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## Do Not Be Afraid to Create Your Own Career!

By *Bennett Stone*, November 18, 2010

In: [People in Transportation](#) > [Do Not Be Afraid to Create Your Own Career!](#)

### Automotive Technician Lori Johnson

Ever wonder what it's like to be a woman in a male dominated field? Lori Johnson, the owner and founder of "Ladies Start Your Engines," an automotive repair class, talked to Go! about what it means to be a female automotive technician and teacher.

Lori has several years of experience as an automotive technician. She has been at the forefront of automotive technology and currently offers basic automotive training classes for women through a variety of outlets including: General Motors, the Girl Scouts of America, The Community College of Philadelphia, and a long list of car dealers.



### Do you feel like you are tested in your field? ▶ [To Listen, Hit Play](#)

Lori has an interesting background. She has always loved tinkering with things. As a little girl she "liked to take things apart and put them back together" just to see how they worked.

This led her to studying more about cars and earning a certificate in automotive technology in the 1980's from Pennco Tech after she graduated high school. With a certificate in hand, she was quickly hired as an automotive technician at a Honda dealership in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Her drive to hone her skills and excel in her field led her to enroll in a 2-year degree program in automotive technology at the Community College of Philadelphia, just when community colleges had started offering vocational training programs.

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### Understanding your customer

Lori worked as an automotive technician for several years, helping people understand the inner workings of their vehicles and holding training sessions for men and women at car dealerships. She realized she loved teaching and interacting with people. It made her job fun and exciting as each day brought with it something new and unpredictable.

### How did this idea for a business come about? ▶

[To Listen, Hit Play](#)

Her desire to understand people at a deeper level and to appreciate what drove them into making certain decisions, pushed her back into college, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. Lori thus may be one of those rare auto technicians who can boast of a degree in the social sciences.

Armed with a degree in Sociology, a rich background in automobiles and training people in car maintenance, Lori was ready to set off on her own. Her classes at the dealership had become very popular and her friends urged her to start her own business. Lori began her business in 2006 with the sole purpose of educating women about cars and equipping them with the skill to perform light automotive maintenance on their vehicles. Her business has been successful with a slight slow down recently due to the economy.

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By *Bennett Stone*, November 18, 2010

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### "You have the choice"

Lori believes she has finally found her calling and it addresses a need that only seems to increase with each day. Studies have shown that upwards to 80% of women are the main decision makers in a household when it comes to purchasing consumer goods, whether it is for household items or for cars. Increasingly, women have also become more involved in maintaining their cars. Dealers are seeing more women customers approaching them for various services. The shops can no longer ignore their female customers. According to Lori, dealerships use her services to attract the female customer base.

Her advice to girls and women wanting to work in male-dominated fields is to **be ready to face greater scrutiny**. "You need to be prepared that you're going to be tested," because "I will say that girls, women going into these fields; **there is more of a proving ground for women than men.**"

[Have you had to prove yourself?](#) [To Listen, Hit Play](#)



"You have the choice," was a recurring theme in our conversation with Lori. She has made conscious choices in her life and has held herself accountable to those choices. But she has always kept herself open to new experiences and learning from them.

As with other careers in transportation, the demand for automotive technicians has increased. There are not enough people to fill the positions of retiring technicians fast enough. Furthermore, the skills required to be an auto technician have

changed. The modern day vehicles are more sophisticated and require knowledge of electronics and engineering. It really comes down to one thing: doing something that you love to do, and it's hard to tell without actually trying it out. Keep an open mind, and give whatever you do your fullest effort of 100%.

[Has the need for technicians increased?](#) [To Listen, Hit Play](#)

Information on automotive training and schedule of classes can be found on her web site [Ladies Start Your Engines](#), as well as her instructional video on [how to check your oil](#) (important to know!).

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