BROUGHT TO YOU BY

AI CENTRAL Jobstream

AI's Impact on the Job Market

Understanding today's job market through real conversations and data

Start Reading

AI Is Reshaping Work Faster Than Anyone Expected

Understanding what's actually happening in the job market

An interview with Katie Fortunato

Katie Fortunato is Co-founder and EVP of Innovation at Hire Innovations, where she leads Jobstream: the affiliate platform connecting creators to job opportunities. She's worked with brands like MTV, AOL, and The Wall Street Journal, and has helped millions connect to jobs. She's focused on building human-centered AI for the future of work.

The job market has changed faster in the past 18 months than it did in the previous decade. Volume is up, signal is down. Applications have skyrocketed due to AI-powered tools, but hiring teams are tightening filters in response, creating a paradox where perfectly qualified candidates get screened out by the very systems designed to find them.

The narrative around AI job displacement is incomplete.
Yes, AI is removing repetitive roles in screening, coordination, and entry-level operations. But it's simultaneously creating opportunity for experienced professionals who pair decades of business judgment with AI tools. The experienced segment is growing, not shrinking.

"We're seeing more applications than ever, mainly due to AI. It's become increasingly more difficult to vet talent, or interview who's actually qualified"

Katie Fortunato

Co-founder and EVP of Innovation at Hire Innovations & Jobstream Leader

What Senior Professionals Need to Know Right Now

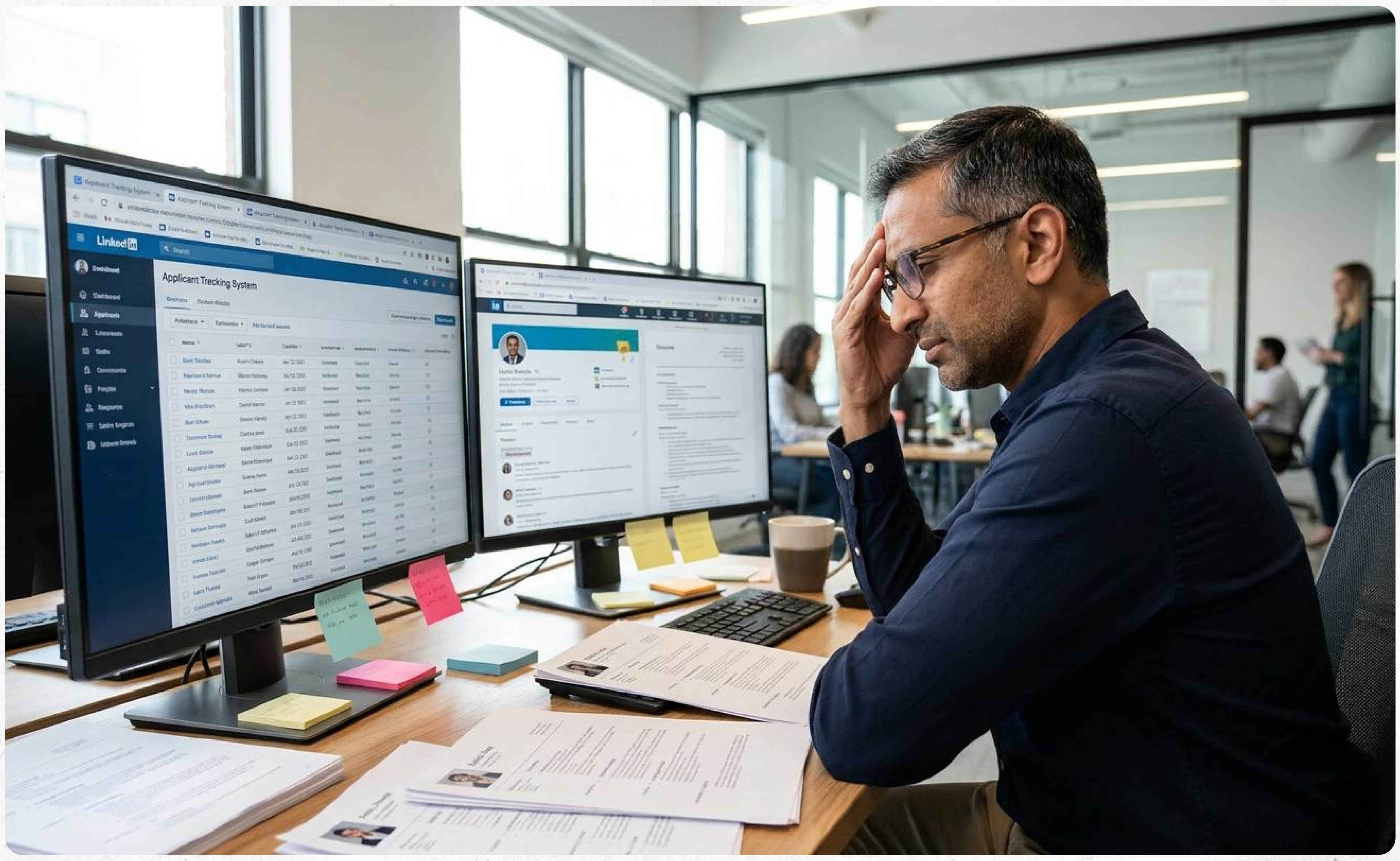
The market is rewarding different skills than it did 18 months ago

For senior professionals, the old playbook of applying cold through job boards no longer works. **Referred candidates are 10x more likely to be hired[1]. The market rewards people who are discoverable.** Building visibility, through social platforms, content, or an active professional presence, has shifted from optional to essential.

The pattern is clear: your network is currency. An audience is the only asset that compounds regardless of your past employers. In a market where AI screens applications but humans still make hiring decisions, being discoverable matters more than being qualified on paper.

[1] CareerPlug, 2025 Recruiting Metrics Report

TIP #1
Get specific about your target role. Write it in one sentence: who you are, where you are, and what you're trying to accomplish. "Mid-career tech professional exploring next senior role in the US" signals expertise far better than "looking for opportunities." Specificity attracts the right attention from hiring managers and recruiters.



TIP #2
Don't guess what hiring managers want, ask your network. A simple poll on LinkedIn ("Would it be helpful if I shared insights about [your expertise]?") validates your positioning before you invest time. Use your network to test what resonates, then double down on what gets engagement.

1

What has actually changed in the hiring market over the last 12 to 18 months?

Volume is up, signal is down. **We're seeing more applications than ever, mainly due to AI, and it's become increasingly more difficult to vet talent, or interview who's actually qualified.** Candidates are applying everywhere, regardless of skills-fit, or interest, and employers are tightening filters, screening out perfectly matched resumes tailored to the job description. **The middle is where people get lost**, and what we are seeing is that timing is everything when it comes to applying to the job. You have to get in early for your chances to increase in being viewed from the applicant tracking system and recruitment team on the employer side. We are also seeing the amount of people filing for LLC's, suggesting that more people have side hustles, or freelance gigs to supplement the core income.

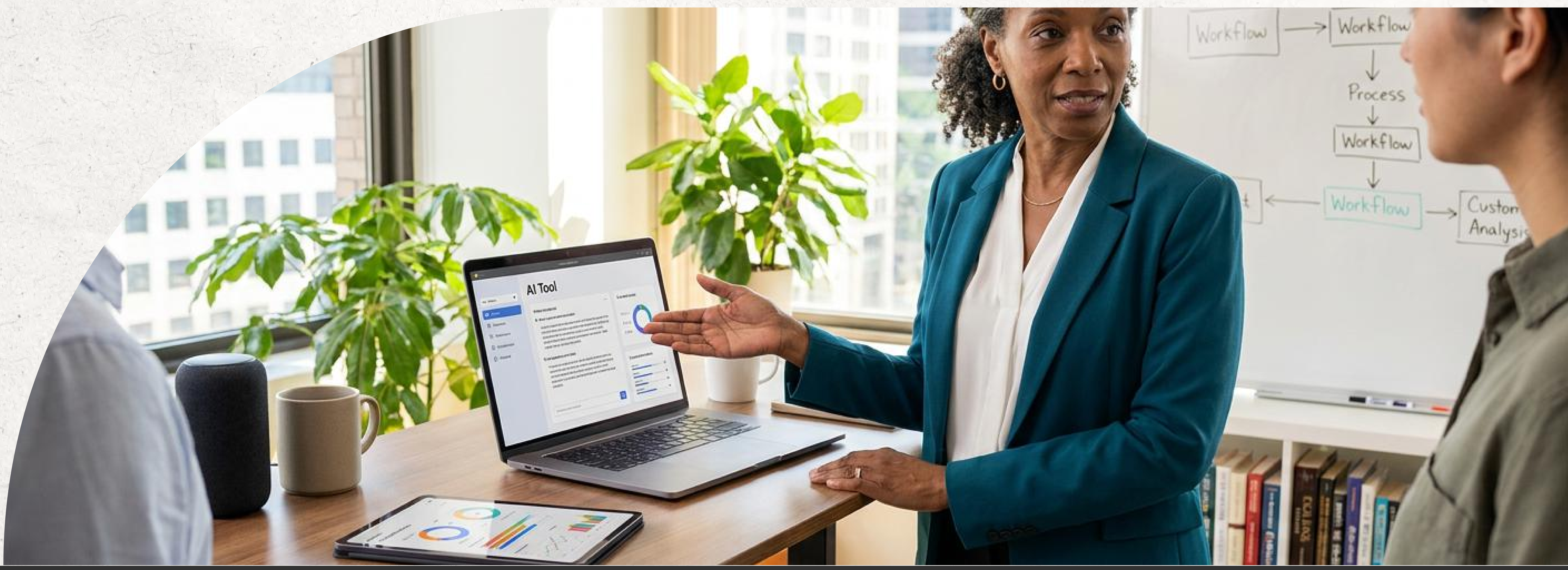
2

Where is AI genuinely displacing roles, where is it quietly creating new ones, and where is it just being used as cover for cost-cutting that was going to happen anyway?

It is true that AI is removing repetitive roles: screening, coordination, basic ops, and entry level roles. Marketing teams and talent teams are becoming leaner, this is reflective in things like inflation, and consumer spending being down, with the fear of layoffs, if the consumer is not spending companies are not growing. If companies are not growing, they are not hiring as much talent, or spending as much on marketing budgets. This is where we are seeing legitimate pullback, and AI neatly captures the headline, but **our belief is that is a marketing tactic in itself.** Any company that can position itself ahead of its competitors that they've figured out AI, the market moves with these signals. And yes, some companies are using AI as cover for cost discipline that was already coming.

TIP #3
Build an owned audience, not just a resume. Platforms change algorithms, but your email list or newsletter cannot be taken from you. One professional regularly picks up opportunities through Google searches alone; their Substack content is SEO-indexed and brings free organic traffic they didn't have to build directly.

TIP #4
Repurpose your expertise across channels. Write one piece about your domain expertise, paste it into an AI tool, condense for LinkedIn, and post the shorter version with a link to the full article. One write, two distributions. LinkedIn's native subscribers get notified automatically, building your discoverable presence.



But AI is quietly creating roles for people who are more experienced, and who possess practical business sense. This, paired with AI, makes a super employee and the experienced roles is a growing segment in the market.

On the other spectrum, we are very closely tracking **what is called the "HALO market", meaning "heavy assets, low obsolescence." These are opportunities that require the skills of the trades or are dexterity based.** The volume of opportunities in these essential verticals remain strong, like healthcare, retail, travel, K-12 education. This is why you see headlines about young people becoming the millionaire toolbelt generation.

Healthcare is an outlier, and the greatest area of need for talent is reflective of the aging population. We believe that there is more opportunity for companies and government to create better pathways to these professions.

-37%
month-over-month

Transportation & Logistics hiring costs down 37.04% MoM, highlighting ongoing volatility in supply chain hiring

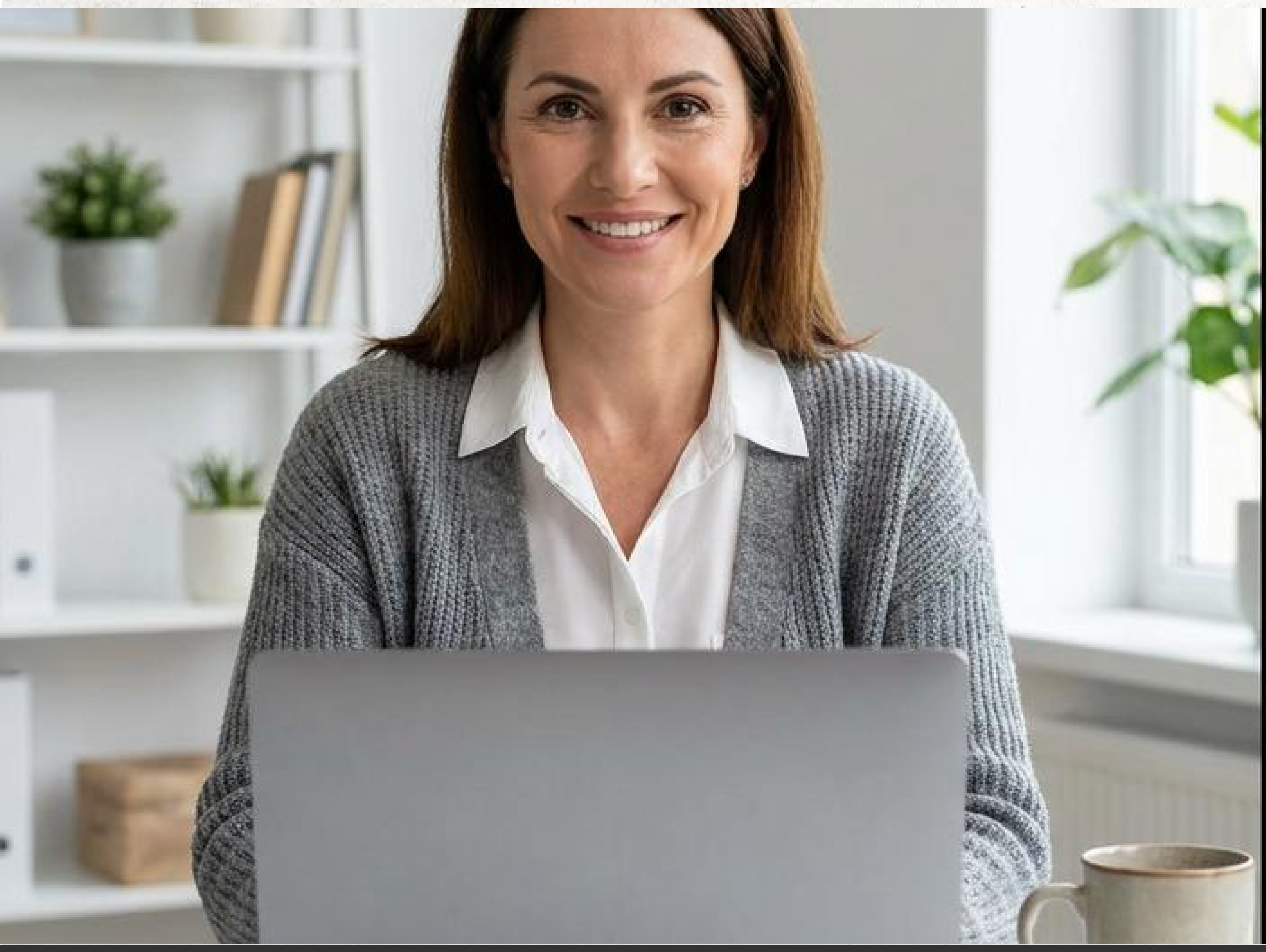
+166%
year-over-year

Retail pricing up 166.13% YoY, reflecting sustained pricing pressure in high-volume and revenue-driving roles

+114%
year-over-year

Finance & Operations talent costs up 114.46%, highlighting demand for strategic and analytical talent

Source: Talivity Talent Market Index, April 2026



TIP #5
LinkedIn suppresses posts with external links, so don't post them directly. Instead, **tease your expertise and ask people to comment** a keyword to receive it via DM. One creator got 40,000 comments using: "Comment ENGINEER and I'll send you the list." This builds engaged connections, not just passive followers.

TIP #6
Many employed professionals don't want to publicly signal they're job searching. **Give hiring managers a private channel** (DM or code word) to engage without broadcasting it. Instagram Stories work well - ask followers to reply with a code word, each reply is a direct connection opportunity.

3

How are hiring managers and recruiters actually using AI in 2026? Walk us through what a modern hiring process looks like.

AI handles things like creating job descriptions, reducing the time to create copy. In talent technology, AI is often used as a first-pass in filtering, scheduling, and matching. **We built an AI-engine to match skills with qualifications from the job descriptions,** however on a deeper level it's harder to filter by soft skills. Humans step in later. **The first interview is often with a system, you just don't see it.**

Many job seekers are optimizing for that reality before they ever meet a person, and this is where AI tools in the hands of those using it to beat the system is resulting in conversations around ethical standards.

4 What is the one thing senior professionals should be doing differently right now that they probably aren't?

You need to change the way you are finding a job. **If you're applying cold, you're already behind.** The "personal brand" exercise is where you should start, and whether this appeals or not, employers are checking your social media before they even read your resume. Make it easy for hiring managers to find you for your skills. Build visibility: post on social platforms, engage, or activate your network. The market rewards people who are discoverable. The market also rewards people who are networking, as we see that referred candidates are 10x more likely to be hired.

TIP #7
TikTok's organic reach is unmatched right now for building visibility. One professional got 50,000 views on an early video and doubled their network in 48 hours without spending anything on ads. Lead with a specific, relatable situation, not a generic resource dump. Post consistently: Sunday, Monday, Wednesday.

TIP #8
Mix professional content with lifestyle or identity content to keep your presence authentic. One professional combines expertise posts with industry insights, showing the whole person, not just the credentials. This builds trust and makes you memorable when opportunities arise.

The State of Hiring

Talivity Talent Market Index, April 2026

+146%
year-over-year

Sales talent costs doubled - revenue-driving roles command the highest premiums as employers get selective

7 of 9
sectors elevated

Pricing remains above baseline across most categories - competition for the right talent is real, even as hiring slows

+134%
year-over-year

Light Industrial pricing up 59% - high-volume hiring categories demonstrate resilience where human work can't be automated

TIP #9
Start your visibility funnel: social content → lead magnet → email capture → newsletter. The pattern top professionals use. Make a LinkedIn post about your expertise, tell viewers the framework is in your bio, link to a free PDF download, the download requires an email. Now you own that relationship.

TIP #10
Create a lead magnet that showcases your expertise. A "Top 10 Insights About [Your Domain]" PDF is a strong starting point. The download page captures the email. The email feeds the newsletter. The newsletter keeps you top of mind when opportunities surface.

5

Everyone is being told to "upskill in AI", but that advice is so generic it's almost meaningless. For a senior professional who isn't a technical person, what does meaningfully upskilling in AI actually look like?

It's not "coding", it's systems thinking. **Can you take something repetitive and redesign it with AI?** Start with your own workflow, email, research, reporting. That's where the opportunity shows up first. Think about ROI as a time savings; if you had more free time, you increase your capacity to make more real life connections.

6

Where does the creator path fit into all of this? For someone not ready to quit their job but watching the market shift, is building an audience and some independent income now a career hedge rather than a hobby? What changed?

It used to be considered a hobby, "you work to do the things you enjoy." Now it's infrastructure, and key to career survival. Hedging is one way of looking at it, but also thinking about yourself as a multi-faceted human being with lots of skills and interest can still create a meaningful life. **Your network is currency. An audience is the only asset that compounds regardless of your past employers.** We're seeing professionals build income streams before they need them, and that changes how they navigate future risk.

TIP #11
The most successful professionals use **multiple channels feeding one central hub**. Think of each platform as an entrance, not a destination. Your destination is always your owned channel: your newsletter, your email list, your network. LinkedIn for authority, TikTok for reach, email for ownership.

TIP #12
First week action plan: Day 1: Write your target role in one sentence. Days 2-3: Create a lead magnet showcasing your expertise, set up email capture. Days 4-5: Post your first piece of content, send your first newsletter. Days 6-7: Check analytics, note what got clicks, plan week two based on what you learned.

67%
of hiring managers[3]

Use AI for initial screening - the first filter is algorithmic, not human judgment

98%
of Fortune 500[4]

Use applicant tracking systems - your resume is screened by AI before humans see it

$250B+
creator economy[5]

Global creator economy revenues - side income is becoming infrastructure, not hobby

[3] DemandSage, "AI Recruitment Statistics 2026"
Boterview, "AI in Recruitment - Statistics and Trends"
Perelson, "2026 AI Recruiting Trends"
AdAI, "Recruitment AI Statistics 2026"

[4] Jobscan, "2025 Applicant Tracking System Usage Report"
SelectSoftwareReviews, "Applicant Tracking System Statistics"
Oracle, "What Is an Applicant Tracking System"

[5] Goldman Sachs Research, "The creator economy could approach half-a-trillion dollars by 2027"
SharkPlatform (via Yahoo Finance), "Creator Economy Statistics 2026"
Gray Group International, "The Global Creator Economy in 2026"

Get the Best Practices

Download now →

About Jobstream™

While traditional job boards optimize for volume, Jobstream optimizes for trust and relevance. Backed by Hire Innovations, a pioneer in talent technology for the last two decades, Jobstream helps creators connect their audience to real job opportunities, and earn from that impact by turning influence into access to income.

Learn more at www.getjobstream.com