PEOPLE | TECHNOLOGY | GROWTH

Publication status

Editorial brief by ClickView Innovation. This document is perspective drawn from our own staffing and delivery work across India and the UAE. It is not a survey report, it presents no sample sizes or market statistics, and every observation is attributed to our engagement work. Where the market is uncertain, we say so.

WHAT THIS BRIEF EXAMINES

- The three profiles hidden behind one job title
- What separates demo experience from production experience
- How practitioner screening tests the difference

ONE TITLE, THREE JOBS

"AI engineer" is doing the work of at least three job descriptions. There are applied engineers who wire models into products, platform engineers who own the serving and evaluation infrastructure, and specialists who fine-tune or build models themselves. Hiring teams that write one brief for all three get pipelines that match none of them.

The first question in any AI hiring conversation should therefore be which of the three the team actually needs. In our engagements it is most often the first: an engineer who can build retrieval over verified content, add guardrails, and keep the thing honest after launch. That profile is scarcer than the title suggests, because it requires shipping judgement, not model training.

DEMO SKILLS VERSUS PRODUCTION SKILLS

The market is now full of candidates who can build a convincing demo, because demos have become

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cheap. The gap that decides hires is everything after the demo: evaluation against known questions, refusal behaviour when the source does not support an answer, monitoring for drift, and the operational honesty to say a feature should not ship.

This is the same seam we see in our own AI practice. The engagements that survive production are scoped tightly over the client's own verified content, with the MLOps treated as part of the build rather than a later phase. Candidates who have lived that distinction once are worth more than candidates with three demo projects.

SCREENING FOR THE DIFFERENCE

Our AI shortlists are reviewed by practitioners from our AI practice, and the screen is deliberately unglamorous: walk through a system you shipped, what broke after launch, what you measured, and what you refused to ship. The answers separate operators from tutorial-followers faster than any puzzle question.

We do not publish pass rates or talent-supply percentages for this work. Those would be our pipeline's numbers dressed up as market data, and this report series does not do that.

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

- ✓ Split the AI engineer title into applied, platform and model roles before writing the brief.
- ✓ The scarce profile is the engineer who ships grounded systems, not the one who trains models.
- ✓ Screen for what happened after launch, not for demo fluency.
- ✓ Pipeline observations are labelled as ours, never as market statistics.

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