



# The **Ultimate** Guide to AI in HR



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# Intro

## AI Won't Replace HR Leaders. But HR Leaders Who Use AI Will Outperform Those Who Don't.

You already know AI is here. You see it in your LinkedIn feed, your vendor pitches, your CEO's forwarded articles.

But knowing AI exists and knowing what to do about it?

Two completely different things.

Right now, you might be stuck between two extremes.

Some teams are racing to implement every AI tool they can find, with zero guardrails and even less strategy.

Others are paralyzed, waiting for perfect policies and crystal-clear ROI before taking a single step forward.

Both approaches miss the point.

## Here's What Actually Matters

**The most successful HR teams aren't the ones with the most AI tools. They're the ones who have a plan.**

Can you explain what problems you're solving? Have you built trust with your team? Do you have basic processes in place?

That's where we start. We created this guide to answer those questions with practical frameworks you can actually use.



## Chapter 1

# AI is here. Now what?

HR leaders aren't asking if AI will reshape their work anymore.

The question is how soon and where to start.

But AI adoption in HR often comes in extremes. Some teams are sprinting to integrate AI across the org with zero guardrails. Others are stuck in endless wait-and-see mode, afraid to touch anything that isn't fully vetted by legal, IT, and a crystal ball.

The truth? You don't need to be an AI expert. You don't need a perfect policy. And you certainly don't need to "AI everything."

What you do need is a foundation. Because AI readiness isn't about chasing hype—it's about doing it right.



## What does “AI Readiness” actually mean for HR?

AI readiness isn't measured in the number of tools you've rolled out or how many Slack threads mention ChatGPT.

It's about whether your people, processes, and strategy are prepared to integrate AI into the work, not just the workflow.

### It's not “tech readiness.” It's organizational clarity:

Do we understand what AI can and can't do?

Have we defined when it should be used—and when it shouldn't?

Does our culture allow for experimentation, learning, and safe failure?



# The Three Pillars of AI Readiness

## 01. Culture & Mindset

A ready HR team starts with a curious, psychologically safe culture.

Does your team feel **safe** experimenting? Are they encouraged to learn out loud—or expected to get it right the first time? These questions matter more than tool selection.

Example: [AI in performance reviews](#) is a gamechanger. It can reduce bias, speed up writing, and tie feedback to outcomes. Helping your managers trust the tech and understand how to give helpful feedback is the key to good AI adoption.

[HR readiness starts with literacy and leadership.](#)

## 02. Process & Infrastructure

AI thrives on clarity, but that doesn't mean perfection.

You don't need airtight documentation or fully automated workflows to begin. But you do need a rough draft of your process. Something consistent enough to build on.

Without that, AI can't help. It just amplifies chaos.

We've seen HR teams get executive pressure to "AI everything," only to realize they can't even describe what "everything" is. If your onboarding lives in five different places or your survey results are a data graveyard, AI won't know where to start either.

Think of AI as a fast-moving assistant. If you can hand it a clear-enough task, it can help. If you can't explain what you're doing, it's not time to scale—yet.

## 03. Strategy & Alignment

Even with the right culture and process, AI will fall flat without alignment.

Is there a shared vision for how AI supports your people strategy? Have you looped in legal, IT, and exec sponsors?

You don't need to automate everything. But you do need [to tie every AI experiment to a meaningful business goal](#)—like reducing time-to-hire, increasing manager capacity, or improving survey response rates.

Here's a signal you're more ready than you think: you've got a pain point that's repetitive, tedious, and well-understood. **That's a great AI use case.**

**See how 15Five AI connects AI initiatives to business goals**

# AI Readiness Self-Check

Here are 7 quick questions to gauge your org's AI readiness. Use them in a team meeting or turn them into a checklist:

\* If you answered "no" to most of these, that's not a stop sign it's your starting line.

- Do we have a clear problem we're trying to solve—not just "AI for AI's sake"?
- Is our HR data centralized, up-to-date, and usable by other systems?
- Are our workflows well-documented and repeatable?
- Do employees trust us to use AI ethically and transparently?
- Can we explain what AI is doing—and what it isn't—to our teammates?
- Have we involved legal, IT, or exec leadership in early conversations?
- Do we know how this supports a core business outcome

## What Readiness Doesn't Require

### You **don't** need:

- A full AI tech stack
- A chatbot for every use case
- To automate everything at once

### You **do** need:

- A full AI tech stack
- A chatbot for every use case
- To automate everything at once

## AI isn't about complexity. It's about clarity.



### First Steps for HR Teams

The best starting points are low-stakes, high-friction areas like:

- Summarizing engagement surveys
- Drafting offer letters or onboarding emails
- Writing job descriptions
- Prepping talking points for manager training

## Here's how to ease in:

- 01.** Find your invisible AI. You're already using it—autocomplete, spam filters, Zoom backgrounds. Call it out.
- 02.** Pick a "manual slog." Choose a task that's repetitive but predictable. Ask: **"How would I teach a smart intern to do this?"** That's your pilot.
- 03.** Involve your team. Share what you're trying. Capture what works. Make this a learning moment, not a secret test.
- 04.** Document your experiments. What prompt worked? What didn't? What would you change? Treat this like product R&D, not procurement.

It's important to experiment daily. Your job isn't to get it perfect—it's to build comfort, literacy, and momentum.



## AI built for managers

Kona provides personalized coaching feedback after 1-on-1s, notes, and follow-ups, helping managers build better habits over time. HR gets stronger outcomes. Managers get guidance they can actually use. Teams feel the difference.

[Learn more about Kona](#)

## Set the Foundation Before You Scale

- AI can be transformative—but only when it's introduced with clarity, care, and curiosity.
- Take the pause. Ask the hard questions. And start small with confidence.
- Because if you start with purpose, the scale will come.

## Chapter 2

# Crafting an AI in HR Policy to Keep Things Human (and Legal!)

Let's talk about the technological elephant in the room, or rather, the super-smart, ever-learning algorithm in the HR department - Artificial Intelligence or AI. It's no secret that AI is popping up everywhere, and HR is no exception. From streamlining processes to predicting future trends, AI promises a lot.

Using AI comes with serious responsibility. Without a clear, thoughtful policy, you're at risk. Think trust issues, legal headaches, and ethical gray areas.

HR leaders don't need to slam the brakes on innovation, just apply enough pressure to ensure we're driving responsibly. We want to balance the incredible potential of AI with the very real need for employee trust, compliance, and ethical use. So, let's explore how you can craft an AI in HR policy that works for everyone.

## HR professionals don't feel well-equipped to use AI technologies, which hinders adoption

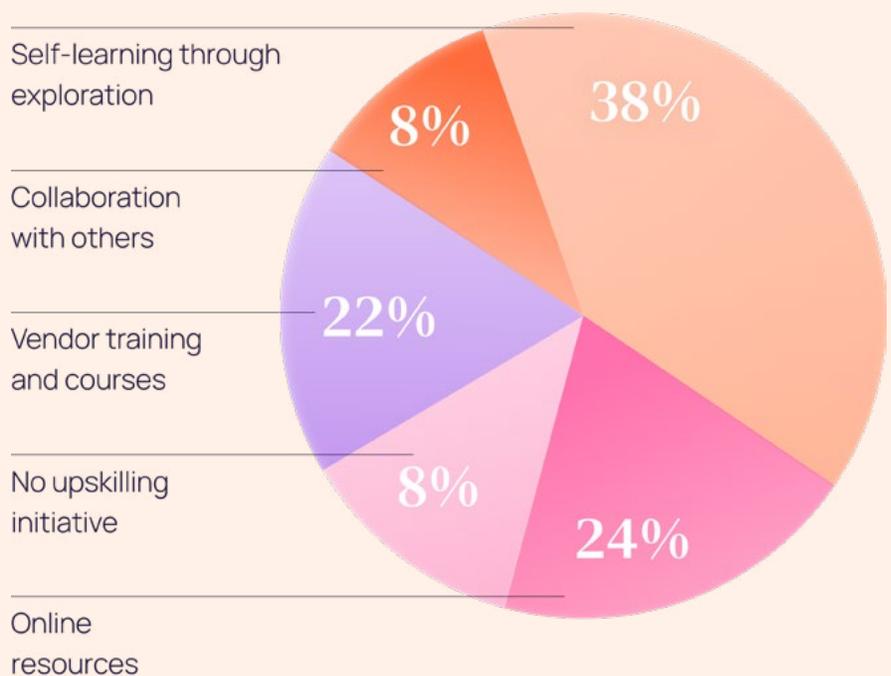
**35%**

of HR professionals feel equipped to use AI technologies

**38%**

of HR professionals upskill themselves through self-exploration of AI tools

Academy to Innovate HR | Source: [AIHR](#)



# Why an AI Policy?

First things first, why do you need an AI policy in HR? Think of it as your organizational GPS for navigating the AI landscape.

01

## Building Trust and Setting Expectations

When employees know how AI is being used, what data it's accessing, and what safeguards are in place, it builds confidence. Transparency is the name of the game here. You're setting clear expectations from the beginning.

02

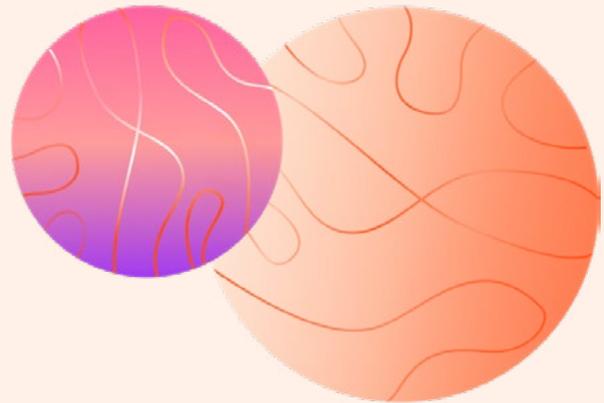
## Avoiding Risk and Staying Legal

Let's face it, the legal and ethical implications of AI are still evolving. A solid policy helps you manage potential risks, ensuring you're using AI in a way that's both compliant and ethical. No one wants a lawsuit because an algorithm accidentally discriminated.

03

## Consistent and Confident Adoption

Without guidelines, AI adoption can be a messy, inconsistent free-for-all. A policy provides a framework, allowing your teams to embrace AI tools with confidence and consistency across the board.



# The Must-Haves: Key Elements for Your AI Policy

So, what should an AI policy contain?

The policy should be more than a vague statement; you need clear, actionable guidelines.



## Data Privacy is Paramount

This is huge. Your policy needs to clearly outline what data is being collected by AI tools, how that data is being protected, and how it's anonymized to safeguard individual privacy. If an AI is analyzing engagement surveys, then employees need to know their responses aren't being laid bare.



## Approved Tools & Use Cases

Not every new AI tool that pops up is right for your organization. Your policy should specify which AI tools are approved for use and for what specific purposes. Are you using AI to summarize engagement surveys? Great, but maybe drafting performance reviews with AI without human oversight isn't quite ready for prime time.



## Crystal Clear Employee Communication

How will you tell your staff about this? Your policy needs a strategy for informing employees about AI usage and, crucially, how you'll obtain consent when necessary. No surprises!



## Oversight and Accountability

Who owns this policy? How often will it be reviewed and updated? And what's the process for flagging issues or concerns? Defining clear oversight ensures the policy remains relevant and effective as AI technology evolves.

# It takes a village: Cross-functional collaboration is key

Creating an AI policy isn't a solo HR mission. You need your internal team to make this happen.



## Align Early, Approve Faster

Get these key stakeholders on board from the very beginning. Early alignment speeds up the approval process and makes adoption much smoother. It's much easier to tweak a draft than to overhaul a fully formed policy.

So, go forth, craft that policy, and make AI a powerful ally, not a potential headache!



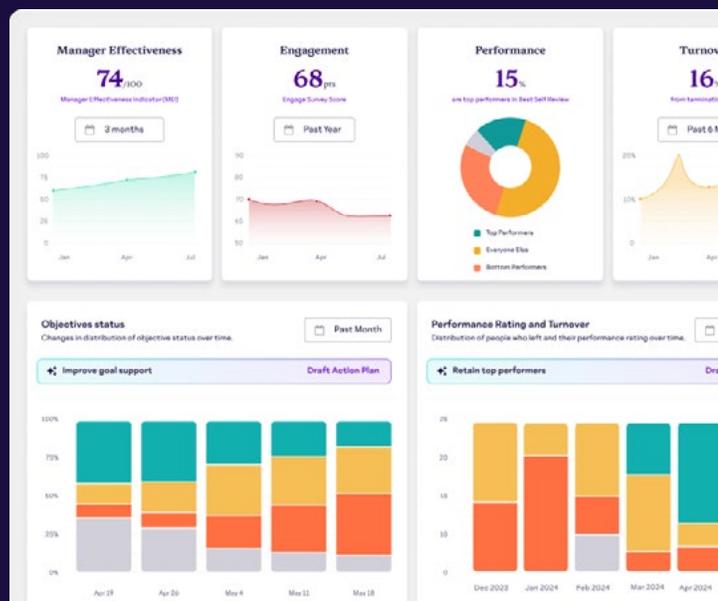
## Team Up!

Work closely with your IT department, operational units, and your legal team (for all things compliance) to tackle potential biases and ensure equity.

# The AI-powered performance management platform, built for business impact

15Five is an all-in-one people management system that's easy to use, delivers effortless insights, and enables managers to lead with impact.

Get a demo of 15Five



## Chapter 3

# How to Convince Your Legal Team and CEO to Get Started With AI

AI holds real promise for HR, freeing up time, sharpening decisions, and helping your team focus on what really matters. But moving forward often depends on getting two important partners on board to get started with AI: legal and [executive leadership](#).

While every organization has different needs and AI use cases, we have some questions to help you frame productive conversations and build shared trust.

## Why HR leads this conversation

HR's role is uniquely positioned at the intersection of people, data, and culture.

That makes HR a function equipped to ensure AI doesn't just drive efficiency, but also equity and impact.

From designing AI-augmented performance systems to developing leaders who can thrive in tech-enabled environments, HR can turn what might feel like disruption into a competitive advantage. AI will change how decisions are made, but HR decides how those changes affect humans, teams, and long-term business strategy.

This is important because the next five years will be a proving ground for HR. Those who lean into this moment, learning how to guide, govern, and scale AI use, will elevate their influence in the C-suite and reshape the future of work for the better.

Those who wait to get started with AI risk being reduced to policy stewards while real decisions are made somewhere else. HR has the opportunity right now to lead the AI transformation, not as tech experts, but as outcome architects and human enablers.

# What your legal team is thinking about

Legal's role is to protect the business. If you're introducing new tools or workflows, they need to understand how risk will be managed, not just what the tech can do.

Start by exploring how your chosen tools handle employee data. Are you clear on how information is collected, stored, and used? Can you speak to vendor compliance with applicable regulations like GDPR or CCPA? You don't need to have every legal detail

memorized, but showing that you've asked the right questions builds credibility.

Fairness is another priority. Legal teams want to understand how the use of AI avoids bias, especially in areas like hiring or performance reviews. Be ready to explain how you'll review results, flag issues, and document outcomes.

And finally, accountability matters. If a tool is making recommendations or informing decisions, how will your team track and audit those outputs?

## What your CEO needs to hear

Executives aren't looking for a product demo. They want to understand how something will move the business forward.

### **That's why it helps to start with the "why."**

Will AI help your team move faster or make smarter decisions? Will it improve retention, engagement, or manager effectiveness? The strongest business cases focus on real pain points, like slow hiring cycles, overloaded managers, or low trust in performance data, and [show how AI can help address them.](#)

Scalability is another important angle. Executives want to know whether AI will reduce friction as the company grows. Can it reduce your team's dependency on manual work? Will it help streamline workflows or support more consistent decision-making across departments?

And finally, consider how AI fits your company's culture and competitive identity. Framing responsible AI use as part of a thoughtful, employee-centered strategy can help position your team and your company as future-ready.



# How to bring legal and execs together

You don't have to pick a side between caution and action. Your job is to show that both can exist together when you lead with intention.

That starts by naming your approach. You're not rolling out tools for the sake of novelty. You're exploring low-risk, clearly scoped use cases that support business needs, like summarizing survey comments or drafting onboarding messages. These are real workflows where the risk is low, and the value is clear.

You can also invite collaboration. Offer to draft an internal AI use policy in partnership with legal. Frame it as a shared effort, not a compliance checkbox. And when you talk with execs, stick to outcomes like improved retention, more manager capacity, and faster insight into what your people need.

Bringing both sides into early reviews or pilot retrospectives can help build long-term trust.

Want to see how 15Five makes it easier to present People data to execs?

[Book a demo](#)

## Talking Points to Try

When you're ready to bring your legal or executive teams into the conversation, use language that reflects both care and clarity.

### With Legal

"We're starting with a narrow use case and a trusted vendor. We'll make sure the pilot stays compliant, create a shared use policy, and make sure those engaged in the pilot are aware of the policy and receive training."

### With the CEO

"This is about giving our people more time for high-impact work. With the right guardrails, we can use AI to move faster, reduce admin, and retain great talent."

# Moving toward the future

For many teams, AI is already working in the background. Traditional performance management tools can collect survey responses or run performance reviews, but they leave HR teams stuck in analysis paralysis or chasing one-size-fits-all solutions.

AI-powered platforms like 15Five bridge this gap by [turning people data into personalized, timely, and scalable recommendations for both HR leaders and managers](#). That means faster insights, more targeted

actions, and better outcomes across performance, engagement, and retention.

There's no one-size-fits-all strategy for AI in HR. But start by asking smart questions, inviting partnership, and staying rooted in business results. The more clearly you can frame what you're solving for and how AI helps, the more likely your legal and executive teams are to say yes.

## Your AI agent for people insights

Ask any question. Get clear answers. AMAYA & Insights Dashboard turns your people data into meaningful, actionable insights.

Discover AMAYA

Good morning, Kiki!

What do you want to know about your people today?

Are we setting new hires up for success?

How strong is employee pride and advocacy?



## Chapter 4

# Elevate, Not Eliminate: How HR Leaders Can Bring Their Teams Along on the AI Journey

Before we can credibly roll out AI-powered tools to managers or employees across the business, HR leaders need to ensure something more fundamental: that our own HR teams understand, believe in, and feel empowered by AI. Without that, we risk rolling out change with shaky foundations. With it, we unlock the confidence and advocacy needed to help the rest of the organization embrace what's possible.

Every HR leader knows adoption is built on trust. Whether it's a new benefits program, a manager training curriculum, or a performance management tool. Success depends on clarity of purpose, transparency of intent, and confidence in execution.

AI is no different. If your HR team is confused or skeptical, they will not be able to lead others through the change. If they feel informed, included, and inspired, they will become your strongest champions. That is the cultural readiness you need before any tool rollout.

**Fear Is Normal. Address It Directly**

**Let's be honest: AI feels intimidating.**

It is powerful, fast-moving, and comes with no shortage of hype.

For HR teams already under pressure, the natural reaction is fear. Fear of job loss. Fear of bias and ethical missteps. Fear of higher expectations on an already burnt-out function.



# Ignoring these fears doesn't make them disappear. Addressing them head-on builds trust.

## ✗ "AI will replace me."

No—it will replace the repetitive tasks that consume your time and diminish your growth. What it cannot replace is your judgment, your empathy, your ability to design meaningful employee experiences.

## ✗ "AI will just add more work."

If AI only increases workload, then we've failed in implementation. The point is to reduce noise, not add to it. That's why leaders must carve out time and space for experimentation, even if just 30 minutes a week. Let people play, discover, and build confidence.

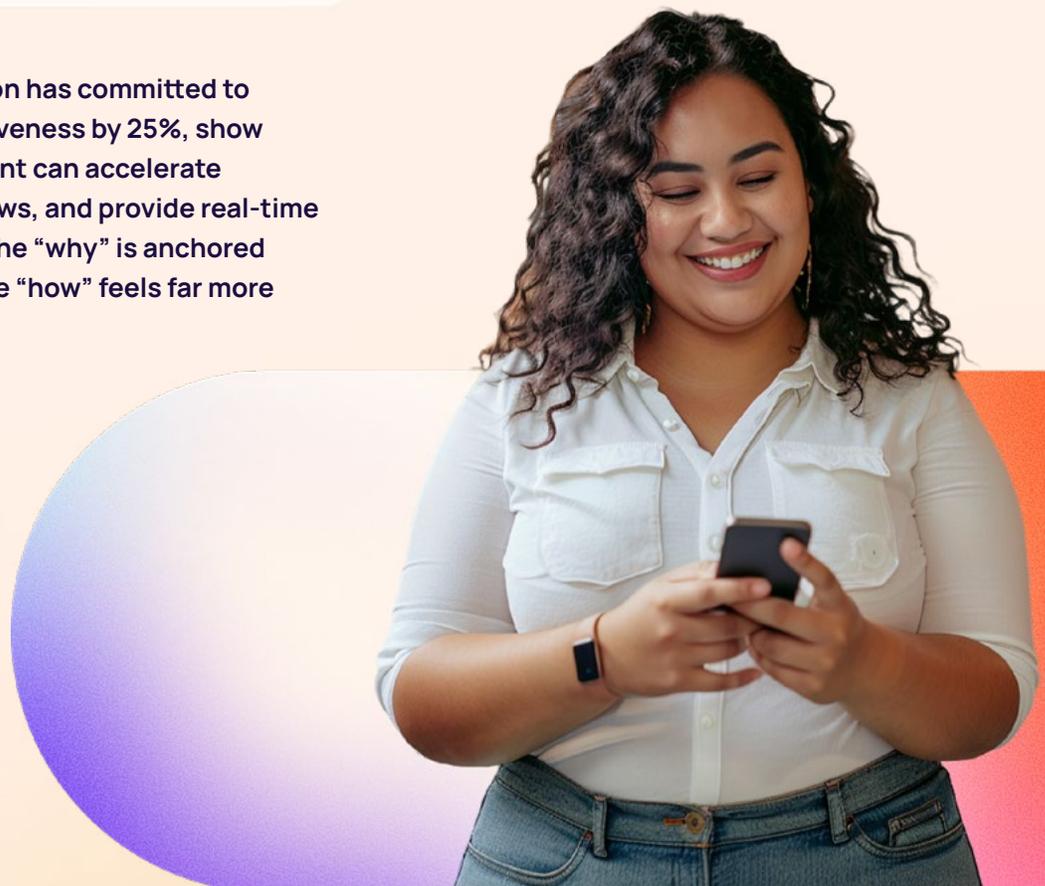
## ✗ "AI isn't ethical or fair."

This concern is precisely why HR should lead AI adoption. Who better to co-create ethical guidelines, monitor fairness, and build safeguards than the very team entrusted with equity and culture? Here, AI becomes not a threat but an opportunity for HR to expand its influence.

## ✗ **Make the Business Connection Clear**

AI isn't an experiment in novelty, it's a lever for impact. HR teams will feel empowered when they can see the line between AI adoption and outcomes that matter.

**For example, if your function has committed to improving manager effectiveness by 25%, show how an AI-powered assistant can accelerate feedback, streamline reviews, and provide real-time coaching prompts. When the "why" is anchored in a clear business goal, the "how" feels far more relevant and motivating.**



# Treat AI Adoption Like a Cultural Shift

Too many organizations treat AI like a tech rollout. It isn't. This is a cultural shift that requires exposure, dialogue, and co-creation. HR leaders can borrow from product thinking to make it stick:

Educate and expose. Highlight practical use cases your team already touches—engagement surveys, compensation planning, or performance reviews. Show how AI is already improving the tools they trust.

## Co-create use cases.

Don't hand down AI workflows from above. Invite your team to experiment, test, and shape their own. Ownership builds confidence.

## Invite feedback.

Run focus groups. Ask tough questions. Act on the feedback you receive. Adoption thrives where people feel heard.

## Lead with Language, Celebrate with Wins

Words matter. Frame AI as an assistant, an amplifier, an enabler. Tie its use to work, not people. Say, "AI automates scheduling tasks," not, "AI automates recruiters."

And don't underestimate the power of small wins. Create space for your team to share how AI saved them time, solved a problem, or sparked a new idea. Recognize those moments publicly. Tie them back to business impact. Over time, these wins shift AI from the unknown to the everyday.

## Your Role as the HR Leader

At the heart of this shift is leadership. Your team will look to you not just for permission, but for example.

- ✓ Model curiosity. Show how you're using AI in your own work.
- ✓ Create space. Protect time for play and learning, even in the busiest weeks.
- ✓ Connect the dots. Always link AI back to business priorities and outcomes.

When you lead with transparency, empathy, and confidence, your team will follow. The future of HR with AI is not about replacing humans. It's about elevating the human role. Done well, AI strips away the work that drains us and doubles down on the work that defines us.

Adoption will not come from slick demos or abstract promises. It will come from understanding and belief.

From building psychological safety alongside technical capability. From ensuring that the very people responsible for leading organizational change feel empowered in the change themselves.

AI is not just another tool, it's a cultural shift. Treat it that way, and your HR team won't just adopt AI. They'll lead your organization through it.

## From AI Readiness to AI Results

We've covered a lot of ground. From building readiness to crafting policies. From winning over skeptics to empowering your team.

But what does AI-powered HR actually look like?

At 15Five, we've spent years building what you just read about. **Our Integrated People Intelligence doesn't just use AI—it puts AI exactly where HR needs it most:**



### Frictionless Reviews That Actually Get Done

- AI pulls from performance data, engagement scores, and 1:1 notes to draft comprehensive reviews in minutes
- Managers spend 75% less time writing while delivering more consistent, meaningful feedback
- HR spends less time chasing completions and more time on strategy



### Predictive Insights That Drive Action

- Our machine-learning model shows you exactly which engagement factors impact your scores
- Spot retention risks before they become resignations
- Get personalized recommendations for each team, not generic best practices



### Manager Enablement That Scales

- Kona AI Coach gives every manager personalized, in-the-moment guidance
- AI Meeting Assistant automatically captures 1:1 notes. No more forgotten conversations.
- Manager effectiveness scores improve



### Real Companies. Real Results.

Companies using 15Five's AI-powered platform see a meaningful **reduction in regrettable turnover, hours saved each week on manual HR tasks, faster review cycles with higher completion rates, and strong manager adoption and engagement.**

# Take the next step

If you're ready to see what AI-powered performance management actually looks like, we'll show you:



**How AI turns your existing data into clear next steps**



**Which workflows you can automate today**



**What your managers will actually see and use**



**How to measure impact from day one**

## AI Readiness Is Just the Beginning

AI won't replace HR leaders. But HR leaders using the right AI platform will outperform everyone else. And that advantage compounds every single day you wait to get started.

Ready to move from learning about AI to leading with it?

[See 15Five AI in action.](#)

**Schedule a Demo today**