

Fictional demonstration

Mapping adjacent employers for an infrastructure hire

I'd start with teams that operate stateful services and can show how they recover from failure. For this brief, that work matters more than a matching job title. The map below explains which employer groups I would investigate first and what I would still need to verify.

The assumed search

A fictional analytics product team needs a senior infrastructure engineer to own service reliability as it adds enterprise tenants. The work includes deployment, incident response, capacity and recovery. A staff engineer owns application architecture. This is an invented research exercise, with no actual employers, people, live market counts or candidate availability claims.

Employer group to investigate	Potentially transferable work	Gap to check
Managed database and storage providers	Recovery, replication and operating stateful services.	Did the person operate production or work only on a narrow component?
Observability and incident tooling companies	Telemetry, diagnosis and service reliability.	Did they own the service behind the tool, or chiefly its user interface?
Cloud infrastructure teams	Capacity, releases and failure handling.	Can the person work with fewer specialist teams and less internal tooling?
Payment and transaction platforms	Service continuity and careful production changes.	How much responsibility sat with a separate operations team?
Streaming and data processing platforms	Backpressure, failure recovery and performance.	Does the work include sustained service operation?
Internal developer platform teams	Release workflows and shared infrastructure.	Was stateful recovery part of the remit?

These groups are research hypotheses, not claims about particular companies or employees. I would investigate database and observability teams first, then use the evidence gaps to decide whether to widen the map.

Worked research ledger

The four records below are invented excerpts. They show how I would separate a useful lead from verified role evidence. Record codes identify examples only; they are not real people or anonymized client data.

Record and assumed source	Evidence in the fictional excerpt	Research decision
I01 / database engineering article	Author explains a recovery rehearsal and names the rollback condition. Own operating responsibility is not stated.	Investigate first. Verify authorship, the person's contribution and whether they owned the service.
I02 / observability conference talk	Speaker describes instrumenting a service and investigating an incident they handled. Tenant isolation is not discussed.	Investigate first. Check the operating remit and ask how tenant boundaries were tested.
I03 / cloud project contribution	Contributor improves a deployment library. The record contains no evidence of on-call work or recovery ownership.	Keep as an adjacent lead. Look for operating evidence before treating it as a match.
I04 / platform team article	The team reports a service migration. The named author's own work and current employment are unclear.	Hold for attribution. A team result cannot establish an individual contribution.

Completed example research note

Record I01. Supported by the invented excerpt: the author can explain recovery sequencing and a rollback condition. Unknown: individual operating responsibility, service scale and current remit. Next action: find an attributable work example or clarify those points in an authorized conversation. Status: research lead, not a recommended candidate.

Resolve overlap before counting coverage

If the same author appears in a database article and a cloud talk, keep one person record with two source entries. Preserve each source context and any conflicting employer dates. Count a reviewed lead once. More source links do not mean a larger talent pool.

A source publication date does not establish current employment. A public contribution does not establish interest in a move. Those questions remain open until separately checked.

Research using public work

Start with public engineering articles, conference programs and project contributor pages that can be read without a personal account. Follow an attributable author to public work evidence where available. If a source requires unavailable access, record the limitation and use another source rather than treating the gap as a negative signal.

Research question	Example search terms	Useful evidence to capture
Who can explain stateful recovery?	database recovery rehearsal engineering	The specific recovery decision, author and source date.
Who has operated the telemetry service?	observability production incident engineering talk	What the person operated and which part of the incident they handled.
Who has worked with tenant boundaries?	tenant isolation infrastructure engineering	The failure mode, boundary design and person's contribution.

What I would deliver

The completed map would contain researched employer names, reasons for inclusion, source links and dates, relevant leads, attributable evidence, open questions and a proposed research order. This demonstration supplies the structure and worked examples only. It contains no live employer list or completed candidate research.

How the map changes the search

If the first reviewed leads can explain recovery but lack enterprise tenant experience, the hiring lead must decide whether that skill can be learned with support. If operating responsibility is missing across the first group, investigate another employer group or revise the evidence requirement. Keep that decision separate from any judgment about an individual.

Scope and next step

A mapping sprint would agree on one role, geography, research depth and the number of leads before work begins. Outreach, interest checks, interviews and placement are separate work. Confirm the operating remit and acceptable adjacent experience with the hiring lead, then authorize a focused research brief.