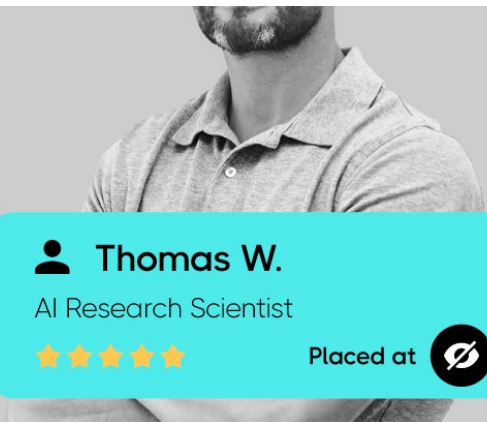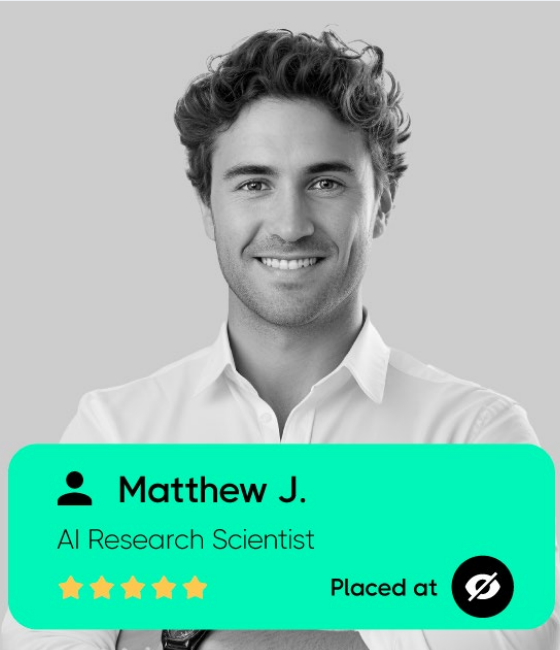STO TTAN DMAY

INSIDER INSIGHT

AI Researcher
Candidate Insights

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The best 7-minute read for anyone hiring AI Researchers

If you are a Founder/CEO of an AI startup or part of a larger enterprise leadership team looking to attract the best AI Researchers to your organization, this is a must-read. Equally, you may be an AI Researcher starting the journey in finding a new role, asking what are the hottest topics in the market right now? The last six months have been a rollercoaster of wins, losses and probably one of the biggest learns we have seen across the last 20 years. **Here are 3 of our key insights:**

1. Top AI Researcher interview challenges **we've had to navigate:**

Legal Risks: AI legislation can expose a startup to legal risks, such as fines, lawsuits, or regulatory actions. Top Researchers will be hesitant to join a company that operates in a legal grey area or disregards compliance obligations.

Reputation Damage: Any lack of knowledge or non-compliance with AI legislation can tarnish a reputation, making an opportunity less attractive to prospective employees. Top AI Researchers will often prioritize working for companies with a strong ethical reputation and a commitment to compliance.

Limited Market Access: Failure to prepare or comply with AI legislation may restrict access to certain markets or government contracts. Researchers may prefer to work for companies with a global outlook and the ability and experience to navigate regulatory complexities.

Investor Concerns: Investors are increasingly scrutinizing the legal and regulatory risks associated with AI startups. Non-compliance with legislation could raise concerns among investors, impacting funding opportunities and the startup's long-term viability.

Innovation Hurdles: Compliance with AI legislation often involves implementing safeguards and controls that can impact the pace of innovation. Researchers may prefer to work for companies that have considered how they will strike a balance between innovation and compliance, rather than those that prioritize one at the expense of the other.

As a founder or CEO, you need to have considered the impact of AI legislation in view of the associated legal, reputational, and market access challenges. If you are unable to confidently talk through these challenges, then the top AI Researchers will be reluctant to join your business.

2. Security protocols form a key component of questions raised

> **Data Breaches:** AI startups are vulnerable to data breaches, which can result in unauthorized access to sensitive information. This can lead to financial losses, legal liabilities, and damage to reputation.

> **Privacy Violations:** AI systems often rely on large datasets, including personal and sensitive information. Failure to secure this data can result in privacy violations, undermining user trust and potentially leading to regulatory penalties under laws like GDPR or CCPA.

> **Algorithmic Bias:** Inadequate security protocols can also contribute to algorithmic bias, where AI systems perpetuate or exacerbate unfair or discriminatory outcomes. This can harm individuals or groups unfairly targeted by biased algorithms and lead to reputational damage.

> **Intellectual Property Theft:** Without proper security measures, AI startups risk intellectual property theft, including theft of algorithms, proprietary datasets, or other valuable assets. This can undermine the competitiveness and ability to innovate.

> **Manipulation and Misuse:** Insecure AI systems are susceptible to manipulation and misuse by malicious actors. This can include adversarial attacks, where attackers intentionally manipulate AI systems to produce incorrect or harmful results, or exploitation of vulnerabilities to gain unauthorized access.

> **Industry Specific Regulatory Non-Compliance:** Many industries have specific regulatory requirements for data security and privacy. Failure to implement adequate security protocols can result in non-compliance with these regulations.

Can you demonstrate a deep knowledge of these through an interview process? As a founder or CEO, it is important that you can confidently demonstrate how you would set up security protocols, considering the sensitive nature of data and the potential implications of AI systems a good candidate may want to discuss. Are you ready to hire top AI Researchers? Is your organization robust enough to convince top talent to commit to your business? You must prioritize cybersecurity from the outset, as failing to prepare your business effectively, will mean you miss out on the best talent available.

3. **Examples of** company characteristics **that are appealing to AI Researchers**

Ethical AI Guidelines: Opportunities that have considered how to adhere to ethical AI principles and guidelines, such as those outlined by organizations like the Partnership on AI or IEEE, signal a commitment to responsible AI development. AI Researchers are drawn to companies that prioritize fairness, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in their AI systems.

Robust Security Protocols & Practices: Candidates lean towards companies with robust security protocols and practices, something which inspires confidence among AI Researchers. This includes measures such as encryption, access controls, secure coding practices, regular security audits, and incident response plans to protect against data breaches and cyber threats.

Intellectual Property Protection: Having clear policies and procedures for protecting intellectual property (IP) rights appeal to AI Researchers who want assurance that their innovations will be safeguarded. Can you or are you ready to discuss confidentiality agreements, patent filings, and other measures to protect proprietary technologies and inventions?

Compliance with Industry Standards: This subject has only come up a few times through interviews, but it is something you need to prepare for, any best practices relevant to AI development, such as ISO/IEC 27001 for information security management or ISO/IEC 27701 for privacy information management, demonstrates a commitment to excellence and professionalism.

Regulatory Proactivity: AI Researchers appreciate companies that are proactive in addressing regulatory challenges and AI policies.

Investment in Training and Education: AI Researchers will be looking to join businesses that can clearly demonstrate or have thought through how they will increase or improve their rate of learning or professional development.

In summary, if you are a CEO/Founder or team lead looking to hire an AI Researcher, albeit now or in the future, the preparation, planning and knowledge-based insight on how to manage this process is key. We can provide you with access to data points around key locations, schools, talent hot spots, diversity and compensation levels that will enable you to make a much better-informed decision when going to market.

Equally, if you are an AI Researcher just about to embark on the search for a new opportunity and would like to understand the market landscape - we can help.

To learn more about the points above, access market data, or have an informal and confidential discussion please reach out now.

About Stott and May

Founded in 2009 Stott and May are a professional search firm with a passion for helping leaders achieve complete confidence that they have hired the right talent, first time in fiercely competitive markets. We believe you should never have to make the choice between quality of candidate and time to hire.

As a result, our business has been founded on the principle of offering a premier standard of search service delivered in vastly accelerated timescales, that our competition simply cannot match. Because after all this is about more than just recruitment, it's about turning your business vision into reality.

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