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# 7 disconnects between employers and job seekers

Indeed's Smarter Hiring Survey reveals that the friction between employers and job seekers often comes down to misunderstanding and miscommunication around what employers actually want. Here's a rundown of the major disconnects.

## 1 Leadership Skills

Employers are looking for candidates with leadership skills who are great team players, but can't seem to find them. Meanwhile, job seekers believe it's more important to demonstrate industry-specific abilities in their applications. These assumptions can lead to missed opportunities on both sides.

**40%**

of employers say leadership and workforce skills are the most critical skills gaps their companies face

## 2 Potential vs. Pedigree

More than half of employers (62%) say they feel most confident hiring someone with an equal mix of skills, experience, and potential. However, job seekers are still most confident applying to roles that mirror their direct experience. So it seems job seekers are selecting themselves out of the process just as employers are trying to be open-minded about screening for potential.

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## 3 Job Descriptions

Job postings cause a lot of confusion in the hiring process. One quarter of job seekers said vague job descriptions are the biggest hiring hurdle they face. Riddled with boilerplate jargon, "corporate speak," and outdated requirements, many job postings confuse rather than clarify.

**1/4**

of job seekers say vague job descriptions are the biggest hiring hurdle

## 4 Speed of Hiring Process

While both sides agree that two to four weeks is a reasonable timeline to go from application to offer, about a quarter of job seekers say they'll start looking elsewhere if it takes more than two weeks. Job seekers aren't waiting around for employers to make a decision—and that's costing both sides. Employers may not only be missing out on strong candidates, but risk being looked upon negatively by job seekers.

**1 in 5**

employers say that their biggest hiring challenge is losing candidates to the competition

## 5 What Job Seekers Really Want

The job offer may be the last step in the process, but misalignment with candidate expectations can still derail the whole operation. For instance, employers understand that work-life balance is important to candidates, but they may underestimate just *how much* it matters.

**Is flexibility the most important part of a job offer?**

**>1/3** of job seekers say yes

**<1/4** of employers say yes

## 6 AI Usage

Job seekers and employers alike are using AI in the hiring process—and yet they're judging each other for doing so. Both groups worry that AI could make hiring less fair by perpetuating historical prejudices, screening out candidates based on arbitrary keywords, or giving the edge to job seekers who figure out how to game the system.

**Is AI good for writing and editing resumes and cover letters?**

**70%** of job seekers say yes
**>1/3** of employers approve

**Is AI good for screening candidates, summarizing experience, and automating scheduling?**

**75%** of employers say yes
**<1/4** of job seekers approve

## 7 AI Upskilling

AI isn't just changing hiring—it's reshaping the workforce. But employers and job seekers don't agree on how fast that shift is coming or who's responsible to get workers ready. Employers say managers at all levels hold that responsibility. Job seekers say it's up to them and their direct managers.

**Do you think workers need to upskill within the next 3–5 years to accommodate AI?**

**67%** of job seekers say yes

**82%** of employers say yes

## Finding a way forward

For all their differences, job seekers and employers share plenty of common ground on the value of soft skills and work-life balance, with a mutual cautious optimism about AI. The challenge now is turning that common ground into common action.

**Explore these disconnects in depth and find strategies to bridge the gap.**

→ Download the full report

Source
Indeed Survey with YouGov 2025, Total N=6,837 job seekers and 2,481 employers (Annual Hiring Insights Report)

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