

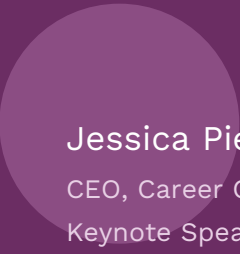


The AI Playbook

for Career Services &
Workforce Development

2026 EDITION

A practical guide for career professionals to use
AI tools and empower job seekers in a rapidly changing
workforce landscape.



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Welcome

AI and the Future of Career Services

Artificial intelligence is no longer a future concept. It is transforming how job seekers find opportunities, how employers evaluate candidates, and how career services professionals deliver meaningful support. From AI-powered resume builders to real-time interview coaching platforms, the tools available today are more powerful, more accessible, and more essential than ever.

This playbook is your practical guide to integrating AI into career services. Whether you work in a workforce development center, a university career office, or a nonprofit serving job seekers, you will find actionable strategies, example prompts, and hands-on activities for every stage of the job search journey.

The 2026 Edition has been significantly expanded with five new chapters covering the U.S. Department of Labor's AI Literacy Framework, skills gap analysis, the evolving AI job market, career coaching platforms, and long-term AI skill building. Every existing chapter has been refreshed with the latest tools and research.

How to Use This Playbook

- Career Services Professionals Use the prompts and activities in each chapter during one-on-one sessions and workshops with job seekers.
- Workforce Development Teams Integrate the AI Literacy Framework (Chapter 12) into your training programs to align with federal standards.
- Job Seekers Follow the step-by-step guides to use AI tools at every stage of your job search.

Each chapter includes example AI prompts you can use directly with tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or Microsoft Copilot, along with best practices checklists and interactive activities.

AI Tools at a Glance

Key AI platforms for career services professionals in 2026

AI Tool	Best For	Key Features
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	General career coaching, resume writing, interview prep	Conversational AI, custom GPTs, file uploads, image generation
Claude (Anthropic)	Long-form writing, nuanced career advice, document review	Large context window, thoughtful analysis, Projects feature
Gemini (Google)	Research, data analysis, Google Workspace integration	Real-time web access, deep Google integration, multimodal
Microsoft Copilot	Office productivity, LinkedIn integration	Built into Word/Excel/PowerPoint, LinkedIn job matching
Perplexity AI	Real-time research, sourced answers	Web search with citations, Focus modes, file analysis
LinkedIn AI Tools	Profile optimization, job matching	AI-written summaries, job suggestions, recruiter insights
Jobscan / Teal	ATS optimization, resume scoring	Keyword matching, job tracking, tailored applications
Prentus	All-in-one career coaching	AI mock interviews, resume builder, 24/7 advisor, job tracker
IBM SkillsBuild	Skills development, certifications	Free access, employer-aligned content, AI fundamentals courses
Coursera / LinkedIn Learning	Upskilling, career transitions	AI-curated learning paths, industry certifications

Tip: No single AI tool does everything well. Encourage job seekers to combine tools. For example, using ChatGPT for resume drafting, Jobscan for ATS optimization, and Prentus for mock interviews.

1. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Resume Writing

Help job seekers create tailored, impactful resumes using AI tools

A well-crafted resume is the foundation of any successful job search. AI tools can help job seekers tailor their resumes to specific job descriptions, highlight relevant skills, and optimize formatting for applicant tracking systems. As a career services professional, you can guide job seekers in using AI to transform their resumes from generic documents into targeted, compelling marketing tools.

How to Use AI to Assist Job Seekers with Resumes

- **Tailor Resumes to Job Descriptions** Show job seekers how to input a job description and their existing resume into AI, then ask it to align their experience with the role's requirements.
- **Quantify Achievements** Use AI to help job seekers turn vague responsibilities into measurable accomplishments with specific metrics and results.
- **Optimize for ATS** Guide job seekers in using AI to identify missing keywords and phrases from the job description that should appear in their resume.
- **Improve Formatting and Clarity** AI can restructure cluttered resumes, improve readability, and keep formatting consistent throughout.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Review my resume and tailor it to this job description. Highlight the skills and experience that best match the role requirements. [Paste resume and job description]"

"Rewrite my work experience bullet points to include quantifiable achievements and action verbs. Here is my current experience section: [Paste section]"

"Analyze this job posting and identify the top 10 keywords I should include in my resume: [Paste job posting]"

"Create a professional summary for my resume that positions me as a strong candidate for a [specific role] at [company type]."

Resume Writing Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Make sure each resume is tailored to the specific job description, not a generic template.
- ✓ Include quantifiable results (percentages, dollar amounts, team sizes) wherever possible.
- ✓ Use industry-standard formatting: clean fonts, consistent spacing, 1-2 pages maximum.
- ✓ Verify all AI-generated content for accuracy. Never submit without human review.

Interactive Activity: AI Resume Workshop

Step 1: Have the job seeker paste their current resume and a target job description into the AI tool.

Step 2: Ask AI to identify gaps between the resume and the job requirements.

Step 3: Work together to revise bullet points, add missing keywords, and strengthen the summary.

Step 4: Run the final version through an ATS simulator like Jobscan to check the match score.

2. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for LinkedIn Optimization

Help job seekers build a powerful LinkedIn presence that attracts recruiters

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform and a critical tool in the modern job search. A strong LinkedIn profile can attract recruiters, open networking opportunities, and establish professional credibility. AI can help job seekers craft compelling headlines, summaries, and experience sections that stand out in search results.

How to Use AI to Assist Job Seekers with LinkedIn

- **Craft a Magnetic Headline** Guide job seekers in using AI to write headlines that go beyond their job title to showcase their unique value proposition.
- **Write a Compelling About Section** Help job seekers create a narrative summary that tells their professional story and speaks directly to target employers.
- **Optimize for LinkedIn's Algorithm** Show how AI can suggest relevant keywords and skills that help profiles appear in recruiter searches.
- **Generate Engaging Content** Use AI to draft LinkedIn posts, articles, and comments that build visibility and thought leadership.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Write a LinkedIn headline for a professional transitioning from [current role] to [target role] that highlights transferable skills."

"Create a compelling LinkedIn About section for someone with [X years] of experience in [industry] who wants to attract recruiters for [target roles]."

"Generate 5 LinkedIn post ideas that showcase expertise in [field] and would attract attention from hiring managers."

"Analyze my LinkedIn profile and suggest improvements to increase my visibility in recruiter searches for [role type]."

LinkedIn Optimization Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Make sure the profile has a professional headshot and custom banner image.
- ✓ Use a keyword-rich headline (not just a job title).
- ✓ Complete all profile sections. Recruiters filter by completeness.
- ✓ Add at least 5 relevant skills and request endorsements from colleagues.

Interactive Activity: AI LinkedIn Profile Makeover

Step 1: Review the job seeker's current LinkedIn profile and identify weak areas.

Step 2: Use AI to generate an improved headline, About section, and 2-3 experience entries.

Step 3: Have the job seeker compare the before and after versions and personalize the AI suggestions.

Step 4: Publish the updates and set a goal to post on LinkedIn at least once per week for visibility.

3. Setting Up Personalized AI Threads

Teach job seekers to create persistent AI conversations for ongoing career support

One of the most powerful ways to use AI in the job search is to create a personalized AI thread, which is a dedicated conversation where the AI learns about the job seeker's background, goals, and preferences. This allows every subsequent interaction to be more targeted and relevant, effectively creating a virtual career coach available 24/7.

How to Guide Job Seekers in Creating AI Threads

- **Create a Career Context Prompt** Help job seekers write a comprehensive prompt that includes their background, target roles, strengths, and job search goals.
- **Use Custom GPTs or Projects** Show how tools like ChatGPT Custom GPTs or Claude Projects can store career context for reuse across sessions.
- **Upload Key Documents** Have job seekers upload their resume, target job descriptions, and portfolio to provide AI with rich context.
- **Iterate Over Time** Encourage returning to the same thread to refine strategies as the job search progresses.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"I'm going to share my career background with you. Please remember it for our future conversations. Here is my resume, my target job titles, and my career goals: [Paste details]"

"Based on everything you know about my background, review this job posting and tell me how strong a match I am. What gaps do I need to address?"

"You are my career coach. Using my background, help me prepare for an interview at [Company] for a [Role] position."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Start each new AI tool with a thorough context-setting prompt.
- ✓ Encourage job seekers to save their context prompt so they can reuse it.
- ✓ Remind job seekers that AI threads are most helpful when they provide honest, detailed information.
- ✓ Update the thread context whenever the job seeker gains new experience or shifts goals.

Interactive Activity: Build Your AI Career Coach

Step 1: Help the job seeker write a comprehensive career context prompt covering their experience, skills, goals, and preferences.

Step 2: Paste it into ChatGPT, Claude, or another AI tool and ask a follow-up career question.

Step 3: Observe how the AI provides personalized responses based on the context.

Step 4: Encourage the job seeker to continue using this thread for all career-related questions.

4. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Accomplishment Statements

Transform job duties into powerful, results-driven accomplishments

Many job seekers struggle to articulate their accomplishments. They often list duties instead of results. AI can help transform vague responsibility statements into compelling accomplishment statements that demonstrate impact. This is one of the highest-impact uses of AI in career services because strong accomplishments drive interview invitations.

How to Use AI for Accomplishment Statements

- **Convert Duties to Accomplishments** Show job seekers how AI can rewrite "responsible for managing a team" as a quantified achievement.
- **Apply the STAR/CAR Framework** Use AI to structure accomplishments using Situation-Task-Action-Result or Challenge-Action-Result formats.
- **Add Metrics and Specifics** AI can suggest ways to quantify impact even when exact numbers aren't immediately obvious.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Transform these job responsibilities into accomplishment statements with measurable results: [Paste list of duties]"

"I managed a team of 5 customer service reps. Help me write 3 accomplishment statements that show leadership impact with metrics."

"Use the STAR method to help me write an accomplishment statement about [describe a project or achievement]."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Every accomplishment should include at least one metric (percentage, dollar amount, time saved, team size).
- ✓ Begin each statement with a strong action verb (Led, Increased, Streamlined, Launched).
- ✓ Make sure the accomplishment is relevant to the target role.
- ✓ Review AI suggestions for accuracy. Never fabricate metrics.

Interactive Activity: Accomplishment Statement Workshop

Step 1: Ask the job seeker to list 5 job responsibilities from their most recent role.

Step 2: Use AI to transform each responsibility into a results-driven accomplishment.

Step 3: Have the job seeker verify accuracy and add real metrics where possible.

Step 4: Integrate the strongest statements into their resume and LinkedIn profile.

5. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Cover Letters

Create targeted, authentic cover letters that complement the resume

A cover letter is a job seeker's opportunity to show personality, explain career transitions, and make a case for why they are the ideal candidate. AI can help draft personalized cover letters quickly while maintaining an authentic voice, saving job seekers significant time when applying to multiple positions.

How to Use AI for Cover Letters

- **Generate Targeted Drafts** Show job seekers how to provide AI with their resume and a job posting to generate a tailored first draft.
- **Maintain Authentic Voice** Teach job seekers to provide AI with writing samples or tone preferences so the letter sounds like them, not a robot.
- **Address Employment Gaps** AI can help frame gaps, transitions, and non-traditional backgrounds in a positive light.
- **Customize for Company Culture** Use AI to research company values and weave them naturally into the cover letter.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Write a cover letter for [specific role] at [Company] using my resume. Highlight my relevant experience and explain why I'm passionate about this opportunity. [Paste resume and job description]"

"I have a 2-year career gap due to caregiving. Help me write a cover letter paragraph that addresses this positively and highlights the skills I maintained."

"Rewrite this cover letter to sound more conversational and authentic while keeping the professional tone: [Paste draft]"

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Every cover letter should be customized for the specific company and role.
- ✓ Address the letter to a real person whenever possible (use LinkedIn to find the hiring manager).
- ✓ Keep it to one page, concise and focused.
- ✓ Always read the AI draft aloud to make sure it sounds natural and authentic.

6. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Career Branding

Help job seekers develop a consistent personal brand across all platforms

A personal brand is more than a resume. It's the consistent story a job seeker tells across every touchpoint. AI can help job seekers define their unique value proposition, create consistent messaging across platforms, and develop content that positions them as professionals in their field.

How to Use AI for Career Branding

- **Define a Value Proposition** Help job seekers use AI to articulate what makes them unique and valuable in their field.
- **Create Consistent Messaging** Use AI to align resume language, LinkedIn profile, elevator pitch, and interview talking points.
- **Develop Thought Leadership Content** Guide job seekers in using AI to draft articles, social posts, and presentations that build credibility.
- **Build a Personal Website or Portfolio** AI tools can help create compelling portfolio content and professional bios.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Based on my background in [field] with [X years] of experience, help me create a personal brand statement that I can use across all my professional platforms."

"Write me a 30-second elevator pitch that highlights my strengths in [area] and my passion for [industry]."

"Create a consistent set of messaging: a LinkedIn headline, a resume summary, and a networking introduction, all aligned with my brand as a [target identity]."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Make sure messaging is consistent across resume, LinkedIn, cover letters, and interviews.
- ✓ Focus on what the job seeker brings to employers, not just what they want.
- ✓ Encourage job seekers to share content online that reinforces their expertise.
- ✓ Review and refresh branding materials every quarter as experience grows.

7. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Networking

Use AI to build strategic professional connections

Networking remains one of the most effective job search strategies, with many positions filled through referrals. AI can help job seekers identify the right people to connect with, craft personalized outreach messages, and prepare for informational interviews. This makes networking less intimidating and more strategic.

How to Use AI for Networking

- **Identify Target Connections** Show job seekers how AI can analyze a company's LinkedIn presence to identify decision-makers and potential advocates.
- **Craft Personalized Outreach** Use AI to write LinkedIn connection requests and follow-up messages that feel genuine, not templated.
- **Prepare for Informational Interviews** AI can generate thoughtful questions tailored to each contact's background and role.
- **Follow Up Effectively** Guide job seekers in using AI to draft thank-you notes and maintain relationships over time.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Write a LinkedIn connection request to a [role] at [Company] that references our shared interest in [topic] and asks for a brief informational conversation."

"Generate 5 thoughtful questions for an informational interview with a [job title] who works in [industry]."

"Draft a follow-up email to someone I met at a networking event. We discussed [topic]. I want to stay connected without being pushy."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Always personalize outreach. Never send generic connection requests.
- ✓ Research each contact before reaching out (AI can help with this too).
- ✓ Follow up within 24-48 hours of meetings and events.
- ✓ Set a weekly networking goal (e.g., 3 new connections, 1 informational interview).

8. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Salary Negotiation

Equip job seekers with data-driven strategies to negotiate compensation

Salary negotiation is one of the most impactful skills a career professional can teach. A single successful negotiation can mean tens of thousands of dollars over a career. AI can help job seekers research market rates, prepare negotiation scripts, and practice their approach, giving them confidence to ask for what they're worth.

How to Use AI for Salary Negotiation

- **Research Market Compensation** Use AI to analyze salary data from Glassdoor, Levels.fyi, Payscale, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics for specific roles and locations.
- **Develop Negotiation Scripts** AI can generate word-for-word scripts for different negotiation scenarios.
- **Evaluate Total Compensation** Help job seekers consider benefits, PTO, remote flexibility, stock options, and other factors beyond base salary.
- **Practice Counteroffers** Use AI to simulate a back-and-forth negotiation so job seekers can rehearse their responses.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"What is the average salary range for a [job title] in [city] with [X years] of experience? Include data from multiple sources."

"Write a salary negotiation script for a candidate who received an offer of \$[amount] for a [role] but believes the market rate is \$[higher amount] based on their qualifications."

"Help me evaluate this job offer by comparing the total compensation package (salary, benefits, PTO, bonus) to industry standards: [Paste offer details]"

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Always negotiate. Even a modest increase compounds significantly over time.
- ✓ Base requests on market data, not personal financial needs.
- ✓ Practice the negotiation conversation out loud before the real discussion.
- ✓ Consider the full compensation package, not just base salary.

9. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for ATS Optimization

Help job seekers get past automated screening systems

Most large employers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter resumes before a human ever sees them. Studies suggest that up to 75% of resumes are rejected by ATS before reaching a hiring manager. AI tools can help job seekers understand how these systems work and optimize their applications to pass through automated filters.

How to Use AI for ATS Optimization

- **Analyze Keyword Match** Show job seekers how AI can compare their resume against a job posting and identify missing keywords.
- **Optimize Formatting** ATS systems struggle with tables, graphics, and complex formatting. AI can help create clean, parseable resumes.
- **Use Dedicated ATS Tools** Introduce tools like Jobscan and Teal that score resume-to-job match rates and suggest improvements.
- **Test Multiple Versions** Encourage creating tailored resume versions for different job types, optimized with AI for each.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Compare my resume to this job description. List the keywords and phrases in the job posting that are missing from my resume. [Paste both]"

"Rewrite my resume in a clean, ATS-friendly format. Remove any formatting that might cause parsing errors. Keep the content strong."

"Suggest 10 industry-specific keywords I should include in my resume for a [job title] position in [industry]."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Use standard section headings (Work Experience, Education, Skills) that ATS systems recognize.
- ✓ Avoid tables, text boxes, headers/footers, and complex formatting.
- ✓ Include both spelled-out terms and acronyms (e.g., Search Engine Optimization (SEO)).
- ✓ Submit in .docx or .pdf format as specified by the employer.

10. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Interview Preparation

Build confidence and polish through AI-powered practice

Interviews are one of the most critical stages in the job search process. AI-driven interview practice can help job seekers feel more prepared by simulating questions, refining responses, and building confidence. In 2026, AI interview platforms have advanced to include voice-based simulations, real-time feedback, and adaptive questioning that mimics real recruiter behavior.

How to Use AI for Interview Preparation

- **Practice Behavioral Questions** Show job seekers how AI can generate STAR-format questions and evaluate their responses for clarity and impact.
- **Simulate Full Interviews** AI platforms like Prentus and SpectraSeek offer realistic mock interviews with adaptive follow-up questions based on the job seeker's answers.
- **Refine Answers** Use AI to analyze and improve a job seeker's response clarity, conciseness, and relevance.
- **Prepare Questions for Employers** Guide job seekers in using AI to develop insightful questions that demonstrate research and genuine interest.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Help me craft an answer to 'Tell me about yourself' for a [role] position at [Company]. Keep it under 90 seconds."

"Simulate an interview and ask me five behavioral questions for a [job title] role. After each of my answers, give me feedback."

"Generate a response to 'What is your greatest weakness?' that is honest, specific, and shows self-awareness and growth."

"Suggest five thoughtful questions I can ask at the end of an interview for a [role] at [Company] that show I've done my research."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Encourage job seekers to research the company and role thoroughly before interviews.
- ✓ Have them practice common and role-specific questions to build familiarity and confidence.
- ✓ Teach them to use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) for impactful responses.
- ✓ Help them prepare thoughtful questions for interviewers to demonstrate interest.

Interactive Activity: AI-Powered Interview Practice

Step 1: Guide the job seeker in using AI to generate five common interview questions for the target role.

Step 2: Have them practice answering each question out loud.

Step 3: Use AI to evaluate their responses and suggest improvements for clarity and impact.

Step 4: Encourage job seekers to simulate a full mock interview with AI, incorporating feedback.

11. Guiding Job Seekers with AI for Employer and Industry Research

Empower informed career decisions with AI-driven research

Researching employers and job market trends is essential for job seekers to make informed career decisions, prepare for interviews, and identify new opportunities. AI tools with real-time web access (like Perplexity AI and Gemini) make this research faster and more comprehensive than ever before.

How to Use AI for Research

- **Investigate Company Culture** Show job seekers how AI can summarize company reviews, values, and work environments from Glassdoor and other sources.
- **Explore Industry Trends** Use AI to track hiring patterns, emerging skills, and job market shifts in specific sectors.
- **Analyze Job Postings for Key Skills** Help job seekers identify the most in-demand qualifications for their target roles.
- **Discover Related Companies** Teach job seekers how AI can generate lists of similar organizations for expanded job searches.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Summarize reviews about [Company] from Glassdoor and LinkedIn to help me understand its work environment and culture."

"What are the current hiring trends in the [industry] sector? What skills are most in demand?"

"Highlight the most common skills required across 10 recent job postings for [job title] roles."

"List five competitors of [Company] in the [industry] and compare their employee reviews and growth trajectories."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Encourage job seekers to research company culture and values to make sure it aligns with their goals.
- ✓ Guide them in analyzing salary trends and benefits to understand compensation standards.
- ✓ Teach them to explore industry trends and identify the most in-demand skills for their field.
- ✓ Show how AI can generate related companies for networking and job opportunity expansion.

12. AI Literacy Fundamentals for Career Professionals

Align your training with the DOL's national AI Literacy Framework

In February 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor released a landmark AI Literacy Framework, a foundational guide for integrating AI education into workforce and education systems nationwide. The framework defines AI literacy as a baseline workforce capability (not a specialized technical skill) and calls on career services organizations to embed AI training into their programs.

As a career services professional, understanding this framework is essential. It provides the structure for how you teach AI to job seekers and how you use AI in your own practice. This chapter breaks down the five content areas and seven delivery principles into actions you can take right away.

The Five Content Areas of AI Literacy

Content Area	What It Means	How to Apply in Career Services
Understand AI Principles	Grasp what AI is and how it works at a conceptual level	Explain to job seekers that AI predicts based on patterns and does not "know" things. Set realistic expectations.
Explore AI Uses	Understand where AI can improve processes in your job	Map AI tools to specific career service tasks: resume review, interview prep, labor market research.
Direct AI Effectively	Know how to interact with AI systems (prompting)	Teach prompt engineering fundamentals: be specific, provide context, iterate on outputs.
Evaluate AI Outputs	Assess and refine what AI produces	Always review AI-generated resumes, cover letters, and advice for accuracy, tone, and relevance.
Use AI Responsibly	Understand boundaries, security, and accountability	Never input sensitive client data into public AI tools. Teach job seekers about AI-generated content disclosure.

The Seven Delivery Principles

- **Enable Experiential Learning** Use hands-on exercises: have job seekers write prompts, compare outputs, and practice in real time.
- **Embed Learning in Context** Teach AI skills within the career services tasks people already do, not as abstract theory.
- **Build Complementary Human Skills** Emphasize critical thinking, editing, and judgment alongside AI tool use.

- Address Prerequisites Assess baseline digital literacy before introducing AI. Some job seekers may need foundational computer skills first.
- Create Continued Learning Pathways Build progression from basic AI literacy to advanced prompt engineering and specialized tools.
- Prepare Enabling Roles Train managers, career coaches, and trainers first so they can support adoption across the organization.
- Design for Agility AI tools evolve rapidly. Build flexible programs that can incorporate new tools and capabilities as they emerge.

Practical Implementation for Your Organization

Step 1: Assess your team's current AI literacy level using the five content areas as a rubric.

Step 2: Identify 3-5 career service tasks where AI can be embedded immediately (resume review, interview prep, labor market research).

Step 3: Create short, hands-on training modules (30-60 minutes) for each task.

Step 4: Establish AI usage guidelines: what tools are approved, what data can be shared, and how outputs must be reviewed.

Step 5: Schedule quarterly reviews to update tools, prompts, and practices as AI capabilities evolve.

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Align all AI training with the DOL's five content areas and seven delivery principles.
- ✓ Start with experiential learning. Let people use the tools before lecturing about them.
- ✓ Create an approved AI tools list for your organization with data privacy guidelines.
- ✓ Build AI literacy into job seeker orientations, not as a standalone workshop.

13. AI-Powered Skills Gap Analysis

Help job seekers identify and close the gap between current skills and career goals

The World Economic Forum projects that 39% of workers' core skills will change by 2030. In this rapidly evolving landscape, helping job seekers identify their skills gaps and create a plan to close them is one of the most valuable services career professionals can provide. AI makes this process faster, more data-driven, and more personalized than traditional approaches.

How to Use AI for Skills Gap Analysis

- **Compare Skills to Job Requirements** Have job seekers paste their resume alongside a target job description and ask AI to identify the gaps.
- **Map Transferable Skills** AI can identify adjacent skills that transfer between industries, helping career changers see their hidden strengths.
- **Create Personalized Learning Plans** Use AI to recommend specific courses, certifications, and projects to fill identified gaps.
- **Track Progress Over Time** Build a skills development tracker that job seekers update as they complete training and gain experience.

Example AI Prompts to Use with Job Seekers

"Compare my resume skills to this job description. List the skills I have, the skills I'm missing, and suggest specific ways to develop each missing skill. [Paste both]"

"I'm transitioning from [current field] to [target field]. What transferable skills do I already have? What new skills do I need to develop? Suggest a 90-day learning plan."

"Based on current job market data, what are the top 10 skills employers are looking for in [job title] roles? How do my skills compare? [Paste resume]"

AI-Powered Skills Assessment Tools

Tool	Best For	Cost
IBM SkillsBuild	Foundational AI and tech skills with industry certifications	Free
Coursera Skills Dashboard	Benchmarking skills against industry standards	Enterprise pricing
LinkedIn Skills Insights	Identifying in-demand skills by role and region	Premium / Enterprise
Pluralsight Skill IQ	Technical proficiency benchmarking with hands-on labs	Business tiers
Degreed	Skills normalization and personalized learning at scale	Enterprise

Interactive Activity: Skills Gap Discovery Workshop

Step 1: Have the job seeker identify 2-3 target job postings for their dream role.

Step 2: Use AI to extract the required skills from each posting and create a consolidated skills list.

Step 3: Rate current proficiency for each skill (Strong / Developing / Gap).

Step 4: Use AI to recommend specific free and paid resources for each skill gap.

Step 5: Create a 30/60/90-day action plan with weekly learning goals.

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Focus on skills that appear across multiple job postings, not outliers.
- ✓ Prioritize skills gaps that block the most job opportunities first.
- ✓ Include both technical skills and human skills (critical thinking, communication, leadership).
- ✓ Revisit the skills gap analysis monthly as the job seeker develops new capabilities.

14. Navigating the AI Job Market

Prepare job seekers for a labor market transformed by artificial intelligence

AI is not just a tool for the job search. It is fundamentally reshaping the job market itself. The World Economic Forum projects that by 2030, job disruption will affect 22% of all jobs, with 170 million new roles created and 92 million displaced, yielding a net gain of 78 million positions. Workers with AI skills command wage premiums up to 56% higher than peers in the same roles without those skills. Career services professionals must help job seekers understand and navigate these changes.

Key 2026 Job Market Trends

- **Accelerated Job Transformation** AI is transforming work more than eliminating it. The fastest-growing roles are in technology, data, AI, healthcare, education, and the green economy.
- **Rise of Human-AI Hybrid Teams** Collaboration between humans and AI is becoming the default operating model. Deloitte finds that most workers prefer an even mix of AI and human collaboration.
- **Surge in AI-Adjacent Roles** AI Ethics Specialists, AI UX Designers, and Prompt Engineers are growing 92-142% year-over-year. These roles bridge technical AI capabilities with business outcomes.
- **AI Wage Premiums** Workers with advanced AI skills earn significantly more. AI proficiency is becoming a compensation differentiator across industries, not just in tech.
- **Flattening Organizations** Gartner predicts 20% of organizations will use AI to flatten structures, eliminating many middle management positions through automated scheduling, reporting, and monitoring.

How to Prepare Job Seekers

- **Reframe the Narrative** Help job seekers see AI as a career amplifier, not a threat. The question is not "will AI take my job?" but "how will AI change my job?"
- **Identify AI-Proof Skills** Creative thinking, emotional intelligence, complex problem-solving, leadership, and strategic judgment remain firmly in the human domain.
- **Explore Emerging Roles** Help job seekers discover new career pathways that didn't exist five years ago.
- **Build AI Fluency** Encourage every job seeker to develop at least baseline AI literacy, regardless of their field.

Emerging AI-Adjacent Roles

Role	Description	Key Skills
AI Prompt Engineer	Designs and optimizes prompts for AI systems	NLP, communication, problem-solving
AI Ethics Officer	Guides responsible AI deployment	Ethics, policy, technology understanding

Role	Description	Key Skills
AI UX Designer	Designs human-AI interaction experiences	UX design, AI literacy, user research
AI Trainer / Evaluator	Improves AI outputs through human feedback	Domain expertise, critical thinking
AI Integration Specialist	Connects AI tools to business workflows	Systems thinking, technical skills
AI Career Coach	Guides workers through AI-driven transitions	Career counseling, AI tools knowledge

Example AI Prompts for Career Exploration

"What new job roles have emerged in [industry] due to AI in the past two years? What skills do they require?"

"Analyze how AI is likely to change the role of [job title] over the next 3-5 years. What skills should someone in this role develop now?"

"I currently work as a [role]. Suggest 5 career pathways that build on my existing skills in an AI-augmented workplace."

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Stay current on labor market trends. Review reports from BLS, WEF, and LinkedIn at least quarterly.
- ✓ Help job seekers develop both technical AI skills and distinctly human capabilities.
- ✓ Introduce the concept of lifelong learning as essential, not optional.
- ✓ Connect job seekers with apprenticeship and upskilling programs, including the DOL's new AI Apprenticeship initiative.

15. AI Career Coaching Platforms and Tools

A resource guide to the best AI-powered career platforms for 2026

AI career coaching platforms have matured significantly. The best ones now offer realistic voice-based interview simulations, adaptive feedback, job-description-specific practice, and 24/7 availability at a fraction of the cost of traditional coaching. For career services organizations, these tools can dramatically scale your impact by providing practice and feedback between live sessions.

Top AI Career Coaching Platforms for 2026

Platform	Best For	Key Features	Cost
Prentus	All-in-one job seekers	AI mock interviews, resume builder, 24/7 career advisor, job tracker	Free plan available
SpectraSeek	Realistic interview simulation	Agentic AI interviewers that adapt in real time, verbal + semantic analysis	Institutional pricing
CareerVillage COACH	Students and workforce programs	Research-backed activities, career exploration, resume review, bias-aware	Free (nonprofit)
Jobiri	Students and career changers	Smart job matching, AI career guidance, learning pathways	Free tier
Kickresume	Resume-focused job seekers	AI resume builder and scorer, cover letter generator, website builder	From \$6/month
Volkai HR	Fresh graduates	Resume-based interview questions, structured feedback, career chatbot	Free tier

How to Integrate AI Platforms into Your Services

- **Supplement, Don't Replace** Use AI platforms for practice and repetition between your live coaching sessions. The human relationship remains central.
- **Assign Structured Practice** Give job seekers specific assignments: "Complete 3 mock interviews on Prentus this week for your target role."
- **Review AI Feedback Together** Use the analytics from these platforms as conversation starters in your next coaching session.
- **Recommend by Need** Match the platform to the job seeker: Prentus for all-in-one support, SpectraSeek for interview-focused practice, COACH for younger job seekers.

When Human Coaching is Essential

AI platforms excel at structured practice, but there are critical moments where human coaching is irreplaceable:

- **Emotional Support** Job search rejection, career loss, and major transitions require empathy and human connection.
- **Complex Career Decisions** Weighing multiple offers, planning a career pivot, or navigating workplace conflicts need nuanced human judgment.
- **Accountability and Motivation** A real person who believes in the job seeker provides motivation that AI cannot replicate.
- **Networking Introductions** Only human coaches can open doors, make referrals, and use their professional relationships.

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Test each platform yourself before recommending it to job seekers.
- ✓ Create a "recommended tools" handout with setup instructions for your most-used platforms.
- ✓ Use AI platform analytics to track job seeker engagement and progress.
- ✓ Position AI tools as practice aids that make human coaching sessions more productive, not as replacements.

16. Building AI Skills for Long-Term Career Growth

Equip job seekers with the AI competencies that future-proof their careers

The 2026 LinkedIn Skills on the Rise report found that employers are increasingly prioritizing AI-related skills alongside traditional human skills. Workers with AI proficiency earn significantly higher wages, and 85% of employers plan to prioritize workforce upskilling by 2030. This chapter helps career services professionals guide job seekers in building AI skills that will remain valuable as technology evolves.

The AI Skills Hierarchy

Not every job seeker needs to become a data scientist. AI skills exist on a spectrum:

Level	Skills	Who Needs It	How to Build It
AI Literate	Using AI tools, evaluating outputs, responsible use	Every worker in every field	DOL AI Literacy Framework, free courses on IBM SkillsBuild
AI Proficient	Advanced prompting, workflow automation, AI-assisted analysis	Knowledge workers, managers, career professionals	Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, hands-on practice
AI Specialist	Building AI applications, data analysis, model fine-tuning	Tech workers, data roles, AI-adjacent positions	Formal training, bootcamps, certifications
AI Expert	Designing AI systems, ML engineering, research	AI engineers, researchers, product leaders	Degree programs, specialized courses, on-the-job

Free and Low-Cost AI Learning Resources

- IBM SkillsBuild Free AI fundamentals courses with industry-recognized credentials. Excellent for baseline AI literacy.
- Google AI Essentials (Coursera) Foundational course covering AI concepts, responsible use, and practical applications.
- LinkedIn Learning AI Courses Short, practical courses that integrate with LinkedIn profiles to showcase skills to recruiters.
- Microsoft AI Skills Initiative Free courses on Copilot, Azure AI, and productivity with AI tools.
- DOL Registered Apprenticeships The DOL's April 2026 initiative is integrating AI skills into apprenticeship programs nationwide across sectors.

How to Guide Job Seekers in AI Upskilling

Step 1: Assess current AI literacy using the five DOL content areas as a rubric.

Step 2: Identify the AI skill level needed for their target roles (Literate, Proficient, Specialist, or Expert).

Step 3: Create a personalized learning plan with specific courses, certifications, and practice goals.

Step 4: Set weekly learning milestones (e.g., complete one course module, practice prompting for 30 minutes daily).

Step 5: Document new skills on LinkedIn and resumes as they are acquired. AI skills are immediate resume enhancers.

The Human Skills That Complement AI

As AI handles more analytical and technical tasks, distinctly human capabilities become more valuable. The World Economic Forum identifies these as rising in importance:

- Critical Thinking Evaluating AI outputs, questioning assumptions, and making judgment calls.
- Creative Problem-Solving Finding novel solutions that require imagination and contextual understanding.
- Emotional Intelligence Empathy, relationship building, and navigating interpersonal dynamics.
- Strategic Vision Long-term planning and decision-making that requires understanding complex systems.
- Adaptability The willingness and ability to continuously learn and pivot as technology evolves.

Best Practices Checklist

- ✓ Help every job seeker achieve at least AI Literate status, regardless of their career field.
- ✓ Connect upskilling directly to job search results. Show how each new skill opens specific opportunities.
- ✓ Emphasize that AI skills and human skills work together, not in opposition.
- ✓ Update your recommended resources quarterly as new courses and certifications emerge.

Empowering Job Seekers with AI

AI is a powerful tool that can transform the job search process, offering efficiency, personalization, and strategic advantages for job seekers. Your guidance in integrating AI tools can help job seekers refine their resumes, prepare effectively for interviews, and uncover better career opportunities. By showing job seekers how to use AI-driven insights, you equip them with the skills and confidence needed to navigate today's job market successfully.

The more you engage with AI and explore its capabilities, the more proficient you'll become in helping job seekers maximize its potential for career success.

Never forget that the work you do is life-changing. Every time you help someone craft a stronger resume, prepare for an interview, or negotiate a better salary, you set off a ripple effect that impacts their future, their families, and their communities. The encouragement and expertise you provide give job seekers the hope and tools they need to move forward.

AI is a resource, but you are the real difference-maker. Thank you for the dedication, passion, and heart you bring to this work. Your efforts truly matter.

Keynote Talks / Workshops

The Future of Work: Top Trends for 2026

The job market is evolving faster than ever, and we must stay ahead of the curve to effectively guide job seekers. In this talk, we dive into the top workplace trends shaping hiring, career growth, and industry demands in 2026.

- Emerging job market trends and the impact on job seekers
- The rise of automation, AI, and skills-based hiring practices
- Strategies to future-proof job seekers' careers in a rapidly changing world

Igniting Passion: How to Stay Motivated When Helping Others Find Their Path

Working in career services is deeply rewarding, but it also comes with challenges: burnout, emotional fatigue, and the weight of guiding job seekers through difficult transitions. This session reignites your passion and energy while reinforcing the meaningful impact of your work.

- Strategies to combat burnout and maintain career passion
- The ripple effect of your work and its lasting impact on job seekers
- How to cultivate resilience and energy in a helping profession

AI and the Human Experience: Balancing Technology with Authentic Connection

AI is revolutionizing career coaching, but the job search is still about human relationships. We explore how AI can enhance career services while preserving the human touch.

- How to integrate AI tools while maintaining a people-first approach

- The role of emotional intelligence in AI-assisted career coaching
- Practical ways to use AI to enhance (not replace) human connection in job search support

I'd love to collaborate and tailor these sessions to meet the needs of your audience.

Let's Connect

I'd love to continue the conversation and support you in your mission to help job seekers thrive. Whether you have questions, need additional resources, or are looking for a speaker for your next event, I'd love to hear from you!

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I'm passionate about empowering career services professionals with innovative strategies, and I love delivering keynotes and workshops that inspire, educate, and equip teams with practical tools to support job seekers. If you're planning a conference, training, or professional development event, I'd love to collaborate!