

The 2026 Radical Simplification Checklist

A quick way to spot where complexity may be holding HR — and the business — back.



JOB ARCHITECTURE

- Roles are frequently re-explained because titles and levels don't mean the same thing across teams;
- Career progression relies more on exceptions than on a clear structure;
- There is a push to incorporate skill-based frameworks, but job family frameworks are not clear and have too many single incumbent role profiles;
- AI has changed how work gets done, but role design hasn't caught up.

COMPENSATION

- Managers struggle to explain pay or equity decisions with confidence;
- Pay decisions feel technically fair but hard to justify in practice;
- Equity is poorly understood and undervalued;
- Rewards programs have expanded over time without being simplified or retired.

HR OPERATING MODEL & PROCESSES

- HR relies on workarounds to keep things moving;
- Core processes (promotions, role changes, pay adjustments) don't work end-to-end;
- Systems produce more data than decisions;
- AI has been added, but the operating model hasn't been rethought.

DAY-TO-DAY LEADERSHIP

- Managers spend more time navigating systems than leading people;
- Expectations of managers have grown without removing anything;
- Tools meant to "enable" managers have added work instead of capacity;
- Difficult conversations are avoided because processes make them harder, not easier.

AI & PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

- We're still figuring out our AI strategy and are worried about being behind;
- Multiple AI tools have been added over time, and it's no longer clear what each one is meant to do or where they overlap;
- AI tools don't connect well with existing systems, creating duplication, manual work, or inconsistent outputs;
- Efficiency gains were promised, but are hard to point to in practice;
AI outputs often generate more data, not clearer decisions.

Radical simplification starts with noticing, not fixing everything at once. Need a helping hand? Get in touch - we are happy to help!