

SIGNAL LOST

An abstract graphic on a dark grey background. A white line representing a signal wave starts from the left, moves horizontally, then curves upwards and to the right, where it breaks apart into a chaotic, explosive cloud of white and black geometric fragments. The background is divided into a grid of squares, some of which contain black and white brushstroke patterns.

Generative AI has fundamentally broken the mechanics of personnel selection. We are fighting an arms race that cannot be won with more automation—only with better measurement.

84%

Job seekers who used AI in their search (Workday Global Workforce Report, 2026).

58 to 69

Increase in median applications per filled job in one year (Workday, 2026).

+40%

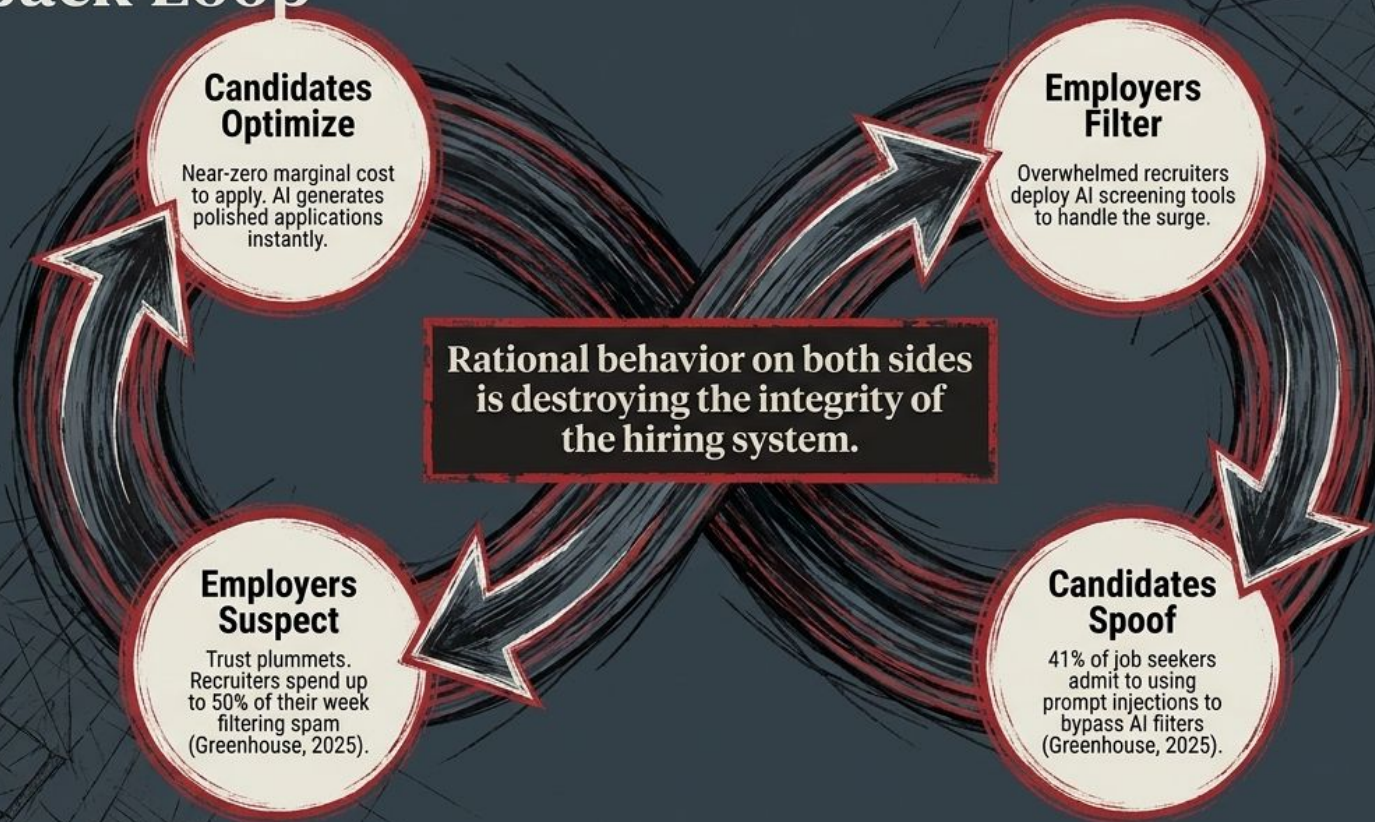
Surge in application volume in the tech and media sectors.

60 Days

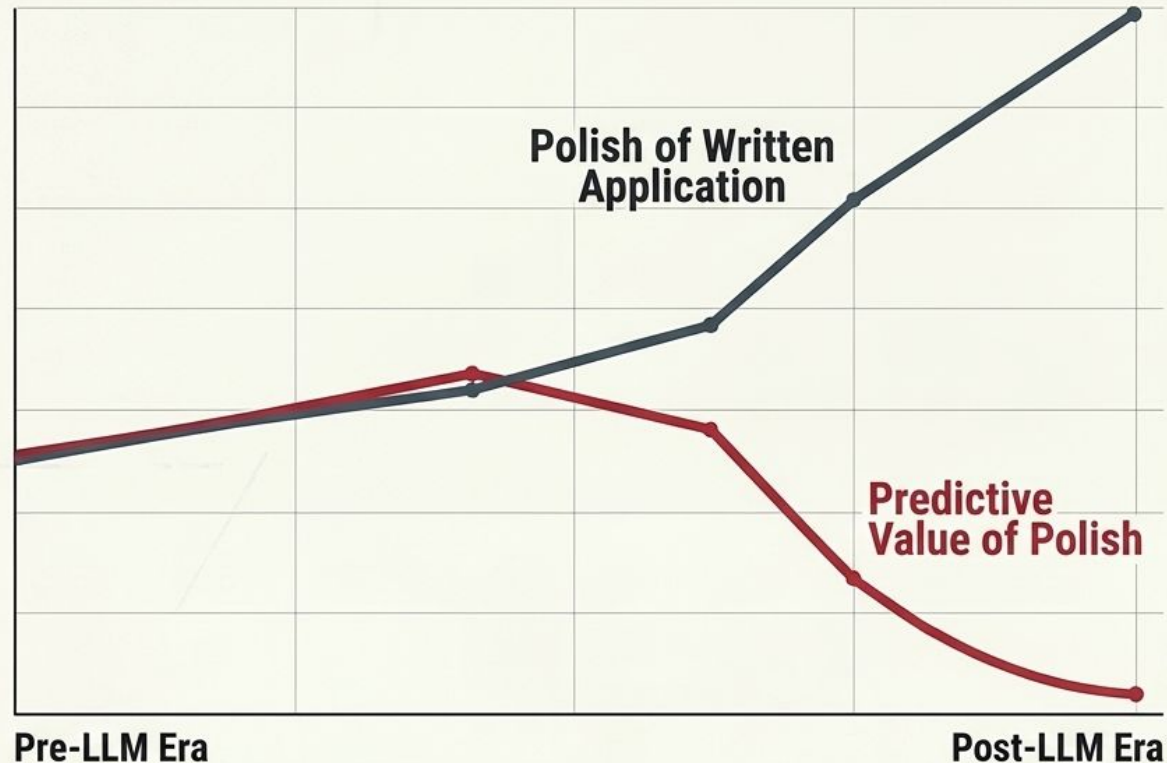
Time-to-fill remains completely flat despite the massive influx of applicants.

More Volume Is Not Producing Faster Hiring. Candidates are generating unprecedented application volume, but employers are no faster at making a hire. The system is clogged with noise.

The AI Arms Race is a Destructive Feedback Loop



The Collapse of the Signaling Equilibrium



The Theory

A signal only works if it is costly to produce. When AI makes tailoring a resume costless, the polish stops predicting the candidate's actual capability.

The Evidence

Point to the Galdin & Silbert (2025) study: When the premium for application customization disappeared, workers in the top ability quintile were hired 19% less often, and those in the bottom quintile were hired 14% more often.

The Result

Written materials no longer differentiate top talent.

The Expanding Trust and Integrity Deficit

Organizational Risk

Legal & Bias Exposure

Amazon penalized women's resumes; Workday faces ADEA class action for algorithmic bias; iTutorGroup settled for age bias auto-rejections.

Security Threats

KnowBe4 hired a fraudulent North Korean IT worker who passed background checks and video interviews using AI deepfakes, immediately attempting to load malware.

Candidate Risk

Eroding Trust

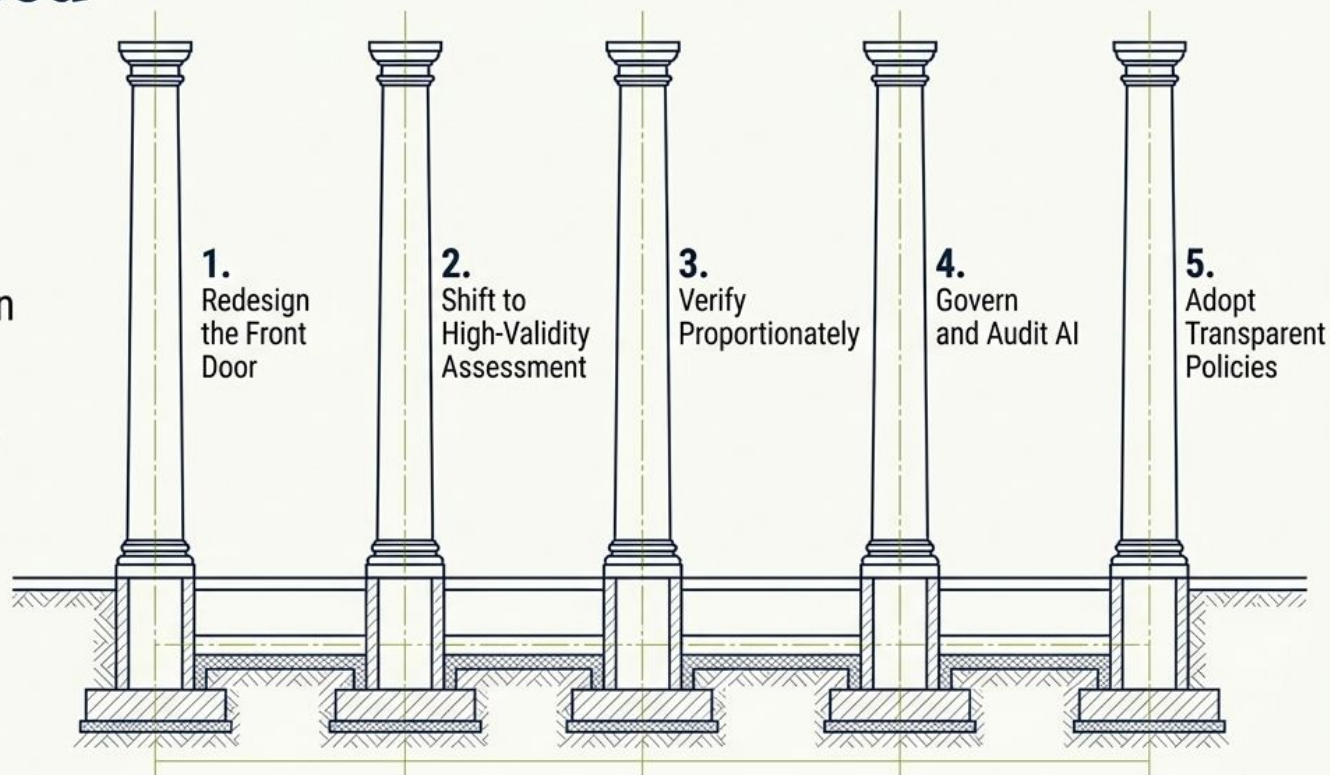
Only 26% of candidates trust that AI will evaluate them fairly (Gartner, 2025).

The Creepiness Factor

Algorithmic evaluation reduces perceived fairness and organizational attractiveness, costing employers top talent (Oostrom et al., 2024).

The Architecture of Evidence-Based Hiring

The solution isn't fighting AI with more AI. It's a return to the fundamentals of evidence-based measurement, adapted for a world where text is cheap and identity can be faked.



Pillar 1: Redesign the Front Door Around Skills

The Static: Generic Filters



The Signal: Skills-Based



The Shift

Remove unnecessary degree filters and vague requirements that invite generic, AI-generated spam. Use short, specific screening questions requiring concrete examples.

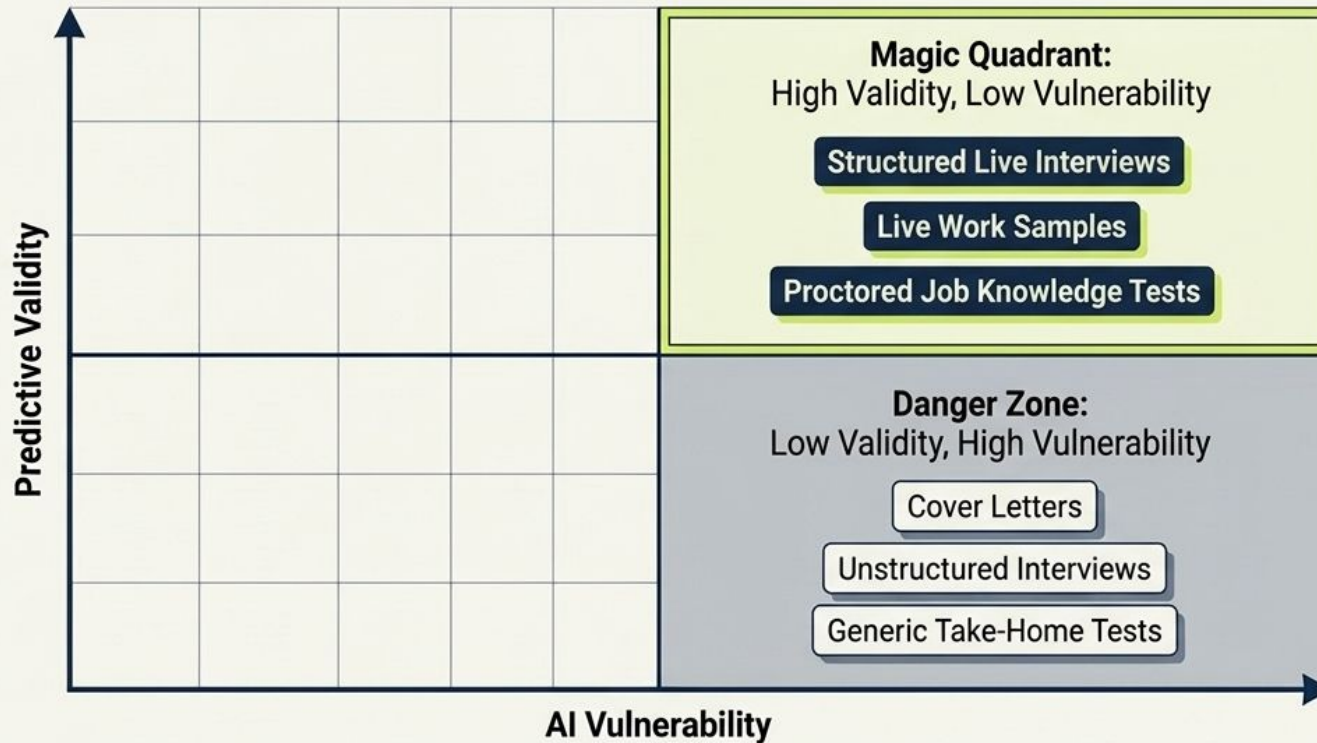
The Evidence

Non-degree hires have retention rates 10 percentage points higher than degree-holding colleagues (Burning Glass Institute).

Proof Points

IBM removed degree requirements for >50% of U.S. roles; Walmart rewrote corporate job descriptions; State of Maryland opened 38,000 roles to non-degree talent.

Pillar 2: Shift to High-Validity Assessment



When text is cheap, live evidence becomes invaluable. Move your assessment weight into the top-right quadrant.

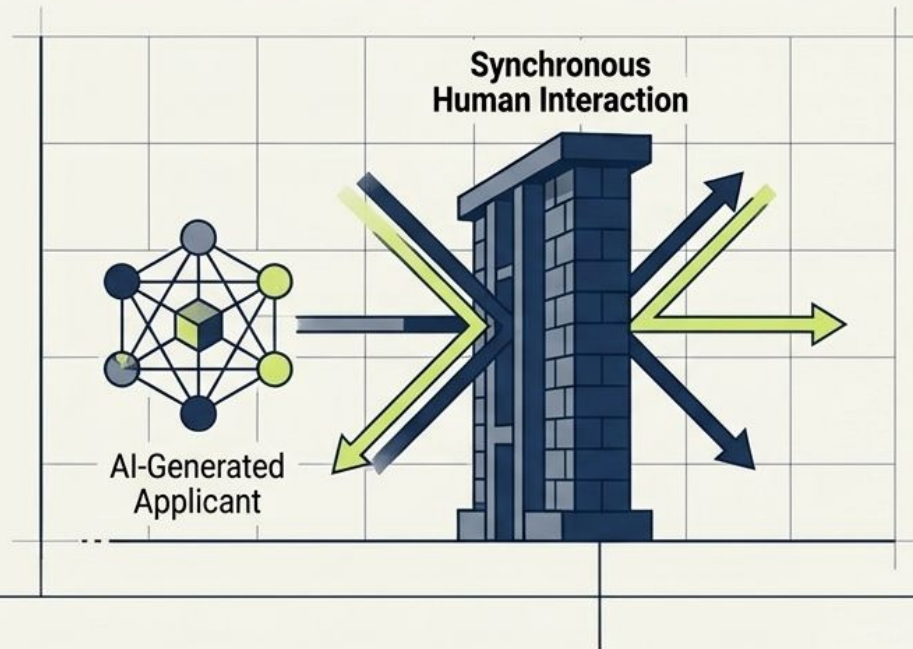
Defeating Deception with Synchronous Interaction

The Vulnerability

18% of recruiters catching deceptive AI use have encountered deepfakes, and 32% caught AI-generated scripts (Greenhouse, 2025). Asynchronous video and text are highly vulnerable.

The Defense

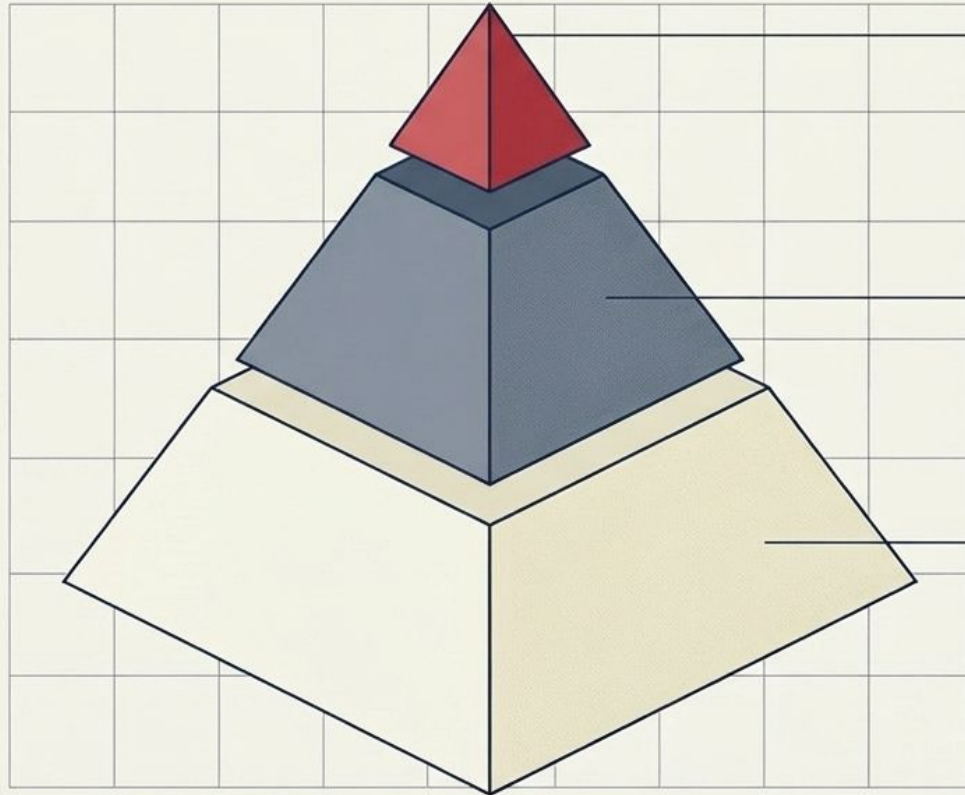
Structured interviews and work samples conducted live force candidates to demonstrate real-time reasoning, neutralizing AI assistance.



Real-World Response

Google reinstated in-person interview rounds to combat AI cheating; Goldman Sachs explicitly bans external sources and ChatGPT in campus interviews to hear the candidate's authentic voice.

Pillar 3: Verify Identity Proportionately



Apex Tier: Remote IT & Security Access

High Friction: Rigorous identity verification before system access, deepfake detection, specific recruiter training on behavioral red flags. (Context: 2025 DOJ seizure of North Korean IT laptop farms spanning 16 states).

Middle Tier: Hybrid Knowledge Work

Moderate Friction: Device controls, shipping equipment only to verified addresses, monitoring early system access.

Base Tier: Retail / Entry Level

Low Friction: Basic identity document checks matched at onboarding. Focus on candidate experience.

Pillar 4: Govern and Audit Your AI Screening Tools

	Demand Validation Evidence	Reject tools that optimize only for efficiency; demand proof of predictive performance validity.
	Mandate Bias Audits	Comply with tightening regulations (NYC Local Law 144, E4, EU AI Act, California Civil Rights Council).
	Ensure Data Security	Remember the 2025 McDonald's McHire breach where 64 million records were exposed via a default vendor password.
	Design Defensively	Avoid algorithms that reward keyword stuffing or are susceptible to prompt injection (white text on white backgrounds).

Legal exposure has shifted from employers to vendors and back again. Compliance requires independent validation, not just vendor promises.

Pillar 5: Adopt Transparent, Candidate-Respecting Policies

Signal vs Static	
Trust-Destroying Asymmetry Employer uses black-box AI to screen; strictly bans candidate AI use; leaves applicants in a silent void. Result: 25% of candidates trust the employer less.	Trust-Building Symmetry Employer discloses AI use stages; sets clear, explained boundaries for candidate AI use; uses AI to speed up communication.
Corporate Examples	
Anthropic Explicitly asks candidates not to use AI, explaining the desire to see unmediated personal interest.	Chipotle Uses AI (Ava Cado) to schedule interviews and answer candidate questions 75% faster, improving experience without using AI to judge human capability.

Deploy AI for Process, Reserve Judgment for Humans

AI Territory: Process & Access



Chatbot Q&A
(L'Oréal example
saving 200 hours)



Automated
interview
scheduling



Multi-language
accessibility



Application
status updates

Automation should be aimed at speed,
responsiveness, and access—never at replacing
human judgment about fit and capability.

Human Territory: Evaluation & Judgment



Assessing
cultural alignment



Evaluating live
work samples



Final hiring
decisions



Granting
system access

The Paradigm Shift: Hiring is a Measurement System



The Old Paradigm: The Filter Funnel

Hiring is a funnel designed to filter out noise based on cheap proxies. (Easily defeated by AI).

The New Paradigm: The Measurement Instrument

Hiring is a high-fidelity instrument designed to measure reality. Data informs the instrument, the instrument drives outcomes.

The Mandate

Link selection scores to later performance ratings and retention. Retire methods that add friction without predictive value.

The Evidence-Based Action Plan

Stop Doing	Start Doing	The Value Delivered
Relying on generic cover letters and unstructured interviews.	Shift assessment weight to structured, live, synchronous interviews.	Restored signal and predictive hiring capability.
Using automated screening without regular, independent bias audits.	Implement a risk-based Proportionality Pyramid for identity verification.	Protected organizational security and reduced legal liability.
Applying maximum identity friction to low-risk roles.	Demand validity and security proof from all HR tech vendors.	Rebuilt candidate trust and competitive talent advantage.
Banning candidate AI without disclosing employer AI use.	Rewrite job postings to target demonstrable skills, not just degrees.	

When text is cheap, evidence becomes valuable. – Jonathan H. Westover, PhD