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Should you need any further information on these topics, please contact us at info@hrtorque.co.za.

1. The Future of Hiring: How Smart Recruitment Technology Is Changing the Way Businesses Hire

Author: David van den Bergh

Recruitment has always been time-consuming. Sifting through CVs, coordinating interviews, chasing feedback — it's administrative heavy lifting that slows down decision-making. What's changed over the past 12–18 months is how effectively AI can take that load off.

The most immediate impact is in CV screening. What used to take hours (or days) can now be done in minutes. AI tools can scan large volumes of applications, identify relevant experience, and filter out candidates who don't meet basic criteria. This doesn't replace human judgement, but it removes the repetitive first pass — the part that drains the most time and often leads to inconsistencies.

Beyond filtering, AI is increasingly being used to rank candidates. Instead of a recruiter manually comparing CVs, AI can score applicants against a defined set of requirements — qualifications, experience, skills, and even indicators of role fit. The result is a more structured shortlist, allowing hiring managers to focus their attention where it matters most: engaging with the best candidates rather than searching for them.

The operational side of recruitment is also being reshaped. Tasks like sending regret letters, scheduling interviews, and managing communication can now be automated end-to-end. This not only improves efficiency but also creates a more consistent candidate experience — something many organisations struggle to maintain at scale.

Another important shift is how data is captured. Rather than internal teams rekeying information from CVs into systems, candidates are increasingly prompted to input their own details through structured forms. This reduces errors, standardises data, and saves significant administrative time. It also makes downstream processes — from reporting to onboarding — far more efficient.

Taken together, these changes don't just make recruitment faster; they make it more focused. Less time is spent on admin, and more time is spent on decision-making and candidate engagement.

For organisations looking to see this in practice, it's worth testing tools that bring these elements together. The HRT Recruitment App is one example, offering a free demo that shows how AI-driven screening,

candidate ranking, and workflow automation can materially reduce the time and effort involved in hiring. It's a practical way to understand where the real savings sit — and how quickly they can be realised.

Ready to modernise your recruitment process?

[Get started with a free trial](#)

2. Why South African businesses should be outsourcing HR and payroll - before it costs them

Author: David van den Bergh

Outsourcing payroll and HR is no longer just a cost decision — it's increasingly a risk and capability decision.

The Case for Payroll Outsourcing

Start with payroll. In South Africa, payroll is far from a simple monthly process. Between frequent tax updates, evolving interpretations, and the practical realities of dealing with organisations like South African Revenue Service, Department of Labour and Unemployment Insurance Fund, the margin for error is small. Even well-run internal teams can struggle to keep up.

The real risk shows up when something goes wrong. A missed submission, an incorrect calculation, or a misinterpretation of legislation can lead to penalties from SARS — or, in more serious cases, employee dissatisfaction that escalates into disputes or even work stoppages. What makes this more dangerous is that payroll issues are often hidden. Problems get patched, reconciliations are delayed, and risks quietly build in the background until they surface at the worst possible time.

There's also a key person risk that many businesses underestimate. Payroll knowledge tends to sit with one or two individuals. When they leave, take extended leave, or simply burn out, continuity becomes a real concern. Replacing that experience quickly — without disruption — is difficult.

Outsourcing payroll shifts that risk. It provides access to a team, established processes, and built-in compliance controls. Instead of relying on individuals, you're relying on a system designed to manage complexity and reduce exposure.

Editor's note: clients often think payroll outsourcing is an all or nothing decision. In practice HRTorQue allows clients to tap into our knowledge through our payroll support team, building a relationship that allows us to step in and help should something go wrong. This process starts with a payroll review and can then move into recommended payroll changes, training and other necessary interventions.

The Case for HR Outsourcing and Support

The case for outsourced HR is slightly different, but just as compelling.

For many businesses, hiring a full HR generalist is a significant cost — and often still doesn't cover the full spectrum of HR needs. Outsourced HR gives employers access to a broader skill set for less than the cost of a single hire. That includes day-to-day administration, but also more specialised areas like employment equity, skills development, disciplinary processes, and policy design.

It also introduces flexibility. As the business grows, restructures, or faces specific challenges, the level of HR support can scale accordingly. You're not locked into a fixed resource model that may be too much at one point and not enough at another.

For larger organisations, outsourcing doesn't replace the internal HR team — it strengthens it. Internal teams can focus on strategic priorities, while external partners are brought in for project-based work (like recruitment drives) or specialist input where deeper expertise is required.

This model isn't new. In the US and other mature markets, businesses have long recognised the value of focusing internal resources on core operations, while outsourcing non-core but high-risk or specialist functions to providers better equipped to manage them.

Payroll and HR sit squarely in that category. They are critical to business stability, highly regulated, and increasingly complex — but they are not, for most organisations, the source of competitive advantage.

Outsourcing them, done properly, is less about saving money and more about reducing risk, improving consistency, and giving the business room to focus on what it actually does best.

For South African businesses serious about growth, the question is no longer “*Should we outsource?*” Rather, it should be “*How much longer can we afford not to?*” When you are ready to make the right call we are here for you – email us on info@hrtorque.co.za for more information.

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3. Understanding payroll calendars: The backbone of accurate compensation

Author: Karen van den Bergh

In many organisations, payroll errors are often mischaracterised as simple mistakes in the payroll process. However, these errors typically stem from upstream governance issues that only manifest at the payroll stage. Recognising the root causes of these discrepancies is crucial for fostering a culture of accuracy and trust in payroll operations.

Common governance pitfalls

Consider the following scenarios:

- A pay rise approved after the payroll cut-off
- A leaver confirmed too late to impact the current payroll cycle
- A bonus communicated verbally rather than through official channels
- An absence reported informally but never documented properly

In these cases, payroll teams find themselves unfairly blamed for errors they did not create. By the time these issues reach payroll, the team is faced with a daunting task: choosing between options like delays, rework, manual checks, amendments, or the uncomfortable explanation of why an employee's pay is incorrect.

This situation highlights that payroll challenges are not simply about capabilities; they are symptoms of upstream discipline failures.

The importance of payroll calendars

Payroll calendars play a vital role in maintaining accuracy, compliance, and trust within an organisation. These schedules are not merely bureaucratic hurdles, they serve as safeguards to ensure that all pay-impacting changes are properly documented and processed.

Cut-off dates are established to protect the integrity of payroll, ensuring that all necessary information is collected and verified before processing. When businesses treat these cut-off dates with the seriousness they deserve, they protect not only their payroll accuracy but also the trust employees place in their compensation systems.

Building better processes

To achieve a flawless payroll process, organisations must treat pay-impacting changes with the same level of diligence as financial approvals or legal sign-offs. Here is how we can help enhance payroll processes:

1. **Educate stakeholders:** Conduct training sessions for managers and team leaders on the importance of payroll timelines and the impact of late communications.
2. **Implement structured communication channels:** Encourage the use of official systems for all pay-related announcements, ensuring that information is logged and tracked.
3. **Regularly review policies:** Establish a routine for reviewing payroll policies and procedures to ensure they align with best practices and address any emerging issues.
4. **Leverage technology:** Invest in payroll software that integrates smoothly with HR systems, allowing for real-time updates and better visibility of changes.
5. **Foster a culture of accountability:** Encourage all departments to recognise their role in the payroll process. When everyone understands the implications of their actions, it creates a more cohesive approach to payroll management.

The message is clear: to ensure payroll accuracy from the start, businesses must take an active role in managing the processes that lead to payroll. By prioritising governance and communication, they can build a stronger, more reliable payroll system that enhances credibility and trust.

In the end, preventing payroll errors is not just about fixing mistakes; it is about creating a disciplined, structured approach that values each employee's compensation journey. Together, we can build a payroll system that works efficiently and accurately, fostering trust one payslip at a time. [Contact our payroll team today](#) for more information.

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4. Hiring smarter: The value of pre-employment and psychometric checks

Author: Candice Zulu

Making the right hire is one of the most important decisions a business can make. A strong recruitment process doesn't stop at interviews and CV reviews, it should include pre-employment checks to ensure you are bringing the right person into your organisation - both professionally and culturally.

What are pre-employment checks?

Pre-employment checks are verification tools used to confirm a candidate's background and suitability.

These may include:

- Criminal record checks
- Qualification verifications

- Reference checks
- Credit checks (for finance-related roles)
- Identity verification

These checks are essential for risk management, ensuring that the information provided by candidates is accurate and that your business is protected.

What are psychometric assessments?

Psychometric assessments go one step further by evaluating candidates':

- Personality traits
- Cognitive abilities
- Behavioural tendencies
- Work style and cultural fit

Rather than verifying facts, these assessments help you understand how a person thinks, behaves, and performs in a work environment.

What is the difference?

- Pre-employment checks confirm *what a candidate has done* (facts and history)
- Psychometric tests reveal *how a candidate is likely to perform* (behaviour and potential)

Both are valuable, but they serve different purposes in the hiring process. Not every role requires the same level of screening - a practical approach is therefore key:

Pre-employment checks are recommended for:

- All hires, regardless of role
- Positions involving trust, assets, or sensitive information
- Compliance-driven industries

Psychometric assessments are best suited for:

- Management and leadership roles
- Finance or decision-making positions
- Client-facing or high-pressure roles
- Roles where culture fit is critical

For example, while a cleaning or general support role may only require basic background checks, a Finance Manager would benefit from both comprehensive verification *and* psychometric testing to assess decision-making ability, integrity, and leadership style.

Why it matters

Hiring the wrong person can be costly - financially, operationally, and culturally. By incorporating both pre-employment checks and psychometric assessments where appropriate, businesses can:

- Reduce hiring risks
- Improve employee performance and retention
- Build stronger, more aligned teams
- Make informed, objective hiring decisions

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to hiring. The key is to apply the right level of screening for the right role. A balanced recruitment strategy not only protects your business but also sets your employees and your organisation up for long-term success.

Our HR experts are on hand to ensure you make the right hiring decisions for your business. Email us on hra@hrtorque.co.za for more.

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5. Recognising burnout early: How the right HR support makes all the difference

Author: Prenal Gengan

With today's demanding work environments, burnout has become one of the biggest challenges faced by employees in all industries. As much as employees can try to manage their stress levels, employers and HR should also assist employees in strategically preventing burnout before it worsens.

What is burnout?

Burnout is an ongoing feeling of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by continuous stress specifically from work and increased responsibilities. Burnout occurs when stress continues for a prolonged period without ample rest, balance, or support.

It does not occur suddenly. Burnout evolves over time when an individual feels swamped with work and finds it difficult to keep up with their workload or demands. This causes a drop in employee productivity, increased employee turnover, and a lack of motivation, which leads to negatively impacting the performance in businesses.

Recognising early burnout is not the sole responsibility of an employee. It is a responsibility shared between employees, managers, and the HR team.

Early warning signs of burnout

- Continuously feeling fatigue and low energy
- Disengagement and no enthusiasm
- High absenteeism or withdrawal
- Decreased productivity or work quality
- Gloomy attitude including workplace relationships

The role of HR in preventing burnout

It is important for HR to create a work environment where burnout is minimised. When organisations focus on employee well-being, they often notice an increase in employee performance, engagement, and retention.

Ways in which employers or the HR team can assist employees:

- Proper planning of employee workload and workforce management
- Set and communicate clear policies and expectations
- Promote employee wellness initiatives
- Provide training for managers to notice signs of burnout
- Build a positive and supportive workplace culture

Burnout can have a drastic impact if ignored, however, with ongoing support and assistance, it can be prevented and managed. At HRTorQue, we assist businesses to create positive working environments by implementing practical HR strategies which support both employees and organisational goals. [Email us](#) today, and we will help your employees thrive, not just survive.

6. Employee Wellness Days: The pros and cons

Author: Harusha Naidoo

A Wellness Day is a dedicated workplace event focused on promoting employee health, wellbeing, and awareness through activities such as health screenings, fitness sessions, mental health talks, nutrition guidance, and wellness education. These events are often seen as the launch point for an employer's broader workplace wellness programme, helping assess employee health needs and creating awareness of available wellness initiatives. Most employers run their Wellness Day early in the year so there is enough time to address employee healthcare risks with opportunities to deliver preventative care, boost morale, and address health challenges such as stress, chronic illness, and mental health strain within the workforce.

Many employers may ask: "But how effective are they really?":

- **They are effective for early health detection.** Wellness Days allow employers to screen large numbers of employees for chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol issues, and obesity. Early detection enables timely intervention, reducing long-term health risks and preventing costly medical complications.
- **They increase mental health awareness and reduce stigma.** By offering mental health talks, stress-management workshops, EAP awareness, and confidential consultations, Wellness Days create safe spaces for employees to acknowledge and address mental health challenges. This is critical in environments where stigma often prevents help-seeking.
- **They boost morale, engagement, and team cohesion.** They provide employees with a break from routine, an opportunity to engage in positive activities, and a moment to feel valued by their employer. The shared experience strengthens team bonding and contributes to a more supportive workplace culture.
- **They can reduce absenteeism and long-term costs.** When implemented properly, Wellness Days contribute to lower absenteeism, fewer sick days, and improved productivity. Early detection of health issues and increased awareness of available support services (such as EAPs), help reduce long-term medical costs and improve overall employee performance.

While the benefits of a Wellness Day are clear, it is equally important to consider the potential drawbacks and limitations, especially when planning such events as part of a broader wellbeing strategy. Keep in mind that:

- **Without follow-up, the impact is short-lived.** A Wellness Day creates an important awareness moment, but lasting behaviour change requires ongoing support. Without reinforcing activities, such as monthly wellness themes, continuous EAP communication, fitness challenges, or regular health education, the initial momentum often fades within weeks. A Wellness Day should be viewed as the starting point rather than the solution.
- **They may be perceived as superficial if workplace issues remain unchanged.** Employees may feel that a Wellness Day is "window dressing" if deeper organisational challenges, such as excessive workload, unclear expectations, or poor management behaviours, persist. Wellness events must be matched with meaningful organisational action. Employees are more likely to trust and participate in wellbeing initiatives when they see tangible efforts to improve working conditions.
- **Participation can be low without leadership support.** A common issue is that employees feel they "don't have time" to participate due to work pressures. Managers' buy-in is essential. When leaders actively encourage attendance, block out time, or participate themselves, participation

rates rise significantly. Without this support, the day may fall flat regardless of the quality of activities offered.

- **Costs may outweigh the benefits if activities are not aligned to needs.** Wellness Days can range from low-cost to high-investment events. If activities are not aligned with actual employee needs, such as stress, financial pressure, chronic illness, or ergonomic issues, the return on investment can be minimal. A Wellness Day should be supported by data (such as absenteeism trends, health risk assessments, EAP utilisation reports, or employee surveys) to ensure it is relevant and impactful.
- **Wellness Days alone cannot address systemic health risks.** Many of the greatest drivers of employee wellbeing, like job design, workload balance, psychological safety, and leadership behaviour, require systemic intervention. While a Wellness Day raises awareness, it does not directly resolve chronic stressors or organisational dysfunction. A holistic wellness strategy must therefore include policy development, training, and operational changes.

Employee Wellness Days can play a powerful role in building a healthier, more engaged, and more productive workforce. They offer an opportunity to detect health risks early, reduce mental health stigma, energise employees, and showcase your organisation's commitment to wellbeing. However, their impact is greatest when they are integrated into a long-term wellness strategy that includes continuous communication, leadership involvement, regular wellbeing activities, psychological safety initiatives, health and safety compliance, and data-driven programming.

When aligned with organisational goals and followed by sustained support, Wellness Days become more than an event, they become a meaningful investment in employee wellbeing and organisational resilience.

Need advice on making the most of your Wellness Day initiatives? Email us on info@hrtorque.co.za.

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7. Skills submission is done... now what?

Author: Candice Zulu

April often feels like the finish line for skills development. The Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report are submitted, deadlines are met, and for many businesses, there is a sense of relief - another compliance requirement ticked off the list.

But in reality, April is not the end. It is the starting point.

The biggest misconception around skills development is that it is a once-a-year administrative exercise. Businesses scramble to pull reports together, submit what is required, and then move on until the next cycle. The problem with this approach is that it turns what should be a strategic advantage into a reactive compliance burden.

Once submission is complete, the real work begins.

This is the time to shift focus from reporting to implementation. The Workplace Skills Plan that was submitted should not sit in a file untouched. It is a roadmap for the year ahead, outlining how your organisation intends to develop its people. Forward-thinking businesses begin aligning their training initiatives to this plan almost immediately, ensuring that learning and development becomes part of day-to-day operations rather than a last-minute rush.

At the same time, employers should start engaging with discretionary grant opportunities. SETAs release funding windows throughout the year, and businesses that are prepared, with clear training plans and

identified needs, are far better positioned to access these funds. Waiting until applications open without any groundwork often results in missed opportunities.

Tracking becomes equally important. The Annual Training Report for the next cycle is being built now, whether intentionally or not. Every training session conducted, every workshop attended, and every development initiative rolled out contributes to that report. Businesses that keep accurate, ongoing records avoid the stress of trying to reconstruct a year's worth of activity at the last minute.

There is also a valuable opportunity to reflect. What worked in the previous year? Which training initiatives delivered real value and which did not? Skills development should evolve with the business, responding to operational needs, growth plans, and changing workforce dynamics. Without this reflection, organisations risk repeating the same activities without seeing meaningful impact.

Importantly, this period allows businesses to integrate skills planning into broader business strategy. Training should not exist in isolation from business goals. Whether the focus is growth, efficiency, compliance, or expansion, your Skills Plan should actively support those objectives.

The companies that see the most value from skills development are not the ones who simply meet the April deadline. They are the ones who treat it as a continuous cycle - planning, implementing, tracking, and refining throughout the year.

So, while April may mark the end of submissions, it should also mark a shift in mindset - from compliance to strategy, reactive to proactive. Because when skills development is managed consistently throughout the year, it stops being an administrative burden and starts becoming a powerful business tool.

HRTorQue specialises in working with you to design a bespoke training solution for your business. Our South African based Learning Management System allows us to allocate training to specific individuals and teams and our HR specialists then make sure the training is done timeously. We literally do all your training for you and sometimes all it costs is for you to allocate a portion of your training budget to us – we then do the rest. It is a no brainer – no extra cost but all the hassle taken care of.

For any skills development assistance or compliance queries, [reach out](#) to one of the team.

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8. This month's highlights

Author: Candice Zulu

1. **Tax year end EMP501 annual reconciliation:** The **deadline of 31 May** is fast approaching. For many South African employers, this submission can be complex, time-consuming, and high risk if not completed correctly. Errors, data mismatches, or missing employee information can lead to rejected submissions and potential SARS penalties. Our team specialises in supporting businesses through every stage of the EMP501 process. [Contact us today.](#)
2. Navigating the complexities of HR can be confusing, even for the experts. That is why we put together our **HR Managers' Pocket Guide**, a powerful resource designed to simplify your HR journey. [Find it here.](#)
3. **Income tax numbers:** We can assist you with the registration of your employees for income tax purposes, managing the process from start to finish. Our consultants will obtain your employees' personal information from your payroll administrator and complete the necessary applications.

The turnaround time for this process is 24 hours and the cost per application is R300 plus VAT per employee. A volume discount will be negotiated in cases where there are more than 20 applications at a time. Should you need assistance please contact Dave Beattie on 031 564 1155 or dave@hrtorque.co.za

4. HRTorQue hosts weekly, online **HR-focused mini workshops**, assisting and guiding your managers to perform better. [Email us](#) for more information or [subscribe](#) to receive details and invites to our 2026 calendar.
5. For the latest recordings from our **Wednesday webinars** take a look at our [YouTube channel](#), filled with informative HR, payroll, and legislation tips and tricks. If you are not receiving our weekly invites, please subscribe [here](#).
6. The Minister of Employment and Labour has revised the earnings threshold under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) from R261 748.45 to R269 600.90 per annum, effective 1 May 2026. This change was published in Government Gazette No. 54544, Notice No. 7384 of 17 April 2026.
7. The Department of Labour has signed on the 24 April 2026 a gazette notice which states the maximum amount on which an assessment of an employee shall be calculated.

With effect from:

1st March 2025 to 28 February 2026 the threshold is **R633 168** per annum

_____ 1st March 2026 to 28 February 2027 the threshold increase is **R668 000** per annum

[Contact us today](#) for all your HR, payroll, tax, and accounting needs.

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