

Interviewer: Great. All right. So my first question is how did you find your job with Amazon?

Interviewee: It's actually my brother that told me about it. He was like, Oh... But when he told me I was expecting for them to give me a call for interviews and stuff, but he told me about this flex. So that's when I went on Google and get more information about it.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So you'd heard about it and then you looked it up. And then did you find an application, or something?

Interviewee: Actually, when you go on Google and you type it in, you will have all the information there. Then they're going to ask you to download the app, when you start doing your application and all that.

Interviewer: Okay. So you downloaded the app. What did you have to send them through it?

Interviewee: Through the app? They ask you for your driver's license. If you have a driver's license, you have to take a picture of the front and back. And then they ask for your social, because they have to do a background check. [inaudible 00:03:14], you have to agree to a background check. And then, ask you for your home address. You actually sign up with them. If you have an Amazon account, it's the same Amazon account that you have to sign in with them; you sign up with them.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: They basically have all your information.

Interviewer: Yeah. And so from your application process, how long did it take them to respond and say, okay, you're good to go?

Interviewee: Actually, its two part. The first part, they got to stop when you get to the driver's license. When you get your picture over to them, on that part, you're going to see them a check. I mean it's going to say, in progress, For me, it took me two days for them to approve the driver's license. And then, after the driver's license, you agree for the background check. It'll take another two days, which is four days, total, before they actually approve you.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So, this was all within a week or so, is that how long it took?

Interviewee: Yes, yes. A week.

Interviewer: And then did you start driving right away?

Interviewee: Yes I did. I wanted to try, and I did. The only thing with them, when they changed their system... When you are a new driver, they put you on top of the list, which is priority. So, you get all the calls, all day.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee: New days, when you start with them, I don't know if it's for you to test the system... After a few days, it's really hard to find shifts.

Interviewer: Oh wow. Okay. Then you have to compete more.

Interviewee: I've heard... On the Amazon Flex app, or on Facebook, there's people... What they did, I heard they buy a little Grab It thing for them to catch the blocks. So, makes it hard for you to catch one. You have to keep clicking all day long, the button on the screen of your phone, to finally find the shifts. Sometimes, it might take you the whole day, and you can never find anything.

Interviewer: Wow. Has that happened to you?

Interviewee: Oh yeah. The first week it was great, and then after that, I can never find shifts.

Interviewer: Oh no.

Interviewee: But they release everything on Fridays and Saturdays. Friday night, and Saturday morning. That's when you can pick up for the whole week.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee: With [inaudible 00:05:45] have to be really fast, like within five seconds.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: [inaudible 00:05:49] rise, because first come, first serve.

Interviewer: So do you end up staying up all night to do that? Or how do you do...

Interviewee: Oh yeah. The first few days. Yes. I have to keep clicking the button on my phone like for hours, to find shifts, and it's... I don't like it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you live in a big city?

Interviewee: Yes, I live in [city].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: [city], [state].

Interviewer: Yeah. So, have you met other Flex drivers, or do you know a lot of other people doing it?

Interviewee: I met some of... I've talked to some of them on the Facebook page, because there's a Facebook page for the Flex drivers.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: If I have any question, or if they have a suggestion, or if there's something going on, you can see it on Facebook.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah I see. Because, when you have issues, do you have a manager, or somebody that you can talk to when there's a problem?

Interviewee: No, and that's my biggest issue with them now. What happened to this week, especially. You get in contact with them if you have to do a delivery. There's a button on the screen, so you can just press it, and then they will talk to you. They have all of yourself from your phone, on the computer, right there.

But as soon as you're done with delivery, they have a support team. If you have something going on, you call support team, you explain it to them. They will type an email and send it to another department.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: From them, that department is not people actually working. It's like automated system. Something on the computer, because when you tell them, Hey, this is what's going on... When they say, Okay, we're going to send an email to the order department... The answer that you're getting from the email, it's not even actually what you ask for. It's like an automated thing. They just send it to you. They don't have any managers to talk with nothing.

Interviewer: Wow. So, you mentioned that you use the Facebook group when you have a problem. Are you more likely to post it there, to ask for help?

Interviewee: If you have a problem with delivering, you'll get all the answers that you want when you call them. But on a [inaudible 00:08:11], if you have something going on with your app, or you can't find blocks, or you have [inaudible 00:08:15] before, you can see them anymore... They say they're going to send an email for you, but they don't help.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you found the other drivers in the group helpful for figuring out how to get blocks, and things like that?

Interviewee: Yeah. Sometimes they do help. Sometimes if I'm not on my phone, [inaudible 00:08:33] on Facebook, and then they post something, and I get the notification that says, Hey, blocks are up... You go from there, and then you pick up blocks, if you have time.

Interviewer: Yeah [crosstalk 00:08:45] .

Interviewee: Yeah, sometimes they do help.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you done this kind of delivery work with other companies before?

Interviewee: I did Lyft, before.

Interviewer: Lyft. And did you do just Lyft, or did you do both Flex and Lyft at the same time?

Interviewee: No, I just started doing Flex now.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: But, I used to do Lyft before.

Interviewer: Okay. How long have you been doing Flex?

Interviewee: It's been six months.

Interviewer: That's been awhile. Yeah. So, I wondered if you would have to do more deliveries around Christmas time, or around big holidays?

Interviewee: Actually, they say you get more. I mean, around the holiday season.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And they already sent us an email, too, Amazon. They say they will get more deliveries and stuff, so get ready.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: But, [inaudible 00:09:40] than orders, because even if you go and pick up in the warehouse...

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Sometimes, if they have delivery... You might pick up a block that says, Hey, you have a delivery set up from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM, for example.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And then, when you get to the warehouse, and then they might be like, okay, you still going to get paid, but we don't have any deliveries available. [crosstalk 00:09:59] You still get paid. But there's no delivery. It's kind of slow these days.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are you worried about black Friday?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: I'm just getting ready. Cause the more blocks, the more money.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, how does it work, when you sign up for a block? Do they tell you how much you'll earn and how many packages it is, or... What do they tell you?

Interviewee: When you sign up for a block, it's going to tell you where to go pick it up. And then, going to say the time, where, and how much you're going to get for that block.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But you don't know what's going to deliver. You don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah. And then once you pick everything up, what kinds of things do you have to record in your phone? Like, I'm here and I picked it up... This is where I'm going... That kind of stuff.

Interviewee: When you open the app from home, and then there's a button that will drive you to the location of the warehouse... When you get the location, you say, I've arrived, from the app. And, then they check you in. And then, as soon as they're done checking in, they get your driver's license, they scan it, and then there's going to be a camera screen, that will operate by itself on your phone.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, they bring you the card with all the items on there. There's a yellow thing that you have to scan. Scan it with your phone, and all the deliveries are going to pop up on your phone.

Interviewer: Okay. And does it tell you what order to do them in, or do you get to pick where you go first?

Interviewee: Sometimes the GPS, they make you do the longer way around, but it's usually by order. It's going to tell you, Hey, this location, you have to go. Or, if there's a priority one, the app's going to tell you to go right there to that house. But you have to follow the app. You can go ahead and see, Oh, this is two minutes away from me, let me just grab this because I don't have to come around and do it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: You need to do it. I mean, it should be your own thing.

Interviewer: Yeah. And do they track your location?

Interviewee: They do. And, also, when you're about to go to the customers house, that customer can track your location, when they know that you coming to them.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. I didn't know that.

Interviewee: One person told me that. Yeah, because I was on my way, and he was like, Oh yeah, because the [descriptor] family, that's you, your almost there. I was like, Oh really? He said, yeah, you guys can't hide.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, interesting. And then, so once you show up, do you check off something on your phone that says, I'm here and I'm leaving the package? Or... What do you record when you're leaving a package?

Interviewee: When you get to the location you hit, I've arrived, on your phone. And then, a screen's going to pop up, like a camera. And then, you scan the barcode on the box. When you scan it, it's going to pop another screen back up that says, where did you leave the package? And, if it's the front door, you hit front door, and then you have to take a picture right there. It's like a step-by-step thing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: When you get to the front door, the camera's going to pop up again [crosstalk 00:13:24] and then you take it of the front of the house. Where you drop it, as proof. Then, you hit, done, and then it's going to bring you to the next location.

Interviewer: Okay, so I do have all of that. And, then when you're done with your block, do you sign out, or do you have to tell them like I've completed the tasks?

Interviewee: When its done, it's going to automatically turn off, and then your money's going to appear from there. Or, if you're done early, then your block, you won't see the money until the block is over.

Interviewer: Okay. But, they pay you as soon as it's over?

Interviewee: I'm sorry?

Interviewer: They pay you as soon as your block is done?

Interviewee: Yes. They pay you, they do the payroll. You can't see the money that you get paid, but you actually get paid on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Interviewer: Okay. So it might take a few days, but you know how much you earned...

Interviewee: Exactly.

Interviewer: Oh, cool. Okay. And when you started, did you have to do some kind of training for the job?

Interviewee: Oh no. They don't even tell you anything. Actually, my first block that I picked up, when I went to the location... Because its a huge warehouse... I lost the first block, because no one told me, because 80% of the people that worked in the warehouse, are Hispanic speaking.

Interviewer: Mmm.

Interviewee: So, there was nobody to tell me, you came to the wrong location, or couldn't give me any explanation when I showed them, Hey, this is my first time. But there were all Hispanic speaking. They couldn't help me. So that's when I had to call customer service and explain it to them, Hey, it's should be English... So, nobody could tell me exactly what to do and I lost my first block, and they still pay me. But there's no training. They just have some videos on the app to show you exactly what to do, [crosstalk 00:15:16] but there's nobody helping you.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you have to sign a contract to start working?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you had to develop different kinds of skills to do this job?

Interviewee: No. You don't. It's an easy, a very easy job. All you have to know is, load the app on your phone, know technology a little bit. But you don't need anything.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you find the app pretty easy to use?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's very easy. It's very easy. It's just, sometimes the notes that the customer puts... Sometimes we can see notes, and then when they put them on, you don't even understand what they say. Or, where they put the keys, you can see the little sign of a key... And when you get to the gate there's no number. This is very hard. Apartments are very hard to deliver.

Interviewer: Yeah. How many hours do you try to work with them per week?

Interviewee: I'm trying to do like... It seems 16 hours.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: [crosstalk 00:16:32] Because most of the time it's usually three or four hours a block.

Interviewer: Yeah. And you were saying, because it's hard to sign up, do you usually find yourself able to do the 16 hours a week?

Interviewee: It's hard. It's hard to find the blocks. That's the only thing. I can tell them, this is how many hours I want to work for y'all. But that doesn't mean it's guaranteed. They might have blocks, they might not have blocks as well.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: [inaudible 00:17:02]

Interviewer: Do you know, when you are working, does it average out to the same amount of money per hour, or does it vary a lot? How much you earn per hour?

Interviewee: Oh, it's more. They might have a block for three hours, way for example.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Or, \$70.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: And, three divided by 70... No, it's usually \$72.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: \$72 divided by three hours. That's \$24 an hour.

Interviewer: Hmm. Okay. Yeah.

Interviewee: You can make way more than a regular job.

Interviewer: Yeah. Since you were working 16 hours, do you have other work that you do during the week as well? Or this is your main job?

Interviewee: Oh, I just finish school. I'm a nursing student.

Interviewer: Oh cool.

Interviewee: [inaudible 00:17:53] Yeah. I wanted to do something part-time, and that was very interesting.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Oh, you just go in and do your thing. And also, the only good thing with them, you can have other people in your car with you.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: They don't mind.

Interviewer: Yeah. So do you...

Interviewee: I always bring my kids with me.

Interviewer: Oh cool. So, are you [crosstalk 00:18:12] still in classes, and then you do this in addition [crosstalk 00:18:15] to going to class? Oh wow.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's a very busy week for you.

Interviewee: It is. It is. But the hours are not bad, because you might spend like three hours, and then we get \$72 for the day. If you get \$72, but that's something for the week.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Do you end up...

Interviewee: [inaudible 00:18:36] \$360 for the week, for doing three hours a day.

Interviewer: Yeah. And do you mostly do night shifts, or do you do weekend shifts, or how do you work around your classes?

Interviewee: Oh, sometimes I do early mornings because I pick up the 3:00 AM shift, or 4:00 AM. By 7:00 AM, I'm back home, and I can do everything that I want. Or, it depends what time I have class.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Or, I pick up 6:00 PM shifts, til nine, it depends. Yeah, I do early morning or night.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you ever end up working on weekends?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, I did a weekend. I did weekends, early morning weekends.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay.

Interviewee: 4:00 AM shifts...

Interviewer: And since you've been working for them, have you ever had to test any new software or features on the app?

Interviewee: No, I haven't, but the only thing that I've realized, with the app, it kills your battery. Your phone battery. Yeah. You won't have your phone for too long with this app.

Interviewer: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:19:45] Has anything changed since you first started working for them?

Interviewee: No, I haven't seen any changes. They just keep sending emails. Like all the time. To get ready, or this is what you need to do for [inaudible 00:20:02]. But the app itself, Hasn't changed, nothing has changed. Oh yeah, actually, the app has changed. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, what happened?

Interviewee: They have a filter [crosstalk 00:20:13] in the app, so you can choose your location, because they have different warehouses. [crosstalk 00:20:17] But, I guess they are testing it for now, it's not actually working. Because you can see [city] area, [other city 1], [other city 2]. You can pick exactly where you want a pick up.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I always excluded [other city 2], and I've heard people on the Facebook page, too. They say the same thing. They excluded [other city 2]. But, you keep getting the whole block for [other city 2]. [crosstalk 00:20:44] So, I guess it's the new feature that they are working on it, still? But there's a filter.

Interviewer: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:20:51] Okay. So I have a couple more questions. [crosstalk 00:20:55] Do you think of yourself as an employee of Amazon, or do you think of yourself as someone who's like a freelancer, or running a small business?

Interviewee: I don't get it. Say it again?

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So do you think of yourself as someone who's an Amazon employee, or do you think of yourself as like a freelancer for Amazon?

Interviewee: Oh no, I'm just a job for them.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think you'll still be doing this in a couple of years?

Interviewee: Oh no, I'm just waiting on my board exam. I'm just waiting to get the exam date. After that I'm gone.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So, I have three questions about the future of work. And I wonder, do you worry about things like self-driving cars?

Interviewee: About self-driving what?

Interviewer: Self driving cars?

Interviewee: Oh, I mean for Amazon to have?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Interviewee: Oh, it won't bother me because I won't do this job for too long. It might bother the other people that doing it full time...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: You know? They won't be able to meet that earnings.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Could you imagine Amazon doing something like that?

Interviewee: I believe so. I believe so. Cause technology is huge now. If you can go to Walmart, and pay your own thing? And let me tell you, honestly... The one at Walmart, especially it's way faster than having somebody ringing each item for you.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: They might come up with something, and that would be very interesting, and that might work.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Awesome. We got through all of my questions. Thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording now.