



Job Seeker Secrets Interview with Lori Howard, CPRW, Career Transformation Coach

Interviewed by Karen Cappello (www.KarenCappello.com)

Karen: Hello! It's Karen Cappello and I'm here. It is my pleasure to be here today to interview Lori Howard about some tips for job seekers.

And just to let you know a little bit about Lori, she is a career transformation coach and also a certified professional resume writer. Her job is to help overworked professionals who are exhausted by their jobs and also those in career transition to figure out what they really want to do and create a career they love. Lori will help them unearth their worth. That's what she does. She helps people unearth their worth, which is the name of her website, and find a sweet spot in their work.

So hi, Lori. Welcome!

Lori: Hi, Karen.

Karen: I'm so glad we're here today because I really want to learn something and hear some of the tips that you know. I thought it would be a good idea to start our conversation with a question, but I do want to say something more about you. I know that whether somebody is looking for their next job or they're updating their resume or they're working on interviews that get offers, true job offers, you have tips and you have been doing this for years.



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So today we're going to focus on key tips for job seekers, and the foundational question I want to ask before we get into the tips is what would you say are some of the top challenges for job seekers today?

Lori: I think the first challenge for people is that in years past you could be really good at one component of looking for work. You could be really good at your own resume. You could be really good at interviews. You could be really good at networking. And then that would be enough to get you your next job lead to get you to your job.

Today, the people who are getting offers are the people who are good at all of the pieces. So I think one of the biggest challenges is learning, one, you can't just rely on the one thing you're really great at. You really need to develop your skills and start really working all the angles, if you will. So I see that as a big piece.

I also see the other piece is that they get really discouraged quickly. They think if they don't get results right away that it's just not going to work. And the truth is that today, the statistics are it takes on average eight plus months to find a job.

Karen: Wow!

Lori: Yeah. So it's long and so you need to get in your head that this is a marathon; this isn't a sprint. And just because you don't get immediate results in a month or two months or even three, that doesn't mean you're doing things wrong. It means you need to develop a strategy that allows you to be consistent with your job search.



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Karen: Wow, that really does surprise me, Lori, that it takes eight plus months to look like having a baby, creating a job.

Lori: Yes. Right. And that's the average, which means it might you take you less but it might take you longer, and that doesn't mean anything bad about you.

Karen: Yes. So if it's going to take me these eight plus months, and if I know I need to work all these angles, can you give us some tips on -- well, let me go back to a different question. What are some of the mistakes you see people make other than the obvious of not working enough angles and not persevering long enough? Any other mistakes in their own strategies do you see?

Lori: One of the mistakes I see people make with their resumes, which is kind of the first piece that you use in your job search, is not targeting your resume for the job you want or the job you're applying for. In the past, we lived in a world where hiring managers would sit down and spend some time with each resume and go, "Oh, look at these skills and qualifications and experience this person have. We could hire them in this position or that would be a good place for them." They don't do that anymore.

You, as the job seeker, have the burden of identifying what your position is that you want, identifying all your qualifications and targeting your resume for that position, which means you might be customizing your resume for each position you apply for. It means you might have a couple of different versions that you're using for the different kinds of positions you're aiming at.

Karen: So one mistake people are making is they're just taking one resume and sending it out to every job they're applying for.



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Lori: Yes, and hoping that the person on the other end will spot the right qualifications.

Karen: Wow! That makes sense, though, that if you were to target your resume that it will be easier for the person on the other end to kind of read through it and it might make them more prone to wanting to hire you.

Lori: Absolutely. It makes you look better to them. One, you look more prepared, you look more qualified because you presented the qualifications that apply for that position. It also makes them feel like you're a better communicator because you've effectively communicated the answers to the questions they have in their head without them even asking you.

Karen: So say more about that, Lori. How can you help people to do that?

Lori: You mean how to help people answer the questions in the hiring person's head?

Karen: Yes, yes. Can you give us a tip on that?

Lori: Yes. So you want to do that in your resume and that's done by just looking at the job posting and making sure that you're identifying what's important to them based on what they have outlined in their job posting.



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One of the things I teach people regularly about interviewing is you want to always be answering one of two questions. You want to always be answering: Can you do the job? and Do you want the job? So you want to always be communicating either "I'm really excited about this opportunity and I'm passionate about doing this work here for you," or "Here's an example of something I've done in my past, either in paid work experience or volunteer experience that's very similar to what you want me to be doing here in this position for you."

Karen: Those are really, really simple and effective questions, letting them know I can do the job and I want the job, answering those two questions the whole entire time you're in that interview.

Lori: And if everything you say is addressing one of those two things, no matter what the interviewer says, that's really what they're trying to get to. So if you can keep that in mind and always be answering one of these two questions, you're always giving them the information that really answers the questions in their head.

Karen: Yeah, I can imagine how powerful that is when you're answering the questions in the interviewer's head.

Lori: Exactly. I mean not all interviewers are skilled. Many interviewers, they're not necessarily trained to get the right information. So they're giving it their best shot, asking questions, hoping that they get the answers they need. So if you give it to them no matter what they do, you come up the stronger candidate.

Karen: These are fantastic. This is such a great tip, Lori.



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What's another mistake that people make when they're seeking a job?

Lori: The other mistake I see people make a lot is they don't follow up. They'll apply and then let the company or organization dictate how that proceeds. So they don't think to sit down -- and that doesn't mean you want to be calling them every day on the phone saying, "Are you ready to hire me? Are you ready to hire me? Do you want to bring me in?" It does mean that you want to give it like a week or two to follow up and ask did they get your information, did they have all the information they need from you, and you can ask them then, "What's your process?" And once you get their process, you can then schedule your next follow-up appropriately.

Karen: Okay. What are you doing when you're following up? You're just checking on them or...?

Lori: You're checking on them and you're putting yourself back up on the list. You're following up so that they, one, get to know a little bit who you are, know that you're answering that question, "Do you want this job?" Yes, and you know that because I'm taking the initiative to reach out to you because I understand you have a busy day, you have a full schedule. So I just want to check in, make sure you have everything you need and find out where your process is so that really, one, so I don't harass you, and, two, so I can follow up in a reasonable amount of time to see where you're at and if you need anything then.

Karen: Okay. Is there a right number of times to follow up or times in between a follow-up? You don't want to follow up every day, but what is the sweet spot?



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Lori: Yeah. So that really varies and that's one of the reasons you want to find out their process. Because if they tell you, "Well, we're going to have this -- we're waiting for three more weeks to receive all our applications," then you'll want to wait till the end of their open date to follow up again.

So the frequency is tougher. I used to recommend that you get one phone call, you could follow up one time, but I find that that's not necessarily enough. So part of it is trying to feel them out and see what they feel is okay. So if they've said somewhere in their job posting or in the job ad, "Do not call us; do not contact us," then you follow that, then you don't follow up because if they've stated clearly, "Don't call us; we'll call you," then you need to respect that.

But if they haven't said that, you're really just trying to present yourself as a helpful, supportive candidate. How can I help your process along? I just want to check in with you. You don't have to reach back out to me. So you're getting information from them during this, but you're also presenting yourself as a helpful, supportive, "Look how great of an employee I'll be because I'm being helpful and supportive during this process too."

Karen: Right, taking initiative.

Lori: Yeah, exactly. So the reason for asking in that first follow-up call, I'd wait a week or two after you submit, and if you don't hear anything, call. And then when you talk to them, ask them what their process is, and then that will allow you to schedule some kind of follow-up. Because you need to know when they're planning on doing interviews.



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So if you get to the interview date and you haven't heard from them, you want to follow up and say, "Hey, I wanted to let you know I'm still really interested and I'm wondering where you're at in your process." Because you never know. On the one hand, you never really know what they're doing. You don't know if something got delayed. You don't know if somehow the position got pulled. You have no way of knowing what's happening in there unless you follow up with them and kind of gently ask.

Karen: Right. Right. Wow, Lori, you have given us so much information just in these few questions, and I know we wanted to keep this interview kind of short so that people could really listen to it and catch the main tips they needed. Is there really one last tip that you have that you've seen either or you've seen somebody make a mistake on or you've just seen work really well that people may not be aware of?

Lori: I think the other mistake I see people making is around how to leverage your network. What typically happens is people forget or never really learn that networking is really about developing relationships. So what often happens is somebody loses their job and then they think, "Oh, I have to network. So I'll contact everyone I know and ask them if they know of a job or can help me find work." And what that can do, you may have a handful of people that you can call up and ask that question, but if it's someone you haven't talked to in a long time, that's not a good first contact. It's a good idea to check in with them and ask them how they are and offer to support them in something.

Also, if you let them know that you're currently unemployed and looking but don't actually ask them for a job, it can take the pressure off of them, because often what happens is somebody will call you up... If you think about your own experiences, someone you haven't talked to in two years suddenly calls you up and says, "Hey, Karen, I just got laid off. Do you know of any jobs for me?" What's the first reaction? We all kind of tense up right away and try to figure out



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how to end the conversation because it's a lot of pressure for someone you're not really in contact with. It's like, "Wait, do you want to ask me how I am first?" or "Should we reconnect first before I try to help you?"

And they kind of need to earn that help a little bit, right? They need to prove themselves to you a little bit that they're someone you want to help. But if they called you up instead and said, "Hey, I just got laid off, but what that really inspired me to do is just reconnect with people I haven't talked to in a while, and I wanted to ask how you were doing." And if they did that first, you'd be more likely to stay in conversation with them.

Karen: Right. And since I have a little bit of extra time now, if you want me to walk your dog.

Lori: Right, you know. Exactly. And then the other thing is that then, if you happened to see something or if like two days ago you became aware of a position that this person might be a fit for, because they didn't come at you aggressively saying, "Help me find a job," you're more likely to think of that and go, "Oh, wait, you know, I happened to meet someone the other day who might be a good contact for you. I'm happy to introduce you and you can kind of take it from there."

Karen: Um-hum, so leveraging your network but starting to build back into the relationship before asking.

Lori: Yeah. I see people make that mistake a lot and then they wonder why, and then they say, "Networking doesn't work for me." Well, that's because you're just going and taking.



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Karen: Yeah.

Lori: Yeah.

Karen: So Lori, I think these are fantastic tips for job seekers, and I really want to thank you for being with us today. I just want to ask one final question. If someone does want to work with you, how could they get in contact with you?

Lori: Well, there are a couple of little ways. One, you can go right to my website which is www.uneearthyourworth.com, which is all spelled out, or you could call my office and make an appointment to talk with me at 773-669-7899. Either one of those ways you can get to me and we can have a conversation about where you're stuck and how I might be able to help you.

Karen: Well, thank you so much, Lori, for being with us today. Again, I just want to say to everyone, whether you're looking for your next job, updating your resume or working on interviews that really get you offers, Lori can help you.

So thank you so much. That website is www.uneearthyourworth.com. Thank you, Lori.

Lori: Thanks, Karen. This has been great.

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About Lori Howard



Lori is on a mission to help you love your job and thrive in your career. She wants EVERYONE to be happy at work! Lori has an amazing ability to help you figure out what you really want from a job, and how to get it now.

Experience in a variety of corporations and industries, including IT, financial services, and theater, combined with her personal journey and a passion for helping others embrace what they uniquely offer, have created a skill set unlike any other: a balance of pragmatism, process, and knowing how to create and sustain a career you love. Learn more about Lori at www.UnearthYourWorth.com.