IG Insider Brief — Drop 005

Date: 2025-07-14

📊 **Market Temperature**

**Score: 67 / 100**

June looked decent on paper—147,000 jobs added, unemployment down to 4.1%. But half those gains came from government hiring. The private sector? Flatlining.

Job openings dropped. Hospitality lost 300,000. Even healthcare pulled back. Meanwhile, tech is pivoting hard: Microsoft, Intel, and Indeed cut thousands—while 38% of tech roles now require AI skills (up 111% YoY). They’re not hiring people; they’re upgrading systems.

Voluntary quits are down. Long-term unemployment is up. If you get laid off, it’s taking longer to get back in.

**What to do:**

* 🎯 Target sectors still hiring (government, healthcare, education).
* ⚙️ Show you're AI-fluent—even if you're non-technical.
* 🛠 Translate private-sector skills into public-sector wins.
* 📞 Follow up. People who stay visible get traction.

**This isn’t a freeze. It’s a filter.** The job market is sorting—move with it or get left behind.

📉 **Headlines You Shouldn**’**t Miss**

🧠 **The U.S. just went all-in on AI hiring**  
→ *“A New Era for U.S. AI Policy” – Consumer Financial Monitor (July 28)*  
The government launched a multi-billion-dollar plan to fund AI apprenticeships and talent pipelines.  
👉 https://www.consumerfinancemonitor.com/2025/07/28/a-new-era-for-u-s-ai-policy-how-americas-ai-action-plan-will-shape-industry-and-government/  
**What to do:** Check [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/) for free, government-backed AI career tracks.

🪓 **Intel layoffs = AI takeover, not cost cuts**  
→ *“AI-Driven Disruption at Intel” – Times of India (July 26)*  
25,000 jobs are being replaced by LLM agents—not offshored, not paused—replaced.  
👉 https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/ai-driven-disruption-at-intel-puts-25000-jobs-at-risk-what-tech-graduates-in-the-us-must-do-to-remain-employable/articleshow/122919547.cms  
**What to do:** If your role can be automated, get familiar with the tools replacing you—and fast.

🔎 **What**’**s Working Now**

• **The 81% Ghost Job Exploit**  
A staggering 81% of recruiters admit their employers post fake listings with no intent to hire, with 45% of HR professionals "regularly" posting ghost jobs. Smart job seekers are using LinkedIn and Indeed's new response-time tracking tools to identify companies that actually engage with candidates. The platforms now highlight employers with verified prompt response rates, letting you focus your energy on real opportunities instead of feeding the ghost job machine.  
**What this means for you:** Don’t waste time on dead listings—use response tracking to focus only on companies that actually respond.

• **Video Résumé Revolution**  
LinkedIn video content surged 36% as 60–90 second professional videos prove exceptionally effective for showcasing personality and communication skills. These aren't fancy productions—phone-shot clips answering "Here's the biggest win I can replicate for you" are getting opened because they feel personal in a world of AI-generated applications. The platform's algorithm now prioritizes older, high-value content (2–3 weeks old) based on professional relevance rather than recency.  
**What this means for you:** Record one good, authentic video and let it work for you long after it’s posted.

• **AI-Enhanced Profile Arbitrage**  
LinkedIn profiles enhanced with AI tools are seeing 40x more job opportunities and 21x more profile views. The key differentiator is using AI to enhance rather than replace authentic content. AI-assisted messaging is increasing hiring likelihood by 9%, but only when the human voice comes through clearly.  
**What this means for you:** Use AI to improve clarity and strategy—but keep it sounding like *you*. That’s what cuts through.

* **The Gamified Assessment Edge**  
  Companies are using platforms like HirinGames to create custom assessment "parkours" that test cognitive abilities and strategic thinking in interactive scenarios. These games provide employers with objective, data-driven insights into raw potential, moving beyond polished keywords. Success here can fast-track you past the ATS pile straight to human interviews.  
  **What this means for you:** Don’t brush off these “games”—they’re quietly becoming the fastest route to the shortlist.
* **Bonus Hack: The 24-Hour Post-Interview Play**  
  Forget the thank-you email. High performers are sending a 1-page follow-up within 24 hours: a mockup, mini 30-60-90 plan, or solution to something discussed in the interview.  
  **Why it works:** You’re not saying thanks—you’re adding value before they’ve even made a decision.  
  **What this means for you:** If you’re neck-and-neck with someone else, this is what tips the scale.
* **Quick Hit: The 6-Second Resume Test**  
  Most recruiters skim résumés on their phones.  
  **Try this:** Email yours to yourself, open it on mobile, and give it 6 seconds. If your top skills and value don’t jump out, rewrite.  
  **What this means for you:** Your résumé isn’t a novel—it’s a billboard.

✅ **Job Hack**

**The LinkedIn "Golden Hour" Algorithm Exploit**  
LinkedIn’s mid-2025 algorithm update now prioritizes older, high-value content based on professional relevance rather than recency. This creates a timing arbitrage most people are missing.

**How to do it:**

* Create value-bomb posts within the first two hours of your target audience being online (usually 8–10am in their timezone)
* Engage meaningfully on 10–15 posts in your industry within their first hour—LinkedIn's "golden hour" when engagement weight is highest
* Follow up on your own posts the next day with thoughtful responses to extend the engagement window

**Why it works:**  
The algorithm's shift toward evergreen content means your insights continue reaching people weeks after posting. While others chase recency, you're building content that compounds. One well-timed industry insight can be working for you a month later when the perfect hiring manager stumbles across it.

**What this means for you:**  
Smart posting at the right time can quietly build influence, get you found, and keep you top-of-mind—*even while you sleep*.

⚡ **Changing Dynamics**

**The Great ATS Sophistication**  
ATS systems now handle 95% of initial candidate filtering, with technology that better handles PDF files from dedicated résumé builders and gives skills sections more weight than ever before. The old rules are dead: double-column formats now work as well as single-column, contradicting traditional advice. The focus has shifted from beating the parser to proving skills-based value.  
**What this means for you:** Use a clean PDF résumé—and double down on your skills section. Format doesn’t matter anymore. Proof of skill does.

**Return-to-Office Acceleration Creates Leverage**  
While 90% of companies plan to require office returns by early 2025, 65% of workers want full remote work. Here's the opportunity: companies with flexible work policies are 16% more likely to have candidates accept InMails and 29% more likely to receive applications. Flexible employers have a competitive advantage they're not fully exploiting yet.  
**What this means for you:** If you want remote, **target companies that still offer it**—they're getting fewer applicants and need the talent.

**Recruiter Overload Triggers Behavioral Shift**  
Recruiter workloads increased 26% in Q4 2024 due to AI-generated mass applications, with 38% of job seekers using AI tools to flood recruiters with résumés. The result? A 54x increase in "relationship development" requirements in job postings. Recruiters are getting more selective and prioritizing candidates who can build genuine connections.  
**What this means for you:** Start building rapport early. **Comments, replies, thoughtful DMs**—relationship-building is no longer “extra,” it’s expected.

**The Four-Day Week Goes Mainstream**  
22% of employers now offer a four-day workweek, up from just 14% in 2022, with companies reporting 67% less employee burnout and stable or improved productivity. Governments in Belgium, Iceland, and Dubai are institutionalizing shorter workweeks. This isn't just a perk anymore—it's a negotiable benefit you can trade for salary or use as a competitive differentiator.  
**What this means for you:** Ask about it. Even if it’s not posted, **some companies are willing to offer it privately to win you over**.

🧠 AI Tracker

→ **The “Winston” Efficiency Revolution**  
SmartRecruiters launched *Winston*, an agentic AI platform achieving 95% reduction in interview scheduling time, 75% decrease in screening effort, and 60% faster time-to-hire. Users report saving 300+ hours per recruiter annually, serving over 4,000 companies including Amazon, IKEA, and McDonald's.  
**What this means for you:** Decisions are happening faster—but you’ll face stricter filters up front. First impressions count more than ever.

→ **The Fake Candidate Crisis**  
Gartner predicts 1 in 4 job candidates will be fake by 2028, with deepfakes already slipping through video interviews. Over 300 U.S. firms accidentally hired North Korean IT workers using stolen identities.  
**What this means for you:** Expect live ID checks, video verification, and tougher security at every stage—especially in remote roles.

→ **AI Assessment Behavior Changes**  
Harvard research shows candidates tone down human traits like empathy and creativity when they know AI is evaluating them—hurting performance in jobs that require emotional intelligence.  
**What this means for you:** Don’t over-optimize. Show real personality in interviews. AI might screen you, but humans still hire you.

→ **The AI Job Search Stack Emerges**  
Tools like *Teal* help track your pipeline, while *Final Round AI* and *LockedIn AI* prep you for interview pressure. The savviest seekers use free organizational tools daily, then invest in premium help during critical phases.  
**What this means for you:** Build your own tech stack. Treat the job search like a campaign—with tools for every stage, not just the résumé.

💬 **Interviewer Behavior**

→ **Virtual AI Recruiters Take the First Call**  
Job candidates increasingly encounter AI recruiters named “Jamie,” “Robin,” “Angel,” and “Raya” conducting phone and video screenings around-the-clock. These conversational AI systems now handle over 30% of candidate outreach and vetting, analyzing tone, clarity, and engagement during interviews.  
**What this means for you:** Your “first impression” may be to an algorithm. Practice speaking clearly, confidently, and with energy—even if it feels robotic.

→ **Asynchronous Video Interviews Hit 40% Adoption**  
Pre-recorded candidate responses to standardized questions eliminate scheduling conflicts but require enhanced preparation as platforms analyze verbal and non-verbal cues through AI. While 82% of companies adopted virtual interviews and 93% plan to continue, 70% of Americans prefer in-person interviews.  
**What this means for you:** Like it or not, async is here to stay. Prep answers in advance, practice one-take recordings, and watch your body language.

→ **The VR Proving Ground**  
Cutting-edge companies are moving beyond Zoom to VR-based interview simulations using platforms like *Bodyswaps Job Interview Simulator*. Candidates are placed in immersive virtual environments to handle role-play scenarios, manage virtual team projects, or answer behavioral questions.  
**What this means for you:** VR is rare—but growing. If you’re asked to step into a simulation, treat it like a real-world test: prep, engage, and perform like it’s day one on the job.

→ **Interview Timeline Extensions Create Friction**  
60% of companies report increased time-to-hire in 2024, with the average process involving 42% more interviews per hire than 2021 (20 vs. 14 interviews) and taking 24% longer (41 vs. 33 days). This leads to 32% of candidates withdrawing due to lengthy processes. The paradox: companies take longer to decide, then expect instant candidate responses when they finally make offers.  
**What this means for you:** Be ready to wait—then **act fast when it’s go time.** Keep a pipeline of leads moving so one delay doesn’t derail your momentum.

📌 **Prompt Lab**

**The Skills-First ATS Optimization Prompt**  
With 81% of employers now using skills-based hiring methods, this prompt transforms your experience into the **action-verb + quantified-result + business-impact** format that ATS systems and hiring managers prioritize.

**Copy + Paste Prompt:**

You are an expert résumé strategist specializing in 2025 hiring trends and ATS optimization. I need you to create a compelling résumé section that addresses current market demands.

**CONTEXT:**  
– Job Title: [SPECIFIC POSITION]  
– Company: [TARGET COMPANY]  
– Industry: [INDUSTRY/SECTOR]

**TASK:** Write [3–5] achievement-focused bullet points for my [ROLE] experience that:

1. Start with impact-driven action verbs (avoid overused terms like "responsible for")
2. Include quantifiable metrics (numbers, percentages, dollar amounts)
3. Incorporate 2–3 keywords from this job description: [PASTE JOB DESCRIPTION]
4. Demonstrate skills-based value rather than task-based descriptions
5. Address 2025 hiring priorities: AI literacy, cross-functional collaboration, adaptability, and measurable business impact

**EXAMPLE FORMAT:**  
– [Action Verb] [specific task/project] that [measurable outcome] by [percentage/number], resulting in [business impact] for [context/scope]

Raw experience to transform: [PASTE YOUR ACTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE HERE]

**Why it works:**  
This format is 5x more predictive of job performance than education-based hiring. It forces AI to think like a hiring manager focused on outcomes rather than duties, creating bullets that pass both ATS keyword filtering and human relevance screening.

**What this means for you:**  
Skip the guesswork. This prompt **builds résumé bullets that hit the algorithm and the human reading it**—without sounding like either wrote it.

⚠ **Sketch Radar**

🚨 **Text Message Recruiting Tsunami**  
Scammers are blasting texts posing as recruiters from legit companies, dangling $200–$800/day remote gigs. They move you to a "text interview" on Skype or Teams chat, then promptly "hire" you and ask for banking info. This con has cost job seekers $61 million+ in 2025 so far.  
**What this means for you:** If it starts with a text and sounds too good to be true—it is. Real companies don’t hire via chat.

🚨 **FBI Health Insurance Fraud Alert**  
Criminals impersonate legitimate health insurers through phishing emails and texts, specifically targeting job seekers with fake employment offers from “healthcare companies” to steal protected health information and financial details.  
**What this means for you:** No real employer asks for medical info before you're hired. Always verify direct through company websites.

🚨 **Fake Check Equipment Scams**  
Scammers pose as employers sending checks for home office setup ($2,400–$4,982 reported) then requesting equipment purchases and return of “overpayments.” This specifically targets remote job seekers who need home office equipment.  
**What this means for you:** If they ask you to deposit money and forward part of it—it’s a scam. Legit companies ship gear directly or reimburse *after* onboarding.

🚨 **Professor Impersonation Targeting Students**  
Fraudsters impersonate professors and university departments offering flexible, part-time positions while harvesting Social Security numbers, banking details, and ID copies from students.  
**What this means for you:** If a “professor” offers a job via email and wants your full SSN—hit delete. Schools don’t hire this way.

💼 **Side Hustle Intel**

1. **AI-Powered Content Creation Services**  
   Businesses are paying premium rates for quality AI-generated content using ChatGPT, Jasper, and Copy.ai for blogs, social media, and websites. SMBs want turnkey prompt libraries and AI workflows, not code.  
   **What this means for you:** If you can write and prompt, you can pitch micro-services (like blog drafts or email rewrites) and sell them on Upwork or Fiverr—no portfolio required.
2. **Amazon Influencer Program (Onsite Commissions)**  
   Through Amazon’s Onsite Commissions program, approved influencers upload short review videos for products they own. When customers watch your video on the product page and purchase, you earn commission.  
   **What this means for you:** Your product opinions = money. If you already use something, record a 60-second review and let Amazon do the rest.
3. **High-Commission Affiliate Programs**  
   HubSpot pays 30% recurring commission. Semrush offers $200 per subscription + $10 per free trial. BonCharge Wellness pays 15% on $300 average orders.  
   **What this means for you:** No need to start a business—just build content (blogs, videos, LinkedIn posts) around tools you already believe in and include affiliate links.
4. **Niche Mobile Business Concepts**  
   Entrepreneurs are launching niche mobile retail concepts like “flower trucks” selling fresh bouquets at local events and farmers’ markets. Lower overhead than a storefront, and strong visual appeal for social media.  
   **What this means for you:** Got a niche? Package it. A used van + a compelling concept can turn into a weekend income machine.