



Looking Ahead: Navigating AI and your career

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VP of Global Community at Randstad Digital powered by Torc

Who Am I

The Role

VP of Global Community at
Randstad Digital powered by
Torc

The Experience

15 years recruiting in tech

The Track Record

Placed over 1,000+ people in
jobs throughout my career

The Human

Husband, father of 3, mediocre
golfer & ice hockey player. Proud
owner of a mini donkey, corgi,
and a barn cat



Good News... Hiring in Tech Is Not Dead

1.1M

Tech Jobs Posted

Employers posted nearly 1.1 million tech jobs in 2025 (Indeed / Robert Half)

17%

Bureau of Labor Statistics Projection

Software dev roles projected to grow from 2023 to 2033, adding **~327,900 jobs**

People Are Still Getting Hired

People are still getting hired in my network

But...

You actually have to **do the work**



What's Slowing Things Down

Market Forces

- **The great hesitation:** long interview cycles, frozen headcount
- **Nearshoring:** amazing talent globally is a real factor
- We're still unwinding the overhiring binge of **2021–2023**
- **'The great smush'** — roles are being intertwined

The Numbers

- Entry-level hiring down **73%** in one year vs. only **7%** across all levels (*Ravio 2025*)
- Big tech new grad hires dropped to just **7% of total hires in 2025**, down 25% from prior years

It's Not AI's Fault... Necessarily

- ☐ Companies hired for 8 business lines, 2 worked out
- ☐ Zero interest rates made bad decisions cheap
- ☐ High-profile layoffs at big tech = less than 2% of total tech employment
- ☐ McKinsey: 32% of execs expect AI to **INCREASE** their engineering workforce vs. 28% who expect a decrease
- ☐ AI is convenient cover for decisions that were already coming



Read the Wind

35K+

AI Positions Open

35,445 AI-related positions open in the US in Q1 2025 alone, **up 25% from Q1 2024**

2x

AI Job Postings

AI job postings more than doubled Jan to April 2025, from **66K to nearly 139K**

170%

Gen AI Growth

Generative AI job postings up 170% from Jan 2024 to Jan 2025 (*Indeed Hiring Lab*)

56%

Wage Premium

Workers with AI skills command a **56% wage premium** over peers in the same job without AI skills (*PwC*)

- ❑ **7 of the 10 fastest growing tech roles in 2025 were AI-related.** The people building the next internet are not slowing down.



Let's Talk About the Reality of Startups

\$425B

VC Is Back and Bigger Than Ever

Global startup funding hit \$425 billion in 2025, up 30% year over year — the third-highest venture financing year on record.
(Crunchbase News)

\$84B

AI Is Concentrating Wealth Fast

Just five AI companies raised \$84 billion in 2025, representing 20% of all venture capital that year. The window to get in early on the next wave is right now. *(Crunchbase News)*

\$4.8T

Exits Are Real Again

Global M&A hit \$4.8 trillion in 2025 — the second-highest year on record — with tech M&A up 66% year over year. *(Morrison Foerster)*

\$100M+

Small Teams, Massive Outcomes

Companies with fewer than 100 employees are landing \$100M+ exits through acqui-hires. You don't need to wait for an IPO to see returns.
(Crunchbase News)

31

Unicorns Are Minting Faster

January 2026 alone saw 31 new companies join the unicorn board — the highest single-month count in more than three years. *(Google)*

This Moment Reminds Me of React

When React Dropped

Two camps formed: **adapters** and **resisters**

The Adapters

Became the React people

The Resisters

Got left behind

This shift is that moment **times ten.**

You Are Not Behind. But Start Now.

- You are not behind. Say it to the person next to you.
- You're not too late, but late is coming
- The difference between people who thrive and people who don't: **curious vs. stubborn**
- Now is not the time to be on the sidelines
- Age is not a factor. Whether you're 22 or 52, you can use these tools. Your experience is an advantage, not a liability.

Me trying to catch up to my invisible timeline



How to Get Started



Pick Up a Tool

Pick up a tool like **Claude Code**, spend \$20 for one month



You're Still Driving

You just have a better GPS.



Start Tomorrow, Not Next Week

When it does something dumb: don't quit, ask "**How do I prevent that next time?**"



Use X

Follow voices in tech you trust, create lists, engage with them. Watch what they're talking about, tinker with that tech. **Rinse and repeat.**

Use AI to Supercharge Your Job Search

Tailor Your Resume

Paste the job description into AI and ask it to **rewrite your resume to match the language**

Close the Skills Gap

Paste a JD in and ask: "**What skills am I missing and what's the fastest way to close that gap?**"

Personalized Cold Outreach

Use AI to write **personalized cold outreach**, not generic copy-paste templates

Optimize Your LinkedIn

Build your LinkedIn headline and summary around **keywords hiring managers actually search for**



Use AI to Prep for Interviews

1

Generate Likely Questions

Paste the JD in and ask AI to generate the **most likely interview questions** for that specific role

2

Full Mock Interview

Give it your resume and the JD and have it **play the interviewer**

3

Build Your STAR Stories

Ask it to help you build your stories using the **STAR method** based on your actual experience

4

Research the Company

Use it to research the company: **recent news, business model, competitors, problems they're solving**

5

Get Critiqued

After a mock answer, ask AI to **critique it and tell you what was weak or missing**

Use AI to Automate Your Job Search

"Stop manually tracking. Let AI run the pipeline for you."



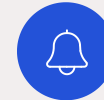
Networking at Scale

- Connect to Gmail and draft follow-up messages for conversations that went cold in the last 60 days.
- Generate research briefs for target companies to enable personalized outreach.



Application Pipeline Management

- Create and update your job tracker spreadsheet automatically via your email history.
- Analyze job descriptions to identify recurring skills and keyword gaps.
- Schedule weekly summaries of new inbox activity so no recruiter follow-up goes cold.



Daily Job Alert Briefing

- Automate recurring tasks with custom cadences (daily, weekly, or hourly).
- Run tasks in independent sessions with full access to your connected tools, plugins, and servers.

How to Stand Out Right Now

The bar is lower than you think. **Most people are just watching from the sidelines.**



Build with AI

Build something with AI and put it on the internet. **Most people won't.**



Talk About It Publicly

Talk about what you're building publicly. **Most people won't.**



Show Up In Person

Show up to in-person events and actually talk to people. **Most people won't.**



Get & Be a Mentor

Get a mentor. Be a mentor. **Most people won't.**

Use LinkedIn

→ **Don't just apply. Engage.**

Comment on posts from hiring managers and engineers you respect.

→ **DM people after you meet them at events while it's still fresh**

→ **Post about what you're learning and building.**

Even one post a week adds up.

→ **Recruiters are searching by skill keywords.**

Make sure your headline and about section reflect what you actually do.

→ **Most people treat LinkedIn like a resume.**

Treat it like a conversation.

Build Something and Put It on the Internet

The Mindset

- A **live URL** > a **resume alone**
- Doesn't have to be perfect. Has to be **real**.
- Proves you're a self-starter who can figure things out and **ship**

The Strategy

- Talk about what you're building every day. **Build in public**.
- You can be junior and still become **known for something**
- You don't need permission to become the person known for a thing



Get Into a Community

The best jobs aren't posted. They're shared.



Hidden Opportunities

Many high-value job openings are shared within private or semi-private online communities long before they ever hit public job boards.



Build Connections

Being an active, contributing member of these communities builds relationships that often lead directly to warm referrals and insider tips.



Reddit Subreddits

Explore niche tech subreddits like r/cscareerquestions or specialized programming language groups for targeted listings.



Slack & Discord Servers

Join local tech Slack groups, industry-specific communities, or developer Discord servers for real-time job alerts and networking.

My Favorite Communities

These are the communities I keep coming back to.



Next Play w/ Ben Lang

Ben Land's community is essential for career transitions and finding purpose-driven roles in the tech industry.



Torc.dev

A high-quality developer network that connects talented engineers with top-tier companies through a unique vetting process.



Anti Job Board on X

This community flips the script on traditional hiring by surfacing human-centric opportunities directly through social connections.



The Short List w/ Andrew Yueng

Andrew Yueng's curated insights provide a direct line to high-signal opportunities that cut through the noise of standard job boards.



Open to Work w/ Bella Nazzari

Bella Nazzari's community dedicated to job seekers, offering support, resources, and real talk for people actively navigating their job search.

AI Job Boards Worth Knowing

aijobs.ai

Dedicated AI, ML, and data science roles only — **no noise**

ai-jobs.net

Only posts AI roles: **machine learning, NLP, robotics, applied AI**

jobtensor.com

Tech and AI job search engine — **shows which skills are trending**

Wellfound (formerly AngelList)

Strong for **AI startups and early stage companies**

remotive.com

Vetted remote AI and engineering roles — **filters by stack and salary**

LinkedIn

Still the most important one. Use boolean search and set job alerts.

The Opportunity Nobody's Talking About

Big Box SaaS Is in Trouble

The era of bloated, one-size-fits-all software is under pressure

Bespoke, Niche, Local Software Is Wide Open

The gap is massive and largely untouched

Small Businesses Need Real Solutions

Small businesses running on spreadsheets need real solutions

The Barrier Has Never Been Lower

The technical barrier to build there has **never been lower**



Is It Time to Pivot?



Your expertise is
leverage, not baggage



Talk to people two years
ahead of you



Now is not the time to be stubborn





Take Responsibility

The downside is smaller than the fear. The upside is bigger than the comfort.



Get Off the Couch

You're not changing your career from your couch



One Action at a Time

One DM. One post. One project. One event.



Act Like You Can't Fail

Act like you can't fail and see what happens



Nobody Is Ready. Ship It Anyway.

You'll learn more from doing than from waiting.

The Checklist: Your Path Forward

If you take away one thing from this presentation, let it be this:

1 Start Experimenting with AI Today

Don't just watch from the sidelines. Dive in, break things, and learn by doing.

3 Actively Engage & Network

Connect with people, join communities, and contribute. The best opportunities are often shared, not posted.

2 Build & Share Your Work Online

A live URL speaks louder than a resume. Show you can ship and build in public.

4 Tailor Your Approach with AI

From resume optimization to interview prep, leverage AI to make your job search hyper-targeted and efficient.

Thank You!

Let's connect and continue the conversation about navigating AI in your career.

Scan this code to connect with me and join our jobs platform!

