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Human Capital Management  
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## **Preparing your HR Team for 2025:** Supporting Employee Wellbeing During the Holiday Season

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As the year draws to a close, HR professionals face unique challenges that require careful attention and planning. December not only marks the busiest time of year for managing increased leave requests and roster changes, but it also presents an opportunity to lay the groundwork for success in the upcoming year. From supporting employee wellbeing during the festive season to ensuring your HR processes are equipped to handle the challenges of 2025, now is the time to assess your organisation's needs and plan accordingly.

The holiday season brings distinct pressures, such as maintaining employee morale while balancing festive celebrations with essential year-end responsibilities. HR plays a critical role in managing these pressures and ensuring business continuity. Balancing the demands of employee wellbeing with operational needs can feel like walking a tightrope, but with the right approach, your HR team can support employees effectively and set the stage for a productive new year.

This document will explore strategies to address these challenges, offering practical tips and checklists to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks while you manage both employee satisfaction and strategic HR planning.

## **Supporting Employee Wellbeing During the Festive Season**

While the holiday season is a time of joy and celebration for many, it can also be a source of stress for employees. Whether it is the pressure of balancing personal commitments, financial strain, or the emotional toll of the season, HR professionals are in a unique position to help employees navigate these challenges.

Here are some key strategies to support employee wellbeing during this time:

### **Promote Flexible Working Arrangements**

Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) have been shown to significantly reduce stress, improve morale, and increase employee satisfaction. Research indicates that FWAs help employees manage their workloads more effectively and alleviate stress associated with commuting during traditional hours. Employees report higher engagement levels when given autonomy, which enhances productivity. Additionally, FWAs foster a positive workplace environment by promoting trust and respect, leading to greater job satisfaction. Overall, FWAs contribute to better mental health outcomes and a more balanced work-life dynamic, benefiting both employees and organisations.

### **Encourage the Use of Mental Health Resources**

The holiday season can heighten feelings of anxiety or loneliness for some employees. It is important to remind staff of any available mental health resources, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs), counselling services, or mental health hotlines. Promoting a culture of openness around mental health ensures that employees know they can seek support if they are feeling overwhelmed.

### **Foster a Culture of Gratitude and Recognition**

Recognising your employees' hard work throughout the year is essential, and the holiday season provides a perfect opportunity to do so. Whether it is through a simple thank you message, team shoutouts, or more formal recognition such as an employee awards ceremony, taking the time to show appreciation can boost employee morale and enhance their sense of belonging.

### **Communicate Holiday Leave and Pay Clearly**

Transparency around leave entitlements and holiday pay is crucial. Ensure your employees understand how their leave balances work, what they are entitled to over the holiday period, and how any public holiday pay will be processed. Clear, consistent communication helps avoid confusion and potential stress.

### Create Opportunities for Social Connection

While large-scale holiday parties might not always be feasible, creating small opportunities for social connection can help strengthen team relationships. Virtual meetups, team lunches, or holiday-themed activities (even online) can help employees feel connected, especially if they are working remotely.

## Cheat Sheet: How to Support Employee Wellbeing Over the Holidays

Task	Done
Offer flexible working arrangements to help employees manage personal and professional commitments	
Promote mental health resources and encourage open discussions about mental wellbeing	
Recognise and celebrate employee achievements to boost morale	
Clearly communicate leave entitlements and holiday pay processes	
Encourage social connection through small team activities, either in-person or virtually	

By taking these steps, HR teams can ensure employees feel supported during what can be a stressful time of year, allowing them to focus on what matters most—both in their personal lives and at work.

## Preparing Your HR Team for Success in 2025

As the dust of the holiday season settles, the new year brings a fresh start. HR professionals should use December not only to close out the year but to lay the groundwork for a successful 2025. From updating employee records to setting strategic goals, there are several key areas that deserve your attention.

Here is how to prepare your HR team for the new year:

### Update Employee Records

The new year is an ideal time to ensure all employee records are up to date. This includes updating addresses, emergency contact details, tax file numbers, and superannuation information. An accurate and current employee database will save time and avoid issues down the line, particularly during tax reporting periods.

### Review and Update HR Policies

HR policies should reflect current business operations and compliance requirements. Use this time to review existing policies, such as those around leave, flexible working, and employee conduct, and ensure they are in line with any recent legislative changes. For example, with increasing demand for remote work, now might be the right time to formalise a remote working policy if your organisation does not already have one.

### Set Strategic HR Goals for 2025

December is a great time to reflect on the year's successes and challenges and set strategic HR goals for the year ahead. Whether you are looking to improve employee engagement, streamline recruitment processes, or invest in learning and development programs, having clear, measurable goals will help your HR team focus on the initiatives that matter most.

### Review Employee Benefits and Wellbeing Programs

The new year offers an opportunity to review your employee benefits and wellbeing programs. Are they meeting the needs of your workforce? Are there additional benefits that could help attract and retain talent? Evaluating your benefits programs now will allow you to make necessary adjustments and ensure they align with your broader HR strategy.

### Implement or Upgrade HR Technology

Is your HR technology helping you achieve your goals, or is it holding you back? December is the perfect time to assess whether your current HR systems are working for you. If your organisation is considering upgrading or implementing new HR software, now is the time to research options, prepare a budget, and plan for implementation in the new year.

## HR Checklist: Preparing for 2025

Task	Done
Update employee records to ensure accurate data going into the new year	
Review and update HR policies to reflect any legislative changes or evolving business needs	
Set clear, measurable HR goals for 2025 to drive key initiatives	
Evaluate employee benefits and wellbeing programs to ensure they align with organisational goals	
Assess HR technology and consider upgrades or new implementations for better efficiency	

## A Final Word

December may be a time for winding down, but for HR professionals, it is also the perfect time to set your team up for success in the year ahead. By taking the opportunity to support employee wellbeing during the festive season, you will foster a more engaged and motivated workforce. At the same time, proactive planning and goalsetting will ensure your HR team is ready to hit the ground running in 2025.

The holiday season presents a unique challenge for HR, requiring a delicate balance between immediate employee support and long-term strategic planning. However, by taking a structured approach and leveraging the right tools and strategies, you can not only manage the yearend rush but also build a strong foundation for the year to come.

So, as you head into the holiday break, remember: with a little preparation now, your HR team will be well positioned to take on 2025 with confidence and clarity.

Happy holidays and here is to a successful new year!

## About Frontier Software

Frontier Software is a leading software and services organisation specialising in digital transformation for payroll and HR solutions. With over 40 years of industry experience, our comprehensive solutions are trusted by businesses across the globe. Our expert team is dedicated to helping organisations streamline their payroll and HR processes, ensuring compliance, accuracy, and efficiency. Looking to enhance your payroll and HR processes? We can help you optimise your existing Frontier Software solution or create a completely new system tailored to your business needs.

“Commitment to customer service is our number one priority.”

Michael Howard, Founder