

AI Vendor Evaluation Checklist for HR



A Step-by-Step Guide to Choosing AI Tools Responsibly and Confidently

AI is quickly becoming part of how HR teams manage complex work. The right technology can reduce manual effort, surface important insights, and free your team to focus on people. But the wrong solution can introduce new risk, more oversight work, and decisions you don't feel comfortable standing behind.

Because you sit at the center of employee trust, compliance, and culture, evaluating AI vendors requires more than reviewing features. It also requires asking the right questions in the right order. This checklist walks through the key steps HR leaders can use to evaluate AI tools thoughtfully, so you can adopt new technology with confidence while keeping your team in control.



Step 1:

Before talking to vendors, clarify what your team needs

Strong evaluations start with what your team is experiencing today. When you understand where work feels heavy, where risk exists, and where employees feel friction, it becomes much easier to recognize whether a solution truly fits your needs.

Ask these questions internally before engaging vendors:

- What problems are creating the most strain for our team today?
- Where are we spending the most manual time?
- Which processes carry the most risk?
- Where do employees experience confusion or delays?
- What would meaningful improvement look like for our team?
- Are we looking for efficiency, visibility, consistency, or all three?

Step 2:

Ask vendors to explain how the tool works

Early conversations should focus on understanding the system, not just the results it promises. HR leaders need clarity on how the tool operates, what role AI plays, and how decisions are formed behind the scenes. If a vendor cannot explain this clearly, it can be difficult to trust the outcomes later.

Ask vendors to walk through the mechanics of the platform:

- Where does AI assist in the workflow?
- What parts of the process are automated?
- What parts require human input?
- How does the system handle complex or unique situations?
- Can the workflow be adjusted to match our policies?

Step 3:

Confirm that your team keeps control and accountability

Even when technology supports the process, HR remains responsible for the outcome. That means your team should always know when the system is making recommendations, when it's taking action, and when review is required. Clear boundaries protect both employees and your organization.

Use these questions to understand oversight and control:

- When does HR need to approve actions?
- How are approvals documented?
- Where does HR make final decisions?
- How does the system ensure HR remains accountable and in control?
- Can we see every step in the decision process?

Step 4:

Evaluate how the vendor handles fairness, consistency, and bias

HR decisions must be applied consistently, but they also require context and judgment. Any system that influences employee outcomes should include safeguards that help your team monitor results and step in when needed. Responsible vendors should treat fairness as an ongoing responsibility, not a one-time setup.

Ask vendors how they maintain consistency over time:

- How do you monitor outputs for bias?
- What happens if bias is identified?
- How often are results reviewed?
- Can HR see how decisions were generated?
- Can HR intervene when context matters?
- What safeguards exist for sensitive situations?



Step 5:

Make sure you can explain every decision the tool supports

HR leaders are often asked to explain decisions to employees, managers, and executives. If a system supports those decisions, your team needs to understand how the outcome was reached. Transparency makes conversations easier and helps maintain trust during difficult moments.

Use these questions to evaluate visibility:

- Can we see why the system made a recommendation?
- What data is used to generate outcomes?
- Is the log history easy to access?
- Can we clearly explain results to leadership if needed?

Step 6:

Check how the system supports compliance, records, and safety

HR technology must stand up to audits, reviews, and sensitive employee situations. That means the system should keep clear records, protect data, and make it easy to show how decisions were made. These safeguards reduce stress for your team and protect the organization when questions arise later.

Ask vendors about documentation and protection:

- Does the system keep a full history of actions and approvals?
- Can we access audit logs at any time?
- How does the platform support compliance reviews?
- How is employee data protected?
- Who can access sensitive information?
- What certifications or security standards are maintained?

Step 7:

Consider how the tool will affect employees and culture

Technology does more than change workflows. It changes how employees experience HR. The right solution should reduce confusion, support clear communication, and allow your team to handle sensitive moments with care. Automation should create space for empathy, not remove it.

Use these questions to evaluate long-term fit:

- How does this tool simplify the employee experience?
- Can communication be adjusted for different situations?
- Does the system allow flexibility when needed?
- Will this help our team respond faster without losing care?
- Does this tool support the culture we want to create?
- Do we feel confident using this during sensitive employee moments?

Move Forward With the Right Safeguards in Place

You can use this checklist to guide vendor conversations and make decisions with clarity. Asking these questions helps ensure the tool you choose supports your need around trust, compliance, and employee experience — not just efficiency.

If you prefer to work with a partner who has already built these guardrails into the platform, Tilt's Leave Experience Management was designed with these principles in mind. Our purpose-built approach combines benefits automation with thoughtfully built AI features to help HR teams manage leave efficiently while maintaining compliance, transparency, and human oversight.

