

The 2026 Talent Sourcing Toolkit

30+ AI-powered tools to find candidates your competitors can't see

Join the Live Workshop — April 2, 2026

Build AI-Powered Talent Pools Outside LinkedIn  April 2, 2026 · 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM UTC  **Register now** → aiwithmichal.com/tickets

I'll show you how to combine these tools into a single automated sourcing workflow — live, hands-on, no fluff. Spots are limited. Grab yours before they're gone.

How to Use This Guide

Each tool below includes:

- **What it is** — the one-line explanation
- **Best for** — the role types or use cases it fits
- **Pro tip** — the non-obvious thing that makes it actually useful

Tools marked  are underused by most recruiters and worth prioritising.

Part 1 — Developers & Engineers

1. AmazingHiring

What it is: Aggregates developer profiles from GitHub, Stack Overflow, GitLab, Kaggle, Bitbucket, and 50+ sources into a single searchable database. **Best for:** Software engineers, data scientists, ML engineers, DevOps **Pro tip:** Filter by "last active" to find

developers who are publicly active right now — these are far more responsive than cold profiles. Combine with a tech stack filter to narrow fast.

2. GitHub Advanced Search ✦

What it is: Free search across 100M+ developer profiles. Filter by programming language, location, number of followers, starred repos, last commit date. **Best for:** Open-source contributors, backend engineers, ML/data engineers **Pro tip:** Search `location:"Berlin" language:Rust followers:>50` to find niche senior engineers before they're on any recruiter's radar. People with recent commits are actively building — far more signal than a LinkedIn headline update. URL: github.com/search?type=users

3. [Cord.io](https://cord.io)

What it is: A platform where tech candidates opt in to being found. They set their preferences (role type, salary, remote/hybrid, stack) and recruiters match against those signals. **Best for:** Software engineers, product managers, designers at Series A–C stage **Pro tip:** Candidates here have self-selected as open to moves — response rates are 3–5x higher than cold LinkedIn InMail. Don't waste it with a generic message; reference their listed stack or preferences.

4. Hacker News "Who Wants to Be Hired" ✦

What it is: A monthly thread on news.ycombinator.com where engineers, designers, and PMs post their own profiles — skills, location, remote preference, and what they're looking for. **Best for:** Senior engineers, technical founders, AI/ML specialists, niche backend roles **Pro tip:** Search the thread with `Ctrl+F` for your key skills. These candidates are actively looking but hate recruiters — lead with a specific technical question or reference their work, not a job pitch. Post is live the 1st of every month.

5. Stack Overflow Talent

What it is: Job board and sourcing tool built into the platform developers already use daily. **Best for:** Full-stack, backend, frontend, DevOps engineers **Pro tip:** Candidates who fill out a Stack Overflow profile are signalling developer identity — they care about craft. Reference their top answers or tags when reaching out.

6. GitLab Explore

What it is: Like GitHub search but for the GitLab ecosystem — strong in DevOps, infrastructure, and European engineering communities. **Best for:** DevOps, SRE, platform engineers, backend **Pro tip:** GitLab users skew toward enterprise and European markets. If you're hiring for infra-heavy roles or teams using GitLab CI/CD, this surfaces candidates LinkedIn doesn't index well.

Part 2 — Designers & Creatives

7. Dribbble

What it is: Portfolio platform for visual designers. Filter by skill (UI, branding, motion, illustration), location, and "Available for hire" status. **Best for:** UI/UX designers, brand designers, motion designers, illustrators **Pro tip:** The "Available for hire" filter is the fastest path to warm candidates. Don't just bookmark profiles — comment on a specific shot with a genuine observation before sliding into DMs.

8. [Layers.to](#) ♦

What it is: A newer design community built around sharing work-in-progress, tools, and process — less polished than Dribbble, more honest. **Best for:** Product designers, UI designers who care about craft over polish **Pro tip:** Early-stage community means less recruiter noise. Designers here are sharing real work, not curated portfolios. Engage with their posts before recruiting — it works.

9. Contra ♦

What it is: Portfolio and work platform for independents — designers, writers, engineers, marketers. Profiles show actual project outcomes, not just titles. **Best for:** Designers, content creators, growth marketers, frontend engineers **Pro tip:** Many Contra users are open to full-time but haven't posted on LinkedIn. Filter by "open to full-time" in their availability settings. The project-outcome format tells you more than a CV.

10. Behance

What it is: Adobe's portfolio platform — large, established, global. Strong for creative and multimedia roles. **Best for:** Graphic designers, motion designers, photographers, UX/UI **Pro tip:** Use the "Available for work" badge filter. Behance has a strong Latin American and Eastern European community — useful for remote design hiring at competitive rates.

11. Polywork

What it is: A profile platform where people document what they're actually working on — projects, side work, collaborations — not just job titles. **Best for:** Designers, developers, PMs, growth marketers with a portfolio of work **Pro tip:** Search by activity type ("launched", "built", "designed") to find people with proven output rather than impressive-sounding job titles.

Part 3 — Startup & Operator Talent

12. Wellfound (formerly AngelList Talent)

What it is: The largest dedicated platform for startup talent. Candidates set salary expectations, equity preferences, and startup stage preferences upfront. **Best for:** Engineers, PMs, operators, founders between companies, early employees **Pro tip:** Filter by "actively looking" + company stage preference. Candidates who specify "seed to Series B" are self-selecting for startup environments — no need to sell the equity upside.

13. IndieHackers ♦

What it is: Community of founders and builders who have shipped products, documented revenue, and built publicly. **Best for:** Growth roles, technical PMs, founding engineers, operators who can build **Pro tip:** Someone who built and grew a product to \$5K MRR solo has more signal than most CVs. Search the "Products" section by category. Reach out referencing their specific product, not a generic "I came across your profile."

14. ProductHunt Makers ♦

What it is: The "Makers" section of ProductHunt shows who built what — and how those products performed (upvotes, reviews, comments). **Best for:** PMs, growth, founders, technical co-founders, 0-to-1 builders **Pro tip:** Sort by upvotes to find people who shipped something people actually wanted. A Maker with 3 launched products is showing you execution, taste, and persistence in one profile.

15. YC Company Directory

What it is: Public directory of every Y Combinator company and founder — searchable by batch, industry, and location. **Best for:** Founding engineers, technical operators, startup PMs, GTM leaders **Pro tip:** Former founders from failed YC companies are among the best operator hires. They've built something real, handled chaos, and are often ready to go deep on someone else's mission.

Part 4 — AI-Powered Sourcing Platforms

16. Juicebox (PeopleGPT) ✦

What it is: Plain-language AI search across the web. Type a natural description and it finds matching profiles — no Boolean required. **Best for:** Any role, especially when you struggle to define exact keywords **Pro tip:** Be specific and contextual: "Find a Head of Growth who scaled a B2B SaaS product from \$1M to \$10M ARR with a lean team" outperforms generic keyword searches by a wide margin.

17. Findem ✦

What it is: Attribute-based AI sourcing. Instead of keyword matching, it understands career trajectories, progression patterns, and inferred attributes. **Best for:** Senior and leadership roles where trajectory matters more than keywords **Pro tip:** Use it to find candidates who have "worked at a company that grew from Series A to IPO" or "was an early employee at a unicorn" — signals that don't appear in plain keyword searches.

18. SeekOut

What it is: Deep-filter sourcing with signals from GitHub, patents, publications, conference talks, and diversity data alongside standard profile info. **Best for:** Technical

roles, research roles, diversity hiring initiatives **Pro tip:** The GitHub and patent filters make it the best tool for finding deep technical specialists. Filter by "has published research" + role keywords for niche scientific or ML roles.

19. hireEZ (formerly Hiretual)

What it is: Outbound sourcing automation — finds candidates, enriches contact data, and manages multi-step outreach sequences, all integrated with your ATS. **Best for:** High-volume technical sourcing, agencies, in-house teams with large pipelines **Pro tip:** Build sequences that combine email + LinkedIn touchpoints with spacing based on role seniority. Senior candidates need more time between touches. Junior roles can move faster.

20. Fetcher

What it is: Fully automated sourcing — you define the role, it delivers a shortlist to your inbox daily. Learns your preferences over time as you approve/reject candidates. **Best for:** Recruiters who want to delegate initial sourcing entirely **Pro tip:** Rate every delivered candidate (even the ones you reject) — the model improves significantly after 20–30 ratings. Most teams don't do this and get mediocre results indefinitely.

21. Loxo

What it is: All-in-one recruiting platform with an AI sourcing layer, ATS, CRM, and outreach tools built in. Strong for agencies and retained search. **Best for:** Executive search, agency recruiting, retained search firms **Pro tip:** Use the talent CRM to track candidates across years, not just open reqs. The recruiter with the best long-term relationship data wins — Loxo makes that manageable.

Part 5 — Data Enrichment & Outreach Automation

22. Clay ♦

What it is: A spreadsheet-meets-workflow tool that connects to 50+ data sources. Build sourcing lists, enrich them automatically, and trigger personalized outreach — all without writing code. **Best for:** Recruiters who want to automate the full sourcing →

enrichment → outreach loop **Pro tip:** Build a "sourcing table" that pulls from GitHub (active contributors), enriches with [Hunter.io](#) (email), scores with an AI prompt (fit vs. JD), and drafts a personalized message — all automatically. This is the playbook from the April 2nd workshop.

23. [Apollo.io](#)

What it is: Contact database with 270M+ profiles, email finding, sequencing, and buying intent signals. Built for sales but increasingly used by recruiters. **Best for:** Finding direct emails, outreach sequencing, market mapping **Pro tip:** The "intent data" feature shows who is researching competitor products or job-change signals — useful for timing your outreach when candidates are already in a change mindset.

24. [Hunter.io](#)

What it is: Find and verify professional email addresses from a name + company domain. Simple, accurate, fast. **Best for:** Any outreach where you can't find a direct email **Pro tip:** Combine with LinkedIn sourcing: find the profile on LinkedIn, verify the email on Hunter, reach out via email instead of InMail. Email gets 2x the response rate for senior candidates.

25. Lusha

What it is: Contact data enrichment — phone numbers, direct emails, company data — with a browser extension that works on LinkedIn profiles. **Best for:** Direct outreach, especially for roles where phone calls are appropriate **Pro tip:** Phone numbers make the difference for VP+ searches where email response rates drop off. Use for roles where a brief, respectful call is appropriate.

26. Clearbit (now Breyta) ✦

What it is: Company and person enrichment API. Pulls firmographic data, tech stack, funding stage, headcount growth signals. **Best for:** Identifying companies in growth mode (and whose employees might be ready to move), enriching inbound candidate data **Pro tip:** Build a trigger: when a company in your target sector raises a new round, their engineers become higher-priority sourcing targets. Clearbit + Clay makes this automatable.

Part 6 — Niche Communities & Hidden Talent Pools

27. Discord Communities ✦

What it is: Thousands of professional communities exist on Discord — engineering, design, data science, product, crypto, gaming, and more. **Best for:** Niche technical roles, gaming/crypto/web3, junior talent before they're on LinkedIn **Pro tip:** Search "[your niche] Discord" or look for "join our Discord" links in GitHub READMEs. Most senior communities are invite-only — get an introduction from a community member rather than cold-joining as a recruiter.

28. Slack Communities ✦

What it is: Professional Slack workspaces organised around topics, industries, or cities. Often more senior and engaged than public forums. **Key communities:** Remote OK, Designer Hangout, Online Geniuses, Rands Leadership Slack, RevGenius (sales/GTM), DataTalks.Club (data/ML) **Pro tip:** Lurk for 2 weeks before posting any job. Add value (answer questions, share resources) before asking for anything. Many communities have a dedicated #jobs channel — post there only.

29. Reddit (targeted subreddits)

What it is: "For hire" and career subreddits where professionals post availability or browse opportunities. **Key subreddits:** r/forhire, r/remotework, r/cscareerquestions, r/devops, r/MachineLearning, r/datascience, r/UXDesign **Pro tip:** Post in r/forhire with a well-written, honest job description. No recruiter spam language. Include comp range. The community upvotes transparency and downvotes corporate speak.

30. Substack & Newsletter Communities ✦

What it is: Writers and thinkers who publish newsletters often have highly engaged professional communities around niche topics. **Best for:** Content roles, thought leadership positions, marketing, research, niche domain experts **Pro tip:** Sponsor or contribute to newsletters in your sector — the audience is the talent pool. A single honest job post in a respected newsletter often outperforms a month of LinkedIn ads.

Part 7 — Bonus: Workflow Connectors

31. Zapier / Make (Integromat)

What it is: No-code automation platforms that connect your sourcing tools, ATS, and CRM. **Pro tip:** Build a zap that takes a new candidate from any source → enriches via Hunter → adds to your ATS → sends a personalised first email. Remove yourself from the mechanical parts of sourcing entirely.

32. Notion + AI

What it is: Use Notion as a lightweight talent CRM. Add AI blocks to score fit, summarise CVs, and draft outreach. **Pro tip:** Build a "passive pipeline" database. Add strong candidates you can't hire now. Review it every quarter. Your best future hire is probably already in there.

33. Perplexity / Claude for Research


What it is: Use AI to research candidates, map company org charts, identify talent clusters, and draft personalised outreach at scale. **Pro tip:** Prompt: "Find 10 companies in [city] that recently scaled their [team] from 5 to 50 people in the last 18 months. Their employees are likely to be experienced in fast-growth environments and open to new opportunities."

Ready to Build This Into a Workflow?

Knowing the tools is step one. The real leverage is combining them into a pipeline that runs automatically — so you wake up to a shortlist, not an empty req.

On **April 2nd**, I'm showing exactly how to do that, live:

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 **April 2, 2026 · 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM UTC** 🕒 90-minute live session — hands-on workflows, real examples 💡 You'll leave with a working sourcing system, not just slides 👥 Limited spots · Basic (€79) & Pro + Toolkit (€129)

 [Secure your seat → aiwithmichal.com/tickets](https://aiwithmichal.com/tickets)

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