

EPISODE 1066

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[INTRODUCTION]

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FT: Welcome to So Money, everybody. July 8th, 2020. I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi. Looking for a job immediately or thinking about how to pivot your career over the next couple of years.

Our Guest, Lauren McGoodwin is a career expert. She's the founder of Career Contessa and the author of the new book *Power Moves: How Women Can Pivot, Reboot and Build a Career of Purpose*. Lauren and I discuss allyship in the workplace, performative allyship versus real advocacy for your black and minority colleagues, and how to fill gaps on your resume if you aren't able to secure that internship or job coming out of college right now. I know a lot of us are pondering our careers, wondering how to make smart moves. Lauren's got answers.

Lauren was formally a recruiter for Hulu focused on hiring, employer branding and talent development. She has a bachelor's in education from the University of Oregon and a master's in communication management from USC where she wrote her thesis on millennial women and career resources. She's been featured on Good Morning America and a host of other media. She's also the host of the podcast The Females, where she covers all things work, women and traits of success.

Here's Laura McGoodwin.

[INTERVIEW]

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FT: Lauren McGoodwin, welcome back to So Money and congratulations on your book *Power Moves*.

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LM: Thank you. I'm so excited to be here.

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FT: So much I want to ask you about. We have on this show been – People have been asking and writing in about jobs and career pivots and do I even look for a new job right now. I was hoping that 2020 was going to be the year of change or starting a business or whatever, and now I feel like – A lot of us feel like there's just not a lot of decisions that we can make with certainty, and your career is so at the core of everything. We derive so much of our sense of self-worth from what we do for a living.

First question for you is, in this climate, what has been the advice that you've been giving people who, firstly, just are looking for work? Because there is so much competition now with the unemployment rates. How do you stand out?

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LM: Yeah. No, it's a great question. I think people kind of fall into two camps where if they've been laid off or furloughed or maybe they were already looking for a job before everything happened, and the two camps are sort of like people who have a very short runway, like they need a job immediately. Maybe they didn't have that emergency savings. Maybe it just isn't – It's just not something where they can give it six months. Especially like some of these companies are giving several – Anyway, there's a lot going on. Then there is this other camp of people who maybe they did get a severance that's going to last longer or something like that. And so their runway is a little bit longer.

So the way I divide this advice is that if you need a job today, this month, your employment is out at the end of July kind of thing, then go where there's demand for jobs. There are companies who are still hiring, and the people who are still hiring are going out of their way to kind of promote the fact that they're hiring, because they know that there's going to be amazing talent that will come their way. Some that just immediately come to mind for like very in-demand jobs are like Amazon, for example. They've been very upfront about the fact that they're hiring more people for the prime delivery and that kind of stuff. There are people who are like maybe Zoom is increasing, like customer service roles. You can go and find the industries that are probably still hiring and also promoting that.

Then the second camp of people where they have maybe a little bit longer runway, they actually have maybe for the very first time ever in their career this opportunity to actually take a step back and self-reflect on what is it that I want to do next? What did I enjoy my last job? What did I hate in my last job? What gave me energy? Where were my strengths? More importantly, where was I successful in parts of my role that are required for my job? I always joke that like you might love gardening, but if it's not required for your job, that's a hobby, right? So it's important to kind of think about where did you have successes that you can leverage those into roles in the future?

Even if you fall into that first camp, it doesn't mean the advice I'm giving to people who fall into this longer runway group, it doesn't mean you can't do it. It just means that you're going to prioritize getting a job that pays the bills today. As someone who graduated during the recession, there's absolutely nothing wrong with having to take a job that you don't love in an industry you don't plan on staying in just so that you can pay the bills.

I worked for a dental school as an admin assistant. It wasn't my dream job, but rent doesn't pay itself, and actually it's very admirable and employers love to see that, "Hey, when push came to shove, you got innovative and figured it out and made it work." I don't ever want anyone to feel like if they fall into that first camp, they don't get the opportunity to have a job that is better suited for them later.

If you fall into that second camp of people who have a little bit more runway, you can use this as a time to self-reflect. You can use this as a time to network. You can use this as a time to really

polish your materials, which is your LinkedIn profile, your resume. Maybe even that cover letter. And that is really interesting, because I think a lot of people, especially running up to this coronavirus, recession-type thing, is they were very reactive with their careers. They were going when jobs landed in their inbox. They were going wherever kind of the role was available. And now they get to be a little bit more proactive about it. That's kind of the long answers to your question. But I do think there's a little bit of the silver lining here with that as well.

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FT: I do appreciate when you say take the job if it's going to pay your bills, because absolutely, you need to – It's just realistic. Right now, it may not be for some people the time to be passion seeking. It's just like make the money, and then that will give you the runway and also the ability to sleep at night knowing that you don't have to worry about all of your bills. You can focus on what is actually you want to be doing in the next 2 to 5 years.

Putting your recruiter hat on for a moment here, Lauren, I know you were a recruiter at Hulu in the earlier part of your career. I have been getting questions from a lot of grads, college grads or people who are in college looking to make the most of the summer, because you can't really go out and get those experiences, those internships to beef up your resume. Or if you're just about to graduate to a very scarce job environment, how can you stay “busy and productive and feel like you are building up your resume”? What are your suggestions? If you are a recruiter, you're going to understand that maybe people don't have the internship experience that they would've had this summer. What else would stand out for you?

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LM: For me as a recruiter, especially right now, I'm all about the show, not just the tell, right? Don't tell me how amazing you can be in the sales role. Show me an example of a time when you've had to sell something or you've used transferable skills that are similar to the skills that a salesperson might use, and give me an example of that. Show, don't tell.

If you are a recent grad and the internship isn't there, but you're trying to figure out, “Okay. Well, how am I going to build up some experience that I can use as a transferable skill or leverage

into a job later.” Then you need to think about what are the skills that are really valuable and whatever it is that you're going to do next?

I've been using this example of like let's say you want to work for an e-commerce company. Okay. Can you learn everything you can about Shopify and create your own Shopify shop as a way to say, “Look, I am learning everything I can about e-commerce. I'm reading about it and listening to podcasts.” I set up a quick Shopify to kind of learn the ins and outs of how do companies quickly transfer their businesses from mom-and-pop shop to e-commerce. Maybe you could go to a local business in your community and say, “Hey, I would be willing to take on this for free. This activity of helping you guys set up a shop a Shopify storefront.” And I'm just using that as a quick example.

But basically, you can get more creative with it. You could, going back to kind of like sales related skills. You could take a summer internship working – Or not internships. Sorry. But like take on some role. Maybe it's part time. Maybe it's customer service, remote customer service. Something like that for company that's still hiring and use those to understand, “Okay. Part of sales is the candidate experience and how to build relationships.” How can you get creative with being able to show that you have examples of those skillsets? The Internet is a wide open place between obviously trying to figure out what skills are going to be required for whatever you want to do next. That's kind of where you can start. And then you can work your way backwards into how can I figure out how to build these things on my own?

My other tip, I had a friend. He just graduated college. He had a job. It fell through. And obviously that's kind of soul crushing, because it's like, “What am I going to do next?” He wants to transfer his skills, because he realizes that what he does is not going to be around for probably a while until all these gets figured out. He likes, “So I'm kind of thinking about transferring into project management.” That's a great skillset to have. But you can take online learning classes or enroll in programs where you're literally creating project management type examples that you could then show in a job interview or a future internship if you find one where you can say, “Hey, I don't just think I'm going to be good at project management. Here's an example of like how I've used and build those skills.” And that's what I mean about the show versus tell mentality that people are going to, I think, really need to rely more heavily on than maybe they have them past graduation years and things like that.

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FT: If you can prove that you are a good salesperson – Look. I've interviewed so many entrepreneurs, billionaires, millionaires and whatever. Whether they're selling tequila, or online courses, or sweatshirts. It's the selling. That's the marketing. It's sort of the knowing human psychology, and this sort of stuff that you can learn on your own. And like you mentioned, opening up your own Spotify and experimenting. Like sell the clothes out of your closet and see what happens. See what you learn. See what you learn about human psychology. See we learn about your pricing behavior. And this is something that anyone can do, whether they have a job or not, and it is applicable to the next job. As an employer, as a recruiter, to know that someone has the gumption, the self-starting desire to do that, that goes a long way. That's a real differentiating point.

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LM: Yeah, absolutely. And I would say the other point that's really important when you're applying for a job is know your why. Why this company? Why this industry? Why this role? Maybe you would believe this or not, but like there are so many people that apply for jobs because they saw the opening on LinkedIn or the company website and they just send their resume. They don't tailor their resume. They don't tailor their – Or even write a cover letter even when it says it's required for the job. They send the same thing over and over again. And we have this phrase in recruiting. It's called spray and pray. It's where you spray your resume everywhere and you pray that someone is going to pick it up. They're not going to pick it up, and they don't have to pick it up, especially during times like this.

So what I think is also really important is know your why and not just the basic why are you interested in this role? But like when I got my job in recruiting, I'd been working as an admin assistant for a dental school. I didn't have any recruiting experience and I had never worked for a tech company before. But I was so certain on my why. Why recruiting? Specifically, university recruiting? Why Hulu at the time? And I got the job offer over people who had recruiting experience, because experience and skillset is important. But being very clear on why this company and the values and how it aligns with you and your interests and your skillset. If you

can tell an amazing story, kind of going back to what you said about sales, and like you will get the role over the person who's been maybe doing it for five years, but like just fell into it and doesn't even know why they're still doing it.

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FT: You wrote your book, *Power Moves*. Your first book. Congratulations.

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LM: Thank you.

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FT: *How Women Can Pivot, Reboot and Build a Career of Purpose*. And you, I'm guessing, wrote this proposal like in the throes of the Me Too movement, where there were like no – There was no end to all possibilities, all the opportunities women could create for themselves. And there's a reckoning happening, right? Where people were like, “Okay. We've been in a discriminatory or we can do better.” And now, that movement has continued, but now we have another revolution, A Foot, which is the Black Lives Matters Movement, which is amazing, and we just finished a whole month of interviews with black individuals who've gone out there and built careers and made money and built wealth and how do they do it.

In the context of today's world, we just talked about the pandemic, but also let's talk a little bit about the Black Lives Matters Movement. How does power moves support people of color? Can they read your book and feel just as empowered as a white person?

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LM: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, my book is – And what I say is that *Power Moves* is an approach to your career that anyone can take, right? It's not about if you are white or black, if you went to an elite university. It's about you as a person. But that being said, I do think it's important for – And I think this is a whole other piece of education, is that when you have privilege, it's

important to recognize that you have privilege and how can you use your power and privilege to also help support other people around you and be an ally. Or how can you – If you are a whitecist gender man, how can you make sure that you are helping to advocate or being an ally or even sponsor not just women, but women of color, right?

So there're so many, and obviously I'm sure most men are not reading *Power Moves*, since the tagline is how women can pivot and build a career of purpose. But the point of kind of the book is, yes, these are all things you can do as an individual. But I think a big piece of what is happening with Black Lives Matter Movement that I am so thrilled about is that it is amplifying and also bringing attention in a way that there hasn't been as much tension around power and privilege in the workplace. And I really do believe that there is an education that has to happen for all people, and women of color especially, and black women especially. They've known this for a while, and people haven't maybe been listening or maybe didn't take it seriously because it was like, "Oh, I don't know. Nobody interrupts me in a meeting. So I don't know why it's so hard." Or there was just a study out there. I think it was maybe by Lean In, and they found that in a survey they did, the majority of black females who answered the survey said that they very rarely or had never had a casual interaction with a senior leader of their company, right?

Are the senior leaders purposely not having casual interactions with the black female employees, or are they not aware that they're doing it? That – It's like, of course, the black female employee is probably well aware of the fact that she's not getting one on one time or casual interactions. But I think that a power move, for example, is creating a new habit. It's creating a new – Or taking action. Power moves can be a lot of different things. They can be habits. They can be actions. They can be behaviors. And I think a lot of this, when it comes to creating more inclusive and diverse workplaces, places where people have true feelings of belonging, that is coming down to power moves. It's changing your habits. It's changing your behaviors. It's changing the actions you take. At least for me, my opinion is that a lot of that starts with education, and that's an education that has to be done in a variety ways, not just on the individual level, but I think also at an organizational level as well.

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FT: I mean, I'm learning so much about being inclusive versus antiracist. And I think that for a long time, we were just okay with inclusivity, and that's fine. But we have to actually make conscious proactive moves to help black colleagues at work to be advocates for them, to be mentors for them, to fight for them, to say out in meeting if someone says something that is subconsciously or consciously racist. So these are just sort of things that I am definitely learning more about, and I hope that that's where the consciousness really gets raised. And I think that is a power move, is to be an advocate for someone at work who is marginalized, who's getting microaggressed.

It's such an important time, and your book is really I think for a lot of reasons going to be really important right now.

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LM: Yeah. I think – I mean, just to add to your point. I also feel like there's a lot of conversations about allyship, and it's really important to make sure that this is not performative allyship. This is stopping now that the black square on Instagram maybe like not up in the very top of your feet anymore, right? This is something that has to be a part of your everyday habits and behaviors and actions and making sure that when you are being an ally at work, is that because it's helping you? Does it that make you feel good? Or you doing that because you're able to use your power and privilege to help, for example, your black coworker who works really hard and is not getting the recognition that she deserves? Or you blatantly saw that they didn't put her name in that meeting, didn't mention her name in that meeting for that promotion? Or when you got feedback, you realized you got really specific feedback and when you asked her how her feedback was, she said, "Oh, they just said everything was good," and you thought, "Oh, I should speak up about that, because that's not helping her."

I am learning a lot also about allyship as it pertains to making sure that it's not about you. That's performative allyship. So there is a lot of learning, unlearning, work to do. For the people who are defensive and don't want to do it, it's like, "Wow! You're looking at this through the wrong lens completely."

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FT: And so much more learning to be done. And switching gears a little bit. I was really interested to learn from you about where the hiring is. I mean, we talked already about the immediate hiring, right? There's like immediate needs and people need to fill those roles, whether that's like in healthcare or in delivery and food. But in future, we're obviously going to see some industries weaken or just go away altogether. I have people asking me should I even bother to look for a job or look to enhance my education and things like hospitality, or airlines, or restaurants? Do you have a sense of where the jobs are going and where there is going to be more opportunity, let's say, for somebody who is still studying or preparing for a career launch in two years? What are the best places to be focusing on right now?

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LM: Yeah, that's a good question. I mean, industry-wise, I think what you said is all correct. Would I be encouraging someone to get a degree in hospitality and event management? Maybe not necessarily, but also I think something to consider is that if you work in events right now, there's going to be a huge trend of events becoming virtual events, right? What can you be doing right now to learn how to take maybe the experience you had of these in-person events and convert them to virtual, right? There're companies that all they do is help host virtual conferences. Can you learn about those companies and maybe attend one and see how they do?

I do feel like – Yes, maybe there will be industries that don't exist, but what I see more is that there's just going to be this dramatic shift or an acceleration in how they become either remote or virtual, or they're able to work in a way like that. Events is like the good example of going to virtual events. I think online learning is a really interesting one too. I think that it is not necessarily that I think, again, like an industry is going to go away completely. It's going to be about can you adapt and can you pivot to this next normal that we're going to be part of that is going to rely a lot more on virtual and remote?

An example of that might be if you're in like commercial real estate. Okay, I might start thinking about what's the future of that going to be like if people are not going to be going to an office as much? Again, it does require people to get out of their comfort zone. Get out of the whole like,

“Here's how it's always been,” you can just kind of plop yourself into the formula and one plus one equals two. That's not going to happen. But there are companies still hiring me. We have jobs. We're on Career Contessa, and there's still jobs being sent to us every week to post on our job's board.

There are companies hiring, and we see obviously tech is huge. Even client success or Canada experience, that's a big area. Online education is a big area on. I mean, I think that people who were already in creative roles where they were able to work virtual collaboration, virtual project management, sales, all of this stuff still matters. They're still hiring. It's just a matter of are people hiring as many people as they used to? Maybe not.

I was listening to this podcast the other day and it was talking about how like Airbnb went from being this place where you would rent someone else's place for short-term rentals, to all of a sudden they were having all these experiences you could book. And it's kind of like some companies don't need to be doing all the things, and that means that if Airbnb goes back to where they started, they're going to be removing complete departments. Yes, that's unfortunate, because they hired whole teams and departments and roles. It doesn't mean that those departments and roles don't exist. They just don't need to exist for Airbnb.

So you can take that skillset and go somewhere else. I still think that for people who are thinking about what skills should I be developing? Think about the skills we talked about a second ago. Sales. That's going – Business development, relationship building, tech skills, project management. There are certain transferable skills that work for almost every industry, because at the end of the day, you're almost always going to be working with a client or have somebody you're working with or reporting to, and you're going to need to work well to other people.

So sometimes I just like to take it back to like the basics of like how does work work and and what skillsets are going to be required for that. Even at Career Contessa, we have online courses, and we focus a lot – Our courses mostly on leadership, business and communication skills. Because at the end of the day, what we've learned in a lot of our interviews and talking to hiring managers, those are the skills that a lot of people don't learn in school or there aren't as many hardcoded classes that teach you how to do this or that around communication. But it's vital to being successful in a role.

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FT: I've been looking about how career coaches and career courses that you pay for are doing right now. It's like the most important thing you need, but also you don't have job. How do we pay for them? So how is the market for learning about this stuff and getting professional advice? The irony of it all, right?

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LM: I know. It really is. The irony of it is that we actually started with job search courses, and it was funny, because it was back in a time when people weren't like desperate for job search advice. So we quickly kind of, I guess, pivoted and start to include other topics. So for example, in our job search courses, we have one called the 24-hour resume makeover. We have the job search academy, ace the interview. But when we first launched these, it was like, "Oh, people aren't like desperately job searching." They're actually doing really, really well right now. I think part of it is that our courses are not crazy expensive. Some people are selling courses for thousands of dollars. Our courses are \$200 or less. And I also think that from the online education standpoint in career courses and coaching, is that when you – I mean, it's kind of like in the steps of things, you kind of need to get figured out.

As you mentioned, career is really in the center of a lot of that, because it's how you support your lives. So people who are maybe deciding, "Where am I going to move to next?" or "I want to do this next." It almost always hinders on like, "Okay. But what am I doing job-wise? What am I doing to make money to pay for this life?"

I also think that these classes are doing well, because while there were sacrifices that people are making and cutting things they don't need, what they do need is still careers. And what they do need if they're still – If they're still working for company, the other thing that we're seeing on Uptick are courses that help people be better at their jobs. So we have one called the new manager manual. We have one called the critical problem-solving 101. Those are classes that people are buying more now, because they want to make sure they are the best person at their jobs so they're not on that layoff list, for example.

Again, I can only speak from our perspective at Career Contessa, but we're selling more courses today than we have been in the past, which I know sounds kind of like, "Oh! People are spending money." But it's because we never created courses on things I think that don't matter, if that makes sense.

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FT: And we're not spending on a lot of other things. We do have some disposable income if we're working still, and we're realizing where we really need to put the money, the things that really matter. So many resources you provide. There's careercontessa.com. Go to powermovesbook.com to order the book. And your podcast, The Females.

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LM: Yes. And Farnoosh was on our first season. So can even listen to that. That's really nice of you. Thank you.

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FT: My pleasure. And thank you for joining and giving us all the latest and greatest on how to get work and meaningful work in this environment. Laura McGoodwin, thank you so much.

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LM: Thank you.

[END]