



The Role of the System Admin: Tech-Savvy HR Expert

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Introduction.



In HR technology transformation, one of the strongest predictors of long-term success is whether you have the internal capability to run, maintain and evolve the system.

That's where a well-structured System Administrator (or System Analyst) role becomes critical. When clearly defined, embedded from the start and properly supported, this role becomes the backbone of sustainable HR tech adoption, system stability and continuous improvement.

The HR Tech System Admin sits at the intersection of business process, technology, data and change.

When this role is done well the organisation's confidence in the system is markedly higher, and the project's outcomes are far more sustainable.

Unfortunately, many organisations only begin thinking about this role as go-live approaches. By that point, much of the opportunity to embed deep understanding, support strong decision-making and build long-term ownership has already passed.

A System Admin engaged on the project from day one, however, becomes someone who understands not only the "how" of the system, but the "why" behind every design choice.



HR Tech System Administrator or Analyst?

At its core, the System Administrator manages, configures and supports the organisation's HR, Payroll or WFM technology.

But this description doesn't capture the strategic nature of the role.

The Sys Admin must understand organisational processes, how the future-state design is intended to function, how integrations and data move through the ecosystem, and how technical capabilities align with operational needs.

They ultimately become the custodians of your HR platform, ensuring it continues to deliver value, remains aligned with business goals, and evolves in response to updates and organisational changes.

That's why at Pinpoint we prefer to call this role an 'HR Tech System Analyst' - acknowledging the business and technical analysis aspects of the function.

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Think of it more as an analyst than an admin role. It's tactical and technical, but it's also about understanding business priorities and driving HR system adoption.”



**Bronwyn Best –
Delivery Oversight,
Pinpoint HRM**



Why this role matters on Cloud HR Projects.



The System Administrator bridges the gap between what the business requires and what the system can deliver.

Their involvement enables more informed design decisions, a clearer understanding of functional and technical implications, and faster resolution of issues as the project progresses.

They also provide continuity, absorbing knowledge throughout the build rather than at the end, ensuring it is not lost when external consultants transition off the project.

Beyond go-live, the Sys Admin becomes the driver of optimisation, ensuring the system is not “Set and Forget”. They identify opportunities for improvement, adopt new features, manage upgrades and support users across the organisation.

Without this role, systems often stagnate, confidence erodes and return on investment declines.



The System Admin's Role Across the Project Lifecycle.

01. Vendor Evaluation and Due Diligence

The HR Tech System Administrator should be involved from the earliest stages of vendor evaluation. Their participation ensures the future system is selected with a clear understanding of ongoing maintenance requirements, technical considerations and integration complexity.

Early involvement also enables them to develop system expertise long before configuration begins, significantly improving their ability to manage the platform post-go-live.

02. Project Planning and Set-Up

During project planning and initiation, the Sys Admin becomes an essential source of insight into existing systems, data structures and current-state processes.

If the individual is internal, they bring valuable organisational knowledge; if external, early immersion is critical for understanding the operating environment they will ultimately support.

Their role in this phase lays the groundwork for accurate design, realistic planning and strong alignment between system configuration and business priorities.

03. Discovery and Design

Throughout discovery and design, the System Administrator's presence in every workshop is essential. This is where foundational decisions are made - decisions that shape not only the initial build but the long-term sustainability of the solution.

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From the evaluation stage, we encourage customers to start planning how they will resource the system administrator role. This is an essential BAU HR operational cost that should be factored in early.”



**Lynette Redward -
Head of Advisory,
Pinpoint HRM**



By observing and contributing at this stage, the Sys Admin gains an understanding of the rationale behind each choice. This context cannot be replicated through documents or rushed handover, and it becomes invaluable when supporting the system in BAU.

04. Build and Test

As the project moves into build and test, the System Administrator transitions from observer to active participant. They develop hands-on familiarity with configuration, integrations and data behaviour.

Their contribution becomes particularly important during user acceptance testing, where they apply business process understanding to validate system behaviour, identify gaps and ensure the solution is genuinely fit for purpose. UAT is where the Sys Admin consolidates their knowledge and builds confidence in managing the platform.

05. Deploy and Go-Live

During this phase, the System Admin becomes the organisation's first point of contact for system issues.

Their prior involvement means they can triage effectively, resolve straightforward issues independently and work collaboratively with vendors and consultants to address more complex items.

Hypercare is also the ideal time for advanced administrative training, allowing the Sys Admin to become increasingly self-sufficient as the project transitions to BAU. This can reduce the need for extended hypercare or additional partner support during this critical transition stage.

06. Optimisation and Ongoing Support

Post go-live, the Sys Admin plays a central role in optimisation and realisation. They monitor system behaviour, gather feedback, adopt new features, maintain documentation and ensure continuous improvement. In this phase, the strength of their early project involvement becomes evident.

A confident, proactive Sys Admin keeps the system aligned to business needs, focused on ROI and prevents the platform from becoming static or underutilised.

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They learn progressively as the project develops, almost through osmosis, which means their understanding is embedded rather than delivered in a crash course at the end.”



**Hayley Parker –
Head of Strategy,
Pinpoint HRM**



Common Pitfalls **vs** What Good Looks Like.

Pitfalls and Challenges

Many issues arise when the System Administrator role is under-resourced or poorly defined. When organisations assign someone too junior or expect the Sys Admin to maintain BAU responsibilities alongside a full implementation workload, they create conditions for burnout and reduced effectiveness.

Another risk is consolidating too much knowledge into a single individual — without proper documentation and redundancy, system ownership becomes fragile and vulnerable to turnover.

Finally, neglecting optimisation post go-live often results in systems becoming outdated, underused or misaligned with evolving business needs.

What Good Looks Like

A well-supported System Administrator enables a smoother transition from project to BAU, maintains strong change control and drives continuous improvement.

They help ensure the system remains contemporary, user adoption stays high and enhancements are regularly incorporated.

Organisations with mature Sys Admin capability experience fewer disruptions, stronger internal confidence and far greater long-term return on investment.

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The trap many fall into is thinking about resourcing from go-live onwards, when the real benefit is having the Sys Admin involved from the start so they learn the solution and understand the goals.”



Lynette Redward -
Head of Advisory
Pinpoint HRM





Essential Skills of an HR Tech System Administrator.

Successful Cloud HR System Administrators blend technical proficiency with strong business understanding.

They communicate effectively, manage vendor relationships with confidence, triage issues quickly and work well under pressure.

Data literacy is increasingly important, as is the discipline of maintaining clear, accurate documentation.

Most importantly, they take a proactive approach - seeking to understand, refine and improve the system (based on user feedback and vendor enhancements) rather than simply maintain it.

Success in this role requires a unique blend of technical, functional and interpersonal capabilities.

Personal Attributes

- Curious and open to learning
- Highly proactive
- Detail-oriented
- Calm under pressure
- Great with people
- Passionate about continuous improvement
- Comfortable challenging requirements
- Strong ownership mindset

Core Skills

- High technical aptitude
- Deep HR/Payroll/WFM domain knowledge
- Strong understanding of business processes
- Excellent communication
- Ability to triage and prioritise issues
- Confidence working with vendors and functional consultants
- Strong data understanding and reporting capability
- Ability to work under pressure
- Analytical problem-solving
- Decision-making capability

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When done right, the System Admin is picking up feedback and trends, acting proactively on improvements rather than just reacting to issues.”



**Bronwyn Best -
Delivery Oversight,
Pinpoint HRM**



Wrapping it up.

The HR Tech System Administrator is often thought of as a role that begins at go-live, but the strongest outcomes typically come when this capability is considered much earlier. Involving the Sys Admin function from the start helps build internal understanding of the system's design decisions, supports more effective knowledge transfer, and creates a smoother transition into BAU.

When properly resourced and supported, the System Administrator isn't just managing your people platform in BAU. They're enabling the business to sustain change, respond to workforce needs, and continuously improve the way work gets done.

Over time, the organisations that get the most value from their HR technology are usually those that can confidently operate and evolve the platform from within. A System Administrator helps sustain adoption, maintain system stability, and enable continuous improvement long after the implementation phase has ended.

The Cloud HR System Administrator is not a nice-to-have. They are not an IT resource or a problem to solve later. **They are the custodian of your HR tech investment.**



Start your HR tech journey with Pinpoint today.

Known as 'The HR Tech Project Specialists', Pinpoint HRM has been assisting clients in designing and delivering people technology projects for over 20 years, from vendor evaluation and project readiness to implementation and beyond go-live.

Our passionate team of 80+ HR tech experts work with clients across the full lifecycle of HR transformation and cover all the market-leading HR, Payroll, and Workforce Management software systems.

With experience delivering more than 850 people technology projects, we know there's more to success than just the tech!

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