

MATCHING COMPANY CULTURE

What is the company culture and how to find the right place for you?

Landing a great job is not just about getting an offer and earning a paycheck. Loving your job is about finding the right company culture for you in an environment aligned with your values and beliefs.

Working at a company with values inconsistent with yours is stressful and unrewarding. The quality of your work life is also directly correlated to your supervisor's attitudes, values, and beliefs. A person's values significantly affect their behaviour and hence how you are treated. No matter how great the position, if you're working in a caustic, understaffed and unethical culture, you'll feel unfulfilled.

The job interview is your opportunity to assess the work

environment and organisational norms. But how can you assess the culture while you're being interviewed?

Organisational culture comprises of the values, behaviours, beliefs and norms that permeate the group. Culture is expressed through words and behaviours of each employee. It is like a recipe where each person is an ingredient. The company or the department leadership set the overall tone.

When interviewers say "the candidate fits" or "doesn't fit" to describe a candidate's qualifications, what they really saying is the candidate fits or doesn't fit the company culture.

To perpetuate corporate culture, companies hire people they feel "fit"

and reject qualified candidates whom they believe "don't fit" their culture. During each interview, you have an opportunity to assess how the culture aligns with your values. Rarely will you find an environment totally aligned with your values. You can, however, find organisations where the culture and your values can coexist.

Clues to company culture can be found in the interviewer's behaviour and their words. Below is a list of organisational cultural indicators.

- How you are treated?
- What phrases are frequently used by the interviewers?
- Is there a theme or unspoken tone to the questions you're asked?

- How does the environment feel to you?
- How prepared are the interviewers? Are they on time?
- Are your responses to their questions treated with suspicion or professional curiosity?

Questions you can ask about an organisation's culture are listed below.

- Please describe the company or department culture?
- How does the company (team) handle conflict or differing opinions?
- How does the company recognise employee accomplishments?
- Please describe the leadership or managerial style at your company?

- What qualities do the most successful employees in your company possess?
 - What is the company's attitude towards professional and educational advancement?
- Job interviews are business events where your talents are evaluated. They are also your opportunity to evaluate how the company's culture compliments your values – a critical factor in your job success and satisfaction.

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