LinkedIn Priority Application

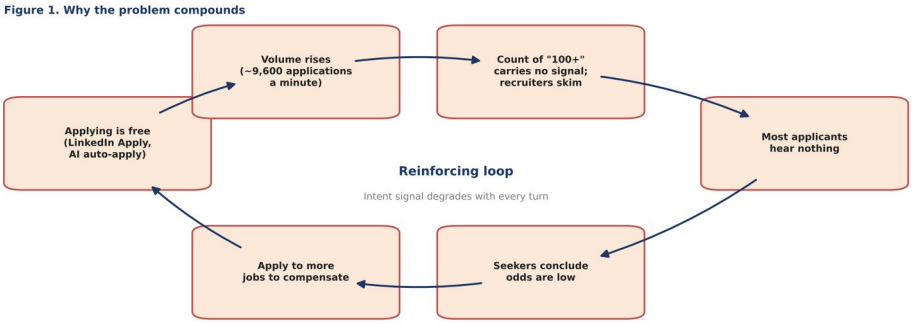
Structure of the Document

1. Problem Alignment
2. User Personas
3. Solution Alignment
4. Appendix

Problem Alignment

What problem (or opportunity) are we trying to solve ?

- Restore a usable intent signal on job applications, so hirers can find strong, interested applicants and seekers hear back



Where does this stand today ?

- Applications run at about 420.2M a month (9,600 a minute, midpoint of 8,200 to 11,000 across two sources). The count on a posting, "Over 100 applicants", carries no signal.
- Top Choice already exists: Premium members mark up to 3 jobs a month while applying, with a required message to the employer, and the hirer sees the flag. Credits refresh on the 1st (12 AM UTC) and do not roll over (LinkedIn Help). It is Premium only and not used to rank, count or route applications.

Assumptions

1. Intent signal could mean replies, interviews or hires. Here the focus is on replied applications (a hirer reply or status change within 14 days).
2. The target market is the current LinkedIn job-active base, with the US as the first launch market. Persona sizes are guesstimates from the companion sizing doc.
3. Billing stays as it is today: promoted jobs are charged per candidate view or click and Job Slots are sold as contracts, so less noise does not directly cut revenue.
4. All analysis rests on two primary pain points:
    a. Seekers cannot show intent when applying is free
    b. Hirers cannot find strong, interested applicants in a pile of 100+

Why is it important to our business ?

- **Hirer Willingness to Pay**

    - Hirers pay for access to qualified candidates; if review time per hire rises, the value of a posting falls
- **Growth Under Scrutiny**
    - LinkedIn revenue grew 11% in FY26 against 41% for Azure, and is no longer reported on its own from Q1 FY27
- **Seeker Trust and Engagement**
    - Silence after applying pushes seekers toward more volume, which feeds the loop above
    - A visible, answered signal gives seekers a reason to be selective instead of shotgun applying
- **Defensibility**
    - A job board can copy a count. It cannot copy a signal built on verified identity, the member graph and engagement history

What insights are we operating on ?

Company Alignment

- LinkedIn is aimed at connecting talent and opportunity at scale
- **Talent Solutions:**
    - Recruiter, Jobs and Hiring Pro all sell the promise of fewer, better candidates
- **Premium:**
    - Priority slots extend Top Choice, an existing Premium benefit, giving a natural paid ladder
- **Trust and AI:**
    - Verified identity and AI interviews (1,000+ a day, per a LinkedIn PM) can become ways to earn verified intent

User base

- Job-active members are about 86.4M a month out of 360.0M monthly active (guesstimate), with about 1.21M hirers [Personas and Sizing]
- Within job-active members:
    - Volume Applicants (10.8M) send about 39% of applications
    - Targeted Seekers (32.4M) and Early-Career Entrants (43.2M) are the most likely to gain from a credible signal

Specific Industry Trends - Hiring Marketplaces

Trend	Description	Relevance	Source
AI auto-apply	Third-party agents and LinkedIn's own Premium Apply Assistant apply on a seeker's behalf; applications up 45% year over year	Volume keeps rising, so count-based signals keep decaying	NYT, July 2026
Friction removal	Easy Apply renamed LinkedIn Apply (2026) and kept one tap	Friction cannot be added to the default path without hurting engagement	SocialBee 2026 updates

Trend	Description	Relevance	Source
Agent access policing	Restrictions by detection, with no sanctioned path (single first-hand account, n=1)	A verified agent tier is a later option	First-hand account
AI hiring regulation	EU AI Act obligations for employment AI delayed to December 2027	Ranking by intent and fit is high-risk territory; legal design from day one	Gibson Dunn; Ogletree
Application flood	Applications grew four times faster than openings in H1 2024 (173M, up 31%); Handshake reports applications per job up 30% in 2025	Hirers cannot read everything, so a lane for the few that matter gains value	Fortune via Recruiting News Network; Pin on Handshake
Fake and AI-assisted candidates	Ranked the number one expected hiring challenge for 2026 by 500+ US talent leaders; Gartner projects one in four candidate profiles fake by 2028	Verified identity becomes the moat for a signal that must be trusted	GoodTime 2026 Hiring Insights Report, via Recruiting News Network
Caps and review before submit	Wellfound limits active applications per candidate. Indeed's Apply For Me test is capped, and its automatic mode was paused on Aug 4, 2026 in favor of reviewing each draft	Rivals already use limits to protect quality, so scarcity is not a novel ask of seekers	Wellfound Help; Indeed newsroom
Paid reach for hirers	Indeed de-prioritizes free postings (June 2026 report) and bills sponsored jobs per click or per started application	Paying for reach is normal for hirers, so priority must stay unbuyable to keep the signal clean	Pulse.bot; HeroHunt on Indeed pricing
Slower hiring despite more applicants	Time to hire worsened at 60% of surveyed organizations and only one in nine hired faster; 99.8% of talent teams use or plan AI agents	A faster path to the few real candidates is a hirer-side benefit worth measuring	GoodTime 2026 Hiring Insights Report

Learnings from adjacent industries

We want to analyze how other industries build scarce signals and receiver accountability:

Industry	Trend	Impact	Opportunity for LinkedIn
Freelance marketplaces Upwork Connects	Freelancers spend a limited currency to submit a proposal	Filters low-intent bids, but can tax newcomers	Closest analogue; give free members a real slot
Dating Hinge Roses, Tinder Super Like	A few scarce, visible signals shown to the recipient in a separate lane	Scarce signals get answered; paid versions can feel pay to win	A priority lane that keeps standard apply alive

Industry	Trend	Impact	Opportunity for LinkedIn
Travel Airbnb host response rate	Response rate and speed are shown and affect ranking	Closes the loop on the receiving side	Show hirer reply rate; reward fast replies
Email Gmail Priority Inbox, VIP lists	Messages are ranked by sender importance and past engagement, with a visible reason	Cuts overload, but opaque ranking breeds distrust	Rank by fit and intent and show the reason on each applicant

Competition

Figures marked third-party come from vendor comparison sites and may be stale or approximate. Indeed, Wellfound and Handshake details come from their own help pages or newsroom where noted in Sources.

Criterion	LinkedIn	Indeed	ZipRecruiter	Handshake	Wellfound
Core services	- Professional network - Jobs, Recruiter, Premium	- Job search engine - Sponsored jobs, Smart Sourcing	- Job posting sent to 100+ partner boards - AI candidate matching	- Campus and entry-level recruiting	- Startup jobs - Equity shown on listings
Who it serves	White-collar, mid to senior roles; 1B+ members (third-party)	Broad, high-volume and hourly hiring	Employers wanting broad applicant flow	Students and early-career; 1,400+ career centers (third-party)	Startup hirers and candidates; about 10M candidates (third-party)
How applying works	One-tap LinkedIn Apply; Premium Top Choice flags up to 3 roles a month	Indeed Apply; Apply For Me test drafts applications, capped, review-first since Aug 2026	One-click apply; employers can Invite to Apply	Apply through the school portal and profile	Apply with a note; a cap on active applications per candidate
Intent signal	None by default; Top Choice badge for Premium only	None by default; started-application counts used for billing	Invite to Apply signals employer interest, not candidate intent	Limits on employer messaging (10 a month on Basic)	Application cap pushes candidates to choose, number not published
How hirers pay	Free post pauses at about 14 days or 26 applicants; Promoted Jobs from about $7 to $10 a day, or Job Slots (third-party)	Three free jobs a month; sponsored from $5 a day or $150 a month, billed per click or per started application	About $299 to $899 a month per slot (third-party)	Basic free; Pro $450 a month with Promoted Jobs (third-party)	Free Job Posts plan; Job Ads from $200 each (third-party)
2026 moves	Easy Apply renamed LinkedIn Apply; Premium Apply Assistant	Cutting visibility for free postings; Glassdoor jobs folded into Indeed	AI matching and Invite to Apply	Postings down 15% and applications per job up 30% in 2025 (third-party)	AI sourcing seats (Reach)
Gap Priority Application fills	Intent for all members, not only Premium	No scarce, seeker-owned signal	Employer-led, not seeker-led	Closest on early-career, no scarcity design	Has caps but no signal the hirer sees

User Personas

Personas have been defined on the basis of the companion Personas and Sizing doc, built from public data and one conversation with a LinkedIn PM. Passive Professionals rarely apply and are out of scope. Sizes are guesstimates, and attributes beyond size and behavior (aspirations, background, free time) are hypotheses to validate in the Phase 0 interviews. The personas considered are:

- Volume Applicant
- Targeted Seeker
- Early-Career Entrant
- Recruiter (in-house or agency)
- Hiring Manager or SMB Hirer

User Personas					
Behavior					
Type of User	Volume Applicant	Targeted Seeker	Early-Career Entrant	Recruiter	Hiring Manager or SMB Hirer
Size (monthly, global)	10.8M	32.4M	43.2M	0.37M	0.84M
Activity	About 15 applications a month, often with auto-apply	About 4 applications a month, tailored	About 2.5 applications a month, mostly one tap	About 8 open roles at once; reviews the first few dozen applicants	1 to 2 roles at a time with no ATS; reads early, then gives up
Aspirations	A stable job soon	A better role without a loud search	A first role in the field	Fill roles faster with fewer rejections	Hire a good person and get back to the job
Background	Laid-off professionals, career switchers	Mid-career employees, often Premium members	Students, recent graduates, career switchers	Corporate and agency recruiters	Small business owners, team leads
Knowledge of the platform	Advanced, uses auto-apply tools	Intermediate, relies on profile and referrals	Beginner to intermediate	Advanced, uses Recruiter and the ATS	Beginner, posts a job and waits
Situation	Laid off or in a long search; time poor and anxious	Employed and selective; protects reputation	Recent graduate or career switcher; thin network	Measured on time to fill	Hiring is a distraction from the real job
Tools	LinkedIn Apply, auto-apply tools	Profile, referrals, Top Choice if Premium	LinkedIn Apply, campus channels	Recruiter, ATS, spreadsheets	LinkedIn jobs, email
Lifestyle					
Free time activities	Networking events, courses, tuning the resume	Reading industry news, mentoring, side projects	Campus groups, internships, online courses	Sourcing on LinkedIn, hiring communities	Running the business, little time to search

Needs	A reply from at least some employers	To stand out for the few roles that matter	To be seen as more than a thin resume	Few strong, interested people, fast	A filled role without drowning in applications
Excitement	Any reply at all	A recruiter who read the note	A first interview	A short, clean shortlist	A strong hire from a small pile
Worries	Slots cut their volume	Hirers ignore priority applicants	Intent gets paywalled	Cannot meet a reply commitment	Lane needs setup they will not do
Jobs to be Done					
Jobs	**- Get a reply** without a full-time job of applying **- Learn** which applications are worth the effort	**- Show intent** to the few roles that matter, without gaming the system **- Know** whether the hirer saw the application	**- Be seen** beyond a thin resume with no experience **- Get a fair shot** without paying for it	**- Find the few strong, interested** applicants without reading 100 profiles **- Know** which applicants to reply to first	**- Fill the role** without drowning in applications **- Stay** on top of replies with no ATS

Solution Alignment

Assumptions

- One-tap Apply remains the default. Priority Application is an opt-in layer on top, not a replacement
- Scarcity makes the signal credible only if priority applications stay a small share of each posting's applicants (see Capabilities)
- Hirers must see the benefit without training, so the priority lane appears by default
- The per-seeker application cap from the earlier prioritization doc is demoted to a gated last phase. It cuts against Volume Applicants and the engagement the business tracks, so it should be earned by evidence

High Level Alignment

Proposed Solutions	Solution Description	Pain Points Addressed
F1 Priority Application	Scarce, refundable, verified-intent slots for all tiers, evolved from Top Choice	- Seekers cannot show intent when applying is free - Priority share stays small so hirers can answer all of it Personas: Targeted Seeker, Early-Career Entrant, Volume Applicant
F2 Applicant Snapshot	Tiered counts (priority, strong match, all) replace "Over 100 applicants"	- The count carries no signal - Seekers cannot judge their odds Personas: all seekers, hirers
F3 Hirer Inbox Lane	Priority lane, filters, and default sort by fit and intent	- Hirers cannot find strong, interested people - Early applicants win over better, later ones Personas: Recruiter, Hiring Manager
F4 Application Budget	Confirm-intent step beyond a daily threshold of applications	- Volume without intent Personas: Volume Applicant
F5 Response Commitment	Hirer reply rate shown; replying to priority applicants is rewarded in job reach	- Priority applicants hear nothing Personas: Recruiter, Hiring Manager, seekers

Prioritization

- Prioritizing based on the DHM model (see Appendix), which helps focus on initiatives that not only meet customer needs but also provide strategic differentiation and potential for significant business impact
- F3 ships with F1 because the signal has no value if hirers cannot see it

Feature Name	Delight to Customers (D)	Hard to Copy (H)	Margin Moving (M)	Priority
F1 Priority Application	High	High	High	High
F3 Hirer Inbox Lane	High	Medium	High	Medium
F2 Applicant Snapshot	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
F5 Response Commitment	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
F4 Application Budget	Low	Low	Medium	Low

Roadmap

- Sharing the roadmap for the first prioritized feature: Priority Application (F1, with F2 and F3)

Team	Activities and Objectives	Dependencies
Phase 0: Research and baseline (weeks 0 to 6)		
Product	- Interview 5 to 8 seekers and recruiters per persona - Prototype test of the wireframes	- Recruiter and seeker access
Data Science	- Baseline reply rates; reproduce the Top Choice lift on a clean holdout; model priority share	- Top Choice and application data
Legal	- Review ranking by intent (EU AI Act, US hiring-tool laws)	- Legal capacity
Phase 1: Build and test Priority Application, snapshot and inbox lane (quarter 1, US)		
Product	- F1, F2, F3 specs; free plan gets 1 slot, Premium keeps 3 - Success and guardrail metrics, and the experiment plan	- Phase 0 gate: lift reproduces
Design	- Flows and states: slot available, used, refunded, none left - Usability tests of the apply modal and inbox lane	- Requirements from product
Engineering	- Slot ledger and refund logic, tier counts, inbox lane, experiment platform - Instrument funnel, reply and review events	- Identity verification, match scoring
QA	- Edge cases: withdrawals, closed jobs, time zones, double spend, refunds	- Build completion
Trust and Safety	- Abuse review: agents spending slots, slot trading	- Detection signals
Data Science	- Cluster-randomized test by market and occupation	- Experiment platform

Team	Activities and Objectives	Dependencies
Phase 2: Launch, response commitment and Premium packaging (quarter 2)		
Product	- F5 reply commitment and reach reward; tune the Premium allowance - Phased rollout plan by market	- Gate: reply-rate lift, priority share at or below 10%
Engineering	- Reach reward in job distribution; reply SLA tracking; phased rollout	- Job distribution team, backend readiness
Marketing	- Hirer and seeker education: what priority means and what it does not - Premium messaging that does not sell priority as a guarantee	- GTM aligned with product
GTM	- Talent Solutions enablement; Premium packaging	- Sales planning cycle
Customer Support	- Macros for slot refunds and "why was I not answered" - Report recurring issues to product	- Stabilized launch
Data Science	- Monitor guardrails weekly; fairness check by seniority and geography	- Analytics monitoring
Phase 3: Application budget (quarters 3 to 4, conditional)		
Product	- F4 confirm-intent step beyond a daily threshold	- Gate: F1 to F3 show lift and Volume Applicant harm is acceptable
Policy	- Fairness audit and communications	- Legal sign-off
Customer Support	- Prepare for complaints from Volume Applicants	- Communications ready

Low level Alignment - Priority Application

Why will the feature fix the intent signal ?

- **Scarcity makes intent costly to fake**
  - A limited monthly allowance means a priority application says "I chose this one"
- **Verified identity and refunds keep it honest**
  - Slots are tied to a verified member, and are refunded on withdrawal or if the hirer never opens the application
- **Reciprocity closes the loop**
  - Hirers see a 7-day reply expectation, and seekers see the hirer's reply rate (F5)
- **Hirer attention goes where it counts**
  - A priority lane and fit-and-intent sort reduce review time and soften the early-applicant advantage

Capabilities

- Slot allowance by plan:

    - Free: 1 a month. Premium: 3 a month at launch (matches Top Choice today)
    - Slots reset each calendar month; unused slots do not roll over (same as Top Choice today: credits refresh on the 1st at 12 AM UTC, per LinkedIn Help)
- Priority flag at apply time:
    - Seeker chooses Priority or Standard; Standard stays unlimited
    - Message to the employer is required, 20 to 400 characters (same as Top Choice today)
    - The allowance is shown before the choice, never hidden

Top Choice today vs Priority Application

- **Stays the same**
    - Marked during Easy Apply, with a required 20 to 400 character message to the employer
    - Premium gets 3 a month; credits refresh on the 1st at 12 AM UTC and do not roll over
    - Hirer sees the job was marked a top choice; seeker gets an application-viewed email
- **Proposed changes**
    - Free members get 1 priority slot a month (today Premium only), refunded on withdrawal or if never opened
    - The seeker sees Priority or Standard as an explicit choice with slots left, instead of a tick box
    - Job page shows tiered applicant counts and the hirer reply rate, replacing "Over 100 applicants" (F2, F5)
    - Hirers get a priority lane with filters, a 7-day reply expectation and a fit-and-intent default sort (F3, F4)
    - Message and reason for the label are shown in the lane; links and contact details are not allowed
- Refund rules:
    - Withdrawn application, closed job, or application never opened by the hirer
    - Refund window is a starting value of 14 days, matching the reply metric, and is an experiment parameter
- Hirer view:
    - Priority badge and lane, with the seeker note and the reason (referral, AI screen)
    - Filters for priority, strong match, identity verified, AI-screen completed
    - Default sort by fit and intent instead of arrival time, with a switch back to newest first
    - Reply and Pass actions record an outcome that feeds the reply rate (F5)
- Applicant snapshot:
    - Priority, strong match and all-applicant counts replace "Over 100 applicants"
    - Hirer reply rate to priority applicants, hidden until there is enough data
- Seeker view:
    - A list of priority applications with status: sent, opened, replied, refunded
    - Slots left this month, and when they reset
- Reporting:
    - Priority share per posting, reply rate by priority and standard, refund rate, slots used by plan
    - Fairness cut by seniority, geography and proxy groups
- Offline replay (the counterpart of backtesting):
    - Replay historical applications to estimate priority share and reviewer load before launch

Sizing the slot allowance

Job-active seekers are about 86.4M and applications are about 420.2M a month. The share of applications that become priority depends on slots and adoption. [Guessing on adoption]

Slots per month	Adoption among job-active seekers	Priority applications (M a month)	Share of all applications
1	30%	25.9	6%
1	60%	51.8	12%
2	30%	51.8	12%
2	60%	103.7	25%
3	30%	77.8	19%
3	60%	155.5	37%

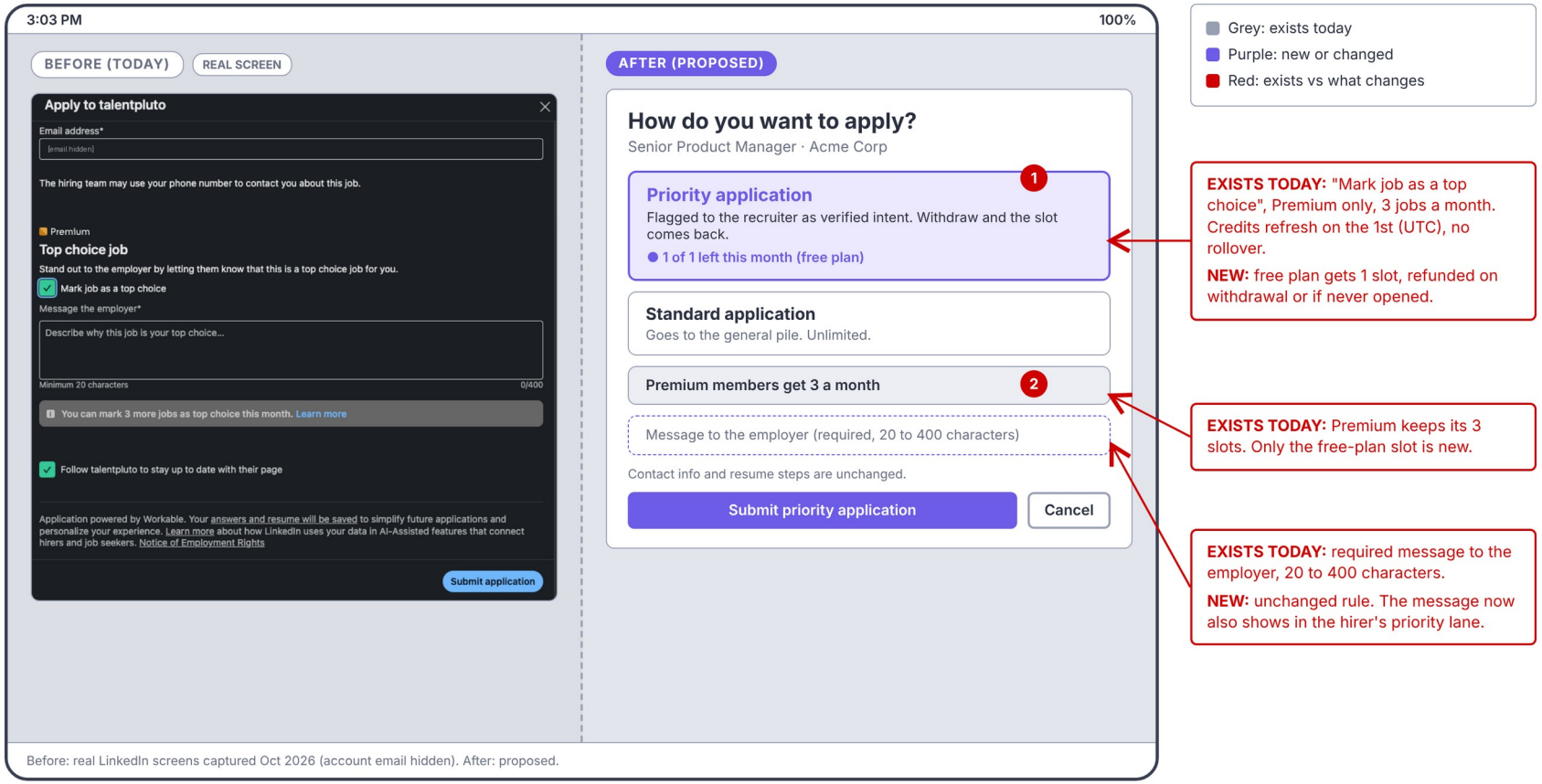
One free slot at 30% adoption is about 6% of applications, which a hirer can review in full. Three slots at 60% would be about 37%, which recreates the noise. At 60% adoption even one slot is above the 10% guardrail, so the allowance is tuned per market and is an experiment arm, not a fixed number.

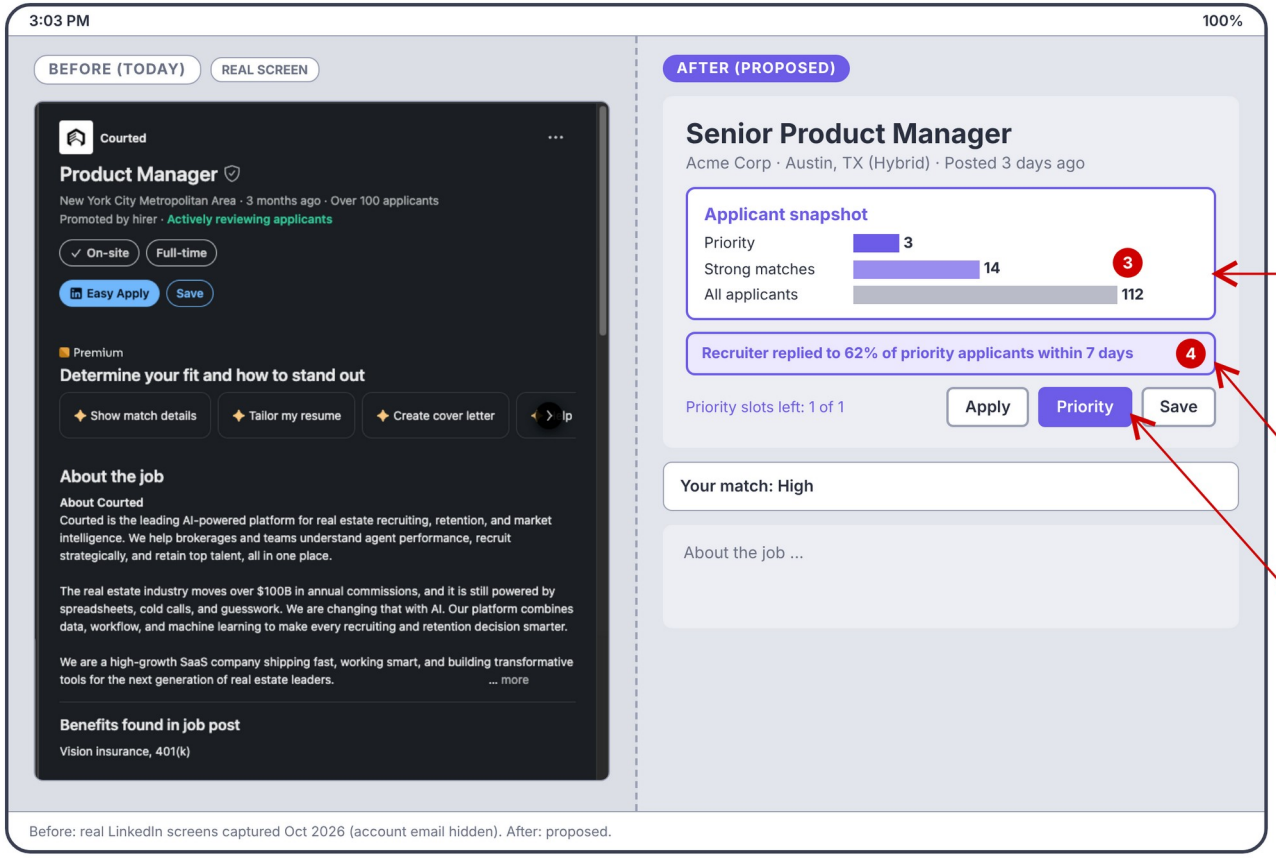
Limits

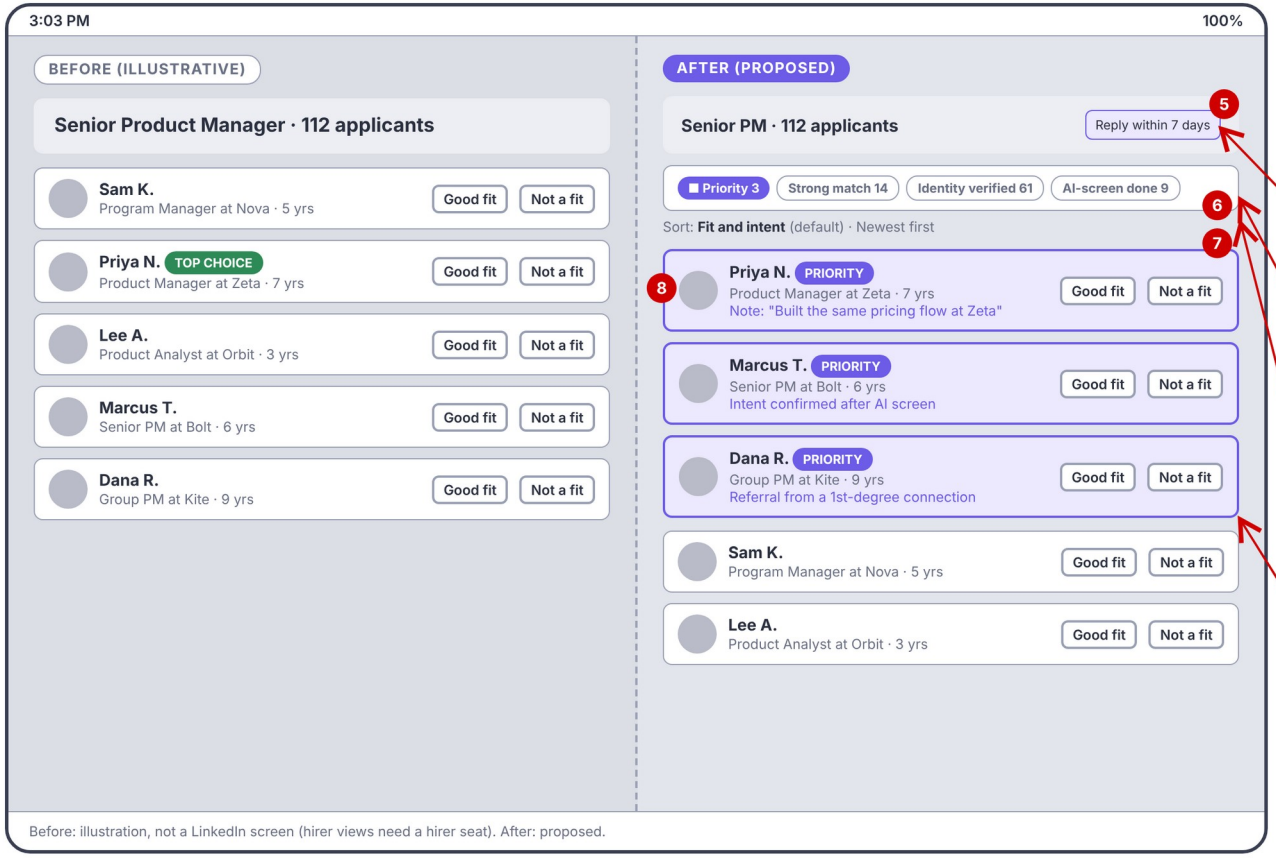
- Allowance limits
    - Free 1 and Premium 3 slots a month at launch; both are experiment arms and tuned per market
    - Priority share of a posting's applications stays at or below 10%; above that the allowance is cut for that market
- Priority never replaces Standard apply
    - Unlimited Standard remains, so volume is not capped in phases 1 and 2
- Per-company limits
    - One open priority application per company at a time
    - Stops piling into a single employer
- Hirer limits
    - Hirers cannot buy priority placement or see priority applicants first by paying
    - Reply expectation is 7 days for priority applicants, shown to the hirer, not enforced by penalty at launch
- Content limits
    - Message keeps Top Choice's 20 to 400 characters; the added rule is no links or contact details
- Fairness limits
    - Free members must get a real slot; if intent is only for Premium, early-career seekers are shut out and the persona rationale fails
    - Priority is not a guaranteed reply: the badge promises attention, not an outcome
- Stop rules
    - Stop a treated market if weekly active job seekers fall more than 2%, or applications per Targeted Seeker fall more than 5%

Wireframes

Grey is what exists today, purple is new or changed, and red comments mark what exists today versus what this PRD changes.




3:03 PM
100%
BEFORE (TODAY)
REAL SCREEN
Courted
Product Manager
New York City Metropolitan Area · 3 months ago · Over 100 applicants
Promoted by hirer · Actively reviewing applicants
On-site
Full-time
Easy Apply
Save
Premium
Determine your fit and how to stand out
Show match details
Tailor my resume
Create cover letter
About the job
About Courted
Courted is the leading AI-powered platform for real estate recruiting, retention, and market intelligence. We help brokerages and teams understand agent performance, recruit strategically, and retain top talent, all in one place.
The real estate industry moves over $100B in annual commissions, and it is still powered by spreadsheets, cold calls, and guesswork. We are changing that with AI. Our platform combines data, workflow, and machine learning to make every recruiting and retention decision smarter.
We are a high-growth SaaS company shipping fast, working smart, and building transformative tools for the next generation of real estate leaders.
... more
Benefits found in job post
Vision insurance, 401(k)
AFTER (PROPOSED)
Senior Product Manager
Acme Corp · Austin, TX (Hybrid) · Posted 3 days ago
Applicant snapshot
Priority 3
Strong matches 14
All applicants 112
3
Recruiter replied to 62% of priority applicants within 7 days
4
Priority slots left: 1 of 1
Apply
Priority
Save
Your match: High
About the job ...
Before: real LinkedIn screens captured Oct 2026 (account email hidden). After: proposed.
Grey: exists today
Purple: new or changed
Red: exists vs what changes
EXISTS TODAY: one "Over 100 applicants" line, plus "Actively reviewing applicants".
NEW: tiered counts (priority, strong match, all).
NEW: hirer reply rate for priority applicants. Hidden until there is enough data.
EXISTS TODAY: Easy Apply and Save. Easy Apply stays the default.
NEW: Priority is an opt-in layer on top.

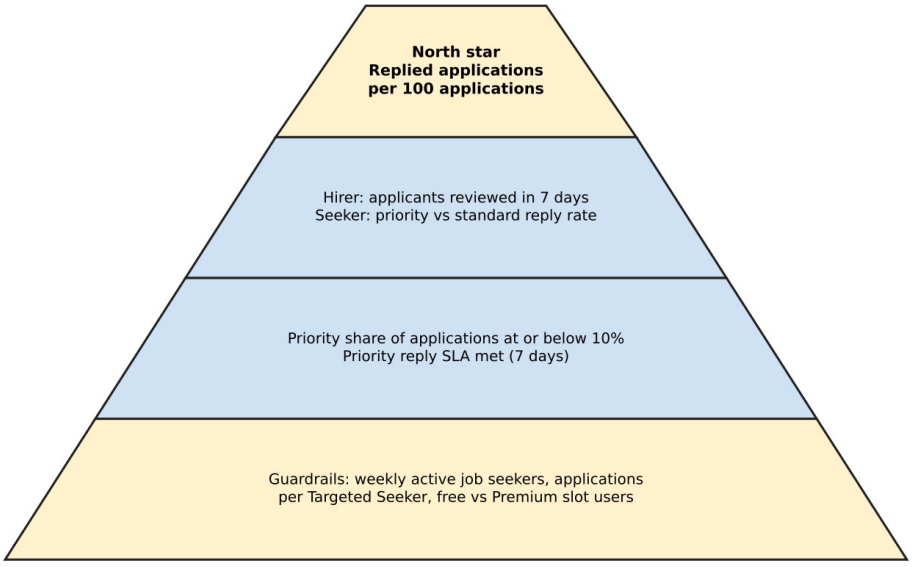

3:03 PM
100%
BEFORE (ILLUSTRATIVE)
Senior Product Manager · 112 applicants
Sam K.
Program Manager at Nova · 5 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Priya N. TOP CHOICE
Product Manager at Zeta · 7 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Lee A.
Product Analyst at Orbit · 3 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Marcus T.
Senior PM at Bolt · 6 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Dana R.
Group PM at Kite · 9 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
AFTER (PROPOSED)
Senior PM · 112 applicants
Reply within 7 days
5
Priority 3
Strong match 14
Identity verified 61
AI-screen done 9
6
7
Sort: Fit and intent (default) · Newest first
8
Priya N. PRIORITY
Product Manager at Zeta · 7 yrs
Note: "Built the same pricing flow at Zeta"
Good fit
Not a fit
Marcus T. PRIORITY
Senior PM at Bolt · 6 yrs
Intent confirmed after AI screen
Good fit
Not a fit
Dana R. PRIORITY
Group PM at Kite · 9 yrs
Referral from a 1st-degree connection
Good fit
Not a fit
Sam K.
Program Manager at Nova · 5 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Lee A.
Product Analyst at Orbit · 3 yrs
Good fit
Not a fit
Before: illustration, not a LinkedIn screen (hirer views need a hirer seat). After: proposed.
Grey: exists today
Purple: new or changed
Red: exists vs what changes
NEW: 7-day reply expectation for priority applicants.
NEW: filters for priority, strong match, identity verified, AI-screen completed.
NEW: default sort by fit and intent, not arrival time. Softens the early-applicant advantage.
EXISTS TODAY: recruiter sees a Top Choice badge among the applicants.
NEW: a separate priority lane, with the seeker note and the reason for the label.

Wireframe Annotations

#	Annotation
1	Priority slot is chosen at apply time, with the allowance visible. Standard apply stays one tap away.
2	Premium raises the allowance (3 a month), in line with existing Top Choice. The upsell appears in context, never as a block.
3	F2: "Over 100 applicants" is replaced by three counts: priority, strong matches, all applicants. Numbers are illustrative.
4	F5: the hirer's reply rate to priority applicants, so seekers can judge whether a slot is worth spending. Hidden until enough data exists.
5	F5: the 7-day reply expectation for priority applicants, shown to the hirer.
6	F3: filters for Priority, Strong match, Identity verified, AI-screen completed.
7	F3: default sort uses fit and intent, not arrival time.
8	F3: priority candidates are visually separated, with the seeker's note and the reason for the label.

Success Metrics

The objective of this launch is to help hirers find, and answer, applicants who really want the job. Hence the primary goal we wish to establish is replied applications per 100 applications.



Type	Metric	Baseline	Hypothesis (to test)
North star	Replied applications per 100 applications (hirer reply or status change within 14 days)	Unknown, measured in phase 0	Up 15% relative in treated markets
Hirer	Share of applicants reviewed in the first 7 days; time to first shortlist	Unknown	Review share up, time to shortlist down

Type	Metric	Baseline	Hypothesis (to test)
Seeker	Reply rate to priority vs standard applications from the same user	Top Choice claims +43% recruiter messages (claimed, may not generalize)	Priority beats standard by a clear margin
Guardrail	Weekly active job seekers; applications per Targeted Seeker; hirer posting volume	Current	No decline beyond 2% in treated markets
Guardrail	Priority share of applications per posting	None	At or below 10%

Business Case

This is a scenario model, not proof. The honest claim is a break-even test, because the revenue effect cannot be measured until the experiment runs.

Input	Value	Source and confidence
Talent Solutions revenue	$8.4B	FY2024 per FourWeekMBA, a secondary source that conflicts with other totals. Low to medium confidence
Premium revenue	$1.7B	Disclosed by LinkedIn for 2023. High confidence on the figure, but stale
Share of Premium from job-seeker use	50%	Guess. The model only counts this share as exposed
Year-one program cost	$12M	22 FTE at $0.35M loaded plus $4.3M for data, legal, research and infrastructure. Guess

Scenario	Premium effect	Talent Solutions effect	Gross ($M)	Net of cost ($M)	Reading
Downside	-2% on exposed Premium (-$17M)	0.0% on Talent Solutions ($0M)	-17	-29	Slots cannibalize Top Choice, hirers unmoved
Base	+5% on exposed Premium ($43M)	0.5% on Talent Solutions ($42M)	85	73	Modest conversion and retention lift
Upside	+10% on exposed Premium ($85M)	1.5% on Talent Solutions ($126M)	211	199	Hirer value clearly improves

- **Break-even is small:** a cost of $12M against an exposed base of about $9.25B breaks even at a 0.13% uplift

- The real risks are seeker-side harm, fairness and regulation, not whether the program pays back
- Being this easy to clear is itself a warning: treat the revenue lines as a bound, not a forecast

Experiment Design

Element	Design
Unit	Market by occupation clusters (for example Austin product roles), because applicants and hirers interact and user-level randomization would leak
Arms	Control (today). Treatment A: F1 + F2 + F3. Treatment B: A + F5 (phase 2)
Primary metric	Replied applications per 100 applications
Sample size	Assuming a baseline reply rate of 10% and a 15% relative lift, about 6,683 applications per arm at 80% power and 5% significance; about 20,049 with a design effect of 3 for clustering. [Guessing on baseline]
Duration	At least 6 weeks so a full hiring cycle shows up in replies
Stop rules	Stop if weekly active job seekers fall more than 2% in treated markets, or applications per Targeted Seeker fall more than 5%
Fairness check	Compare priority usage and reply rates by seniority, geography and proxy groups. Free-slot users must not fare worse than Premium users

Visibility on Timelines

Q. The other teams want more visibility on the timelines, but you are missing visibility because of dependencies on legal review of ranking by intent, Trust and Safety, and Talent Solutions sales planning, which are hard to estimate. What are the risks? How do you proceed?

<u>Risks</u>

1. **Pay-to-win perception:** if priority needs Premium, wealthier seekers get an edge and early-career seekers lose
2. **Slot inflation:** if slots are generous, everyone flags everything and the signal dies
3. **Hirers ignore the lane:** seekers burn slots and get silence, so trust drops further
4. **Cannibalizing Top Choice:** giving free users a slot may reduce Premium conversion (downside scenario)
5. **Gaming by agents:** auto-apply tools can spend slots on bad targets
6. **Regulatory exposure:** ranking people by intent and fit is high-risk employment AI in the EU (obligations delayed to December 2027), and US cities and states regulate hiring tools; timelines depend on legal review

<u>How to Proceed</u>

1. Phase 0 (6 weeks): interviews, baseline, legal review. Go or no-go on the Top Choice replication
2. Phase 1: F1, F2, F3 in cluster-randomized US markets for at least 6 weeks
3. Phase 2: F5 and Premium packaging, only if the primary metric moves and guardrails hold
4. Phase 3: revisit F4 with data on Volume Applicants; do not build it before then
5. Publish gates instead of dates for legal-dependent steps, re-plan at each gate, and keep slots, snapshot and lane modular so they can ship independently

Appendix

Documents:

1. LinkedIn Issue Prioritization (companion)
2. LinkedIn Personas and Sizing (companion)
3. Conversation with a LinkedIn Principal PM (October 27, 2026), one person's view

Concepts

DHM Framework and how to use:

- **Delight to Customers (D):** How much the solution enhances user experience and satisfaction
- **Hard to Copy (H):** The level of difficulty competitors would face in replicating the solution
- **Margin Moving (M):** The potential impact of the solution on revenue generation or cost savings
- Methodology
    - Provide each cell in the table one of the following values: High, Medium, Low
    - Prioritization:
        - **High Priority:** Solutions that score high across Delight to Customers, Hard to Copy, and Margin Moving criteria
        - **Medium Priority:** Solutions with a mix of high and medium scores across the DHM criteria
        - **Low Priority:** Solutions that score lower across one or more criteria and may have less immediate impact or differentiation

PR Note:

"LinkedIn introduces Priority Applications for every member"

Every member can now flag the jobs they really want. Recruiters see priority applicants first and can reply to them within days. Job pages now show how many strong matches and priority applicants a role has, instead of "Over 100 applicants".

Pricing:

- **Recommended: seeker-side allowance, no new hirer charge**
    - *Free plan: 1 priority slot a month. Real and refundable; needed for fairness and signal*
    - *Premium: 3 priority slots a month at launch, matching Top Choice today*
    - *Hirers cannot buy priority placement; billing for promoted jobs and Job Slots is unchanged*
- **Options considered**
    - Premium tiers with more slots (for example 3 or 5)
        - Tests the upgrade ladder; risk is that a larger allowance dilutes the signal, so cap by priority share
    - Extra slots sold à la carte to seekers
        - Rejected at launch: it turns scarcity into pay to win; revisit only with fairness data
    - Hirer-paid priority placement, or fees per priority applicant
        - Rejected: hirers paying to see priority applicants first breaks the signal and the trust of seekers
    - Talent Solutions add-on: reply-rate analytics and response-commitment reporting
        - Later option once F5 data exists; sold with Recruiter or Hiring Pro, not as a priority fee
    - Bundling priority with Job Slots

- Possible in phase 2 packaging; hirers value fewer, better candidates, not more applications

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