

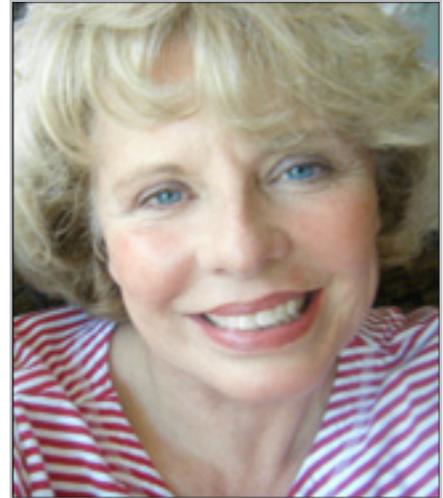
## PERSONAL BRANDING

## An Image Makeover – A New Shot at Success

Laura Warren didn't know how to make the right career connections – until she learned she'd had them all the time.

By **Kevin Fogarty**

December 8, 2008



*Laura Warren, the job seeker*

SOMETIMES IT TAKES MORE than just a little self-knowledge and chutzpah to get what you want. Sometimes it takes someone with an outside perspective to help you see that you may be frustrated in pursuing a goal – not because you can't reach it but because it's not the right one in the first place.

In the case of Laura Warren, the right job turns out not to be the mid-level marketing positions she was pursuing in a \$230 billion cosmetics industry dominated by Estee Lauder and L'Oreal, against which she competed as an independent. The right job comes out of charity and community work, a path that feels to her like advocating for important causes and looks to a career counselor like the background and contacts of a successful lobbyist or political operative.

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Chasing the wrong job was more a matter of momentum and reluctance to take advantage of friends than it was a conscious career decision. After nine years of fighting for and running her own color-cosmetics business, Warren knew she needed a job, so she went after one in the industry in which she'd most recently worked.

Unfortunately, all her experience in cosmetics was in working for herself, not for companies among whom, she said, a 57-year-old woman isn't the most sought-after commodity.

"Everything is fine in e-mail or on the phone until I go to the interview," said Warren of her job search and inability to get past what appeared to be the refusal of industry recruiters or hiring managers to consider a candidate who is older than the one they might have expected.

"If [the interviewer] is someone younger than I am, 38 or 40 maybe, then it's an issue," she said. "If they're younger than that, they just have no time for you. They seem to be following a formula, and if you don't fit, it's hard to talk your way through that barrier. They're not interested in a history of success as much as they are a profile."

But was it really her age that was working against her? Or did the problem lie in the way she was marketing herself – and to whom?

Warren agreed to be interviewed for a story on The Ladders.com about age discrimination and how to get around barriers like the ones she faced. She also agreed to talk to a career coach about alternative approaches that

might be effective.

The problem Warren was running into – according to Josh Klenoff, leading career coach for TheLadders and president of **JKCoaching.com** – was that she was not only applying for jobs that were too low-level for her skills, she was ignoring her greatest strengths and assets to interview for jobs that weren't half as important as the work she did on a volunteer basis.

“She had a great deal of energy that was wildly diffused,” Klenoff said of their initial one-hour phone conversation. “My job was to help focus that energy. We took inventory of the elements of her past or skills that would help her to thrive, adapted those to what she might think would be her ideal job, and focused her on how to land that job.”

### Friends in High Places

One stumbling block was the limited range of contacts with whom Warren was networking. She was talking to recruiters and colleagues in the cosmetics business but had not even approached friends and colleagues she made doing political or business-development or charity work.

Warren is a member of the board of governors of the Los Angeles Economic Development Council, for example, a Southern California lobbying and business-development group whose executive committee and board of governors include senior executives from Time Warner; Wachovia; Bank of America; Sony Pictures; and some of the largest, most powerful entertainment, transportation, real estate, manufacturing and other businesses in Southern California.

Its reports focus on the performance of California busi-

nesses; recommendations for changes on regulatory, business or political issues; and forecasts of economic performance that are often among the earliest hints that big economic changes are about to take place.

It compares to a local Chamber of Commerce the way Simba the Lion King compares to a house cat.

**LAEDC's membership page** quotes Warren as saying the group “is one of the most powerful catalysts within the business and economic development community today. The LAEDC is instrumental in effecting positive change that benefits residents and businesses throughout LA County.”

Warren has been an active member for years, spending tremendous amounts of her own time working on committees, reports and issues she considered important to the business and political climates of Southern California.

When industry trade group the **Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association** needed a contact in the California legislature to raise objections to “legislation that was going to be very bad for the

cosmetics industry in California,” Warren said, they called her. “I was a member of CTFA, but I also knew all these other people. I gave them a name to call, who was a friend sitting in the legislature, and I called her and said, ‘I want you to be nice to these people.’ It worked out very well,” she said.

Though she's the only cosmetics-industry executive on the board, her contacts and experience go far beyond cosmetics. She has deep expertise – and tremendous contacts – in the international shipping industry, in entertainment, and at the high end of the art world.

“She had a great deal of energy that was wildly diffused.”

–Josh Klenoff  
TheLadders Career Coach and  
President of JKCoaching.com

## Behind the Rewrite: Building a Winning Resume

By Kevin Fogarty

**Laura Warren ripped up the old blueprints so she could construct a new resume. Here's how an expert writer helped her do it.**

**P**ROFESSIONAL RESUME writers don't usually take it as a positive sign when they ask a new client for a copy of an existing resume and are told she just deleted it.

It might suggest the client is a little careless with what's supposed to be a thumbnail history of his or her own life.

Or it might reflect a lot of determination to change course and not much patience with an existing resume's inability to reflect reality more effectively than a W-2 form.

In the case of Laura Warren, it appears to have been the latter. This

member of TheLadders was unhappily pursuing mid- to senior-level executive positions in the cosmetics industry until a session with a career coach helped her realize that politics, public activism and the life of a professional lobbyist fit the reality of her life much better than a marketing gig at L'Oreal.

“The first time we talked on the phone she said she'd deleted [her resume],” said Becky, the resume writer

She began her professional career in the shipping business in the Port of Los Angeles – a family tradition in which she was the third generation. She started in office work, helping to establish the first West Coast headquarters of **Evergreen Marine Corp.**, the Chinese shipping company that became a giant of Pacific shipping by moving heavily into container ships while U.S. shippers were shackled by fuel costs during the oil crisis of the mid-1970s.

She is still proud of her membership in the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)**, in which she rose through the docks hierarchy, managing the schedules and paperwork involved in loading the huge ships and eventually heading the maritime claims group responsible for making good when a rogue wave or loose tarp left cargo water damaged or lost at sea.

“I loved working with the Chinese and people from all over the Far East,” Warren said. “I picked up Mandarin after a while. The Chinese are fascinating; they’re all about results. We got along very well.”

Where she didn’t get along was with the culture of the docks that, even in 1994, made it impossible for a woman to be seriously considered as vessel superintendent, the staffer who coordinates the movement of cargo on and off ships. It was the only role in vessel operations missing from her resume, and she didn’t like the limitation.

She learned to negotiate in the rough conditions and multiple languages of the maritime industry, in which management and the unions might be at each other’s throats over an issue, and sometimes might be unable to understand each other because of language or cultural barriers. After negotiations were settled, though, everyone still had to work together.

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**HIRED!**

## Change Your Resume; Change Your Life

**Jill Greene got out of the cold and into a new job. Rethinking her resume was a crucial step.**

By **Kevin Fogarty**

**D**URING STABLE ECONOMIC TIMES (common wisdom dictates), people change jobs to get more responsibility, more money or a better work environment. During bad economic times, they don’t change at all unless their situation becomes unmanageable or they’re laid off.

Only rarely, especially in a down economy, will a job seeker admit to having left one job simply to go to a new city where no job is waiting but a happier life may be. That is, you don’t hear it often from anyone who has outgrown their 20s, let alone their 30s or 40s.

Jill Greene, 52, did just that, and ended up in a new environment and a new job she loves.

“My husband and I lived in the Midwest our whole lives, and we’d reached a point where we were both disenchanted with our jobs,” said Greene, who worked as a marketing manager in Des Moines, Iowa, for a series of advertising agencies and veterinary pharmaceutical companies. “We decided that if we were both going to look for new jobs, why do it in Des Moines? We just said, ‘We’re done with the cold

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at TheLadders who worked with Warren. “She had one, but it had all these jobs that basically said ‘office assistant’ or clerical work that didn’t really reflect the really impressive things she’s done.”

“I had to go on a fact-finding mission to get more information,” Becky said. “I needed more than just the names of the positions. I needed what she did for each company, what her accomplishments were.”

According to Becky, Warren had a hard time promoting her real strengths

and accomplishments.

Being CEO of your own cosmetics company is pretty impressive, and that alone probably carried her through a lot of initial screenings.

Warren spent almost 20 years working in the Port of Los Angeles for various shipping companies, learning not only how to manage and document the logistics of international trade, but also how to negotiate with both management and

labor, work with international companies, and what goes into the actual operation of a port.



Becky, the resume writer

“When I travel I look at ports and hammerhead cranes,” she said. “I time the number of moves they do an hour from the port to the ship [as they load or unload containers]. Sometimes you see 12; sometimes you see 40. I evaluate the ports and can see where they’re doing well and where they need to be shored up.”

See *RESUME* Page 6

► RESUME Notice how TheLadders Resume Team optimized Laura’s resume to bring out her hidden skills.

**LAURA WARREN**

**SENIOR LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE**  
*MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ~ ENTERTAINMENT*

Executive with passionate and innovative, future-oriented vision, leveraging private and public board-level experience to mobilize major support campaigns. Multi-faceted contributor with verifiable success in maritime transportation and entertainment industries. Affected change at state and federal levels. Manages litigation risk control in highly contested operational transitions. Business experience across a wide range of industries.

Expert in building collaborative relationships (internal and external), gaining buy-in for new ideas, and driving strategic programs through complex regulatory environments. Catalyst in aligning business to achieve historical industry change. Demonstrated expertise in delivering change by influencing leaders, the community and government offices.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership Building              | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Compliance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative & Regulatory          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Management         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Program Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiations & Persuasion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations & Public Speaking   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Liaison         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Experience          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Licensing & Contractors           | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Leadership |

**KEY STRENGTHS**

**CCG Cosmetics**

- Selected by the US Department of Commerce to present brand in South Africa, Italy, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Turkey in Trade Mission exhibitions to build American brands in overseas markets.

**Biltmore Galleries**

- Established and grew client list of art collectors: celebrities, domestic and offshore collectors, investment bankers and private collections and museums.

**Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board**

- Created and established a business park complex vital to Port expansion and local economy.
- Built partnerships and community support for the complex via various private and public presentations.

**Los Angeles Economic Development Organization**

- Focus corporate group participation in three troubled sectors: arts, entertainment and fashion via LAEDC sponsorship.
- Offered sound and attainable suggestions for sustaining and capturing new opportunities for these sectors now underway.

**Community and International Support Programs**

- Delivered a special event for local and inner-city schools and families, improving relationships between communities and increased growth.
- Spearheaded a program to send funds for medical equipment and pharmaceutical supplies to Philippines for emergency life-saving services.
- Created program to send major equipment to Croatia during the war, utilizing a maritime carrier.

**International Longshore and Warehousing Union**

- Elected to represent Office Clerical workers for Marine Clerks Division.

She spent several years working at the Biltmore Galleries in Los Angeles, managing expensive artwork, working with an exclusive clientele, and learning how both the art and entertainment businesses work.

During both those periods and during the time she was running her own company, she was active in organizations involved with both the Port and the Los Angeles business

community. She sits on the board of governors of the **Los Angeles Economic Development Corp.**, a community and business-development organization whose members include top executives from most of the big companies in Los Angeles. She’s also on the advisory board of the **Community Redevelopment Agency/Los Angeles**, again with top executives from many of the area’s largest busi-

**EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE**

CCG COSMETICS • Los Angeles, CA 1996 to 2008

**Founder and CEO**

Established and managed organization from brand concept to create the idea and deliver cosmetics for women of color in the US and Mexico. Collaborated with two Dermatologists to study various skin types and determine additives and ingredients needed for sensitive skin. Grew brand awareness by showcasing products at the Italian, Chilean, and Indian exhibits designed for trade development of American-made goods for overseas markets. Oversaw and maintained compliance with all product development, regulatory, and environmental changes.

- Led two-year study throughout the country to research and determine need for color cosmetics.
- Designed a sample line of cosmetics and assisted laboratory in formulation of additional products.
- Selected by the Department of Commerce to participate in a Trade Mission in South Africa, resulting in the generation of a large interest in product line.
- Offered joint venture with Export Import Bank and company in India to deliver products to market in New Delhi.
- Generated \$1.6M in development and operating capital, by assisting equity group in France in various roll outs and acquisitions of other companies.

PASHA STEVEDORING TERMINAL • Los Angeles, CA 1990 to 1996

**Administrative Assistant to Terminal Manager**

Selected to provide support and administrative functions to five executives. Monitored various departments, including Vessel Operations, Yard Operations, Office Clerical Operations, and Customer Service. Collaborated with local, state, and federal agencies for special circumstances, HAZMAT training, and Red Cross training for Earthquake preparedness.

- Secured grant for 25% reduction in electrical power usage for five years. Recognized opportunity to save start-up company by reducing power costs through the DWP.

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSING UNION • San Pedro, California

**Office Clerical Worker**

Promoted to highest level seniority to assist in the launch of container cargo operation along with management and key staff members. Represented company as Job Steward, while negotiating contracts with other companies through the Contract Committee group.

- Led the design and implementation of a complete office clerical system, advice on the concept of intermodal moves, and delivered a highly effective system for incoming ocean carriers. Terminal added more container lines to client base and increased overall profitability.

BILTMORE GALLERIES • Los Angeles, California

**Assistant Director**

Communicated with Contemporary Western Artists to secure purchases of high-value pieces. Provided support to the gallery owner and Director of Gallery in private ventures.

**EDUCATION**

Harbor Junior College • Pursued an Associate of Arts • Wilmington, California

nesses.

“With most resumes you focus on not just the companies people work for but what you did for them,” Becky said. “With Laura, it was the other stuff that mattered to presenting her effectively as a lobbyist, without any formal experience as a lobbyist.”

So, rather than a resume that starts with one paragraph on the job seeker’s goals and another on her skills and accomplishments at past jobs, Warren’s will showcase her experi-

ence and contribution running her own company and at the CRA/LA and LAEDC and other organizations.

“In that way we can show her immediate value as a lobbyist, talking about her experience in those areas and her contacts there, even though they weren’t part of a formal job,” Becky said. “Her work with these organizations and the people she knows and what she accomplished are what she’s trying to leverage as experience as a lobbyist, so that’s the focus of the resume.”

► HIRED

and the snow' and moved to Texas.”

Greene and her husband Ricky, a CPA, packed up the car in 2008 and drove south, ending up between San Antonio and Austin, where they looked around to see if they liked the place, decided they did, rented a house, then drove back north to pick up the rest of their stuff.

“We have no kids; all our family is back in Indiana, so we had nothing holding us back,” Greene said. “We did a lot of planning financially, so we knew how long we could last. If neither of us had another job by July, we would re-evaluate; if neither of us had anything by October, we’d move back to Iowa, where we still had a house.”

“Looking back on my resume and performance, they must have thought I was some kind of idiot.”

—Jill Greene

It didn’t take that long, although the insecurity of not having a job and shock of having to find one in a place where she was completely unknown made Greene’s three months of unemployment more stressful than she’d expected.

She hadn’t had to look for a job among strangers since getting into the marketing business after college. “For 20-something years, my job moves were due to somebody recruiting me based on my experience; they knew me or my work,” she said. “For that first interview [in Texas], I was very ill-prepared. I thought it would be just like before – it would be fine. They didn’t know who I was and could have cared less. Looking back on my resume and performance, they must have thought I was some kind of idiot.”

Greene spent days researching best-practices articles on how to do a job interview, how to write a resume and how to search for jobs online. She realized she had spent years helping companies market products but never thought about how to market herself.

A resume evaluation from TheLadders helped turn that corner.

“The woman who evaluated my resume implied it was a wonder I got any calls back because my resume was in such bad shape,” Greene said.

► MAKEOVER

“That’s where I learned my technique for negotiating, which my friends refer to as ‘pouring tea,’” Warren said. “You pour tea and remain calm and polite and just keep talking. It’s diplomacy.”

She learned how to negotiate more softly, with celebrities, wealthy benefactors and art collectors, after shifting into the high-end art world to support her then-husband, a well-regarded painter of the Taos school. She took a relatively low-level job at the **Biltmore Galleries**, a top-end art gallery founded in Los Angeles by artists including famed Western painter Charles M. Russell, but was quickly promoted to executive director, the No. 2 position.

The job required discretion – celebrities and wealthy clients don’t like to be gossiped about – a rich understanding of art in a rapidly changing market, and tremendous tact to deal with both clients and artists of unpredictable mien.

“I handled all the live artists because the owners loved the dead ones,” she said. “They loved them because they were dead.”

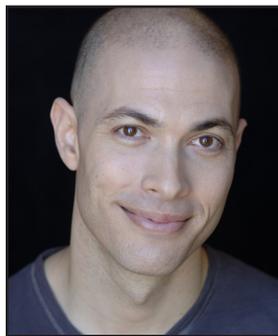
Though she doesn’t talk about them without pressure and doesn’t name them at all, the people she works with on charity projects, economic-development projects and groups like the LAEDC make up a contact network that covers most of the rich and powerful in Southern California.

“I never looked at my network for myself,” Warren said, a little wonderingly, a day after her conference with Klenoff. “I always looked at it for trade academies, for the Port of Los Angeles, problems with the community. I don’t hesitate to advocate if the issue makes sense. But I never really looked at it for myself. I just didn’t really think to do that.”

**From Beggar to Marketer**

The issue is one of perception, Klenoff said. Even accomplished people feel as if they’re going hat-in-hand to ask for handouts if they have to ask powerful, wealthy or well-connected friends for help.

“They’ll say, ‘I feel like I’m asking for favors,’” Klenoff said. “It’s a beggar mindset. That’s not a powerful place to be coming from. The alternative is a marketing mindset. You see yourself as a product, and you can see that anyone who can



Josh Klenoff, the career coach

Greene's resume listed her jobs and education but didn't put the highlights of her career up front or emphasize her most visible strengths and accomplishments. It also didn't create a recognizable person or set of skills that would catch the eye of a recruiter or hiring manager faced with dozens or hundreds of resumes.

"I sat down and really rewrote it and took a really hard, honest look at myself," Greene said. "I had to dig back and look at my accomplishments over time. A lot of things I had done I hadn't thought that much about at the time, so I hadn't written anything down. I had to go back and remember all that and describe it and why it was important. It was a real shock."

Her resume consultant identified specific accomplishments to highlight – not just that Greene had helped launch a product, but that it was a USDA-regulated product the company was able to ship in an unusually quick 18 months, and that after X number of months on the market the product garnered Y amount of sales.

**'If I Can Sell a Toothbrush for a Cat ...'**

"It was all about specific ways you helped a company move

forward," Greene said. "And in the interview, too, you have to walk in and tell them exactly what you can do for them and tell about a time in the past that you did that for someone else. I told them how once I had worked for a company that among other things made toothpaste and toothbrushes for dogs and cats. I said, 'If I can sell a toothbrush for a cat, I can sell anything.'"

**“If I can sell a toothbrush for a cat, I can sell anything.”**

—Jill Greene

As it turned out, being able to sell things for animals – if not dogs and cats – was the key to landing a new job in marketing at Applied Biosystems, which makes products designed to sequence and analyze DNA and RNA samples, often for companies diagnosing sick animals or making drugs or other health-related products for them.

"Applied Biosystems posted this job that said they needed someone with an animal-science degree who had done marketing with animal products," Greene said. "I pulled it off and said, 'This is who I am.'"

Greene graduated from Purdue University with a degree in animal science, which covers most of the health and

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get that product to the customer who values it – the employer – will also get a value out of it."

After realizing the untapped power of her network, Klenoff and Warren reviewed her other strengths and decided her ability to collar politicians, friends and business contacts to talk about issues she thought were important is more than just a personal strength.

"We talked about lobbying as a career, and it's just a natural fit," Warren said. "I'm a natural-born advocate if something makes sense to me. I have a very sound background in maritime – not only ocean but air and rail – as well as entertainment and cosmetics and other international business.

"Maritime transport and entertainment are very hard-pressed in this state. Growth, taxes, business-unfriendly environments and other states that are enticing businesses away from California, we're competing with other states for port development," Warren said, listing a few of her hot-button issues. "There is a lot of critical legislation up for discussion, and I understand busi-

ness, and I'm used to working with politicians; I know how they work."

"This change in perspective put her on a completely different playing field," Klenoff said. "When we first got on the call, she was unclear on her next steps. It's not at all uncommon, and people can spend a year in that place. Now she has a path at her feet she can just walk on, and it's one in which she can use her wellspring of resources, her knowledge, her intuition. So creating a new metaphor for herself was helpful. It was a quantum leap in progress for her."

**“Creating a new metaphor for herself was helpful. It was a quantum leap in progress for her.”**

—Josh Klenoff

It only took one phone call to get started on the new course, Warren said. She phoned a close friend and contact who is active in Southern California business and politics, and whose husband is a player in judicial circles.

"They understood immediately that I was talking about myself," she noted. "She said, 'Yes, darling. Come over Sunday and we'll talk, we'll make sure some doors open for you.' They're thrilled I came to this realization because they know I can do it. I just didn't know it was OK to ask. I'm amazed."

► HIRED

biochemistry issues that affect agribusiness: diseases and medicines for cattle and chickens, animal biochemistry, and other topics critical to those running commercial farms and ranches.

She spent her career in Iowa working mostly for companies marketing products and pharmaceuticals to animals – usually farm animals rather than dogs and cats. So when Applied Biosciences needed marketing help for a small division in Austin selling products designed for veterinary diagnostic labs trying to identify avian flu or salmonella in farm animals, the match seemed perfect.

“The recruiter told me, and this is the first time I ever heard this, that they weren’t even talking to any other candidates, because they didn’t expect to find me,” Greene said.

She got the job with little drama during the interview process and has been in love with it ever since.

Much of the reason it went so smoothly, though, is that she prepared for it using the advice she’d gotten from TheLadders and other sites.

“You want to be humble, but in this situation, you just can’t. You have to dig hard and find the one or two things you can do for them,” she said. “I asked them to give me a specific challenge they had, the hardest thing they’re facing. Based on that, I could say ‘Here’s something I did in the past to solve a similar problem and what I would do to solve this one.’ It’s almost like consulting advice; you run the risk of being way off-base, but even if you are, they like that you have opinions.”

The company must have liked what she said; she’s currently working on the marketing plan for the product her hiring

manager brought up in the interview. (It has not yet been announced.)

What she didn’t encounter was any hint that her new company was uncomfortable with her age or that any other companies she interviewed with were, either.

“I did have one friend recommend that I just take all the dates off my resume, which drives some people crazy, and put one thing in there like mentioning I had run a half-marathon last year, that shows you’re really healthy and energetic and no one will even think about the fact that you’re over 50,” she said.

Another trick that worked well was to remember the kinds of books on the shelf of the hiring managers she interviewed. At Applied Biosystems, one manager had a marketing-theory book called **Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant** by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne.

“I didn’t have it, but I went out and bought a copy and skimmed it,” she said. “So in my follow-up note I was able to

say I thought they needed to pursue a Blue Ocean strategy to differentiate themselves and what that meant and make some suggestions on how to do it.”

It worked. So did Texas. Greene’s husband has put off finding full-time work to act as general contractor on a house the two are building.

On the day she spoke to a reporter from TheLadders, it was 38 and partly cloudy in Des Moines; 75 degrees and sunny in Austin. “I have yet to put on a jacket this year,” Greene said. “I just love it.”

**“The recruiter told me, and this is the first time I ever heard this, that they weren’t even talking to any other candidates, because they didn’t expect to find me.”**

—Jill Greene



### Career Advice from TheLadders: Rebranding

- Feeling Defeated? Here’s Your Comeback Guide...
- Handling the Dreaded “You’re Overqualified” Challenge
- Behind the Numbers: Who’s Looking to Switch?
- Resume Writing Strategies from a Career Coach’s Tool Kit