

Scaling Up? A Guide to Growing Your HR Support with Your Business





As your business grows, so does the need for consistent, compliant, and effective people management. What worked for a five-person team won't work when you've got departments, locations, or shift patterns to manage. That's where growing your HR support becomes essential.

In this guide, we'll explore:

- Why growing your HR support matters
- The types of HR support available
- Key factors to consider when deciding what's right for you

Why Growing Your HR Support Matters

HR isn't just about policies and payroll, it's the foundation of a strong, healthy workplace. But as businesses grow, HR often gets left behind. Here's why keeping your HR provision in step with your growth is critical:

1. Legal Responsibilities Increase

More people mean more rules to follow. Contracts, holidays, sickness, and redundancy all need to be handled properly to avoid legal issues.

2. Small Issues Can Become Big Problems

Without clear policies and support, small concerns can turn into formal complaints or disputes. Good HR support helps to spot problems early and deal with them fairly.

3. Culture Can Be Lost

As you grow, it's harder to attract and keep the right people without strong processes. Strong HR support helps you keep your culture consistent by reinforcing behaviours, policies, and communication that reflect what your business stands for, even as new people join.

4. Hiring and Retention Get Harder

As your business grows, attracting and keeping the right people becomes more challenging. Scaled HR support ensures your recruitment is structured and your employee experience keeps people engaged and committed.

5. Leaders Need Support Too

Managing people becomes a big part of leadership. HR gives managers the tools and support to lead well and stay focused.

Understanding Your HR Support Options

Different businesses need different types of HR support. Here's a quick look at your main options:

In-House HR

In-house HR refers to a dedicated HR professional or team that is employed within your business. This type of HR support is usually an ideal option for medium to large companies with ongoing, day-to-day HR needs.

Outsourced HR

External providers manage specific HR tasks or projects, from contracts and payroll to investigations or restructures. This is a perfect type of HR support for smaller businesses or those needing expert support on demand.

Hybrid HR

This is a blend of both in-house and outsourced HR. You might have an internal HR manager supported by outsourced specialists for legal, strategic, or project-based needs.

HR Software

HR software involves using technology to automate admin and streamline processes like leave tracking, onboarding, and performance reviews. HR software can be useful at all business stages to reduce manual work and increase visibility.

HR Support: What It Looks Like at Different Stages

Small Businesses (1-50 employees)

If you're just starting or have a small team, you might be managing recruitment, handling payroll, and updating contracts, all while trying to grow the business. At this stage, having full-time HR isn't usually realistic or necessary, but that doesn't mean you should ignore it.

Many small businesses choose to:

- Outsource tasks like payroll, contracts, and legal compliance to a trusted HR provider.
- Appoint a part-time HR generalist or admin team member to manage day-to-day people matters.
- Call in external expert HR support as needed. For example, during disciplinary proceedings or changes in employment law.

This approach helps you stay compliant, reduce legal risk, and build a foundation for growth, without an internal HR team.



Medium-Sized Businesses (50-250 employees)

With more employees, things get more complex. Managers may be unsure how to handle performance issues, new hires may receive inconsistent onboarding, and employee questions start to take up more time. What's needed now is consistency, guidance, and structure.

Many medium-sized businesses choose to:

- Employ a full-time HR manager or advisor to lead day-to-day HR operations.
- Use HR software to streamline admin tasks like leave requests or performance tracking.
- Work with external HR experts for strategic or complex needs like wellbeing initiatives or employment law queries.

This hybrid model provides the best of both worlds: a dependable internal presence backed by expert external advice when needed.

Large Businesses (250+ employees)

Larger organisations usually have a fully established HR function. With multiple departments, levels of management, and often multiple locations, the challenges around communication, consistency, and culture multiply. HR must be fully integrated into the organisation's long-term strategy.

Many large businesses choose to:

Have a dedicated HR team with specialists in recruitment, training, pay and benefits, and employee relations

Work with HR business partners aligned with different departments of the business to provide tailored support.

Use external support for one-off projects, such as policy reviews or leadership training.

At this stage, HR becomes a proactive driver of success, ensuring the business has the right people, the right culture, and the right structure to scale further.


What to Consider When Choosing HR Support

Choosing the right type of HR support is about more than just how many people you employ. It's about aligning your people strategy with your business model, growth plans, and leadership capacity.

Making the right decision now can help you avoid costly mistakes later, support a healthy workplace culture, and free up your time to focus on growth. Before you decide how to structure your HR support, take time to reflect on these key questions:


How big is your team, and how fast is it growing?

If your headcount is rising fast, you'll need scalable HR support that can grow with you. Fast growth can bring pressure on recruitment, onboarding, and manager support, which informal processes often can't handle. If growth is steady or stable, a more flexible setup may work just fine.

 **Tip:** Think ahead, your HR setup should be designed for where you're going, not just where you are now.

What's your budget? Is it more cost-effective to outsource or hire?


Budget always plays a role, especially for small to medium-sized businesses. Outsourcing can be a cost-effective way to access expert advice and compliant processes, especially if you don't need full-time support. As your needs grow, investing in internal HR might save time and money in the long run.

 **Tip:** Consider a blended approach. Many businesses outsource complex or legal work while handling day-to-day tasks in-house.

How complex are your employees' needs?

Do you work in a regulated industry? Run shift patterns or remote teams? Face frequent people challenges like sickness or underperformance? If so, your HR needs are likely more complex, and you may need experienced HR support that goes beyond the basics.

Simpler structures may only need basic compliance and admin support.

 **Tip:** Review the last 12 months. What kind of HR issues came up, and how well were they handled?

Who's currently handling HR, and is it working?


Sometimes HR tasks are handed to office managers, finance staff, or directors, but this can quickly become unsustainable. Consider whether the people currently handling HR have the time, knowledge, and capacity to keep up as the business grows.

 **Tip:** Consider external support. This can ease the load, upskill your team, or offer specialist help when needed.

Do you need daily support or just occasional advice?

Some businesses need an HR presence embedded in their team. Others need a proactive presence involved in everything from staff engagement to leadership development.

Think about how hands-on you want your HR support to be and choose a setup that gives you the right level of involvement and flexibility.

 **Tip:** Think about whether you want HR to be strategic, reactive, or operational. The clearer you are on this, the easier it will be to find the right fit.

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