

Interviewer: Great. Can you tell me about how you found your work with Amazon?

Interviewee: Say that one more time.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about how you found your job with Amazon?

Interviewee: I actually work for [State School].

Interviewer: Oh, I thought... Do you drive with Amazon Flex?

Interviewee: But I do work for Amazon part-time as well. Do you want me to give you my experience based on Amazon?

Interviewer: Yes, please. That'd be great.

Interviewee: I found information about them online. I heard about their Amazon Flex program and it seems very flexible. That's how I found it and I went to their actual Amazon Flex website to get more information in regards to the positions they had available.

Interviewer: Did know someone who was doing Amazon Flex or how did you hear about the job?

Interviewee: No, originally I didn't know anybody personally who did it. I just heard of it, word of mouth, seeing things online and then after I did my research, then I joined a couple of Facebook groups, people in my area that actually work for them.

Interviewer: Oh cool. Okay. Your job is that you were a Flex delivery driver, is that right?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: What was the application process like to get the job?

Interviewee: The application process was fairly easy. You just had to download an app, fill out your personal information, answer some customer service questions, and then from there they completed a background check.

Interviewer: Okay. How long did it take between you applying and you being able to drive for them?

Interviewee: I would want to say about seven days.

Interviewer: Oh, it was quick.

Interviewee: Yes. I filled out everything online. They asked me for my license. I believe they verified my license within about 24 hours. The only reason I'm going to say seven days is because I believe they started my background check on a weekend. It was like a Monday when they got it. It was fairly quick. I think my background check was done in less than 24 to 48 hours.

Interviewer: Oh cool. How did they tell you that you were approved?

Interviewee: They do send an email, but actually I saw in the app that I was approved first before I received an email. It appears to me that they may be a little bit delayed on the email because I received some information after the fact that I was able to see it in the app first.

Interviewer: Okay. Were you able to see it because then you could sign up for blocks?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you sign up right away to drive?

Interviewee: Yes, I did. The following day I did my first shift.

Interviewer: Do you remember what it was like?

Interviewee: The first shift was actually good. It was kind of confusing at first, but I watched all the videos the first time and then I made sure that the day of my first shift I went ahead and watched the videos again just to make sure I had a clear understanding. My first one was the [facility], which is an [city] facility and it was the afternoon shift, so it was a 3:30 to 5:30 PM and on that particular shift, I got there a little bit early. I'm glad I did because there was a lot of traffic and it kind of seemed like the people who actually work at the distribution, there was some confusion going on because per Amazon you can clock in 15 minutes early and they weren't letting us clock in early and it was kind of worrying me at first. I'm like, we're getting close to the start of the shift and you can only be five minutes late so you can be 15 minutes early but only five minutes late.

Everything went good. I got everything in my vehicle, the route was easy, and on my first day I only had one person where I wasn't able to deliver. They lived in an apartment, the leasing office was closed. I didn't have access to the apartment. It wasn't an apartment where you could have access to the unit or to the mailbox. I tried to call the customer and get it delivered but I was unable to so I had to drop it back off to the facility, but overall it was a good experience for my first one.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you end up signing up for another one that day or when did you do your next shift?

Interviewee: I did another one and this time I tried Whole Foods. When you drive for Amazon Flex, they have different entities so you can sign up for multiple. You can either deliver packages, you can do fresh food or whole food delivery, and then they have restaurants. The second shift I did, I did a Whole Foods run. That was chaotic.

Interviewer: Oh really? Cause it's in the grocery store? Is that what made it different?

Interviewee: What made it different is that yes, one, it's the grocery store, so you're behind the butcher, produce and it's small back there. You have the employees who work there

that are the fulfillers. They're actually the people who shop and there's about 10 of them. Then you have everybody who comes in that's a Flex driver that is trying to get their packages. What caused confusion is there was a girl there and it was her first day and she ended up taking a whole bunch of bags without scanning them, but those orders didn't belong to her. It just caused a whole bunch of chaos. I ended up having, as my shift started at one, I think it was a 1:30 to 3:30 shift and I didn't leave the store until three o'clock and I had been there since one o'clock.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Do you still get paid for that time or no?

Interviewee: Yes. I was paid for that time. I don't think it was anything on Amazon's fault, it was more so maybe she probably should have just looked at her training again because in the training it tells me you have to scan the bags and things. I mean that's an honest mistake.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, for sure.

Interviewee: It just slowed everybody else.

Interviewer: Yeah. What else did they cover in the training videos?

Interviewee: They cover when you're going to get paid, safety, alcohol and tobacco, scanning ID's, customer service. It's about eight to nine videos, I believe. How the different facilities work, so meaning they had one video if you're picking up packages and then one video for Whole Foods. It broke it up for you. I found the video very helpful.

Interviewer: Oh yeah. Oh cool. Did you end up going back to Whole Foods trips or do you now mostly pick other types of shifts?

Interviewee: No, I would do it again. I think that was just like a one off.

Interviewer: Yeah. How do you decide which blocks you'll do each week?

Interviewee: I try to see what could fit in my schedule because I do have another job, so what can fit in my schedule and then depending on the time. If there's something afford to in the afternoon, I probably won't go to [city 2]. I know it's a lot of traffic, so I tried to look up the shift based upon that. Then also what they're paying for that area. From my understanding, the minimum is \$18 an hour that they try to pay you per block.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you end up working in the morning or evenings or weekends?

Interviewee: I usually work in the afternoon or Saturday and Sunday, midday or morning.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned that the lowest pay is \$18. Are there blocks that pay a lot better or periods of time?

Interviewee: Yes, there are blocks that pay different amounts, but I know that I read somewhere the minimum. So unless they don't have a delivery for you or anything, you'll still get paid \$18 an hour.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. If something goes wrong, so like the day that everything was going on at Whole Foods, do you have a manager or somebody that you talk to when that happens?

Interviewee: That's the thing that I didn't like. There wasn't an actual Amazon manager there. I asked the associates, like the people who were there, I guess you would call the fulfiller's. I asked them and they said there wasn't a manager. I called the number in the app, but if I could just be completely honest, it's very discouraging when you work for a company and you speak to somebody that doesn't even understand what's going on, what the company is. I mean the woman asked me, are you an Amazon Flexor? It's kind of like, if I gave you my credentials, isn't that something that you should know and isn't this the help number for Amazon Flex? I had to call about five times to really get somebody that could help me.

I've worked for other kind of platforms like this and it's the same thing and it's kind of discouraging because when you're working for these companies, especially when you basically are an independent contractor and work for yourself, it's your gas, your wear and tear on your car. Basically in these types of jobs, time is money. We're kind of on a time clock. When things occur and you can't speak to somebody who has the correct information, it's just very frustrating.

Interviewer: Yeah, for sure. You mentioned that you've had other similar types of jobs. Have you done other kinds of delivery work before?

Interviewee: Yes, I did Instacart as well, and I did Door Dash.

Interviewer: Do you still do either of those?

Interviewee: No. Door Dash doesn't really pay, so it's not really worth it. When it boils down to it, Instacart isn't worth it either. If you can get on with Amazon Flex, because you're not shopping for the grocery. With Instacart, you have to shop for the groceries and deliver them. With Whole Foods, you at least get a minimum that you know you're going to get a certain amount and it's already shopped for you, so you're just picking it up. The other thing that I like is you're getting all your orders for that block. Instacart, I would get one order come in and I'm going to [grocery store] and then I'm shopping that order and I'm going to that customer's house. I get another order. It could be another [different grocery store], another [different grocery store] or another grocery store, and I'm shopping for that order and then I'm going somewhere else.

I feel economically the money is better and the wear and tear on your car is better because you're really not driving all over. You're still doing routes, but you're going to

one location to get your groceries and everything that you need and you're delivering and the routes are planned so that they can be together. That's another benefit that I like over Instacart. What I've noticed is I really haven't traveled more than five, six minutes. The first house and the next one might be two minutes, three minutes, five minutes, but I'm not really going outside of or long distance driving. All my blocks are together in the same area.

Interviewer: Yeah. The food I assume has more kind of concerns about temperature and stuff, are the blocks for Whole Foods shorter than the normal Amazon blocks?

Interviewee: Yes. I find that they're usually like two hours and a half or three hours. I do have cooler bags as well that I've already had from previous that I've used. If I have frozen items or things that are cold that need to keep the temperature or even hot items.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. How long have you worked with Amazon Flex?

Interviewee: Six months.

Interviewer: Six months. When you started, did you have to sign a contract or something?

Interviewee: I wouldn't say a contract. You just have to agree to the terms and agreement. You're basically an independent contractor. You'll have to pay your own taxes and things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. When you show up and you pick things up, I assume that you have to log something in the app? Are there other...

Interviewee: Yes. When you go to the distribution, and this is when you're picking up packages specifically, they do scan your license.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: You're not able to pick that up without your license. They do not scan your license however at Whole Foods.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you scan each item that you pick up or with each package? I guess you scan each package, right?

Interviewee: Yes. When you get to the distribution location, you will get scanned in by somebody and once you get scanned in, there's racks that will have the batches on it depending on your time block. If you have a two hour or three hour, you will need to get a corresponding batch, a two hour or three hour. Then you'll need to scan and load in your car. When do you deliver, you scan again.

Interviewer: Okay. When you show up and leave it at someone's house, what do you have to record?

Interviewee: Yes. In the notes, it will usually tell you if it's something that needs a signature. If it's something that you can just leave, I find that most customers just want you to leave it. They don't want you to ring the doorbell on anything like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Is it the same with food from Whole Foods?

Interviewee: Yes and no. More people, I would ring the doorbell and let them know that I arrived just because it's perishable. I work in a city, if I take the city as my Whole Foods route, then I'm doing a lot of apartments. In that situation you kind of want to give good customer service and let them know that their groceries are there. You don't kind of want groceries sitting outside.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. Between your two jobs, how many hours do you end up working a week?

Interviewee: Maybe 60 to 75.

Interviewer: Wow. Does it feel like a lot of time or does that feel okay?

Interviewee: Not really. I feel like the shift with Amazon Prime go quickly. The other thing is if you finish with your route early, you're done. A lot of times I finished early.

Interviewer: It feels like an okay amount of time with work?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: How do you decide how many blocks you'll sign up for that week?

Interviewee: It just depends how I feel. The good thing also is I don't have to make a schedule for the whole week. Today I might see a block on there for Saturday and I can pick it for Saturday or I can just wait till Saturday and see what comes available. You don't really have to fully commit to a schedule like if you went to go work at a brick and mortar or a store. The days that I definitely work are Saturday and Sunday and then during the week I'll see how I'm feeling because my other job is a Monday through Friday. I'll see how I'm feeling and if I could pick up one or two shifts during the week.

Interviewer: Do you have to sign up that morning or how far in advance do you sign up for a block?

Interviewee: They have available now. Sometimes they'll have shifts at certain 30 minutes if they need people. The only thing is if you need to cancel, it has to be within 45 minutes before your shift is supposed to start.

Interviewer: Do you worry about, since we're getting close to it, do you worry about Black Friday?

Interviewee: I do kind of worry about Black Friday. I feel like it would be a great opportunity to make money, but I'm also a little nervous and I hope that the facility will have everything under control, so that it can be seamless.

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm sure. Has Amazon said anything about whether or not they'll pay you more for that time since it's so crazy?

Interviewee: I didn't work last holiday since I've only been here working for them for six months, but I've heard the pay is more during the holiday season.

Interviewer: That sounds good. You've heard you've heard that through...

Interviewee: From my group. In my groups, I hear these things.

Interviewer: With the shifts that you've ended up taking, do you know about how much you end up making an hour when you're driving with Amazon?

Interviewee: I usually always make more than \$18 hour. Just to give you an example, the shifts that I did at Whole Foods, I was going to say it was \$62 but I don't want to tell you wrong. I like it definitely better than the other ones just because you don't have to drive all over the world. I did a 5:30 to 8:30 that was like \$63 and that was packages. Just for example, I did a Whole Foods, a 1:30 to 3:30 and that was \$64. That was including tips.

Interviewer: Was that today?

Interviewee: I did that one last Sunday.

Interviewer: Last Sunday. Oh right, you said weekends.

Interviewee: That just gives you an idea. That's the other thing, at Whole Foods, you can get tips as well.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Not with packages, right?

Interviewee: No, no, no tips. That's a flat rate Amazon pays you.

Interviewer: Since you've been working with them, have you had to test any new software or features on the app?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Has anything else changed since you started working for them?

Interviewee: I've seen other people say things, but I haven't really. I haven't been working as long as them, I don't really see that as much to me, but some people say that they can't see blocks and all these other things, but I see blocks. I see a lot of afternoon blocks and weekend blocks. I do see blocks, but I haven't personally had any issues.

Interviewer: Do you think you'll still do this job in a couple of years?

Interviewee: I hope not. I hope that I will have been able to pay for my master's and that my first job will pay me some more money and I won't have to continue to work two jobs in five years.

Interviewer: Are you working two jobs and going to school?

Interviewee: I am going back to school. I just finished school like a year ago and I got my bachelor's, but now that I work at [State School], they're going to pay for my master's. I'm going to start that program in the summer. I have the certification program that I start in February, but right now I don't have any school that I have to go to. Thank God.

Interviewer: What kind of job are you working towards with your certification and stuff?

Interviewee: Right now I'm in the HR field. I'm a benefits specialist, so I'm looking to get my PHR.

Interviewer: Oh, very cool. Congrats. I hope it goes well.

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: I have just a few final questions. These are about sort of the future of work in technology. How do you feel about self driving cars?

Interviewee: I think it looks cool, but it's kind of scary at the same time.

Interviewer: Why scary?

Interviewee: It's technology. At the end of the day, they're just like human beings. They have kinks and things can happen. I would just be worried about that. I think that sometimes we rely on technology too much, so it would scare me that, yes you have that technology. I would personally pay attention to the road, but I know some people, they'll probably fall asleep because they just trust the car so much and that's scary.

Interviewer: How would you feel if Amazon said that they were going to start using self driving cars in their delivery group?

Interviewee: I don't think I would feel anyway. I feel like that's kind of where I see technology going and see where some of the tycoons are talking about, especially with, what's that company, I'm probably going to say it wrong. Tesla.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: They're already going in that direction, so it wouldn't necessarily surprise me. I just hope they get all the kinks out, but it wouldn't surprise me.

Interviewer: My last question was going to be, could you imagine Amazon doing that and it does that seem likely to you?

Interviewee: Maybe not today, but in the next five years, could I see it happen? Absolutely. I believe Uber or one of those companies are testing right now as well. I could see that in the near future. Absolutely.