IG Insider Brief — Drop 004

Date: 2025-05-28

📊 **Market Temperature**

**Score: 62 / 100**

The job market looks stable on the surface, but conditions are tightening underneath. Weekly jobless claims spiked to 240,000—the highest since late 2021—and job openings have slid to 7.2 million, their lowest in five years. Major players like Microsoft, LinkedIn, and Chegg announced cuts.

Hiring hasn't stopped—but it’s slower, pickier, and quieter. Recruiters are drawing out timelines, leaning on contractors, and ghosting faster. The demand is still there in healthcare, logistics, and financial services—but across the board, candidates are facing higher bars and longer waits.

**Bottom line:** It's not a freeze, but it’s not go-time either. If you’re active, stay sharp, move fast, and target sectors still showing momentum. The advantage is shifting back to employers.

Let me know if you want it punchier, more data-driven, or moodier. Otherwise I’ll move on to 📉 **Headlines You Shouldn’t Miss**.

📉 **Headlines You Shouldn’t Miss**

1. **“State Dept. cuts poised to be more severe than previously outlined with 3,400 employees on the chopping block”** – *Government Executive*  
   <https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/05/state-dept-cuts-poised-be-more-severe-previously-outlined-3400-employees-chopping-block/405171/>  
   → If you're targeting government or policy roles, watch your timing—federal cutbacks are accelerating. Pivot toward private sector or state-level opportunities if you're stalled.
2. **“More Americans file for jobless aid but layoffs remain low despite economic uncertainty”** – *Washington Post*  
   <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/05/29/unemployment-benefits-jobless-claims-layoffs-labor/>  
   → The hiring faucet isn’t off—it’s dripping. Employers are still cautious, so response times lag. Use tracking and re-engagement tactics from your IG toolkit to stay top-of-mind.
3. **“Tech companies are requiring employees to learn and use AI at work—here's the best way to do that”** – *NBC Philadelphia*  
   <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/business/money-report/tech-companies-are-requiring-employees-to-learn-and-use-ai-at-work-heres-the-best-way-to-do-that-experts-say/4197336/>  
   → Companies like Shopify and Duolingo are making AI literacy mandatory. IG Network tools aren’t just job search enhancers—they’re upskilling engines. Use them to stay hire-ready.
4. **“The biggest red flag this hiring expert sees in job seekers: ‘All the candidates are starting to look the same’”** – *NBC DFW*  
   <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/business/money-report/the-biggest-red-ag-this-hiring-expert-sees-in-job-seekers-all-the-candidates-are-starting-to-look-the-same/3845786/>  
   → Recruiters are drowning in generic AI-generated applications. IG Network members stand out because we teach you how to prompt with voice, purpose, and precision—not just paste and pray.
5. **“Anthropic CEO says AI could wipe out half of all entry-level white-collar jobs”** – *Business Insider*  
   <https://www.businessinsider.com/anthropic-ceo-warning-ai-could-eliminate-jobs-2025-5>  
   → Entry-level roles are under siege. But the IG Network arms you with the one-two punch of AI literacy + differentiated strategy—exactly what recruiters say they still can’t find.

🔎 **What’s Working Now**

• **AI-enhanced résumé editing**  
Candidates are using tools like ChatGPT (or better yet, the IG Network!!) to refine existing résumés based on specific job descriptions. One report cited a job seeker who boosted their résumé quality score from 7/10 to 9.5/10 after incorporating AI-driven edits—and landed a six-figure offer. The key: write it yourself, then tighten with AI. Don’t outsource your voice.

• **Networking over “Easy Apply”**  
Top performers aren’t waiting in inbox purgatory. They're bypassing traditional funnels by messaging 10 company insiders per week to request short informational chats. This approach is surfacing unposted roles and triggering direct referrals.

• **Tactical upskilling**  
81% of active job seekers are completing short AI-related courses or micro-certifications to stay competitive. The edge isn’t just having AI on your résumé—it’s showing how you’ve used it. Hiring managers are responding to candidates who pair new tech skills with proof-of-work.

✅ **Job Hack**

**The Keyword Crossfire Method**  
Before applying, run the job description through a free word cloud tool like MonkeyLearn or WordArt.com. This visualizes which keywords are most dominant—especially in the responsibilities and qualifications sections.

Then, cross-check your résumé: are those high-frequency terms showing up naturally in your experience bullets? If not, revise—not by stuffing, but by aligning.

This quick check takes 3 minutes and helps you speak the employer’s language without sounding robotic. Most applicants skip it. You won’t.

⚡ **Changing Dynamics**

**Hiring timelines are stretching**  
Employers are slowing down across the board—adding more rounds, dragging decisions, and increasing reliance on skills tests.

**What this means for you:**  
Don't misread silence as rejection. Stay professionally persistent: follow up, track responses, and keep your momentum across multiple leads. Build a pipeline—not a one-shot plan.

**ATS systems are getting smarter—and stricter**  
Stuffing your résumé with keywords (especially in white text or dense clusters) now backfires. ATS tools are flagging over-optimization, while recruiters are weeding out AI-generic phrasing.

**What this means for you:**  
Use IG tools to guide your keyword alignment, but prioritize clarity and natural language. Highlight proof of skill, not just buzzwords. Better to sound real than robotic.

**Federal budget cuts are hitting the job market**  
The State Dept. alone is cutting 3,400 roles—marking one of the largest federal downsizings in years. Research and government-adjacent fields are showing similar contraction.

**What this means for you:**  
If you’re aiming for public sector or government-funded orgs, watch for hiring freezes. Start identifying parallel roles in adjacent industries like nonprofit, policy orgs, or private sector think tanks.

**Location-based competition is spiking**  
States like California and Texas now have more applicants per job than any other region. Meanwhile, talent shortages in Virginia and the Mountain West suggest softer competition.

**What this means for you:**  
If you're flexible, search beyond your zip code. Hybrid and remote roles in lower-competition markets may give you an edge. Start using location filters strategically.

🧠 **AI Tracker**

→ **Job postings requiring AI skills are up 98% year-over-year**  
More roles now expect basic AI literacy—even outside of tech. From marketing to project coordination, the ability to use tools like ChatGPT is becoming a default requirement.  
**So what?** If AI isn’t on your résumé, you’re invisible in certain hiring pipelines.  
**Action:** Add an “AI Tools” or “Digital Skills” section to your résumé. List specific tools you've used (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Notion AI) and how they supported real outcomes.

→ **Candidates with AI/ML skills are earning 17.7% more**  
The wage gap between AI-fluent and AI-agnostic candidates is widening fast. Recruiters are paying extra for people who can automate, analyze, or optimize workflows.  
**So what?** Hiring teams see AI familiarity as a direct signal of efficiency and leverage.  
**Action:** Weave real AI use into your bullet points. Instead of saying “created reports,” say “automated monthly reporting using ChatGPT and Excel macros—cut delivery time by 60%.”

→ **Companies like Duolingo, Shopify, and Fiverr now *require* internal AI use**  
This isn’t a pilot program. Employees at these companies are expected to work with AI daily—and contractors who can’t are being replaced.  
**So what?** If you can't speak AI, you're not just uncompetitive—you may be excluded entirely.  
**Action:** Prepare examples for interviews showing how you’ve incorporated AI into your workflows, even in small ways. Your IG Prompt Lab is a great place to practice and source ideas.

→ **77% of AI-using job seekers landed higher-paying roles (vs. 48% of non-users)**  
The outcomes are real: candidates using AI tools to prep, research, and tailor materials are closing better offers.  
**So what?** Smart AI use = stronger positioning and faster traction.  
**Action:** Use IG’s Prompt Lab to generate better responses, sharper content, and tailored materials—but always refine manually to preserve voice and avoid detection.

→ **Recruiters are using AI detectors—and asking for disclosure**  
Some companies now scan applications for generic or AI-generated content. Others require you to confirm you didn’t use AI during certain stages.  
**So what?** Over-optimization is risky. Authenticity isn’t optional anymore—it’s a filter.  
**Action:** Use the Resume Analyzer Pro to score structure and keyword alignment. Then revise your content by hand to make sure it still sounds like you.

💬 **Interviewer Behavior**

**You’re not just being interviewed anymore—you’re being filtered.**

This cycle’s intel shows a clear shift: interviewers are testing for authenticity, adaptability, and AI fluency—**in that order**.

→ **Asynchronous video prompts are replacing live calls**  
You’ll be asked to record answers alone, often with no feedback, no redo, and no interviewer present. It’s a trap for the unprepared. If your energy’s flat or your answers ramble, you're out.

**What to do:**  
Use the IG Network’s Interview Coach to simulate this exact format. Practice answering tough prompts in one take. Play them back. Sharpen. Repeat.

→ **Scripted answers are getting exposed**  
Recruiters are using deeper, unscriptable questions like:  
• “Tell me your proudest failure—and what it changed.”  
• “What’s a work decision you regret, and why?”  
• “What are you most proud of—outside of your job?”

These aren’t casual. They’re designed to shake off AI-fed candidates and surface real experience. The canned stuff doesn’t survive impact.

**What to do:**  
Use IG’s story structuring prompts (STAR and “win/fail/recover”) to build answer sets that actually sound like you.

→ **AI questions are now standard**  
“Have you used AI in your work?” isn’t niche anymore—it’s baseline. They don’t want to hear theory. They want to hear *workflow*.

**What to do:**  
Prepare a 90-second story that shows how you used AI to solve a problem, save time, or improve something tangible. If you're in the IG Network, this is your home turf.

🤖 **Tool Watch**

✅ **LinkedIn Hiring Insights Badges**  
New badges now show how quickly employers respond and whether listings are verified.  
🧭 *What to do:* Use these to filter for roles with real momentum. Skip the ghost posts and auto-rejections.

📈 **Teal raises $7.5M**  
The résumé match extension just secured major funding to expand its AI tools.  
🧭 *What to do:* Use it for surface-level alignment if you must—but for actual ATS scoring and structure feedback, the IG Resume Analyzer is still the deeper play.

🧪 **LinkedIn’s AI Interview Coach (LinkedIn Learning)**  
This new Premium tool offers basic practice questions with AI-generated tips.  
🧭 *Why it falls short:* It’s generic, static, and behind a paywall. It’s not personalized to your role, company, or résumé—and it can’t simulate the modern formats recruiters are actually using.  
**You already have something better:** The IG Interview Coach adapts to your target role, builds scenario-specific prompts, and mirrors the async video formats dominating early-round interviews. This isn’t practice—it’s precision prep.

📌 **Prompt Lab**

**Use Case: Rewrite your résumé to match a real job post—without sounding like a bot.**

Anyone can copy-paste a job description into ChatGPT and ask for a rewrite. But most people get back fluff: over-polished, underwhelming, and instantly flaggable. Here’s a better way.

**The Prompt:**

“Act as a strategic résumé coach. I’m applying for [Job Title] at [Company Name]. Here’s the job description: [paste it]. Here’s my current résumé content: [paste].

1. Identify the top 5 keywords and skills in the job description.
2. Suggest edits to 3–4 bullet points in my experience section to better align with those terms.
3. Write a 3-line professional summary tailored to this job.”

**Why it works:**

* Prioritizes alignment without rewriting your entire résumé
* Extracts real keywords instead of keyword stuffing
* Keeps your voice, strengthens your framing

**IG Network Enhancement:**

After you’ve used this prompt, run your edited résumé through **Resume Analyzer Pro**. It’ll confirm whether your changes actually improve your ATS score—and tell you what’s still missing. This combo = precision + power.

⚠ **Sketch Radar**

🚨 **Fake “new manager” texts targeting new hires**  
Scammers are watching LinkedIn for job updates, then texting new hires pretending to be their boss:

“Hey, are you available?”  
These messages escalate quickly into gift card or financial transfer requests.  
**What to do:** Never act on requests that come from unknown numbers—even if they reference your new job. Always verify through official company channels.

🚨 **Phantom remote job offers with direct deposit scams**  
Unsolicited emails or texts offering six-figure remote roles are circulating. Victims are asked for bank info “to set up payroll” or to purchase equipment upfront.  
**What to do:** No legitimate employer hires without a live interview. If you didn’t apply and they’re offering money—it’s a trap.

🚨 **Money mule schemes disguised as “finance assistant” roles**  
Some listings—especially on lesser-known job boards—advertise remote roles that involve “handling client payments” or “processing transactions.” These are laundering operations.  
**What to do:** Never use your personal account to move money for a company. If it sounds shady, it is.

💼 **Side Hustle Intel**

**1. Freelance writing with AI support**  
Writers using ChatGPT to outline articles and draft content are reporting average earnings around **$120/day**. Once edited for clarity and tone, these pieces are sold on platforms like Fiverr and Upwork.  
**What this offers:** A steady income stream for anyone comfortable with words—even without formal writing experience.

**2. Sell prompt libraries to small businesses**  
As AI adoption rises, small companies are paying freelancers for **prebuilt GPT workflows**—things like content calendars, onboarding messages, or email replies.  
**What this offers:** A way to monetize your knowledge of AI tools without building software. Just create smart prompt stacks and sell them.

**3. Blog your experience, earn affiliate revenue**  
Niche blogs reviewing job tools (like FlexJobs, Teal, or Otta) are gaining traction. These sites rank in search and earn through affiliate links.  
**What this offers:** A slow-burn but scalable path to passive income—especially if you’ve already tested these platforms firsthand.