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Dayforce brings agentic HCM to the frontline at Discover 2026

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The Bottom Line

At Discover 2026 in Las Vegas, Dayforce introduced the Dayforce Agentic HCM Platform, which brings conversational access, AI agents, customer-built bots and apps, and connections to third-party AI into its HR, payroll, workforce management, and talent suite. Because the agents and Dayforce Build work from employee, schedule, and pay data and rules that already sit in one system, under the same permissions and approvals as the rest of the suite, the platform is designed to help HR, payroll, and frontline managers resolve exceptions and create department-specific tools without adding separate systems. Alongside the platform, Dayforce previewed a frontline manager Command Center, agentic recruiting, a workforce planning agent that models people and AI agents together, and AI-assisted implementation.

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Overview

Dayforce's agentic platform pairs its own AI agents with customer-built apps and bots, and opens the suite to outside AI assistants such as Claude.

Dayforce recently held Discover 2026, its customer conference in Las Vegas, to share new product announcements with HR, payroll, operations, and finance leaders. Keynotes and product sessions centered on the Dayforce Agentic HCM Platform, which Dayforce organizes into four layers on top of its single HCM suite. The Understand layer is Ask Dayforce, a conversational assistant that answers questions and completes tasks. The Perform layer covers AI agents and digital workers that handle specific tasks across HR, pay, and time. The Extend layer is Dayforce Build, which is designed to let customers and partners create apps, bots, and documents on Dayforce data, and the Connect layer opens Dayforce to third-party AI through APIs, events, and the Model Context Protocol (MCP). The message across sessions was that AI should act on the HR, pay, and time data customers already run in Dayforce, under the same controls as the rest of the suite, rather than in a separate tool. The vendor also announced a plugin for Anthropic's Claude, now in beta, expanded integrations with Microsoft, and an agreement to acquire Ribbon AI, a provider of conversational voice and video interviewing. Select agent and implementation capabilities are available now. Most new capabilities are planned for 2027.

The Dayforce Agentic HCM Platform

Agents handle work Dayforce defines and bots handle work customers define, with both running under the same approvals and usage limits.

Each Dayforce agent has a fixed purpose. Agents shown during the event included a scheduling coverage agent that recommends qualified, available employees for open shifts and time-to-pay agents that flag missed punches and overdue approvals before payroll closes. In the workflows shown, agents recommended options or prepared changes, and a manager or administrator approved them.

Bots are the customer-defined counterpart to agents and are part of Dayforce Build. Customers set a bot's purpose, schedule, and instructions, and bots are designed to run on a routine or respond to events, such as a daily review of timesheet exceptions. In one demonstration, several bots were combined into a store manager morning briefing covering timesheet exceptions, shift coverage, and pending approvals.

Agents, bots, and apps run under the same permissions, approvals, and audit controls as the rest of Dayforce. An AI usage console lets administrators track consumption, set limits by team or individual, and stop new work when a limit is reached. Customers should understand consumption per workflow before scaling bots and apps.

Dayforce Build and Marketplace

Dayforce Build, a new offering and the largest announcement of the event, is designed to let customers and partners describe a need in plain language and generate a Dayforce-native app, bot, or document. Solutions are developed in an isolated environment and run within Dayforce, with data access following each user's identity, permissions, and licensed entitlements. Examples shown included an overtime heat map for a store manager, a store bonus app with configurable thresholds, and a labor cost dashboard combining Dayforce payroll data with revenue from Microsoft Dynamics 365.

Build is designed to give customers the reports and workflows they would otherwise wait on a vendor roadmap or a separate tool to get.

Dayforce Marketplace is designed to distribute apps and bots from Dayforce, partners, and customers, and partners including Checkr, Deloitte, Guusto, and PwC are already building solutions. Build and Marketplace are planned for 2027. Nucleus expects early Build use to center on specific internal processes, such as reporting views and incentive tracking, so customers should decide early who approves and maintains what gets built.

WFM and Command Center

Building on its single data model and compliance engine, the vendor is redesigning its schedule-to-pay experience. A guided manager timesheet and a predictive time clock are available now, and the next-generation pay experience, which lets payroll teams correct timecard issues without leaving the payroll workflow, is available in North America. A unified employee experience for schedules, time, and time off, a manager scheduling view across locations, and Contingent Workforce Management are planned for 2027.

Command Center brings workforce management and talent priorities into one view for managers running day-to-day operations.

Command Center, also planned for 2027, is designed to give frontline managers a view of priorities across recruiting, onboarding, scheduling, and timesheets, so they can see what needs attention and act on it. It brings together workforce management and talent capabilities for managers overseeing day-to-day people and operations. Retailers evaluating it as a broader store-management workspace should also assess how task execution and frontline communications connect to it.

Other announcements

Agentic recruiting and Ribbon AI

A rebuilt recruiting experience, planned for the first half of 2027, targets frontline and high-volume hiring. It is designed to include candidate

relationship management, configurable hiring processes, a candidate assistant that recommends jobs and handles applications, and the option to apply by WhatsApp or text without a resume. AI agents are planned to handle sourcing, screening, and scheduling, while recruiters set the rules that move candidates forward. Ribbon AI's first-round voice and video interviews are expected to be integrated after the acquisition closes, and in the demonstration, recruiters could review interview scores alongside transcripts and video, which matters for employers that need to explain how candidates were evaluated.

Dayforce is extending AI beyond HR and pay into hiring, workforce planning, and its own implementation process.

Learning and performance management

Dayforce plans AI learning paths built on Go1 content that are designed to let administrators describe a role, skills gap, or audience and receive a curated learning path. A continuous performance management experience is designed to bring goals, ongoing conversations, and feedback together between an employee and a manager. Both are planned for 2027 and are intended to give managers more visibility into skills across their teams and where development can close gaps.

Strategic Workforce Planning Agent

The Strategic Workforce Planning Agent, expected in the first quarter of 2027, is designed to let leaders build workforce plans in conversation, starting from the work to be done rather than from headcount. It identifies skills gaps by position and shows the share of skills an AI agent could cover alongside the agent's estimated annual token cost and the employee's annual cost, and when no suitable agent exists, it can produce a specification for Dayforce Build. Customers should establish whether agent cost estimates include deployment, integration, maintenance, and human oversight before relying on those comparisons.

Dayforce Deploy

Dayforce Deploy applies AI to implementation by connecting requirements, configuration, and testing in one workspace. It turns customer policies, contracts, collective agreements, and workshop notes into structured requirements, connects them to configuration, and automates test design and execution, with recommendations subject to human review and approval. Dayforce Services uses Deploy to generate requirements from customer documents and automate testing for entitlements, and the vendor plans to extend it to the Dayforce Partner Network, with general availability planned for 2027. Deploy is also designed to support configuration updates and retesting after go-live, when policies and regulations change.

Expected benefits

Because agents, bots, and Build apps work from employee records, schedules, pay rules, and permissions that already live in one system, customers can automate exception handling and reporting without moving data into a separate AI tool. Nucleus expects the earliest gains for frontline managers in the time spent resolving open shifts, missed punches, and overdue approvals, since agents surface these items and prepare the fix for a manager to approve. For payroll teams, catching timecard issues before payroll closes could reduce corrections and off-cycle payments.

The earliest gains are likely in exception handling, where open shifts, missed punches, and late approvals turn into payroll corrections.

For HR and operations teams, Build could cover needs such as incentive tracking or labor cost views without a separate reporting tool or a wait on IT or consultants. Deploy is designed to reduce the manual effort of translating policies and agreements into configuration, which also applies after go-live as policies and regulations change. The clearest returns are likely in high-volume, rules-based workflows where exceptions are frequent and the cost of a missed one shows up in payroll.

Looking Ahead

Build is the most significant shift from Discover. Customers that needed a department-specific report, workflow, or alert have typically waited on a vendor roadmap or used a separate tool, and Build is designed to let them create it on Dayforce data under the same controls as the rest of the suite. How far that goes depends on whether customers set up ownership, review, and usage controls before apps and bots spread.

Build moves part of the roadmap from Dayforce to its customers, which makes ownership and usage controls an early decision.

Nucleus expects customers already running Dayforce across HR, payroll, and time to adopt workforce management agents and Command Center first, since their records, schedules, and rules are already configured. Deploy is also expected to shorten implementations as it covers more product areas, particularly for employers managing union agreements and multi-state labor rules. Customers that track exception-handling time, payroll corrections, and implementation effort against their subscription and AI usage costs are best placed to decide which workflows to expand.