Thank you for listening to this version of Career Cast. Career Casts are podcasts from the Sam M. Walton College of Business Career Development Center. My name is Renee Clay. My podcasting partner today is a special guest, its Laurie Gram. Laurie is the supervisor for human resources for USA Truck. USA Truck is on our campus today recruiting Walton College students. And this podcast is part of a series of podcasts that highlight companies, different industries, and is designed to give you general information about the kinds of companies that are out there and the kinds of opportunities they may have for you.

Renee: So Laurie, will you tell us a little bit about USA Truck?

Laurie: USA Truck is a medium haul trucking or transportation company. We haul freight through the 48 United States. We also go into Canada and also into Mexico. Our corporate headquarters is based in Van Buren Arkansas. So we’re about 45 minutes away, but still close enough that we’re in the vicinity.

Renee: Laurie I know that USA Truck has a very active, very intense, very creative management trainee program. Can you share with our listeners a little bit about that management trainee program? That’s the entry level job with USA Truck, is that right?

Laurie: That’s definitely the case. Our management trainee program is a very big program in our company. It’s an entry level position for recent college graduates. You usually spend about four to six months going through all of the major departments of our companies. So you usually spend about two weeks or so in each department, depending on the size of the department. And you basically get a broad overview for how the whole company works in general. So, we believe that that will give you an advantage when you do get placed in your permanent position, because you’ll know not only how that specific position works, but how all of the departments work together.

Renee: Tell me, you’re a recruiter, you’ve been recruiting for a long time, tell me what do you guys look for in a candidate? What are the characteristics of your ideal candidate?

Laurie: We usually, we look for someone that’s very goal oriented, very confident about their abilities and the skills they already have, along with, I guess, we’re wanting someone who is willing to put in the hard work, to start out in an entry level position and move up and advance through the company.

Renee: How do you feel about resumes? What do you want to see on a resume?

Laurie: Resumes. Make them as simple as possible. We don’t like a lot of graphics or things like that. As long as they are basically just straightforward about your education, what kind, if any, work experience you may have, all the affiliations you may have going through college with different clubs and things like that. That’s what we’re looking for in a resume. So as long as it’s very easy to read and just very straightforward, that’s what we’re looking for.
Renee: So maybe, an education section, a section that talks about work experience, and I’m assuming work experience that is both relevant to transportation logistics but you’re probably interested in any kind of work experience?

Laurie: Definitely. We’re always looking for the students that have the transportation logistics experience. But that’s not just our main focus for the program. We’re looking for all business majors, and even non business majors for that fact. So we want to see all of the work experience that you’ve had because it could definitely relate to our company in some aspect.

Renee: And then maybe a campus leadership, or a community…just a leadership section in general.

Laurie: Sure.

Renee: You’ve been interviewing for a long time. Share with our audience what your favorite interview question is.

Laurie: My favorite interview question would have to be when I ask them what they’ve tried and failed at, and how they handled it and what they learned from it, because you just never know what kind of answer you’re going to get from a student. And it may be something that, you know, they tried out for a ball team or tried out for some kind sport and they failed at it and they worked harder. Or it could be that they studied really hard for a test and they didn’t get the grade that they expected. So sometimes you get some really funny stories out of that question.

Renee: I bet you do. We talked about the management trainee program. I want to talk about growth opportunities with USA Truck. Somebody maybe that is progressing through the management trainee program, what could an employee expect with regard to growth opportunities with USA Truck?

Laurie: The management training program is a very aggressive program, we expect that once you finish the program and actually get put into your permanent position that you will be moving up through the company and advance probably within the first year and half to two years that you’re with the company. So there’s definitely a lot of advancement potential there. It just goes back to, you know, what you put into it when you actually get into the program.

Renee: One of the, as you probably know, one of the concentrations for the management majors here in the Walton College, is an entrepreneurship kind of concentration. Would you say that given USA Trucks growth goals, it sounds like there are some aggressive growth goals…would you say that an opportunity with USA Truck would be one that might appeal to some of our more entrepreneurial kinds of students?

Laurie: I definitely think so. We’re looking for students, once they get into this program, we want them of course to learn the knowledge of our company, the culture of our
company. But we’re also looking for students who are going to be creative and give new ideas on how we can improve things and be more efficient as a company. So I definitely think that someone that has an entrepreneurial aspect to them would definitely be a benefit to our company and definitely an asset.

We want to thank Laurie Gram. Laurie again is the supervisor for human resources. She’s with USA Truck headquartered in Van Buren Arkansas. Laurie has been our guest pod casting partner today as part of a series of pod casts that will highlight companies, so that you can begin to make some decisions about a major, about opportunities that may be available to you when you finish, about internships. We want this to be informational for you. My name is Renee Clay. Laurie and I have been coming to you from the Sam M. Walton College of Business Career Development Center on the campus of the University of Arkansas. This has been another Career Cast and we hope you listen to the next one.