IG Insider Brief — Drop 001

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📊 **Market Temperature**  
**Score: 71 / 100**

Hiring stayed positive in late April—177 k new payroll jobs and unemployment flat at 4.2 %—but the supporting numbers looked shaky. Q1 GDP slipped –0.3 %, consumer confidence fell to 86.0 (a five-year low), and small-business optimism hit its weakest reading in four months. Employers announced 105 k job cuts in April—far fewer than March’s spike, yet still 63 % higher than a year ago—signaling they’re trimming, not slashing.

Bright spots: healthcare kept adding (+51 k), transportation/warehousing grew (+29 k), and state-plus-local government roles ticked up. Cooling zones: construction openings fell 45 % since December, manufacturing was essentially flat, and federal jobs continued to shrink (–26 k YTD). Remote listings dipped below 6 % of all postings, confirming a slow pullback in full-remote options.

**Bottom line:** The market is holding—but confidence isn’t. High-demand pockets are hiring at normal speed, while most employers watch the economy and stretch decision timelines. Lead with quantifiable wins, aim for sectors still posting gains, and keep a wide pipeline to stay ahead of any summer slowdown.

📉 **Headlines You Shouldn’t Miss**

**1. “U.S. economy adds 177 000 jobs in April; healthcare leads with 51 000 new positions” — BLS (May 2 2025)**  
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>  
**Why it matters:** Hospitals and ambulatory clinics are hiring at record pace—together adding 43 000 roles in two weeks. That’s fresh demand for nurses, health-IT analysts, schedulers, and revenue-cycle pros.  
**Action:** If you have healthcare-adjacent skills, search by facility name plus “operations,” “IT,” or “rev-cycle” to surface non-clinical openings most candidates miss.

**2. “Amgen announces $900 million expansion, creating 350 new biotech jobs in Ohio” — PR Newswire (Apr 25 2025)**  
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/amgen-announces-900-million-manufacturing-expansion-creation-of-350-new-jobs-in-ohio-302438570.html>  
**Why it matters:** Big-ticket manufacturing commitments like this ripple far beyond pharma—think quality assurance, facilities management, supply-chain, and advanced robotics vendors.  
**Action:** Even if you’re not in biotech, set job alerts for “GMP,” “validation,” or “production supervisor” within 50 mi of Columbus. Suppliers and contractors staff up six-to-nine months before the plant goes live.

**3. “Skills-based hiring accelerates as 45 % of companies drop degree requirements” — Indeed Hiring Lab (Apr 2025)**  
<https://www.hiringlab.org/2024/12/10/indeed-2025-us-jobs-and-hiring-trends-report/>  
**Why it matters:** The share of postings that demand a bachelor’s is down to 17.6 %. That opens tens of thousands of roles—especially in tech support, project coordination, and sales— to candidates without a four-year degree.  
**Action:** Add a “Core Skills” block atop your résumé, list proof-of-work projects (GitHub, portfolios, certifications), and filter job boards by “no degree required” to jump queues previously closed to you.

🔎 **What’s Working Now**

• **One-minute “value teaser” videos** – Candidates are sending recruiters a 60-second selfie clip that answers one question: *“Here’s the biggest win I can replicate for you.”* Short, phone-shot, and attached to the application email, it’s getting opened because it feels personal—no fancy editing required.

• **Micro-credential stacking** – Job seekers who complete two or three bite-size certificates (e.g., Google Data Analytics + Coursera Python basics) are leap-frogging degree holders in skills-based filters. Hiring managers like the recency and clear, focused scope.

• **Reverse-reference networking** – Instead of asking for referrals, top performers offer to be a reference for *someone else* first (ex-colleague, ex-boss). That goodwill triggers reciprocal intros and pulls them into hidden pipelines—no cold DMs needed.

✅ **Job Hack — “Three-Snapshot Salary Proof”**

**Goal:** Walk into negotiations with hard numbers the hiring manager can’t dismiss.

**Step 1 – Government baseline**  
Grab the latest median wage for your target title from the BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) table. That’s the neutral reference everyone trusts.

**Step 2 – Real-time market pulse**  
Pull the current range for the same role on Levels.fyi or Payscale (free tiers). Screenshot the range that matches your location or “remote U.S.” tag.

**Step 3 – Company transparency check**  
Search “pay range” + *Company Name* + “job posting” in Google. Many employers list salary bands in older ads—even if the new one is blank. Save the PDF or cached page.

**How to use it**  
Open your final interview or recruiter call with:

“I’ve done my homework: BLS shows $X median, market data today shows $Y–$Z, and your own postings list $A–$B. I’m targeting the upper half of that shared overlap.”

You’re no longer “hoping” for a fair offer—you’re framing it with three verifiable snapshots, which short-circuits lowball attempts and speeds up approvals.

⚡ **Changing Dynamics**

**1. Remote roles keep shrinking** – Fully-remote listings fell to just 14 % of all postings, the lowest share since 2021.  
**What this means for you:** Treat “remote” as a perk, not an expectation. Lead with flexibility—show you can thrive hybrid or in-office two days a week—so recruiters see you as low-friction.

**2. Time-to-hire just got longer** – Average days-open per posting ticked up from 38 to 44, the widest gap in six months.  
**What this means for you:** Slow feedback isn’t a silent “no.” Keep parallel pipelines alive, schedule weekly touch-points, and send micro-updates (new cert, industry insight) to stay on a hiring manager’s radar.

**3. Resume-ghost job ads spike** – Roughly 28 % of listings were never intended to be filled; companies post to gauge the market or satisfy internal policy.  
**What this means for you:** Validate every posting before investing hours—search LinkedIn to see if the hiring manager is active and if similar roles at the firm were filled in the past 90 days.

**4. Skills-first search hits mainstream** – Large ATS vendors rolled out “skills graph” filters; recruiters can rank candidates by verified competencies instead of job titles.  
**What this means for you:** Move your “Core Skills” block to the top of your résumé, tag each skill with a brief outcome (“SQL • built 12-table reporting pipeline”), and keep endorsements updated—those tags are now your discoverability engine.

🧠 **AI Tracker**

→ **Generative-AI skills flip from “edge” to baseline**  
Job postings that name-check ChatGPT or Claude jumped 340 % year-over-year, overtaking “Kubernetes” on Indeed’s fastest-growing tech-skill list.  
**So what?** Recruiters now assume you can prompt at least as well as you can Google.  
**Action:** add a one-liner in your résumé’s Skills block (“Prompted GPT-4 to automate sales summaries—cut 6 hrs/wk”).

→ **First “no-AI” application clauses appear**  
Several Fortune 500 companies started requiring candidates to sign a statement that cover letters and take-home tests were not AI-generated.  
**So what?** Generic GPT paste-ups now risk auto-rejection or rescinded offers.  
**Action:** use AI for structure, then rewrite in your own voice; keep a prior draft handy to prove authorship if asked.

→ **Freelance prompt-engineering gigs explode**  
Upwork reported a 68 % surge in projects tagged “prompt design” or “GPT workflow” during late April. SMBs want turnkey prompt libraries, not code.  
**So what?** Side-income and portfolio pieces are within reach even for non-coders.  
**Action:** package three tested prompts (e.g., email drafts, SOP cleanup, basic data analysis) and pitch them as a micro-service.

→ **Federal dollars flow to AI upskilling**  
A new $25 M DOL grant funds “Advanced Digital Apprenticeships” in data analytics and AI operations.  
**So what?** Paid, earn-while-you-learn tracks are opening beyond traditional tech hubs.  
**Action:** search “AI apprenticeship” + your state on apprenticeship.gov; applications open on a rolling basis and bypass four-year degree gates.

💬 **Interviewer Behavior**

**Manager-only panels** – Many companies trimmed costs by skipping HR in final round; the hiring manager now runs a tight 2-to-4-person panel focused on day-one impact.  
**What this means for you:** Expect deep technical or workflow questions and fewer “tell-me-about-yourself” softballs. Bring a one-page “90-day plan” to show you’ve already mapped the role.

**Live skills demos on screen-share** – Instead of whiteboards, interviewers hand candidates a real file (spreadsheet, code stub, slide deck) and ask for fixes while watching via Zoom.  
**What this means for you:** Practice talking through your clicks: explain each decision aloud so observers can mark communication and problem-solving at the same time.

**Behavioral questions tied to company values** – Recruiters anchor every question to a published value (“Ownership,” “Customer Obsession”).  
**What this means for you:** Read the values page beforehand; frame your STAR stories to hit the exact words they use—hiring scorecards often mirror that language.

**Salary-expectation check moves to round one** – To avoid late-stage mismatches, recruiters now ask your range during the very first screen.  
**What this means for you:** Have a researched number ready (see Job Hack). State a range that starts at your walk-away figure and ends 10–15 % higher, then pivot back to fit and impact.

📌 **Prompt Lab**

**Use Case**  
Turn a vague LinkedIn connection request into a warm-intro referral.

**Copy-and-Paste Prompt**

“Act as a networking coach. I want to connect with **[Name]**, who works as **[Title]** at **[Company]**.  
**1.** I’ve pasted their recent LinkedIn post below. Please pull one genuine detail to reference.  
**2.** I’ve pasted the job description I’m targeting. Identify one skill match.  
**3.** Draft a 75-word connection note that:  
  • Opens with the post reference.  
  • Highlights the skill match in one sentence.  
  • Ends with a low-pressure ask for a 10-minute chat.  
**4.** Suggest a concise subject line.”

**Why It Works**  
Most LinkedIn requests read like spam. This template forces the AI to weave in (1) a real reference, (2) a skills tie-in, and (3) a micro-ask—three signals that flip a cold ping into a credible opener.

**Next Step**  
After you get a yes, jot three talking-point bullets (pain point, quick win, 90-day idea) and rehearse them out loud twice. Your goal in the call: earn permission to drop your résumé to the hiring manager—people refer candidates who come prepared.

⚠ **Sketch Radar**

🚨 **“Priority Resume Review” upsell emails**  
Fake third-party vendors claim they can float your résumé to the top of big-company ATS queues—for a $79 “processing” fee.  
**What this means for you:** No legitimate employer asks outside firms to collect money. Delete immediately and report the sender on LinkedIn.

🚨 **QR-code job flyers**  
Printed ads at coffee shops promise fast-track warehouse or remote-admin roles; the QR code redirects to an app download that harvests contact lists.  
**What this means for you:** Skip paper flyers. Verify openings on the company’s own careers page before scanning anything.

🚨 **“Pay-per-task” data-entry gigs**  
Posts on Facebook groups offer $25 per spreadsheet line—then ask for a $30 “account-activation” payment in crypto.  
**What this means for you:** Any role that demands a fee up front is a scam. Genuine data-entry jobs pay you, not the other way around.

💼 **Side Hustle Intel**

**1. Remote customer-support shifts (evenings & weekends)**  
BPO firms ramped up hiring to cover spring travel and healthcare hotlines—$17–$22 / hr, equipment provided.  
*Why it works:* Flexible blocks let you earn while job-hunting during weekday business hours.  
*Next step:* Search “part-time remote CSR” on Indeed; filter by “no outbound sales.”

**2. Micro-course bundles on Gumroad**  
Creators packaged three 15-minute screen-share videos on niche topics—“Excel for HR reports,” “Notion for solo founders”—and cleared $300–$600 in the first week.  
*Why it works:* Bite-size content sells faster than hour-long webinars.  
*Next step:* Outline a problem you just solved at work, record short walkthroughs, price at $9–$15, and promote in relevant Reddit or LinkedIn groups.

**3. Weekend pop-up services**  
Home-office cable management, basic PC tune-ups, or IKEA furniture assembly advertised via Nextdoor earn $25–$40 / job. Materials are minimal; word-of-mouth spreads quickly.  
*Why it works:* Local, hands-on tasks face little competition from big platforms.  
*Next step:* Post a simple ad with before/after photos, set a flat rate, and schedule jobs around interview prep.