



YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS OF HR

The Checklist

*Practical guidance for small teams, solo HRs,
and first-time people managers.*

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WELCOME & ORIENTATION



**You're here because
someone finally
asked, "Can
someone just
handle HR?"**

And now — it's you.

Whether you're the founder, the new HR officer, the admin person wearing five hats, or the person who just "seemed organised enough" — you've landed in a critical role.

This isn't a compliance checklist.
This is a clarity guide.

- What actually matters in the first 90 days
- What to focus on (and what can wait)
- How to bring structure to the chaos — without a 50-slide policy deck
- And how to do it without losing your mind in the process

WHAT YOU'RE STEPPING INTO



"I didn't sign up for all this HR stuff."

We know. Most HR in small businesses isn't handed over with a structured transition or a toolkit — it's usually a mix of:

- A folder of contracts (some signed, some not)
- Leave being tracked in someone's head
- A frustrated team unsure of what the rules even are

And that's why this guide exists. To help you:

- Assess what's already in place
- Build what's needed
- And set a calm, people-first tone — without the corporate jargon

DAYS 1–30 — ASSESS & OBSERVE

Theme: Clarity before action

 **Checklist:**

This phase is about seeing the full picture. You're listening, collecting, clarifying.

Objectives:

- Understand the current state of HR
- Locate critical info (contracts, policies, employee records)
- Build trust — don't rush to "fix"

- ☐ Review all current employee files
- ☐ Locate and assess offer letters or contracts
- ☐ Confirm how leave is tracked (or start tracking it)
- ☐ Identify existing HR policies (discipline, leave, etc.)
- ☐ Create a basic employee list with roles & start dates
- ☐ Ask: "What happens when someone joins? Leaves? Gets sick?"
- ☐ Schedule intro chats with team leaders or founders

Tip:

HR is as much about relationships as it is about records. The first month is about seeing what's really going on, without judgement or panic.



DAYS 31–60 — CREATE SIMPLE SYSTEMS

Theme: Structure brings safety.

 **Checklist:**

Now you've seen the gaps, it's time to fill them — slowly and clearly. The goal isn't perfection. The goal is repeatable systems people trust.

Objectives:

- Build basic onboarding, leave, and records systems
- Draft missing documents
- Create shared understanding across the team

Tip:

If you can't explain the process in under 3 minutes, it's too complicated. HR in small teams should be easy to follow and easy to repeat.

- ☐ Write or revise 1–2 job descriptions
- ☐ Create a basic onboarding checklist
- ☐ Set up shared access to contracts and policy documents
- ☐ Draft missing policies (start with leave and conduct)
- ☐ Audit UIF / tax compliance and employee registrations
- ☐ Introduce a digital or paper leave request process
- ☐ Add emergency contacts to each staff record



DAYS 61–90 — SHIFT TO PEOPLE & PLANNING

Theme: From admin to development.

Now that basic systems are in place, it's time to look ahead. This is where HR becomes more than paperwork — it becomes people practice. This phase is about supporting growth, opening conversations, and preparing for what comes next.

Objectives:

- Begin culture and team conversations
- Identify skills gaps and training needs
- Align HR with the business strategy

Checklist:

- ☐ Hold a check-in with leadership on goals, concerns, and HR pain points
- ☐ Ask employees about challenges and improvements they'd suggest
- ☐ Create a rough org chart (even if your "departments" are two people)
- ☐ Draft a mini training plan for each role (internal or external)
- ☐ Flag any risks (unmanaged leave, unclear expectations, unhappy team members)
- ☐ Discuss career growth pathways, even if they're informal
- ☐ Review how performance, conflict, and feedback are currently handled

Tip:

You don't need a talent strategy. You need clarity, communication, and consistency. These 90 days give you the momentum to lead with confidence.

FINAL THOUGHTS — WHAT COMES NEXT

You've completed your first 90 days — and built what most small businesses never do.

Let's recap what you've achieved:

- You brought structure to scattered systems
- You created a clear onboarding and record-keeping process
- You learned what your people need — not just what the business wants
- And you created space for growth without burning out

This isn't the end. It's your starting point. Now you can:

- Begin building deeper training & development
- Formalise career paths
- Create a workplace people want to stay in

WANT HELP BUILDING WHAT COMES NEXT?

We support small teams with:

- **Build Your Human Resource Foundation**

- Get the essential policies, contracts, and onboarding tools you need to set up your HR the right way — even if you're starting from scratch.

- **Support for Solo HRs & Office Admins**

- You're not alone. Our tools, checklists, and training guides help you run HR like a pro — even without a department.

- **Workplace Skills Planning & SDF Tools**

- From WSPs to SETA submissions, we show you how to handle skills development planning with confidence — and free tools.

- **Human Resource Strategy Made Simple**

- Not sure what comes first? Our downloadable "People Plan" guide helps founders and managers prioritise HR that matters.

Let's build your people systems together — without corporate noise.



CONTACT US



www.hr.lizmentor.com



+27-064 088 2794



lizm@lizmentor.com