

What It Really Takes to Land a Job That You Love



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The art and science of career identity, resumes and what it really takes to land a job that you love.

Interview with Lori Howard

**Career Identity Coach,
Professional Resume Writer
and Founder of Unearth Your Worth**



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What It Really Takes to Land a Job That You Love

In this interview, Lori talks about both the art and science of career identity, resumes and what it really takes to land a job that you love.

Interviewer: How are you different from other career coaches and resume writers? What sets you apart?

Lori: That's harder to answer than it seems like it should be.

Interviewer: You mentioned in an earlier conversation we had that resumes are an art, not a science. That surprised me because I thought there was a lot of science. Tell me about that.

Lori: There is definitely some science to resume writing. There are formats that work a little better than others, but there is no one standard template, approach or strategy for resume writing that will work for everyone, and certainly not one that's going to get you the job you want and are most qualified for.

I know many resume writers and career coaches who use resume templates. Templates make me crazy because people think they can follow a formula. People think, "All I need to do is have a solid branding statement or summary statement at the top and make sure all my job descriptions have bulleted accomplishments with metrics with them that will highlight my client in the best way possible, and I'll get job offers or called in for interviews."

The problem is that there's more to it than that. A resume needs to reflect who you are and what you bring to an employer and position, so it needs to highlight your strengths and skills. If you want to love your job, it needs to highlight strengths and skills you want to use.

*"Resume templates
make me crazy."*

There needs to be a way to represent your soft skills. A lot of people say, "I'm a great communicator. I'm a good problem solver." Those tend to fall flat on a resume, but there are ways to talk about how you're a good problem solver and what kind of communications

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you're known for. Those don't really follow the formula. A resume is a great place to get credit for those and show a potential employer what they get if they hire you.

The other thing you want your resume to do is filter out misfit companies or jobs that aren't a good match for you. If you know you don't want to deal with client complaints all day long, you don't want to highlight and show your metrics for all the client complaint turnaround scenarios you have or all you'll get calls for are jobs where you have to deal with a lot of client complaints.

"If you want to love your job, your resume needs to highlight strengths and skills you want to use."

Interviewer: Earlier you said you can use your resume to get a job you love. Say a little bit more about that because that's a really good point you just made.

Lori: Most people create their resume by capturing their work experience. "Let me tell you the best of what I've done when I was there." If you've worked three, five or seven jobs, or had a career but now want to target a position you like even better, to make sure your next job is a good fit for you, you need to rework your resume to target the position you want now. Make sure you showcase the strengths, achievements, accomplishments and contributions that line up with the work you would love to do next. Most people don't do that.

Interviewer: How do you do that? You work with clients on this all the time. Can you give us a tip?

Lori: This is a very specific example. I had a client who was an accountant, and the business of accounting had moved away from getting to deal directly with people. In the work she was doing, it was more about dealing with numbers and sitting in front of a computer all day. She didn't like that.

We went through some work to figure out what kind of work she'd really love to do at this point in her life and career. She wanted to move more into an event planning role which could use a lot of her account management and accounting skills. It would also give her a

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chance to do something a little more fun, leverage her people skills, and work with people in a different kind of way.

We went through her resume and talked about each position she had held and what work she had done that lined up a little bit more with event planning. We discovered she had volunteered for projects that involved some degree of event planning where she had to do a little bit more project management, task management, or coordination of an event or group.

We removed the hardcore accounting accomplishments which were all about the numbers she'd managed, calculated and been responsible for, and the sizes of accounts. We kept a little bit to talk about the budgeting skills she had, and her ability to manage and understand what happens with certain sums of money. We removed all the technical accounting, and went through each job description and talked about the things she had done that would line up with event planning.

All of her communication skills that never showed up in a traditional accountant's resume, like all the work she had done where she'd pick up the phone and talk to people to get them on board for different projects, resolve problems or address questions with individuals, were going to be much more useful in an event planning capacity. We put all of those things back in.

We literally walked through her work history and thought about the work she wanted to do next, the kinds of things she wanted to be doing, and all of the experiences she'd already had doing components of that.

Interviewer: That's brilliant. You mentioned that the paper and numbers help with the resume, but it's this whole art. Now we're starting to get into what that art is all about. What do you think the paper and numbers do that can help people get a job?

Lori: Numbers do several things on a resume. One of the reasons I like to include them is that people read a resume faster visually. If they read numbers, they consume your resume more quickly, which always works in your favor. We hear the statistics that people give five to 10

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seconds to a resume these days. The more they get through, the better off you are.

The other thing is that by quantifying things, it does the other component of showing that you understand the business and your impact on the business. At the end of the day, if the company is hiring you, they want you to be passionate about what you do. They want you to love the work. They also need you to contribute to the bottom line, and they need to know you understand it. We all stay in business and collect a paycheck if the company is profitable.

Putting numbers on a resume and quantifying things shows that you understand in a concrete form the impact of what you've done. It can be as simple as how many calls you took a week. It can be the size of the budget you manage.

I worked on a resume for a project manager recently. Initially, it sounded like she worked tiny projects. She was a newly certified project manager. She was really nervous and not feeling very confident about her experience.

When we went through and talked about the budgets for each of her projects and the number of people she had to collaborate with, as well as the number of people on her team she had to lead, all of a sudden the scale of the project became really clear without her having to say, "I've worked on large-scale and small-scale projects."

She could say, "I've worked on multimillion-dollar project budgets that lasted multiple years. I've worked on projects with \$400,000 budgets. I led a team of six, and collaborated with four departments across the US." If you're leading a team of six in one location, that's a



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different experience than if you're leading a team of six from around the globe.

All of that begins to communicate just by telling how many people you worked with, how many people you collaborate with, how many people you've lead, what the size of the budget was, and what your responsibility was in a very concrete, measured way. It communicates how experienced you are without you having to say, "I'm very experienced." It's much more believable because it gets closer to saying, "Here's a concrete example of the kind of experience I have." This also prepares you with concrete examples to discuss in your interviews.

Interviewer: You also mentioned matching up the resume and everything that's going out as the person is articulating themselves in this job search. It not only has to do with the person themselves, their values and what they want from the job, but it's also about the posting of the job. Can you talk a little bit about matching oneself with the posting of the job?

Lori: A lot of people now talk about the importance of going through your resume and adding key words. You read the job description. If they describe particular tasks and responsibilities using specific terms, you should go through your resume to see if you're describing it using the same terms. That's one thing you can do: change your terms to match the job posting.

I like to walk through a job posting and look for couple of things. One is to get a sense of the personality of the company as well as the personality of the person they're looking for. I saw a job posting recently that literally said three times in their posting that they value fun.

Interviewer: I want to work there.

"I like to walk through a job posting and look for a couple of things: I want to get a sense of the personality of the company as well as the personality of the person they are looking for."

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Lori: Don't we all? That's fantastic. They used the phrase, "We value fun. Fun is one of our core values." I thought, "Oh my goodness. They said it three times." This immediately lets you know that's important to them and you need to acknowledge that in some way.

I wouldn't necessarily put that in the resume. I'll explain why in a moment. In the cover letter, I'd make sure there's a little component where you express your sense of humor or some sense of fun and playfulness that you like to incorporate at work. Think about ways to talk about it at an interview, or at least have some things ready to talk about or ways to show that. That means they want to see you have some personality. They don't just want the cold, objective, "Here are my hard, concrete qualifications."

For this particular job posting, the rest of job description was very conservative, structured and standard, which is why I wouldn't put any of the sense of humor in the resume. Their job description was back to formal, orderly, professional, and a little cooler in its communication. You want your resume to reflect that, but because they mentioned fun, I'd stick it in the cover later.

I've seen other job postings where it's infused with a healthy sense of humor. It's clear that the company has a value for people with personality and a sense of playfulness.

I've even seen some postings where they want to make sure you have fun outside of work and that you have a broad variety of interests. In that case, I would go back through the resume to find places to incorporate some of that.

That company is looking for a personality match in addition to qualifications. If you come in with the professional objective and a very conservative style, they're going to think you're not a match. They need to see your personality.

If you're really good at writing that way, you're probably a good fit for them. If you can't figure out how to show that, it's probably not the best fit for you. If you think, "This sounds like something I would say to my friends," you need to find a way to incorporate that language and the way you speak into the resume and cover letter because they're looking for that.

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Interviewer: There are a lot of nuances to this, Lori.



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Lori: There are. Another thing I look for in a job posting is things that repeat. Sometimes they will say, “Need to be willing to do what it takes to meet a deadline. Need to have high standards of quality.” Then they’ll repeat those two things in different ways by talking about the standard of quality, the willingness to go the extra mile to meet the customer’s needs, and the willingness to do whatever it takes to meet a deadline.

If you start seeing those things repeat four or five times, that tells you something about the position. It tells you they’re looking for somebody who’s willing to put in extra hours as needed. You can use that to screen through the job posting and say, “I don’t want to work 100 hours a week. This might not be for me.”

If they’re talking about it, it’s important to them. There’s some kind of issue around that that they want to make sure they prevent or screen out. It is saying, “We only want people who are willing to go the extra mile every time,” or “We’re willing to sacrifice anything for the customer.”

Interviewer: If there was a person who said, “I’m really committed, and I want the benefits of that,” that would be the right match.

Lori: Exactly. If you look at that and say, “That’s so me. I always go the extra mile for the customer. I want that to be valued. I always have a high standard of quality and will do everything I can to make it right. I

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want to be recognized for that,” this is a good fit for you. You should definitely apply. Make sure you comment on that in your cover letter and resume.

Interviewer: What other ideas can you share that you think are a little bit different than what other resume writers or career coaches are talking about out there? What about the foundational session? Where do you start?

Lori: That’s a good question. If you want a job you love, there are several things you need to look at, and it all has to start within you. You need to know what your values are and what you want the values of the company you work for to be. The two don’t have to be the same, but there may be some things you want your company to value in order for you to really like working there and to want to work for them. You need to be really clear about what those are.

“If you want a job you love, there are several things you need to look at. It all starts within you.”

I have one client who was very clear that she wanted to work in a diverse environment. She had very specific ideas in her mind about what kind of diversity that included and how far she wanted the company to go in standing up for diversity. It was very important to her that she work for a place like that.

In addition to doing research for organizations like that, we also needed to put some things in a cover letter to make sure she could start filtering some of that. We talked about interviewing strategies so she could feel out where they stood on things because it was that important to her. She would never have thought to do that if she hadn’t sat down and thought through what’s important to her in life, for herself and in the company.

Other clients have a different set of values. One of the frustrations this client had in her previous job was that it was not diverse in the way she wanted and was very anti some of the things she thought were important. It created huge conflicts for her on a daily basis and made her very unhappy. She had never thought to sit down and

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think, “What’s important to me? How do I look for those things in a company and create a target list of companies that value those kinds of things?”

It may be values about the way you work. You may have a certain work style. With some clients, they want a really structured environment that’s very process oriented. Other clients like a lot of freedom and autonomy. You need to know what’s important to you.

There are other things that are important to know. You want to know your strengths and skills, what you’re good at. It’s important to know what strengths and skills you’re good at that you enjoy doing. We all have stuff we’re good at that we can’t stand. You want to think about that.

I had a client who was really good at handling client complaints and turning around problem clients. She never wanted to do that again. We had to make sure those great achievements that were not highlighted in her resume, or she’d get called in for that.

It’s important to know what things you want. What are you good at? What are you good at that you like? I happen to be good at organizing and managing projects, so I was always told, “You should be a project manager.” I hate project management. I don’t enjoy it at all. Highlighting those skills would get me called in for those roles. I didn’t like them.

That’s another place where most coaches and resume writers will just look at what you do well. They won’t really think, “What do you do well that you like?” How do we line up your job search, career strategies and resume writing to aim toward the position and the work you really want to do next?

When we think about the work we want to do, most of us think about the job. What are the tasks I want to do? What’s the title I want to have? Those are good to know, but you also need to know in what kind of environment will I thrive? Do I need to be part of a team? Am I a person who does well when I lead that team? Do I need to work with other experts? Do I need to work by myself? Do I want people coming to me with questions? Do I want to do a lot of writing? Do I want control over my schedule? Do I want to be in an

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organization that values process and procedure? What kind of context will you thrive in?

I have a client who loves structure. He wants to be in an environment that has a defined procedure. He thrives in that. He was working for quite a few smaller companies that tended not to have that

kind of structure because they were smaller and newer. He would flounder there because he didn't know what to do. He wasn't really good at taking charge. He didn't want to take charge like that.

We ended up looking at larger companies that typically had established processes and procedures. Then we looked at who was known for the kind of procedures they had and whether that lined up with what he wanted to do. It was important for him to know where he thrives.

What environment is going to help you excel? If you excel, everyone around you will do better. The company will be happy they hired you, and they will do better. You have to know what that is for yourself.

Many people don't think to look at those things. They just think, "I want a job. Here's what I want to do. I would love to do this job." You might love to do that job in certain kinds of places with certain kinds of people. What roles do you want to play? Those are key things to know about yourself. There's not a right or wrong or good or bad. It's about knowing what you have so you can put yourself in the best situation so you can do really well, and feel like you've contributed and done something meaningful.

That's another area that trips people up. I get more people telling me, "I just want to help people." How do you want to help people? Do you want to help individuals throughout the day? Do you want to help people who are having problems? Do you want to help people who are doing well to do better? Do you want to coach a team? Do you want to be an expert that people come to for advice? Do you want the company to do something good for the world or the

"There are hundreds of questions to answer in addition to 'What job do I want?'"

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community, or is it about how people treat each other within that company?

Even with things like, “I want to help people,” everyone has a different take on what feels fulfilling for them. It’s important to look at what it is that will fulfill you. How do you want to help people? What kind of help do you want to offer? How will you know they’ve been helped? Do you want them to appreciate and acknowledge that?

Many of us feel like we shouldn’t be looking for recognition, but a big chunk of us thrive on some kind of recognition. Some people want to be publically acknowledged. Some people just want a thank you. Some people want more pay or a financial bonus. Everybody is different in what makes them feel acknowledged, satisfied and rewarded. Let’s say you want to be acknowledged, satisfied and rewarded as part of what you need. You need to know what that means for you.

Back to the original question, a lot of coaches don’t get into the details in that way. This is why I think this whole thing is as much art as it is science. There are definitely strategies, techniques and approaches you can take to figure this out and to know with confidence, “This is what I want to do. This is what I’m wired to do. This is what I love to do. This is what leaves me feeling like I’ve done something meaningful.”

*“This whole thing is
as much an art as it is
a science.”*

Interviewer: Your approach is really unique. What I used to think of as a job search was, “I’m this person, and I’m out searching for a job. I’m searching everywhere. I’m picking something.” It’s like an off-the-rack pair of shoes. They look beautiful, but if I walk a day in them, I might really be in trouble. It’s that versus going to the shoemaker and getting something that is exactly right for my feet. It’s customized. It’s a perfect fit.

Your approach starts with the person and what they want and love, and matches it up to the job out there. It’s not about some person

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trying to fit themselves into a job that's available. It's about the perfect match and fit.

Lori: It is. I find today that many people think, "I want a job. I need a new job." Maybe they'll talk to their friends, family or coworkers. They'll say, "What do you think my strengths and skills are?" They'll get a list. Then they'll say, "What do you think I'll be good at? What job do you think I should do?" They look for jobs with that title and start applying.

They do a run-of-the-mill resume which targets that a little bit, but mostly it's a reflection of their work history. They go after that. They may or may not get calls for interviews.

They may or may not get offers. If they get an offer and accept a position, sometimes they think, "This isn't better

"It's all about fit."

than what I had." It's because they didn't stop to look at who they are, what they offer or what they want before targeting all their materials – resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, interviewing strategies and networking strategies – to get the job they really want.

Interviewer: That's brilliant. It takes a lot of different questions and a defined process, which is the science part, but also listening for what's important to the person, which is the art part. You do both.

Lori: Yes. There's a mix. There's science. There's a process. There are procedures and strategies used to get to the information. A lot of people don't know how to do that. A lot of people think you have to just figure it out on your own or wait for the answer to come to you. There are definitely ways (things you can do) to get to all that information and create that picture.

The other piece is that you need certain tools. You need a resume, cover letter, networking strategy and interviewing strategies. You have to actually apply for jobs.

Interviewer: You do? (laughs)

Lori: Yes. One of the weaker strategies I've seen is waiting for them [the jobs] to come to you.

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Interviewer: You talked about bringing your own personality into your cover letter. In terms of working with you, what types of qualities does the person who will work best with you have?

Lori: The clients who have the big successes are the ones who come in open, ready to work, and ready to learn about themselves and do their part to figure out all the pieces. There's also a willingness to trust the process and stay open for what they might discover about themselves. Not only are they open and willing to do the work, but they're open to what they learn about themselves.

The other quality is while they may not know what they want, and they may have a lot of questions, concerns and fears about whether they can figure it out, they still are very focused on staying positive and focusing on the possibilities of what there is out there for them.

Another piece is they're willing to invest in themselves. If you're working with any coach, there's a little bit of a financial investment. There's also a personal investment. "I'm willing to get to know me better. I'm willing to dig in and figure out what I do really well. What do I do well that potential employers will value? How do I talk about that in a way that leaves me feeling good about them and them feeling good about me?"

Interviewer: That was beautiful. That's true. A lot of people don't think they can do that. They don't think they can get paid for what they love to do. They think they have to do something they don't love to do.

Lori: If I could communicate something to anyone who wanted to hear it, it would be that you absolutely can figure out what you'd love to do that you'd be great at and feel proud of, and that will pay for all your stuff in the current job market. It's never too late to figure it out. Many of us think, "I should have figured this out when I was younger. Why didn't I figure it out when I was younger? I'm 40. I'm 50. I'm 60. How can I not know these things?" It's never too late.

Interviewer: You answered my last question. You have such a high intuition. Is there anything else you want to share?

Lori: I want anyone to know who's thinking, "I'm not happy. I don't feel satisfied. Is something wrong with me? What am I doing wrong?"

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Maybe I just need to stay more positive,” if you’re feeling that way, those are all clues your body, heart and soul are giving you that it’s time to look for something else.

It doesn’t mean there’s something wrong with you. It means you’re in a wrong fit. It doesn’t mean what you need to fix is your attitude or perspective, or that you need to suck it up and be grateful for what you have. We all should be grateful for what we have, but that doesn’t mean you can’t look for something that’s even better for yourself and that’s an even better fit.

If you hear yourself complaining a lot, look at that as clues and information that you’re just in the wrong spot. What you need to do is focus your energy on figuring out, “What’s the right spot for me? How do I get a job in that spot?”

Interviewer: Beautiful. Lori, you said it all.



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Personal Note from Lori

I want *you* to love your job and thrive in your career. And I know that you can. There is no reason to put that goal on hold.

If you have enjoyed this interview and are ready to take the next step, I'd be honored to help you. For a free *Career Discovery Session* that will help take the next big step to discover and land a job doing the work you'd love to do, that you'd be great at, feel proud of, and that will pay for all your stuff, [click this link](#) or call 773-669-7899, and leave your name, phone number and email address, so we can get you scheduled right away.

In this fast-paced session, you'll...

- ==> Get crystal clear about what's possible for the career you really want ...
- ==> Discover *the #1 thing that's stopping you* from getting what you want (and stealing your soul)...
- ==> Identify the most powerful action that will move you to the career you want...
- ==> Leave the session with the confidence of knowing EXACTLY what to do next to create the career you want...

Just [click this link](#) or call 773-669-7899 and schedule your complimentary *Career Discovery Session*. (If you have problems with the link, just send me an email at info@unearthyourworth.com with "Career Discovery Session" in the subject line.)



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About Lori Howard, PCC, CPRW, CEC



Lori is on a mission to help you love your job and thrive in your career. As a career identity specialist and professional resume writer, Lori helps you discover the work you'd love to do, that you'd be great at, feel proud of, and that will pay for all your stuff. Lori has an amazing ability to help you figure out what you *really* want from your career, 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.