

Interviewer: Great. So can you tell me about how you found your job with Amazon?

Interviewee: It was more out of curiosity and I just Googled online and found information about Amazon Selects and downloaded the app from there.

Interviewer: Oh, and then did you apply right away through the app?

Interviewee: I don't think I did it right away. Maybe I did maybe another day of research, and then I applied.

Interviewer: Yeah. How long have you been working with Amazon?

Interviewee: About two weeks now.

Interviewer: Oh, cool. So how many blocks have you done so far?

Interviewee: Two.

Interviewer: Two.

Interviewee: I have a third one tomorrow, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, cool. How have they been going?

Interviewee: Good. I can't really complain. I've done two different types of deliveries, so they have different types of blocks, basically, that you can pick up and select, and they're a little bit different on each one.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, getting used to the different protocols for each one has been probably the biggest challenge, I would say.

Interviewer: Yeah. What was the first block like?

Interviewee: It was for Prime Now, so it was delivering from Whole Foods deliveries. So, it was pretty simple. So, apparently those are the coveted blocks that everybody looks for, so I guess I lucked out getting it my first time. But it was pretty simple once I figured everything out within the app.

Interviewer: Yeah. Is it time of day that makes it really coveted or what about it's good?

Interviewee: I think it's because it's a short amount of time and because there's tips involved, it's a higher pay.

Interviewer: Oh, great. Yeah, so how much did you end up making per hour on that one?

Interviewee: Roughly about \$30 an hour with tips.

Interviewer: Oh, cool. Yeah, that sounds better than some of the other stuff I've seen.

Interviewee: I know.

Interviewer: Yeah, what did you do on the second block, if it was different?

Interviewee: That was delivering packages.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, so more traditional kind of Flex job?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Was it-

Interviewee: More of what you would expect with Amazon.

Interviewer: Was it more time?

Interviewee: Yes, it was four hours.

Interviewer: Oh, did that feel ... yeah, did you like doing a longer shift or was it hard?

Interviewee: No, it wasn't hard, it was just more driving. So, I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Do you notice, with the blocks, are they kind of spread out where you are over the course of the day or are they concentrated at night or on the weekends?

Interviewee: The ones that, I believe, the Flex drivers mostly see are in the afternoon. So most of the ones that that I've seen come up are usually anywhere from about 1:00, 1:30 to 5:30, 6:00. The Amazon Prime Now ones are more in the evening, so they're typically 7:30 to 9:30.

Interviewer: Yeah. Is there a time of day that you'd prefer to be working?

Interviewee: I like the evening ones a lot better. Less traffic, and just, it's easier.

Interviewer: Yeah. What was the application process like for getting the job?

Interviewee: It was relatively simple. So basically, just go in, you answer a few questions, you put in your information. In the app itself, it's outlined, so they kind of tell you the steps that you have to take in order to complete the process. They have you watch maybe 15, 10, 15 videos, all about the delivery process, how to be safe, what to expect, how you'll get paid, those types of things. How to look for the blocks, all of those kinds of things. At the end, they have you put in your driver's license information, and then once that verifies, they do a background check on you.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: That whole process maybe took 24 hours.

Interviewer: It was really fast.

Interviewee: Yeah. But I'm also in the Facebook groups that you've seen. Those, a lot of people are saying it's taken months to weeks, and I'm like, "Oh, I didn't realize it was [inaudible 00:06:24]." I guess mine was really, really fast.

Interviewer: Yeah. Can I ask what state you're working in?

Interviewee: [State].

Interviewer: [State], okay. Okay, interesting. With your third block, what kind of work are you going to end up doing?

Interviewee: It's also just the normal Amazon delivery stuff.

Interviewer: Okay. Is it also a four hour block?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Oh, I forgot to ask. With the training videos, how long was each video, were they similar?

Interviewee: Maybe about two minutes. Not very long at all.

Interviewer: Oh, for all of them-

Interviewee: You have access to them. Yeah, each one was about two minutes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So if you sat down and watched all of them, it would take a while. But-

Interviewee: Yeah, it was probably about 30 minutes total to watch all of them.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Okay, so the onboarding's also not too bad, it sounds like?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Then did you have a manager or anybody that you talked to when you were starting?

Interviewee: Nope.

Interviewer: Nope. Have you had anything go wrong yet?

Interviewee: Nope.

Interviewer: No. Do you know-

Interviewee: I did have some questions initially when I ... The first time I did the delivery system, I wasn't sure, as far as ... So my route, it's basically set up for you. They give you a route in the app that you can use. But based on how the delivery was set up, I had two deliveries that were near where I lived, and they were the first two deliveries according to their route system. So I wanted to make sure it was okay for me to adjust the order that they were in, because I wanted to finish where I lived, instead of having to drive completely opposite of that.

So, I just looked at everything I could within the app and it was all a delivery window of 8:00 to 10:00. So I just took it upon myself to say, "Okay, well, I'm just going to do the more economical route, so I'm not wasting gas and time." Kind of confirmed after the fact, and some of the groups that I found, that's what other people do as well. As long as you're within the window of delivery, then you're fine.

Interviewer: Yeah. Amazon tracks your location through the app, right?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: But so it wasn't like turn around, go back, do it in this order? Nothing [inaudible 00:08:41]

Interviewee: No, no, no. So I had four stops that first time and I basically would just click on one of them and say, "Give me directions to this one," and then they did. There was a warning that popped up that said, "You're going out of order, so just make sure you deliver within the proper amount of time." Then it allowed me to keep going.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, that doesn't seem too bad.

Interviewee: No, and it even gives you the option, you can actually open the address within Waze or another navigation system that you want to use for your preference.

Interviewer: That seems good.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, so when you showed up at Whole Foods, what did you have to do to log that you had picked up everything and that you were in the right place at the right time?

Interviewee: So when I left my house to start to head to Whole Foods to start it, I used their app to get the navigation to Whole Foods. So it basically told me where to go and where to park. Then in the app itself when it registered my geo locations, it basically prompted me to say I'm here. So I pushed that button and then it prompts you to check-in. So, you can't check-in more than 15 minutes before your block.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So I went ahead and pressed it, but it said it's too early, you'll have to wait until 15 minutes before. But when that 15 minutes before hit, it automatically checked me in, so I didn't have to do it again.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: Then maybe within a minute or two of that 15 minute mark, it gave me a route, asked me if I wanted to accept it. So I accepted it right away, because I've read some people have issues waiting too long to accept it and how it disappears and all sorts of stuff. So I didn't want to take any chances, so I just accepted it. Then once you accept it, it basically gives you instructions on where to go in the store.

So you go inside, they tell you to go in through the back of the store between seafood and meat, and there's a path on the floor that guides you in the direction to go. Then once you get in there, you can see all of your orders and all of the addresses and the customer names and each individual order based on its location, as far as where they've packaged it for you. But initially, I had issues, because it wasn't allowing me to scan the packages. So someone else suggested I close out of the app and go back in and that fixed it.

So then what it does is, it breaks down each person's order based on the location of it. So each bag, they have a chiller, they have a freezer and then they have a shelf. The shelf is for things that don't need to be refrigerated or frozen, obviously. Then as you pull in the back, put them into the cart to load in your car, you scan the QR code on the side of the bag, so then the app registers that you picked it up. Then once you've picked up everything, it allows you to start your delivery process.

Interviewer: Okay. How did it work for the normal packages?

Interviewee: Basically the same process. You go in, you go to the warehouse, you let them know that you're there to start your block, you check in through the app and it tells you where all your packages are located. You scan them into your car the same way as well. Once you saw all of the packages assigned to you through your routes, it allows you to go onto the delivery process.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Then once you get to each location, you have to also then scan the package as you deliver it. So that's kind of their fail safe in making sure that you've picked up everything and are delivering everything.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you live near the warehouse to pick stuff up or a Whole Foods?

Interviewee: The Whole Foods is about, I want to say maybe 20 minutes from where I live. The warehouse, it just depends on which one, because there are multiple. The one that I did previously was in [city], the new one I'm doing is in [city 2]. But thereabouts, those were both about 30 minutes.

Interviewer: Yeah. I guess if you're doing a four hour route, that's not too bad.

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: How many packages do you end up delivering in a four hour block?

Interviewee: Let me think. I think it was about 35.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, so it was a lot?

Interviewee: Yeah, but it's not just one package to a stop sometimes, sometimes it could be multiple.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Were there big distances between places or do they try to keep you in similar neighborhoods?

Interviewee: They try. Yeah, they try to keep you as close as possible. I would say the Prime Now is a little bit more spread out than what the regular deliveries are.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Because the Prime Now was ... even though I was still kind of in the general same quadrants, I would say of the of the city, there was probably 30 minutes driving between the farthest two points.

Interviewer: Yeah. Can you imagine taking on more blocks in the future?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. How many-

Interviewee: I would if I could, but they're just very scarce.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah? How many would you like to do in a week?

Interviewee: I would say, depending on if it's a Prime Now versus the regular blocks, I would do maybe three or four a week.

Interviewer: Okay. So, do you do other work or do you have other things that you're doing during the week?

Interviewee: Yeah, I have a full-time job as well.

Interviewer: Oh, so this is additional part-time income?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, this is for Christmas.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. I was going to ask, are you worried about Black Friday and the holiday rush?

Interviewee: No, I'm hoping it picks up, to be honest. Because from what it's been explained to me, you're just kind of the slack pick up, to pick up the extra work that they can't cover, based on supply and demand of just additional orders that they didn't anticipate.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you heard through the groups or through anybody else about what to expect for Black Friday and the holiday rush?

Interviewee: No, not really. Some people had said that they don't think it's going to pick up as much as what they think, but some people are basically banking on it, so we shall see. There are some people that have said that it'll pick up through Christmas, and then after the holidays, with returns and stuff like that. But I think after the first of the year, it'll basically be nonexistent for people that are Flex drivers.

Interviewer: Yeah. how did you end up finding the Facebook groups?

Interviewee: Just by searching.

Interviewer: Yeah, did you know they existed or were you curious?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: You found them.

Interviewee: I was just like, "There's got to be something for us to be able to ask questions." Because I did try to reach out to Amazon my first night to ask some questions, just because I wasn't sure, based on if I could go out of order, if it said no recipient required or don't knock, don't ring, if that just meant I would leave it by the front door. Just some of those little things that ... they just don't have a frequently asked questions or anything like that posted anywhere. That wasn't in the help section, so there's probably somewhere this would be able to ask that. Sure enough, there were a few groups that I found.

Interviewer: Yeah. How does the Amazon Flex work compare to other work that you've done before?

Interviewee: Well, I've never done anything like this before.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah?

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm a full-time professional during the day.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: This was just one of the things that we ... A few of my friends and I were walking around for Halloween and we saw a bunch of people doing Amazon deliveries out of their cars, personal vehicles in plain dress and everything. I'm like, "I wonder if they make a lot of money doing that?" That's kind of what triggered my interest in it and where I started looking into it and saw the ranges that people could make. What really interested me was the flexibility. I don't have to do it, you can cancel a block up to 45 minutes before

without being penalized. So should something come up or my schedule needs to change, that flexibility was there.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, do you think of yourself as someone who is freelancing for Amazon or how do you think about this job?

Interviewee: Yeah, I would say as a freelancer.

Interviewer: Yeah. Can you imagine doing this for a couple of years?

Interviewee: Yeah, I don't see why not.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: As long as there aren't any major issues that come up or gas prices don't get crazy or anything along those lines, then I can't see why not. It's a nice way to be able to pick up some extra money when you need it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Because you mentioned also that you were doing this with the holiday in mind.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, would you take some time off in the wintertime or do you think even post-holiday you might keep doing it?

Interviewee: If it presented itself, I don't see why not.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I have two more left sort of about ... it's a different line of questions. It's sort of about the future of work. How do you feel about self-driving cars?

Interviewee: I mean, as long as they're safe, I don't see any issue with them.

Interviewer: Yeah. Could you imagine Amazon using them in their fleet?

Interviewee: Potentially.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I could see it being beneficial. I mean, if they're potentially still going to have the people on there to help deliver the stuff, I can see the benefit of having it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay, great. I'm going to stop recording now.