PRACTICAL RESOURCE / JOBCOACH

JobCoach: AI Job Search Content Pack

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How to use AI to find a job that fits

Turn an unfocused search into a shortlist of roles, a clear evidence bank, and a manageable weekly plan.

Category: Find work

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Route: /journal/use-ai-to-find-a-job/

Start with a search brief

Before asking AI to find jobs, write down the work you want to do, the location or remote arrangement you need, your availability, and the skills you can demonstrate. Choose one primary role family and one adjacent option. A search for ‘anything remote’ gives you little basis for deciding which applications deserve your time.

Separate nonnegotiables from preferences. If a role requires a license you do not hold, that is different from preferring experience with a tool you could learn. Do not let an AI fit score make that decision for you.

Build an evidence bank

Collect six to ten examples from paid work, education, volunteering, or personal projects. For each, record the problem, your contribution, tools used, and a result you can support. Save the source of every metric. This becomes the material for your resume, application answers, and interview stories.

Remove private client information, full home addresses, reference contact details, and confidential documents before sharing material with an AI service. Review that service’s current data settings and use only information you are permitted to share.

Compare real job descriptions

Paste three to five current job descriptions into your chosen AI assistant. Ask it to separate explicit requirements, preferences, and assumptions. Request a table matching each requirement to your evidence. A missing example is a question to investigate, not permission to invent experience.

Use AI to suggest related job titles and search phrases. Then search actual job boards and employer career pages. If an assistant provides openings, open every original listing to confirm the employer, location restrictions, application route, and whether the role is still available.

Turn the shortlist into a week of action

Choose a small batch of suitable roles, tailor the strongest applications, and contact a few people with relevant context. Set aside time to practice and improve a work sample. Track the application date, resume version, source, contact, and next step.

After a few weeks, review where the process stalls. Few relevant openings may call for different titles or sources. Applications without conversations may call for clearer evidence or better targeting. Interviews without progress may call for more specific examples and practice. Small samples are noisy, so avoid rewriting everything after one rejection.

Your next 30 minutes

Write your search brief, collect three real job descriptions, and identify one role for which you can provide strong evidence. Finish by choosing a single next action: improve a resume bullet, verify an opening, or ask a former colleague about a team.

AI prompt

Act as a job-search planning partner. Using only my career evidence and the job descriptions below, create: (1) related role titles to investigate, (2) a requirement-to-evidence table, (3) genuine gaps and questions, and (4) a one-week plan for my available hours. Separate explicit requirements from your inferences. Do not invent jobs, skills, dates, achievements, or hiring probabilities. Ask about missing information first. My constraints: [details]. Evidence: [facts]. Job descriptions: [text].

Use AI to improve your resume without losing your voice

Translate your experience into clear, relevant evidence-and check every claim before you apply.

Category: Applications

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Route: /journal/ai-resume-help/

Keep a master resume and a facts file

Your master resume is the complete record you work from. A tailored resume is a selection of the most relevant material for one opportunity. Keep job titles, employers, dates, education, and credentials consistent across versions.

Give AI a separate facts file containing projects, responsibilities, feedback, and verified results. Ask it to flag what is missing before drafting. If you cannot verify a number, remove it or describe the contribution accurately without a metric.

Translate responsibilities into evidence

A useful bullet explains what you did, the context or scope, and the result when known. ‘Responsible for onboarding’ is vague. An illustrative improvement is: ‘Created a new-hire checklist and coordinated weekly onboarding sessions across three teams.’ Use that wording only if those facts are yours.

Results do not have to be revenue. You may have improved documentation, resolved recurring issues, delivered a project, reduced confusion, or helped others complete a task. Distinguish your contribution from the work of the wider team. Do not claim sole ownership of a shared outcome.

Tailor the emphasis, then check readability

Highlight evidence that addresses the target role’s main responsibilities. Use the employer’s terminology where it accurately describes your experience; explain an unfamiliar internal title rather than silently replacing it with a more senior one.

As a conservative formatting choice, use clear headings, selectable text, and a straightforward reading order. Follow the application’s requested file format. Reopen the exported file and check what was extracted into the application form. Fix errors before submitting. Avoid hidden text, keyword stuffing, or claims that one formatting trick will beat every applicant tracking system.

Run a line-by-line truth check

Ask AI to create a change log showing the original wording, proposed wording, and factual support for each change. Personally verify dates, scope, tools, titles, metrics, and links. Read the summary aloud: if it could describe almost anyone, replace adjectives with something specific.

A third-party matching score is feedback from that tool, not the employer’s actual ranking or a prediction of an interview. Prioritize clarity and accurate evidence over chasing a percentage. Save the final version with the role and date so you know what the interviewer received.

Try this today

Choose one job description and improve three relevant bullets. For each, ask: can I explain this work, show its source, and answer a follow-up question? If not, revise before sending.

AI prompt

Compare my resume with this job description. First produce a table of requirements, my existing evidence, and missing information. Then suggest edits to three bullets and the summary. Preserve official titles, dates, and factual scope. Do not add skills, numbers, responsibilities, or credentials. Show the source for every factual claim and flag anything that needs my confirmation. Keep the language direct and natural. Resume: [text]. Evidence: [facts]. Role: [text].

Write a cover letter that sounds like you-with help from AI

Make a specific case for the role using two strong examples and a clear reason for your interest.

Category: Applications

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Route: /journal/ai-cover-letter/

Decide what the letter needs to explain

Follow the employer’s instructions first. When a letter is required, include it. When it is optional, it can be useful if you have something meaningful to explain: a career change, a relevant project, a connection to the organization’s work, or experience that is not obvious from your title.

The letter should add context. It does not need to repeat your entire resume. Identify the two responsibilities that matter most in the posting and choose evidence that addresses them.

Use a simple four-part structure

Open with the role and a specific reason it interests you. Explain one relevant achievement or project. Add a second example or a short explanation of your transition. Close with a clear expression of interest in discussing the work.

For many applications, roughly 200-350 words is a useful drafting target, not a rule. Respect any stated limit. If the application asks separate questions, answer those directly instead of pasting a generic cover letter into every field.

Give AI material worth working with

Provide the job description, your selected evidence, and a few sentences in your own voice. Ask for a first draft with plain language. Do not ask the model to make you sound like the ‘perfect candidate’; ask it to make the connection between your experience and the work easy to understand.

If you mention a company product, initiative, or mission, verify it on the company’s own website. Avoid fabricated praise, invented connections, and claims about company priorities that are only guesses.

Replace generic enthusiasm with a reason

‘I am excited to apply my exceptional skills’ tells a reader very little. A more useful opening, if accurate, might be: ‘Your team is hiring someone to improve customer onboarding. In my last role, I redesigned the onboarding checklist and coordinated its rollout with support and operations.’

Keep the voice professional and recognizable. Remove phrases you would never say in a conversation. Read the letter aloud, check the company and role names, and confirm every example matches your resume.

Final review before sending

Check that the letter explains why this work, why this organization, and why your experience is relevant. Remove unsupported claims and unnecessary personal information. Open the final attachment, check the requested format, and confirm you have selected the right file.

AI prompt

Draft a concise cover letter for this role using only my verified examples. Start with a specific connection to the work, use two relevant examples, and close naturally. Avoid generic praise, inflated adjectives, and invented company facts. If a key fact is missing, ask me instead of filling it in. Match the tone of my writing sample. After drafting, list every factual claim for me to review. Role: [text]. Examples: [facts]. Reason for interest: [reason]. Writing sample: [text].

Prepare for interviews with AI-and practice answering for yourself

Build a story bank, rehearse realistic follow-up questions, and prepare a focused company brief.

Category: Interviews

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Route: /journal/ai-interview-preparation/

Find out what kind of interview you have

Ask the recruiter about the format, approximate length, participants, and whether there is a case, presentation, or technical exercise. A recruiter screen needs different preparation from a panel or a work-sample discussion. Read any rules for tools and outside assistance before an assessment.

Review the role description and the company’s own materials. Make a one-page brief covering its customers, products, relevant responsibilities, and questions you want answered. Treat AI-generated company information as unverified until you check the original sources.

Prepare six flexible stories

Choose examples of solving a problem, handling disagreement, setting priorities, making a mistake, learning quickly, and producing a useful result. Organize each as situation, task, action, and result. Add what you learned.

The action section should make your own contribution clear. Do not turn every answer into a polished success story: explaining a trade-off or a result that fell short can show judgment. If the result is qualitative, describe what changed and how you know.

Ask one question at a time

Give AI the role description and ask it to act as an interviewer. Answer before asking for feedback. Request follow-ups about your decisions, constraints, and evidence. Practice explaining the same project briefly and in more depth.

Use feedback to identify missing context, rambling, or unclear ownership. AI cannot reliably predict a hiring decision. Treat numerical ratings as practice feedback, not an objective measure of your suitability. Check that suggested revisions do not introduce facts you never supplied.

Practice delivery without memorizing a script

Speak your answers aloud using a timer or record yourself privately. Listen for long introductions, unclear outcomes, and jargon. Keep a few short story cues rather than reading full paragraphs. For a video interview, test sound, lighting, connection, and the meeting link.

Use AI before the interview to prepare. During interviews and assessments, follow the employer’s stated rules and ask if assistance is unclear. Do not use undisclosed real-time answer generation to misrepresent your abilities.

Bring questions that help you decide

Ask what success would look like in the first three months, which problems the person will inherit, how priorities are decided, and what support is available. After the conversation, note what you learned and any evidence you still need to provide. A useful follow-up refers to the actual discussion rather than repeating your application.

AI prompt

Run a mock interview for this role. Ask one question, then wait for my answer. Follow up on unclear ownership, decisions, evidence, or trade-offs. After each answer, give one strength, one specific improvement, and a fact-check question. Do not invent a better result for my story or predict whether I will be hired. At the end, summarize three things to practice. Job description: [text]. My background: [facts]. Interview format: [details].

How to create a portfolio-even if you are not a designer

Choose relevant work samples and explain your decisions, contribution, and results clearly.

Category: Show your skills

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Route: /journal/create-a-job-portfolio/

Choose evidence for the role

A portfolio is a collection of work that helps someone understand what you can do. It can be a simple document or website. Start with two or three strong samples that match the work you want, rather than an archive of everything you have ever made.

A marketer might show a campaign brief and results analysis. An operations candidate could show a process map and an improved checklist. A project manager could explain a delivery plan and risk decisions. A teacher might include a lesson sequence and reflection. An analyst could use a public dataset and show the assumptions behind an analysis.

Build a case study around a decision

Use a consistent structure: context, problem, your role, constraints, approach, output, outcome, and lessons. Explain why you chose an approach, what alternatives you considered, and what you would improve.

Show enough of the artifact for a reader to understand it. A screenshot without explanation is often ambiguous; a long story without a sample is hard to assess. Clearly distinguish what you created, what collaborators contributed, and what the wider team achieved.

Create a practice project when you need one

If your best work is confidential or you are changing careers, make a small independent project using public, synthetic, or your own data. Label it prominently as a practice project or unsolicited concept. Do not imply the featured company commissioned or approved it.

For example, map a fictional customer-support process and propose a clearer handoff. Explain what you would measure in a real implementation. Expected benefits are hypotheses; they are not results. A practice project can demonstrate thinking without inventing a client or outcome.

Use AI to improve the explanation

Ask AI to interview you about the work, identify missing context, and critique whether the sample supports the role you want. You can also use it to draft an outline, edit captions, or create synthetic practice data that is clearly labeled.

Verify the work yourself and explain how you used AI when that is relevant to evaluating your contribution or required by the application. Never upload confidential employer files simply to make a portfolio. Obtain permission, redact appropriately, or create a fresh demonstration instead.

Publish the simplest useful version

Include a short introduction, the roles you are targeting, selected case studies, and an appropriate contact route. A clean PDF can be enough. If you use a website, test the mobile layout, links, access permissions, and text readability.

Share the most relevant case-study link in an application where links are permitted. Make sure a reviewer can open it without requesting permission. Keep private contact details and sensitive project information out of public downloads.

AI prompt

Help me plan a portfolio for [target role]. Ask about my real projects, permissions, and contribution first. Recommend three samples and explain which role requirement each supports. Outline one case study using context, problem, role, constraints, decisions, output, outcome, and lessons. Mark missing evidence. If a practice project is needed, label it clearly and use only public or synthetic data. Do not invent clients or measured results.

How to stand out in a job application with relevant proof

Make your fit easy to understand through focused examples, a useful work sample, and careful follow-through.

Category: Show your skills

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Route: /journal/stand-out-job-application/

Make the connection obvious

Read the role description and identify its three most important responsibilities. For each, write one sentence describing your relevant experience and one piece of evidence. This small exercise often reveals whether your application is specific enough.

A recruiter should not have to infer the connection from a long list of unrelated tasks. Put the most relevant material early in the resume and use short, direct application answers. Follow requested formats and word limits.

Show one useful example

Choose a sample that demonstrates work the role actually requires. A short case study, a process improvement, an analysis, or a project explanation can be more useful than an elaborate personal branding package. Introduce it with a sentence explaining what to notice.

For a hypothetical sample, label assumptions and describe what you would test. Do not present speculative findings as an audit of a company’s private performance. Keep unsolicited samples small and proportionate; you do not need to perform a large unpaid project to prove interest.

Use outreach with context

If you know someone connected to the team, ask a specific question about the work or whether they would be comfortable sharing your application. Make it easy to decline. A brief note with the role, relevant evidence, and one question is more considerate than repeated requests for a referral.

Respect application instructions and platform rules. Do not scrape private contact details, automate large volumes of generic messages, or assume that every hiring manager welcomes direct contact.

Let AI critique, then make the decisions

Ask an AI assistant to review whether your materials answer the employer’s stated needs. Have it identify vague claims, irrelevant detail, and places where the evidence does not support the wording. Then decide what to change.

Avoid tricks that compromise credibility: hidden keywords, inflated job titles, fabricated credentials, or a video that implies you have experience you do not. You should be comfortable explaining every part of your application in a live conversation.

Use a final five-minute check

Confirm the company and role names, contact details, dates, and links. Open attachments. Check that the portfolio is accessible, the answers address the actual questions, and any assessment follows the rules. Save a copy of what you submitted.

Standing out is not a guarantee of a response. The goal is to present a clear, credible reason to speak with you while keeping the time spent on each opportunity proportionate.

AI prompt

Review this application as an evidence editor. Identify the role’s three central responsibilities, the evidence I provide for each, and any unsupported claims. Recommend one relevant work sample and three improvements to clarity. Do not invent achievements, insider information, or hiring predictions. Respect these application rules: [rules]. Role: [text]. Materials: [text].

Where to find jobs: build a search beyond one job board

Combine broad job sites, specialist sources, employer pages, and real conversations.

Category: Find work

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Route: /journal/where-to-find-jobs/

Choose a small set of complementary sources

Start with one broad job board, one specialist source, and a list of employers you would like to work for. Add people you can learn from: former colleagues, alumni, professional groups, and local events. More tabs do not necessarily produce a better search.

Use consistent role titles and location criteria across sources. Try adjacent titles when the same work is named differently. Record where each promising opening came from so you can learn which sources produce relevant opportunities.

Match the source to the work

LinkedIn Jobs and Indeed support broad searches across roles and locations. Wellfound focuses on startup opportunities. We Work Remotely lists remote opportunities. Idealist is useful for nonprofit and mission-oriented work, including volunteer opportunities that should not be confused with paid jobs. USAJOBS is the official federal employment site in the United States.

CareerOneStop provides career and job-search resources, including connections to local assistance. Employer career pages, state and local government sites, hospitals, universities, and professional associations are additional places to investigate. This is a starting directory, not a ranking or an endorsement of every listing.

Verify the opening at its source

Find the position on the employer’s official careers site when possible. Check the title, requisition number, location, responsibilities, and application link. A remote role may still require residence in a specific state or country, certain working hours, or periodic travel.

Read the application instructions for each role. Federal applications have their own requirements; use current USAJOBS guidance and the individual announcement rather than assuming a private-sector resume will meet every requirement. Job-board availability and features can change.

Use AI to expand search language

Give AI examples of the work you want and ask for alternative titles and combinations of skills. Try those phrases on actual job sites. Search syntax and filters differ by platform, so adjust rather than assuming a Boolean string works everywhere.

AI can help compare descriptions you provide, but it may generate stale or nonexistent vacancies. Treat every suggested employer and opening as a lead to verify. Do not provide payment or sensitive onboarding information just because a listing appeared on a recognizable board.

Make your search repeatable

Keep a target-employer list with the careers link, relevant role family, last check, and next action. Use saved searches or alerts where available. Review your sources weekly and remove those producing mostly unsuitable roles.

Try this today: choose two sources, check five employer career pages, and save three verified openings. Read the job-scam guide before responding to an unfamiliar recruiter.

AI prompt

Suggest job titles and search phrases based on these tasks and skills: [details]. Group them into direct matches and adjacent options that may need additional experience. Respect these location and schedule constraints: [details]. Do not invent current openings. If you can browse, provide original employer links and mark anything you could not verify. Explain why each title might fit without assigning a hiring probability.

Sources and useful links

- LinkedIn Jobs (https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/)

- Indeed (https://www.indeed.com/)

- Wellfound (https://wellfound.com/jobs)

- We Work Remotely (https://weworkremotely.com/)

- Idealist (https://www.idealist.org/en)

- USAJOBS (https://www.usajobs.gov/)

- Current USAJOBS resume guidance (https://www.usajobs.gov/help/how-to/account/documents/resume)

- CareerOneStop (https://www.careeronestop.org/)

Use LinkedIn and networking to start better career conversations

Clarify what you offer, reconnect thoughtfully, and ask questions people can actually answer.

Category: Find work

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Route: /journal/networking-and-linkedin/

Make your profile easy to understand

Describe the work you do, the problems you can help solve, and the experience that supports it. Keep your roles and dates consistent with your resume. Your headline can communicate a focus without claiming a title you have not held.

In your summary, use a few concrete examples and state the kind of work you are exploring. Add relevant work samples where appropriate. Avoid stuffing the profile with every keyword from a job posting.

Start with people who already know your work

List former colleagues, classmates, collaborators, clients you are permitted to contact, and members of professional communities. Reconnect with a real reason. Share a short update and ask a small, specific question.

An example to adapt truthfully: ‘I’m exploring operations roles where I can improve onboarding and team processes. I noticed your team works in that area. Would you be open to sharing which skills have been most useful?’ This invites perspective without presuming the person owes you a referral.

Prepare for a useful conversation

Before a conversation, review public information about the person’s work and prepare three questions. Ask about the work itself, common challenges, and what someone entering the field should understand. Listen rather than treating the call as a hidden interview.

Afterward, send a brief thank-you referring to something useful you learned. If a role comes up, ask whether they would be comfortable referring you. Give them an accurate resume and a concise explanation of your fit, and make declining easy.

Let AI edit your message, not invent a relationship

Ask AI to shorten a note and check that the request is clear. Supply the actual relationship and context. Do not let it invent shared experiences, compliments about work you have not read, or promises of mutual benefit.

Keep outreach selective. Respect community rules and do not automate spam. When posting publicly, share a useful lesson, a permitted work sample, or a thoughtful question instead of relying only on repeated ‘open to work’ announcements.

Set a sustainable weekly rhythm

A manageable starting point could be two reconnections, one new conversation, and one useful contribution to a community. Adjust to your time and energy. Track meaningful conversations and relevant introductions, not just connection counts.

AI prompt

Edit this networking message to be concise, warm, and specific. Keep the relationship and facts exactly as given. Include one manageable question, make it easy to decline, and remove flattery or pressure. Do not invent shared interests or a prior connection. Context: [facts]. Draft: [text].

Changing careers or returning to work: make your experience relevant

Identify transferable skills, explain your transition briefly, and build evidence for the work ahead.

Category: Your next chapter

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Route: /journal/career-change-and-gaps/

Begin with tasks, not just titles

Write down work you have actually done: explaining complex information, coordinating people, resolving problems, organizing records, teaching, analyzing data, or improving a process. Then compare those tasks with the responsibilities of your target role.

AI can suggest connections you might miss, but a connection is a hypothesis. Validate it against real job descriptions and conversations with people doing the work. Some transitions require specific licenses, credentials, or supervised experience that transferable skills cannot

replace.

Separate relevant strengths from genuine gaps

Create three columns: evidence I already have, experience I can explain more clearly, and skills I still need to develop. This keeps a career change grounded. You may not need another broad course if the real gap is one specific work sample or tool.

Choose a small project that demonstrates a missing capability. For example, someone moving into operations could create a fictional onboarding process and explain the handoffs, risks, and measurements. Label it as practice and avoid claiming real organizational results.

Explain a gap briefly and accurately

You can give a concise explanation without volunteering intimate personal details. For example, if true: ‘I took time away for family responsibilities and am now ready to return to a full-time role.’ Follow with the experience and preparation relevant to the opportunity.

Do not invent consulting work or change dates to cover a gap. If you did complete projects, education, or volunteer work, describe them accurately in an appropriate section. You do not need to turn every period away from employment into a productivity story.

Prepare a coherent transition story

Explain where you are coming from, why this kind of work interests you, and what evidence suggests you can contribute. Keep the focus on the responsibilities you want to take on. Avoid criticizing a former field or implying enthusiasm replaces the skills the new role needs.

For an experienced professional, select recent, relevant examples and show how you have kept your skills useful. For a first job, use coursework, volunteering, part-time work, and independent projects with accurate scope.

Choose the next experiment

Speak with someone in the target role, review several real job descriptions, or finish a small practice project. Set a specific question for the experiment: do I enjoy this work, can I perform the task, or is the missing qualification essential? Use what you learn to refine the search.

AI prompt

Map my real experience to this target role. Separate demonstrated transferable skills, uncertain connections, and genuine qualification gaps. Suggest one small practice project and three questions for an informational conversation. Help me explain my transition in plain language without inventing employment or disclosing private details. Background: [facts]. Target role: [description].

Track applications, follow up well, and learn from your search

Keep a simple record of opportunities and use it to decide what to improve next.

Category: Search habits

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Route: /journal/follow-up-and-track-applications/

Keep one reliable record

For each opportunity, record the employer, role, original posting link, location, source, application date, resume version, current stage, last contact, and next action. Save the job description because it may disappear before the interview.

A document or spreadsheet is enough. The system should help you act, not become another project. Do not store sensitive identity documents, account passwords, or private reference information in a casual job-search tracker.

Follow the timeline you were given

If a recruiter says you will hear back by a certain date, wait until that date has passed before checking in. If no timeline was provided and you have a legitimate contact route, a brief follow-up after roughly a week can be a reasonable starting point. Respect instructions that discourage contact.

Keep the note short: identify the role, mention the conversation or application, and ask about the next step. After an interview, a concise thank-you can mention a relevant point from the discussion. Do not send repeated daily messages or imply you have another offer when you do not.

Look at stages, not just totals

Count suitable roles identified, applications submitted, screening conversations, later-stage interviews, and offers. Record the source of the opportunities that progressed. Use consistent definitions so comparisons mean something.

If applications are not producing conversations, review role fit and evidence clarity. If screens are not progressing, examine how you explain your experience and constraints. If later interviews stall, reflect on the examples, work sample, and role expectations. These are diagnostic questions, not proof that any one factor caused a rejection.

Improve one variable at a time

Try a clearer resume summary, a more relevant sample, or a different source for a comparable group of roles. Keep notes on what changed. Small numbers and different hiring processes make precise conclusions difficult, so look for patterns rather than treating every week as a controlled experiment.

AI can summarize an anonymized tracker and help identify questions. Remove names, private messages, and unnecessary contact details. Do not let it label you unemployable or claim a statistically reliable prediction from a handful of applications.

Protect a sustainable routine

Set defined search sessions and a stopping point. Include time for preparation, networking, and rest. A lack of replies can reflect hiring timing or internal changes as well as your materials. Focus your review on actions you can improve and seek human feedback when you are stuck.

AI prompt

Review this anonymized job-search log. Summarize progress by stage and source, flag missing data, and suggest two hypotheses worth checking. Do not infer causes or hiring probabilities from small samples. Recommend one manageable change for next week. Available time: [hours]. Log: [records].

Compare job offers beyond the headline salary

Clarify the full package, the day-to-day work, and the questions you need answered before deciding.

Category: Your next chapter

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Route: /journal/compare-job-offers/

Write down what matters to you

Before comparing offers, define your priorities: the actual work, manager support, schedule, location, stability, learning, and compensation. A role with a higher headline number may ask for travel or hours that do not fit your life.

Separate nonnegotiables from preferences. Consider what the interview process taught you about how the organization communicates and makes decisions. Your own questions and observations belong alongside the written package.

Separate guaranteed terms from possibilities

Record base pay separately from bonuses, commissions, equity, or other contingent elements. Note what is written, what is only described verbally, and what remains unclear. Ask for the applicable plan documents and explanations.

Compare benefits, leave, expected hours, commute or travel, start date, reporting line, and any probationary arrangements. Different employment arrangements are not directly comparable on a headline rate alone. This guide is a decision worksheet, not a valuation, tax, or contract interpretation tool.

Ask specific questions

Useful questions include: What does success look like in the first six months? How are priorities set? What support is available? Which compensation elements are guaranteed? How are performance-based elements determined? What is the response deadline?

If an important promise was made during interviews, ask for confirmation in writing. Avoid making a decision based on an AI summary of an incomplete offer. For contractual, tax, or other specialized questions, use an appropriately qualified adviser.

Prepare a focused negotiation conversation

Choose the terms you want to discuss and the evidence supporting the request. Explain your interest in the role, state the request clearly, and ask what flexibility exists. Consider which alternatives would matter if one element cannot change.

Do not fabricate competing offers or market data. If you use salary research, check its date, geography, role level, and methodology. A polite request is a conversation, not a guarantee of an improved package.

Use AI to organize, then decide yourself

You can ask AI to turn redacted offer information into a comparison table and a list of unanswered questions. Have it label contingent items and missing terms. Give yourself time to review the original documents and the practical implications.

The result should make your trade-offs clearer. It should not tell you to accept a role because of a numerical score whose assumptions you have not examined.

AI prompt

Organize these redacted offer details into a comparison table. Separate guaranteed, contingent, and unknown terms. Use my priorities without inventing weights or assigning a final score. List questions for the employer and identify items that need qualified professional advice. Do not value equity, predict bonuses, or interpret legal terms. Priorities: [details]. Offers: [redacted facts].

How to spot job scams and verify an unfamiliar recruiter

Check the employer, application route, and requests for money before sharing sensitive information.

Category: Find work

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Route: /journal/spot-job-scams/

Verify independently

Look up the organization using a source you find yourself, rather than only the link in a message. Check its official careers page for the role and contact the organization through a published channel if the approach seems suspicious. A familiar logo or a polished profile does not establish identity.

Compare the recruiter’s email domain with the company’s real domain. A mismatch deserves investigation, though staffing firms can legitimately use their own domains. The point is to verify the relationship rather than deciding from one detail alone.

Watch for requests to pay

The FTC warns about fake jobs that demand money and fake-check schemes involving supposed equipment purchases. It also describes task scams in which people are asked to deposit money to unlock work or withdraw supposed earnings. Do not send money to release job earnings or act on instructions to forward money from a check.

An unexpected message promising easy income for simple online tasks is a reason to stop and investigate. Payment in cryptocurrency, urgency, and pressure to move the conversation can compound the warning signs.

Protect your information

Do not provide banking details, identity documents, or other sensitive onboarding information until you have independently verified the employer and the process. Legitimate onboarding can require sensitive information, but the identity of the recipient and security of the channel matter.

Avoid installing unfamiliar software or granting remote access at a stranger’s request. Do not paste identity documents or complete private recruiter conversations into an AI service just to ask whether an offer is real.

Understand what AI cannot verify

AI can help you organize warning signs or draft questions, but it cannot certify that a recruiter is genuine from a screenshot. Scammers can generate convincing writing, websites, and interview material. Independently check the domain, role, company contact, and requested action.

If you are uncertain, pause. Ask someone you trust to review the situation. A real opportunity should withstand reasonable questions about the organization and hiring process.

If you think you have been targeted

Stop the interaction and preserve the messages and payment details. Report the account to the platform and report the scam through the FTC’s ReportFraud website in the United States. If you sent money or disclosed sensitive information, contact the relevant payment provider or institution promptly and follow its response guidance.

Use official FTC resources for current recovery steps. Do not pay someone who contacts you claiming they can recover your money for an upfront fee.

AI prompt

Help me review this redacted job message for warning signs. Separate observations from assumptions, list what must be independently verified, and suggest questions for the employer. Do not certify the offer as legitimate or ask for identity documents, banking information, or passwords. Message: [redacted text].

Sources and useful links

- FTC: Job Scams (https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/job-scams)

- FTC: How to spot and avoid task scams (https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2025/08/how-spot-avoid-task-scams)

- Report fraud to the FTC (https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/)

- FTC: What to do if you were scammed (https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-do-if-you-were-scammed)