

December 2026 | Delivery Checklist

A week by week planning tool for delivery and hiring managers working to a December 2026 deadline.

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Why use this checklist?

From now until mid-December, there are roughly 15 working weeks left in 2026.

If you need to beef up your team to hit that December deadline, and you don't yet have the skills or person you need, September is the crucial start of your runway to make it possible.

HOW TO USE IT

- Pick one deliverable and work through it.
- Tick the weeks off as you go, and use the notes line to record what actually happened.
- Consistently do the graft now and December mostly looks after itself.

PHASE 1 | Decide



PHASE 2 | Engage



PHASE 3 | Commit



PHASE 4 | Deliver



PHASE 5 | Land



PHASE 1 | Decide

WEEK	OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLETE
1 7 – 11 Sep	Name the gap and the deliverable.	Write down the one thing that has to be done before you close the year off, along with the specific skill you don't currently have in house, but need.	☐
2 14 – 18 Sep	Decide the hire type: perm, internal or contract.	Make this decision based on what's required for your delivery, not what you think the budget will be. It needs no name attached and no approved budget, which is why it can be settled this week.	☐
3 21 – 25 Sep	Start looking, even though nothing is approved.	Who is available, at what cost, on what notice period. A four-day week with Heritage Day on the Thursday, so book the conversations early in the week. Remember, looking is not committing.	☐

NOTES:

PHASE 2 | Engage

WEEK	OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLETE
4 28 Sep – 2 Oct	Shape the job scope to the delivery window.	Write two versions of the job scope. The version with your full wish list, and a version that is genuinely achievable in eight weeks.	
5 5 – 9 Oct	Meet the people while there is no pressure on you.	Start first conversations at least. You are building a shortlist that you can act on immediately once your budget approval lands.	
6 12 – 16 Oct	Build the approval case.	Be clear about the cost, start date, delivery expectation or challenge this hire would be supporting you to solve. Also include the risk and deadline impact of not hiring this side of the year, so you have a clear view of both routes. If contract is the route, check whether the cost can sit on the project budget rather than the wider department headcount budget at this point.	

NOTES:

Picking this up late? Start here instead

If it's October

Start at week 4 and run weeks 1 to 3 alongside it. You've lost some time, but not the window. Permanent is still open until the end of the month if that's the hire you're looking to make.

If it's November

Permanent is closed for this year. Go straight to week 10 on the contract or internal route, and shorten the deliverable before you shorten the onboarding.

If it's December

The job is now weeks 13 – 15. Freeze the scope, write the handover properly, and book the January restart date. Next year's version of this starts in September.

PHASE 3 | Commit

WEEK	OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLETE
7 19 – 23 Oct	Pre-clear the decision with whoever signs it off.	Walk the approver through your proposal before they see it formally for the first time, and benefit from any feedback. A decision that surprises someone in November takes longer to approve, and you don't have the luxury of time.	☐
8 26 – 30 Oct	The last week a permanent offer can still land in time.	If you're going the permanent route, an offer needs to be moving now. Four weeks of notice from here is a December start, which means onboarding rather than contribution. After this week, a perm hire becomes a next year decision.	☐
9 2 – 6 Nov	Decide. A reminder that local elections take place on the Wednesday.	If your business has been holding spend until there is more certainty, this is the week the waiting will end. If you're waiting your competitors may be doing the same, and may also have hires in the wings, so don't get caught short, make the move first to avoid losing out on good people.	☐

NOTES:

PHASE 4 | Deliver

WEEK	OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLETE
10 9 – 13 Nov	Sign, and set a start date in writing.	Contract signed, start date confirmed, first week plan written ahead of their arrival. A contractor starting the following Monday has four clear weeks before the wind-down begins.	☐
11 16 – 20 Nov	Onboard in days, not weeks.	Access on day one, context by day two. Anything not ready in week one costs you a week you genuinely don't have. Delivery speed is a result of preparedness.	☐
12 23 – 27 Nov	First real contribution, make sure you stick to the scope.	Delivery should fit seamlessly into the sprint cycle. This is also a week where the scope will quietly grow, so stick to your defined and agreed scope created in week 4 to keep delivery momentum on the rails.	☐

NOTES:

PHASE 5 | Land

WEEK	OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENT	COMPLETE
13 30 Nov – 4 Dec	Freeze the scope.	Nothing new goes into the scope. Anything not already started, will now need to land in February. Saying this in November is seen as planning, saying this in December is seen as an apology.	☐
14 7 – 11 Dec	Land it, then write the handover.	Test, deploy and test again. Then document next steps while it's fresh in your mind. Where things were left, what is still open, who to call. Half the cost of restarting in January stems from nobody remembering where they left off in December.	☐
15 14 – 18 Dec	Code Freeze. A reminder of the public holiday on the Wednesday.	Code freeze or pause delivery. Skeleton staff will begin activating as the majority of team members begin to take leave. Lock in the January re-start date now, don't make it for the first day back.	☐

NOTES:

Wherever you find yourself in 15 weeks

Whichever week you find yourself in, know that you still have options. Some weeks just have more than others and that's why September is a crucial month to make the big decisions. If any of these weeks look impossible, here is where we come in.

The earlier we chat the more options that stay open to you. We can pick this up at any point between now and January, whether you are testing, whether the market can supply the skill, or working out what next year's team should look like. No pitch or obligation.

Still deciding in September?

Get a read on your market before you commit to the role and budget. No brief required.

 ***Book a market read***

Waiting on approval in October?

We start quietly, so the day the budget lands, you're choosing between people rather than starting from scratch.

 ***Book a discovery call***

Is your date at risk in November?

Specialist contractors who can start and deliver in days, with payroll and compliance handled.

 ***Explore contractor & Payroll***

Planning next year in December?

This quarter showed you exactly which gaps were real. Permanent hires for the team you know you need.

 ***Plan next year's team***

WORK WITH ACUITY

Trusted by the names you know

We've partnered with startups, scale-ups and enterprises, including some of the brands you'd know, to solve leadership, capability and growth challenges.

Have a role you can't afford to get wrong? The right hire can change everything. Tell us who you're looking for and we'll help you find them.

SUBMIT A VACANCY



Modernising insurance technology comes with significant delivery pressure. These environments are complex, highly regulated and require strong engineering foundations, experienced people and the ability to scale delivery without compromising quality. In a short period, Acuity helped us assemble a multidisciplinary team of 15 senior professionals, including full-stack, backend and frontend engineers, engineering leads, cloud engineers and DevOps specialists.

What distinguished Acuity was the time they took to understand our technical requirements, delivery expectations, risks and organisational constraints. They did not simply fill vacancies; they worked with us to find people with the right capabilities and mindset to contribute from the outset.

Their support has played an important role in strengthening our engineering capacity and capability. Based on my experience, I understand why Acuity has maintained such a longstanding relationship with the Group.

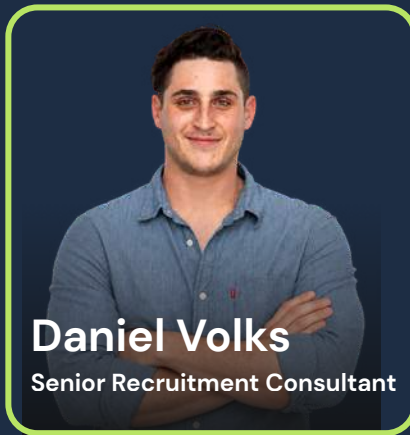


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Daniel Volks

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The right people change everything.

Behind every deadline that lands on time is a team that was built to deliver it.

We help ambitious businesses make the people decisions they can't afford to get wrong. This quarter, next year and every stage in between.

[Get in touch >](#)