

The Ultimate Guide to Implementing Dayforce



How to implement Dayforce for long-term success



What You Need to Consider When Implementing Dayforce

So, you're preparing to implement, or at least considering implementing, Dayforce. You have made a great choice. Dayforce is a fantastic HCM platform, but a fantastic HCM platform alone doesn't automatically work for your team. You need to be deliberate and understand how to work with the platform so you use it to its full potential for your specific business needs.

How do you do that? There are a few important factors to consider when you implement Dayforce so you can hit the ground running once the implementation is complete. These include:

- Your goals for your HCM platform
- How to match your processes to the platform so you can best utilize Dayforce
- Understanding how to configure Dayforce – and what makes it different to configure than other HCM platforms
- What success looks like at go-live and what you might need to do immediately after
- How to ensure the new platform and processes are used as designed

In this piece, we'll walk through these factors, including what makes Dayforce unique and different from other implementations you have done, to help guide you to a successful implementation and future with your new system.



Understanding and Documenting Your “Why”

If you’ve already selected Dayforce, it’s likely because it meets your requirements and does most of what you need your HCM platform to do. You may have documented your requirements as part of that selection process, but it’s important to go a step further now and define what success looks like so you have a goal to work toward through your implementation.

Document your goals along with your requirements. Identify your key stakeholders and your KPIs if you haven’t already. Those stakeholders may have KPIs related to their specific areas too, and you should document them to guide your implementation process.

If you are struggling to identify these things, think about your business case. What are you trying to achieve with your new Dayforce platform? Some common goals include:

- Consolidation of disparate systems
- Enhanced employee experience
- Better access to data and improved reporting to inform decision-making
- Greater efficiency by reducing manual processes



Think specifically about your timeline and what the business impact looks like 12 months after implementation. Let's say you had a goal of reducing manual payroll adjustments by 50%. What impact has that had? How is your team working now?

As you document your requirements and goals, identify what is important to you and what you need to achieve. This helps you develop a timeline and identify milestones you need to hit so you begin your implementation with these goals in mind.

Takeaways

1. **Why did you choose to move to a new HCM? What is your overall goal for your new Dayforce platform?** Document this to help you measure the implementation's success.
2. Support this and guide your implementation by documenting the requirements Dayforce meets that will help you reach the above goal.
3. Think about the future – **how will things be different 12 months from now?** Think about what you will have achieved, and work towards that vision.



Define and Refine Your Processes

You're moving to a new HCM, but that doesn't mean you should just throw out your processes. Yes, some things will be different, and they should be; otherwise, you wouldn't be moving from your previous HCM to Dayforce.

However, your previous processes give you a chance to keep what is working and optimize what wasn't. It's important to note that Dayforce will work slightly differently from your previous systems, so you will need to adapt the processes that worked well for you before. This is crucial to understanding what you need to configure in Dayforce.

Plot out your workflows and denote any special needs based on things like locations, industry-specific requirements, and unions. Dayforce excels with these specifications because of its rules engines.

Once you have your workflows, map them out and link them to the workflows they're associated with. For instance:

- Recruiting -> onboarding
- Time and attendance -> payroll
- Payroll -> approvals



These workflows will help you show what integrations you need – and, crucially, what data you need to flow into and out of Dayforce.

How Dayforce is Different

Payroll, WFM, Benefits, and other modules operate from a connected employee record rather than relying on separate systems. This isn't true of all HCM platforms, giving you the advantage of requiring fewer integrations to have the data you need.

Specifically, time, pay rules, and payroll calculations can work together within the same platform. This allows for real-time dynamic reporting, dashboards/KPIs to spot trends, and valuable insights for business decisions.

With this in mind, you can define processes such as how often data is synced, what attributes your data needs, and what data you will include and exclude.



Takeaways

1. **Which processes were working on your previous HCM?** Document them and preserve what works, while adapting them to the new platform, and use the move to Dayforce as a chance to optimize other processes that weren't working.
2. **What time-and-pay scenarios need to pass testing for your team? Do you have employees in multiple locations? Do your employees have unions?** Build your workflows with those special requirements in mind, and identify who will sign off on your workflows.
3. Take advantage of Dayforce operating with a connected employee record, helping you with consistent data all in one place.



Build For Your Needs

As you implement Dayforce, it's vital to configure the system to meet your needs.

That doesn't mean you should build custom additions. In fact, it's quite the opposite. You chose Dayforce because it did the best job of meeting your needs. And if you customize a platform, rather than just configure it, it becomes harder to maintain and optimize over time, creating long-term challenges. And, as we'll get to shortly, that's not how Dayforce is designed to be implemented.

Instead, you should:

- **Configure to meet your needs** – especially those needs that are based on processes, industry requirements, and locations
- **Follow established best practices** where you can, and be selective about where bigger changes are absolutely necessary
- **Build for scalability** – Dayforce should grow with you as your business grows and you implement additional modules or have additional needs



How Dayforce is Different

Dayforce differs from other platforms in that it is highly configurable while maintaining a solid out-of-the-box structure. Rather than relying on complex customizations, you can configure a tremendous amount of business logic through rules, policies, codes, mappings, and effective-dated configuration.

This effective-dated configuration means historical, current, and future employee information is built into the model, which is powerful but requires careful design. Importantly, you need to build with your business-process design in mind. The best implementations are built on understanding your HR and payroll processes.

**You're not simply loading data and turning modules on.
You have to translate your business rules into Dayforce
configuration, calculations, results, and finally reporting.**

Dayforce itself describes its implementation methodology as a standardized methodology and toolset, with preconfigured rules and datasets intended to let teams refine the configuration rather than starting completely from scratch.

If you run into issues, default to proactively creating workflows that work with Dayforce, not against it.



Takeaways

1. **Does Dayforce meet all of your needs or are there specific things you think you need to custom build?** Consult with your in-house experts to understand what that would mean. We recommend configuring where possible and resisting customizing wherever possible.
2. Dayforce offers particularly strong configuration capabilities, but it's still important to be careful when configuring it and follow best practices.
Are you going to be able to maintain changes if you don't follow best practices? Always consider this if you're thinking about going outside best practices.
3. Build configurations with a business-process mindset. Your configurations should be specific to your business and your needs.



Preparing For Go-Live: Change Management, Training, and Testing

Success with any software is defined by user adoption. For adoption to occur, you need a systematic approach to change management.

Think about your goals that we discussed earlier. If you want to improve efficiency or improve the employee experience, the need for people to use the platform is obvious. But you also won't be able to use data to drive better decision-making or consolidate disparate systems – one of the most common reasons for moving to Dayforce – if your people aren't using your new system.

So, how do you encourage users to adopt the new system? And, perhaps even bigger, how do you sustain adoption?

At HRchitect, we have a six-step system:





1. Identify the Need for Change

Identify your pain points and business drivers. You will need to communicate these clearly so that people understand the need for change.



2. Assign Roles and Responsibilities

Designate people who are responsible for championing change by leading their teams to use the new platform, being an early adopter, and involving themselves in testing.



3. Stakeholder and Impact Analysis

Assess how your new platform will change the way groups of people will work and ensure you're ready to communicate that and address concerns.





4. Communication Strategy and Plan

Identify key messages you want to deliver and a cadence to communicate with your people. Be proactive and consistent with your communications.



5. Learning Strategy and Plan

Provide training specific to roles and day-to-day work so that people are equipped to use Dayforce as intended.



6. Go-Live Readiness and Success Measures

Ensure users are trained and feel ready, integrations are working, payroll can run, and you have support ready for users that need help. Measure success by tracking adoption and the success of workflows without the need for manual workarounds, and compare efficiency with the previous system.



The other points are just as important, too. You need to train the team to use the system from day one because you don't want people using workarounds in the initial period after the implementation that become permanent.

To ensure people are comfortable doing that, they must receive training specific to their roles and how they'll use Dayforce. Specific training paths should include:

- HR administrators
- Benefits administrators
- Payroll
- IT administrators
- Analysts
- People managers
- Everyday users

Before you even get there, though, you need to test. In fact, you should test, test, and test again, because you want to ensure your system is working as well as it can be before the wider team starts to use it.

That's not to say things will be perfect. You won't catch every little bug or error, and we'll get to how to deal with that later in this guide. You should, however, test to catch everything you can – especially those that could cause major problems.

Things to test in particular include:

- Payroll
- Rules and schedules
- Integrations

While there are broad rules for testing, there are some things specific to Dayforce you should keep in mind.

How Dayforce is Different

Dayforce UAT and parallel testing has some key differentiators compared to how you would test other HCM platforms.

Dayforce UAT and parallel testing - key differentiators:

- **UAT validates the business process, not just the system.** Users confirm that Dayforce is configured to support how the company actually operates — from hire through payroll, benefits, time, and termination.
- **Testing is end-to-end.** Because Dayforce connects HR, WFM, Payroll, Benefits, and other modules, scenarios should test entire processes, not just individual modules in isolation.
- **Stakeholder ownership is important.** The implementation team confirms configuration; **the stakeholder validates and accepts that the configuration meets the business requirement.**



Takeaways

1. **Do you have a change management team ready to develop your plan?** The success of your implementation will ultimately be reliant upon user adoption, and change management is crucial to encouraging that.
2. Train the team to be ready to use Dayforce from day one with training that is specific to the user's role. **What different roles do you need to be ready to train?**
3. **Do you have a testing team ready?** You need to be sure to test your most critical scenarios and obtain stakeholder sign-off. Test before the wider team adopts the platform so you catch major issues before they become problems.
4. Test for your specific Dayforce configuration. The Dayforce model means your modules are connected. **If information is entered into Time and Attendance, does it flow effectively through WFM to pay calculations? Is payroll correctly calculating gross-to-net earnings based on the rules you have set up?**



It's Go-Live Time

Reaching go-live is incredibly exciting, but we know it can also be stressful because it's just getting started.

You'll have done your testing, and people should be ready to use the platform on day one. Your everyday users should understand what they need to do in Dayforce. Managers should know how to make approvals. HR needs to be ready to embrace the system and use it to power their work.

Even the most rigorous testing won't catch everything, so be ready, because unexpected things might, and likely will, happen. You just want to be certain the most important components of your Dayforce setup are ready for day one. Those include:

- Role-based access control
- Hierarchies and organizational structures
- Core HR and employee profiles
- Time & Attendance
- Payroll
- Integrations



While every HCM is different, Dayforce has some specific differences that you have to plan for when it comes to go-lives.

How Dayforce is Different

One of the biggest differences is that Dayforce typically requires implementations to align with the start of a quarter, so plan ahead for that. The good news is that this enforces a clean cutover for things like payroll or benefits, especially if you're going live at the beginning of the year.

As mentioned above, HR, Payroll, WFM, Benefits, and other modules operate from a single employee record on Dayforce. This centralized system reduces some of your integration needs, but you should ensure the integrations you do require are working so all modules have the data they need.



Takeaways

1. **Do you have a team ready to address any issues at go-live?** Testing won't catch everything, so be ready for things to go wrong.
2. Dayforce typically requires implementations go live at the start of a quarter, so plan ahead for that.
3. The centralized employee record in Dayforce means you likely have to rely less on integrations to share data between systems, but you still need to have integrations in place – and should check they are working – when you go live.



What to Expect Post-Go-Live

You have done the hardest part with Dayforce now implemented, and you deserve to celebrate. The work isn't done, though. You need to be ready to adjust – things will continue to change in the months after the implementation.

You should have people specifically assigned to support after the implementation for any issues that arise. You'll still catch issues that you didn't find in testing or even during go-live, users will need assistance, and workflows will likely need to continue to be adjusted.

We recommend a stabilization period with a dedicated team ready to support any Dayforce needs. The length of that stabilization period depends on your company size, number of users, and how extensively you use Dayforce, but you can generally expect you need more people ready to help for the first two months. Over time, you can scale that team back a bit, but you will still need to support the platform and adjust as needed.

For instance, you'll likely find ways to improve your processes. Rather than being rigid and attaching yourself to what you decided pre-implementation, be flexible, embrace improvements, and update your documentation.

Finally, to ensure you don't leave yourself with an unoptimized platform and outdated processes, stay on top of new releases, and continually check that your integrations are working. Optimization should be an ongoing process to keep getting maximum ROI out of your Dayforce investment.



Takeaways

1. Be prepared for issues you didn't find in testing or even during go-live in the months following the implementation.
2. You will be able to improve workflows over time. Embrace that ability and update documentation.
3. **Do you have a dedicated stabilization team for the time after the implementation who are ready to support users and fix issues?** Plan ahead so you know they may need to focus on this alongside their usual responsibilities.



The Ultimate Guide to Dayforce Optimization

If you're worried about keeping Dayforce optimized, we wrote a guide to help you. We have seen it all with Dayforce, and some issues keep coming up again and again. That's why we created The Ultimate Guide to Dayforce Optimization to help you proactively optimize your Dayforce platform before problems arise.

In this guide, we'll explore:

- How to make optimization continuous
- What to optimize first
- How to begin optimizing Dayforce
- Common optimization gaps – including what's unoptimized and what's underutilized

**Get the Ultimate Guide to Dayforce
Optimization**



Are You Ready to Implement Dayforce?

If you're preparing to implement Dayforce, we are here to help. As the top-rated Dayforce partner, with experience from pre-implementation to system assessments and optimization, we are ready to support any Dayforce need.

Our implementation experience ranges from US-only projects to global, phased go-lives, all guided by our experienced Dayforce consulting team.

Click the logo to the right to schedule a complimentary consultation today and see how HRchitect can help your organization get the most out of your Dayforce investment.

