, but your top priority should be to find one that is. An all-in-one HRIS is designed to handle the A to Z of HR—employee records, payroll, performance, time tracking, benefits, hiring, onboarding, and so on, allowing you to leverage one system to do your job instead of a combination of systems.

When companies go on the hunt for new HR software, **the most common problems they're trying to solve** generally point right to an all-in-one HRIS as the solution:

Top Three Failings of Companies' Current HR System

These frustrations likely feel very familiar, whether you've been using paper files, spreadsheets, and various HR apps, or if your current HRIS isn't meeting your needs. But the right HR software can help you keep up with your company's HR demands while giving you the time and tools to focus on your people and prepare for future growth.



Benefits of an All-in-One HRIS

- **Simplicity:** An all-in-one-HRIS automates a lot of administrative tasks and streamlines your different HR processes, meaning you can spend less time on manual paperwork or fragmented systems, and more time maximizing your impact on business success.
- **A centralized digital database:** Managing data between various apps and spreadsheets is highly inefficient and requires entering data multiple times, increasing the risk of errors. An all-in-one HRIS with a central database makes it much easier to keep data accurate, control access, and compile reports.
- **An improved employee experience:** With all-in-one HR software, employees only have to deal engage with a single, consistent system whenever they clock in and out, check pay stubs, manage benefits, request tax information, etc. This enables employees to spend less time learning how to use multiple systems and more time doing great work.
- **The potential to grow with you:** An all-in-one HRIS already has solutions available as new needs arise, so it's equipped to grow and scale with your organization. You'll have peace of mind knowing that when your company enters its next chapter, you won't have to go shopping for an HRIS all over again.



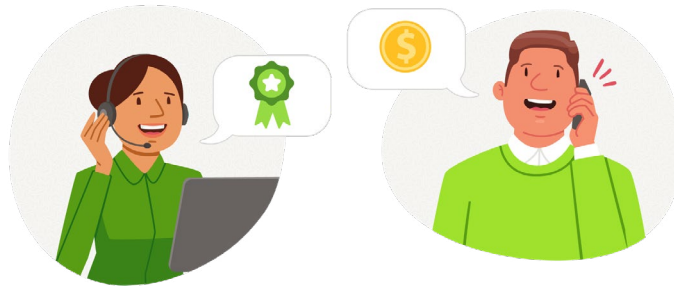
As you look through the different steps in this guide, consider how your choice of all-in-one HR software affects more than just HR. After all, HR serves several essential roles for an organization, including:

- Hiring top talent
- Driving employer brand reputation
- Ensuring compliance
- Guiding performance management
- Fostering employee engagement
- Increasing productivity
- Influencing employee retention
- Supporting employee wellbeing
- Managing overhead costs

With the right tools and features, an all-in-one HRIS empowers you to provide invaluable support to your employees, leadership, and your organization as a whole, helping everyone do great work.



Understanding Needs & Budget



An all-in-one HRIS will affect more than just HR, so you'll want to consider how employees at different levels of the organization will use the software and what they'll need from it. Factoring in the needs of various stakeholders not only helps to get buy-in, but it also ensures a positive user experience for everyone in your organization.

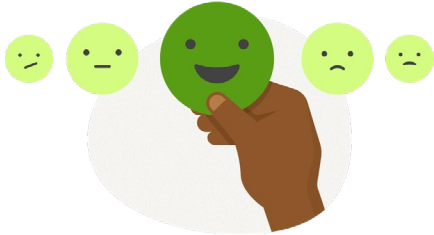
Stakeholder Needs

As you compare different HRIS solutions to find the software that fits your organization best, there are several employee groups to think about.

Employee Level	Potential Needs from an HRIS
<p>Executives and business owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and reporting for business oversight, planning, employee feedback, compliance, and operations • Communication tools for strengthening company culture • Secure and compliant data management
<p>Managers and supervisors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel data, e.g., performance, compensation, hours worked, PTO, contact info • Hiring and onboarding data storage and workflows • Management workflows, e.g., timesheet approvals, review cycles, promotions, transfers • Document storage and signatures
<p>Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel data, e.g., performance, compensation, hours worked, PTO, contact info • Hiring and onboarding data storage and workflows • Management workflows, e.g., timesheet approvals, review cycles, promotions, transfers • Document storage and signatures
<p>IT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data security, e.g., access levels, two-factor authentication, back-up cloud storage, audit trail reporting • Easy integrations with third-party apps • Simple self-service features

The Needs of Individual Employees

Every employee uses HR software to manage information such as benefits, PTO requests, performance reviews, and tax documents. With that in mind, individual employees will need an HRIS with easy self-service features, a reliable communication system, and quick access to important content.



Giving employees a good experience isn't just for their sake—a positive employee experience can also improve business outcomes. In research by **Harvard Business Review Analytic Services (HBRAS)**, companies who prioritize employee experience have higher profitability, resilience, and growth. **Gallup** has similar findings when it comes to employee engagement, which “correlates strongly with positive performance outcomes,” including:

- Profitability
- Productivity
- Sales
- Safety
- Retention

So whether it's an executive who wants comprehensive oversight reports or an entry-level employee looking to review their paystub, every stakeholder's needs should be considered when choosing an HRIS that will benefit your people and the business.

Setting the Budget

Your financial team and executive leadership will likely have a say in how much HR can spend on a new HRIS. While there are many financial factors that might influence your organization's shopping budget, you can help advocate for your HR software needs by emphasizing ROI.

You can start by reviewing the potential savings. What costly systems or lengthy manual processes would an all-in-one HRIS replace? Current expenses might include

onsite or offsite hardcopy file storage, and several software subscriptions, as well as the time costs of manual data entry and training employees on multiple systems.

Additionally, you should account for any expenses related to the risk of errors and security breaches in your existing systems.

Extra Help

Want to look at some potential savings before you start your own calculations? Based on labor and market data, we estimate the average company could save \$94,250 annually by investing in HR software.

[Get the Full Breakdown](#)

When discussing the budget, remember that an all-in-one HRIS also offers strategic benefits that can contribute to your organization's success:

- **Scaling:** A comprehensive HRIS has the potential to grow with you, helping you anticipate future needs and handle shifts in employee expectations.
- **Security:** A central, digital database makes you more secure and efficient.
- **Time Savings:** By freeing themselves from paperwork, HR and managers can spend more time supporting employees and boosting retention.
- **Engagement:** By having better tools to track performance and solicit company feedback, HR can contribute to a better employee experience, making for happy, **engaged employees who are more productive.**
- **Efficiency:** Increased efficiency and employee productivity will help your organization be more profitable and achieve your business goals.

Once your finance team and executive leadership have agreed on a budget, you can begin shopping around and comparing HRIS software that fit your price range.

Customers who switch to BambooHR report saving at least 15 hours a week, which is up to \$27,000 in operational costs per year!

Compare Essential Features

As you review HRIS options and each vendor makes the case for their software package, you'll see many features listed. While many software packages might be called "all-in-one," the feature options will vary from product to product. This may leave you wondering what actually matters most in an HRIS. For an HRIS to be truly all-in-one, there are several key features it should have.

Comprehensive Data Management

Data storage and management is one of the most important functions of an all-in-one HRIS. When comparing software options, look for a platform with comprehensive, easy-to-use data management tools.



CENTRALIZED RECORDS AND DATA STORAGE

A quality data system should provide an intuitive experience for employees, managers, and leadership as they pull and update the information they need. Look for a centralized database that automatically updates records across all software features as you input new content, preventing discrepancies and the need for double data entry.



REPORTING

Whether you're curious about PTO usage, analyzing turnover rates, or trying to gain insight into employee satisfaction, an HRIS should be a one-stop shop for all your HR analytics needs. Look for an HRIS that can get you the insights you need with just a few clicks.



COMPLIANCE

The right system should ensure that data and documentation is accurate, up to date, and complete. An HRIS can also facilitate compliance best practices by providing effective communication tools, such as a community hub for sharing important announcements or a notification system integrated across your employees' preferred messaging apps.



SECURITY AND PERMISSIONS

Due to the sensitive nature of employee data and the obligation to comply with labor laws, an HRIS needs to be secure. Employees, managers, and decision-makers must be able to access everything they need—and nothing they shouldn't. A good HRIS should have industry-benchmark security protocols, such as controlled access levels, two-factor authentication, and GDPR compliance.



CUSTOMIZATIONS

There's no point in an all-in-one HRIS if it doesn't cover all your data management needs. Prioritize finding an employee records system that allows you to add custom fields, so whether you need to track certifications relevant to your industry or stay compliant with your region's labor laws, you can control exactly what to keep on file for your employees.

Payroll, Time Tracking, and Benefits Administration

To make the most of an all-in-one HRIS, seek out features that'll streamline your compensation processes.

- **Payroll:** Payroll underpins your organization's success—not just through compliance with labor laws, but also in retaining your employees. For instance, many employees will start **looking for a new job** after just one or two payroll errors. An effective HRIS will sync seamlessly with payroll software to remove the danger of human error and the time cost of manual entry.
- **Time Tracking:** For organizations with hourly employees, a time tracking system is an essential extension of the payroll process and your HRIS as a whole. Along with looking for effortless sync with your HRIS and payroll systems, other time-tracking features to consider include project tracking, mobile clock-in, and timesheet approval workflows.
- **Benefits Administration:** An HRIS with benefits administration makes it simple to create enrollment windows, approve elections, and set up deductions in payroll. For optimal benefits management, choose an HRIS with automated carrier connections, allowing you to seamlessly deliver data to providers.

Employee Engagement and User Experience

While it's important for an HRIS to address major operational needs like data management and payroll, it's just as essential for an HRIS to provide premium employee engagement tools that help HR attract and retain top talent. An HRIS should also make it easy for both managers and individual contributors to access important information, complete necessary workflows, and feel engaged in their company's digital environment.



EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT

HR isn't the sole owner of company culture or employer brand, but you're often tasked with spearheading and measuring the success of both. Consequently, an all-in-one HRIS needs to feature tools for measuring employee happiness and engagement. A comprehensive software package should include employee surveys on satisfaction and wellbeing, ideally with data analysis that can break down results, inspire meaningful insights, and help you improve employee retention.



EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE

Save your HR and IT teams from extra work by choosing an HRIS with self-service options. With a secure, easy-to-access central data hub, every employee can handle their own HR needs, such as updating personal information or submitting a PTO request. Employees will appreciate getting to directly manage their own records, and the increased efficiency could save your organization hundreds of hours every year.



APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM (ATS)

Modern job candidates' first impression of your employer brand comes during the hiring process. You need an ATS that helps you efficiently sift and organize applicants, communicate in a timely manner, tailor the hiring experience, and smoothly funnel top talent through to the onboarding process. A good HRIS should also make it easy to collaborate, allowing HR to engage more intentionally in equitable hiring initiatives. Additional special features to look out for include e-signatures, offer letter templates, and mobile access.



PERFORMANCE

At bare minimum, an HRIS should help keep performance management consistent across the organization, with formal periodic assessments, rather than a single year-end review. A quality HRIS will also offer multiple customizable review cycle options, giving you the ability to create evaluation cadences based on roles, hiring dates, etc.



INTEGRATIONS

Integrations are relevant to various aspects of an HRIS, but they also deserve your specific attention as you shop for a new HR solution. An all-in-one HRIS works best when it works effectively with all your other preferred apps and software. Choose a system that can seamlessly coordinate with all the tools your organization loves to use, like messaging apps, training programs, or international payroll platforms.

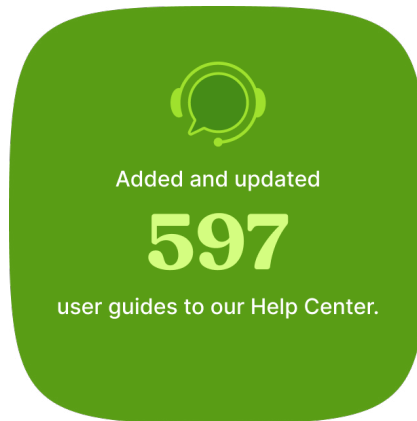


COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Communication is key for a productive HR department and a healthy company culture. Just like an all-in-one HRIS provides a central database, it should also offer a central internal communications hub. Look for an HRIS with extensive employee communication capabilities, such as:

- Engagement tracking on important announcements
- Social intranet for cross-team collaboration opportunities
- Direct-to-inbox notifications
- Third-party app integrations
- Mobile access

In 2023 BambooHR:



Look for Quality Service



When you're shopping for an HRIS, it's not just about reviewing the software itself—you'll also need to consider the quality of service provided by the software company. Your HRIS company should have premium customer support, a perfected implementation process, and an excellent industry reputation.

Customer Service

It's tempting to feel charmed by a positive sales experience, but remember that interactions with sales representatives might not be fully reflective of a vendor's customer support capacities.

As you research a potential HRIS, you should find out:

- What types of support are available? Does the vendor use phones, chat, and email?
- Will customer support be available during your organization's business hours? (Be sure to make note of time zones when reviewing the customer service hours.)
- What are the average ratings and reviews for the vendor's customer support team?
- How does implementation work? How long does it take, and what kind of help is offered to customers? Does implementation support cost extra?
- What other resources does the vendor provide? Do customers have access to tutorials, industry tips, and other professional resources?



“My first customer service interaction was so kind that it put me over the edge. Every person at BambooHR is helpful and kind, and that means a lot.”

Emily White Hodge | Director of HR & Operations | New Moms

Find Out About Customer Resources

Customer support should go beyond a phone number. Look for an HRIS that offers a variety of ways to find answers quickly and learn more about the product.

A quality vendor will also offer ample enrichment opportunities for HR professionals and be eager to share their industry insights. Here are example resources an HRIS company might offer to help you learn more about features and get extra industry tips:



FREE PRODUCT WEBINARS



FREE LEARNING/TRAINING COURSES



HELP ARTICLES



HOW-TO VIDEOS



USER COMMUNITY



NEWSLETTERS



BLOG POSTS

Listen for “We Don’t Do That”

As wonderful as it is to hear that a software is the absolute perfect choice for everyone, the truth is that each HRIS is unique, and some may fit certain needs better than others. A sales representative who claims that a software does everything equally well and is a great match for every kind of organization isn’t being forthright.

For instance, one vendor may appear to have a high ranking on G2, but will actually have a lower score within specific categories, such as ease of setup or quality of support. A sales rep should help you make an informed decision by telling you exactly what their software can do and who it’s made for.

Take a Close Look at the Company’s Vision

Vision and mission statements steer a company and shape the product it makes. If their mission is something you’ll outgrow, then you’ll outgrow the company. Look for a purpose-built product that has a clear scope and direction, and make sure the software company cares about solving challenges that will matter to you today and tomorrow.

Values Count Too

In addition to looking at a company’s vision and mission statement, it’s also worthwhile to look at their values. A company’s values will influence how they conduct business and approach client relationships—consider whether those values align with your own before signing on as a customer.

BambooHR Free Content Library

Our content library offers helpful resources on every major HR topic, free to everyone!

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Implementation

When evaluating an HRIS company's quality of service, the implementation process should be at the forefront of your mind. Implementation is what happens after you buy new software; it's the work of integrating the software into your company's processes and workflows.

In many ways, implementation can make or break your software experience, creating the foundation of user knowledge and determining whether stakeholders feel confident using the HRIS in their day-to-day. It also sets the tone for your relationship with the vendor's support team going forward.

A high-quality HRIS vendor should provide an efficient implementation timeline with clear and accessible support. The implementation process should fit your needs regarding your organization's size, the types of data you're handling, and any customized features you've requested.

During implementation, you'll likely have to go through the following action items:

- Gather and format any new data you want to include.
- Transfer employee data from your current systems to the new HRIS.
- Digitize paper documents.
- Set up employee access permissions.
- Set up workflows and customize functionality.
- Test the new HRIS before rolling it out to employees.
- Train yourself on the new HRIS.
- Train the HR team, leadership, managers, and employees.
- Integrate third-party apps or services.

Before making a purchase decision, review what each of these steps will look like to get a full picture of the implementation process. Be sure to check with relevant stakeholders (such as executives and IT leaders) to make sure the proposed implementation plan will work for your organization.

Implementation Timeline

One of the biggest questions regarding implementation is how long it will take. An all-in-one HRIS is supposed to increase efficiency, so you want to avoid getting bogged down by an unclear or drawn-out timeline.

How long it takes to implement an HRIS depends on many factors:

- The number of employees in the organization
- How much data you'll need to migrate or digitize
- If you need to customize any functionality
- Your data security requirements

Your vendor should be able to give you an estimated timeframe for implementation based on your requirements. Common timelines range from as little as six weeks to several months, depending on the vendor and their offerings.

BambooHR Implementation

At BambooHR, we estimate an initial implementation timeline of only 4 weeks, including employee rollout. We also provide a self-guided implementation option for folks who want to implement independently, at their own pace.

WHO TO INCLUDE

As you map out the implementation timeline, identify the key decision makers from relevant departments (e.g., executives, IT, payroll). These are the folks who'll need to know what implementation support a potential vendor is offering and—once the HRIS is purchased—be involved in the actual implementation process.

PRO TIP: Share specific dates for those stakeholders to keep them accountable and outline what you'll need from each of them to keep the process going smoothly.

In addition to looping in the key stakeholders, you'll also have to think about who to include in a soft launch. When you implement a new software for an organization, it's helpful to start by introducing the software to leadership and management, so that they can learn how to use it and how to help their employees use it.

PRO TIP: By rolling out to management first, you'll save time in the long run, as they can serve as a resource once the HRIS is rolled out to the rest of the company.

RESOURCES AND EDUCATION:

Much like customer service, a vendor's implementation support should include plenty of resources and education.

During the shopping stage, discuss what implementation resources are offered. Find out if you have the option to implement yourself with set-up videos or guides, or if the vendor will assign an implementation manager to assist you throughout the process.

Whatever the options, it should be clear how you can get help when you need it.

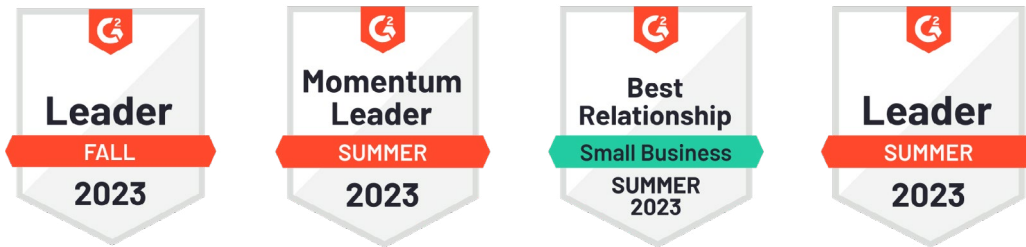
Awards and Reviews

Reputation matters when choosing an HRIS vendor. The company should have positive, first-hand customer and industry expert reviews. Ideally, a premium HRIS company will have also received industry recognition and awards, as this

Always seek out objective reviews of the HRIS you're considering. Avoid relying solely on sales reps and marketing materials—instead, look at third-party review sites where you can hear directly from customers.

Here are some reputable review sites to check out:

- [G2](#)
- [Capterra](#)
- [GetApp](#)
- [PCMag](#) (Though not a third-party review site, this publication features business software reviews from industry experts.)



Hear What Others Have to Say

We have great customers, and they have great things to say about BambooHR.

[Learn More](#)

Take a Test Drive

You wouldn't buy a car without taking it for a drive, and you shouldn't buy an HRIS without testing it out either. There are lots of different ways to try out an HRIS, so check with your sales rep to learn what options the vendor offers.

Try Out or Ask to See a Workflow (Rather Than Just a Feature)

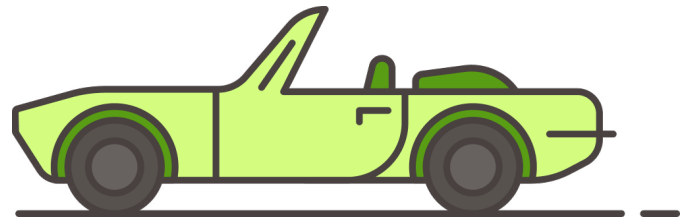
Before you even ask for a trial or attend a demo, ask to try out or see a workflow in action. While it's great to learn about a software's snazzy features, the actual workflows are where the real HRIS user experience takes place.

Trying out your team's most common workflows is a valuable litmus test for whether the product is a right fit. Time how long the workflows take and look out for any cumbersome elements. and get extra industry tips:

Try It Before You Buy It

Once you've tested out a few workflows, it's time to ask for a free trial. A free trial, sometimes called a demo account, is the best way to find out if an HRIS has the right features and is going to make it easier for you to do your job.

During a trial, you can fully explore all the features and see for yourself if it's the right HRIS for your organization. Note that a demo account should be free to set up and easy to use—if it's not, that's a big red flag for a company's quality of service.



Live Demos: Another Way to See an HRIS Up Close

You might not have time to try a free trial for every HRIS you're interested in, in which case you can request a live demo instead. During a live demo, a sales representative will walk you through the experience of using the system.

A live demo can be helpful, but the sales rep will likely show you an idealized version of the product, so to gain a deeper understanding, come prepared with questions about:

The product's ability to handle problems you're currently facing

Specific features you need or want

Features you might need in the future

Take BambooHR for a Spin

Don't just take our word for it—check out BambooHR for yourself with a free trial!

[Try it For Free](#)

See BambooHR in Action

[Schedule a Demo](#)

Compare Costs and Pricing

Naturally, cost will be a factor when making a final decision, especially for stakeholders who are responsible for your organization's financial health, such as your executive leadership and finance teams. As you begin to compare vendors, feature packages, and price quotes, have a finalized spending budget and estimated ROI figures on hand as a reference.

Pricing Models

Discuss pricing models with your finance team to figure out what type of pricing model is best for your organization, particularly monthly versus annual billing.

Here are the most common ways HR software vendors charge for their services:

- Per employee, per month
- Per user, per month
- Per employee, per year
- Once-yearly payment
- Additional fees for add-on features

Before bringing a price quote to stakeholders, be sure to consider every element of the pricing model that might impact your organization, including charges per employee or user, and whether you plan on using features that have additional fees. You should also inquire about any discounts that could apply to your organization.

BambooHR Pricing

BambooHR offers per-employee, per-month pricing, and we never lock you in with an annual contract, meaning that we're committed to giving you a great experience and continually earning your business. We work with you to find plans (and discounts) that fit your needs and budget, whether you're looking for basic automation functions or a complete HR platform. BambooHR offers two package options to get you started.

CORE PACKAGE: Foundational HR automation to move your business forward. Ideal for smaller HR teams with basic operational needs.

PRO PACKAGE: A complete, flexible HR platform. Ideal for scaling companies looking to level up their employee experience.



98%

of customers agree that BambooHR is a positive investment. [Get Pricing](#)

Get Started Today!

An all-in-one HRIS is a smart investment that can bring incredible value to your organization. And with the right preparation, you can be a savvy shopper, choose the right software for all your HR needs, and lead your organization confidently into the future.