



QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

1. Does the organization have a stated set of values?

A progressive department/company is aware of its influence and has thought about the values they want to promote both within their organization and outside with its constituents. If they have no written values, research whether they have a mission statement, which may provide you insight into their priorities. Ask how they translate their values/mission into action and how that will impact the position for which you are interviewing.

2. What kind of employee achievements are recognized and in what ways?

Their answer will reflect their values, particularly in terms of their treatment of their employees, and especially if they offer unique ways to acknowledge and encourage staff.

3. What does it take for someone to be successful here?

What kind of personal characteristics are they seeking? Risk-taking? Initiative? Ability to be a team player? Take note of the personal traits they encourage and reward. If you are able to ask earlier in the interview, direct your answers to demonstrate how you have those characteristics (provided you do, of course).

4. Please describe the work environment here.

Listen to the adjectives that the interviewer uses. On what aspects of working there does the interviewer focus? The team camaraderie, the career development opportunities, or the great breakfast bar?

5. How often does the organization have all staff meetings?

What does their answer say about management's priority to keep their employees informed?

6. How often do smaller teams meet? What are some examples of teams and committees that may be available to me in this position?

The answer may provide you clues as to the channels of communication within the organization.

7. In what kind of sponsorships or philanthropic activities does the organization participate?

Do they support programs, such as a "take-our-children-to-work day" or "bike-to-work day"?
Do they encourage participation in a charity (or provide specific time off for you to do so)?
Does they steer clear of such activities? Are you comfortable with what they support?