Hello there. Thanks for listening in to another Career Cast. This is Heather Sprandel with the Walton College Career Development Center. I’m very excited to have our guest here today. It’s Matt Schuppe, who is the area human resources manager for Sherwin Williams. And he is actually an alum of the Walton College with a BSBA’98 in management and human resources. Welcome to Career Cast Matt.

Matt:    Thank you, Glad to be here.

Heather: Thank you. I’m going to ask you some questions just so we can educate our listeners as to a little bit about you and your background as well as Sherwin Williams as a company and why they might want to consider working or interning there.

Matt:    Ok.

Heather: Maybe you could just give us a little information about you and your career background.

Matt:    Ok. Well actually I started working for Sherwin Williams when I was a freshman here at the U of A. I worked there my freshman through senior year and had an opportunity to join Sherwin Williams when I graduated college. I’ve been there for about 12 years. I’ve been everything from being a field auditor to working in one of our stores, to compensation and now in the different roles as HR managers in a couple of our different facilities and locations.

Heather: Ok, so you said you interned there. What drove you to actually select them as a company to intern at? Did you look at other companies as well?

Matt:    I did. And I think the biggest thing was the opportunity. The fact that I was able to experience many different things, more of a business generalist role to understand all of the different duties and responsibilities that it takes to go into managing one of your own businesses. I think that was really attractive to me, that it wasn’t a desk job and a lot of variety and challenges every day.

Heather: Some students say that paint isn’t sexy as an industry.

Matt:    Sure.

Heather: Could you touch on that, what you think.

Matt:    Yeah, and I agree. It’s one of those things that when you first think about it why would I…I thought the same thing. I never saw myself being in the paint business, but its, I think, with anything, no matter what the business is, no matter what the product is, its more about, you know, once you begin to understand the opportunity, and what kind of career you have. Be it paint or clothing or general products it doesn’t matter, it’s more about the opportunity and the fact that you can get involved and learn the products, understand how they impact our customers, and get into the opportunity to grow and advance your career based upon your performance. You kind of like it over time, because it’s not just paint, it’s more about getting into the opportunities, getting to work with builders and contractors and designers and decorators and all different kinds of customers. You can learn a lot more about what they do and kind of get to see things that the general public doesn’t see and be a part of some really neat projects.
Heather: So does someone whose coming into an internship or full time position. Does Sherwin Williams put a lot of emphasis on training and educating that person as a new employee? And if so how?

Matt: Yeah there’s a lot of different ways. First and foremost in each division within our stores group has a dedicated division training center. We run several different classes through that training center every year. Examples being new store manager classes, experienced store manager classes, new store assistant manager classes, our manager training class, our intern class. And in our stores we have our training program, its called START. It stands for Store Training and Reference Tool. There’s several different levels and modules as a part of that program for all of our employees in our stores to learn more about the business, the products, and anything from customer service, or trade mark service as we call it, to the basics of paint, paint terms, paint technology, these types of things, learning about brushes and rollers and other parts of our business. So it’s very extensive and it’s something that changes every year. We’ve come from where it was all book lined and now most of it is interactive and can be done through our store computer system and through home and different things like that. So it’s pretty engaging and empowering and allows our employees to always have that reference there, things that they are required to learn. Each job has certain classes and courses that you must complete to become job certified before you can actually apply for promotions.

Heather: You mentioned a lot of management type positions. But you don’t just look at management majors when you recruit? You look at all business majors is that right?

Matt: That’s right we look at all business majors because its one of those things where we’re very confident in the training programs we have to be able to bring you in and teach you what you need to work in our business and to manage our business. So it’s more about just having a good general business knowledge, and the want to learn more and have that opportunity to put that into play, and use a lot of things that, for myself as a student the things that I learned in the classroom that had a direct impact on the things that I learned while I was training.

Heather: When you look at resumes, and I’m sure you see a lot of them, what stands out on a resume that makes you want to call that person in for an interview?

Matt: I think first and foremost is it easy to read, is the format good? There’s maybe a catching or an empowering objective, something that’s focused on what they really want to do, what their career goal is. And I think also just their work experience. If you can look at, be it work experience or different clubs or organizations or other leadership opportunities that students had to be able to participate it, either formally or informally, those are things that are very attractive to us. And its just one of those things that if it’s well laid out and it has some good experience and there’s no errors and no mistakes. They get the name of the company right. You know they’re looking for an opportunity with Sherwin Williams not Sherman Williams or Sherwin Wilson, or whatever it could be. Take the time to know who your audience is.

Heather: And what is your favorite interview question?

Matt: Wow, there’s a lot. I think the one that I seem to like the most is: “What do you expect in an employer?” We talk a lot about from a candidate perspective of what we expect of them. But taking the time to talk to a perspective candidate about what they expect from us and being able to have that conversation. I think that’s one I enjoy it the most, just because it gives us an
opportunity to explore and have that discussion. And it seems a lot of times you find that students really didn’t think about that. That didn’t know that they could have expectations of their employer.

Heather: Sure. That’s a good one.
If you could describe Sherwin Williams in one word, what would it be and why?

Matt: Wow, one word. I would say exciting. And I think the reason for that is the opportunities, the career potential, and the fact that it’s a dynamic, fast paced environment where you’re going to come into contact with a lot of different people, build some really special relationships, and have a lot of fun along the way.

Heather: Great. Well thank you Matt. We appreciate you being here.

Matt: Thank you.

Please listen in to our next Career Cast. Thanks again. This is Heather Sprandel and my guest, Matt Schuppe, signing off.