

Goal of the Interview

The main goal of the user interview was to understand the needs, behaviors, and challenges of warehouse managers who might use a platform to post freelance jobs for loading and unloading cargo. I wanted to learn more about their daily routines, the problems they face, and what they would hope to get out of a system like the one we are imagining. The class mock up interview helped clearing this by presenting this process with Instacart.

What Went Well

One of the strengths of the interview was the use of open-ended questions. Instead of yes or no answers, the participant was encouraged to share stories about their daily work and specific examples. This provided detailed insights than a survey would have since each owner or manager have unique experiences. Another positive aspect the natural feel of the interview questions. By beginning with background questions, the participant felt more at ease and gradually opened up about frustrations and needs. It's like getting to know the person a little to build a bond and understand the person better.

What Could Have Been Improved

Looking back, I think the interview could have been more organized. At times, I shifted between topics without a clear order, moving from daily routines to frustrations and then back to tools they use. A smoother structure would have helped the conversation flow better. I also noticed that some questions were too broad. For example, instead of asking, "What are the biggest challenges you face?" I could have asked, "Can you describe a time when a shipment was delayed because of a staffing shortage?" That kind of question would have led to a more detailed story. I also realized I did not always follow up when the participant hinted at an issue. It's important to respond coherently to their problem so they feel like I understand rather than moving onto the next question. Pausing to ask for clarification or an example would have given me deeper insights as well.

Insights Gathered

From the interview, I learned that flexibility with staffing is one of the warehouse manager's top concerns. Freight volume can spike without warning, and even with regular staff and overtime, it is not always enough. The manager explained that delays affect more than their own operations, since they also cause problems for clients and sometimes lead to penalties. Another important insight was that trust and reliability are big concerns with freelance work which was also a concern of mine going into this. Managers worry that temporary workers might not show up, might lack training, or might not follow safety rules. This means any platform we design would

need to include strong safeguards, such as worker verification, reviews, and possibly training requirements. It would be very useful if these freelancers and companies had profiles that can be reviewed such as Uber. A company or freelancers could be reviewed at the end of each job to express how the job went so that they can be viewed by others in the future.

What Surprised Me

I was surprised by how open the participant was to the idea of paying per job instead of hourly (which has been the case most of the time in real-world). I assumed managers would stick with the hourly model since it is traditional, but they saw potential in incentive-based pay for increasing efficiency and work ethic. I also did not expect how many different methods managers already use to fill gaps, from temp agencies to overtime to calling in help from other facilities. This confirmed for me that staffing is a constant challenge and that a digital solution could offer real value by making the process simpler.

What I Would Do Differently

If I were to conduct this interview again, I would prepare a clearer structure by starting with background questions, then moving into daily routines, frustrations, expectations, and closing thoughts. I would also focus more on asking questions that leads the interviewee to specify on certain scenarios because those tend to lead to stories and examples. Finally, I would be more comfortable leaving space for silence, since sometimes the most useful details come after the participant has had a moment to think.

Conclusion

Overall, the interview gave me valuable insights into the daily challenges warehouse managers face. It showed the importance of trust, flexibility, and efficiency in a freelance staffing platform. While my approach could improve with more structure and better follow-up, the experience made it clear that user interviews are an essential step in designing a system that meets real needs.