

Career Research: Things to Think About

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPANY:

1. What does the company or organization do?
2. What is the organization's culture like (egalitarian/hierarchical? formal/informal? good corporate citizen or just profit? etc. Does this match your own style?
3. How do they treat their employees? (exploitative or supportive? good benefits? family-friendly? flexible with regard to working hours? overtime required? travel required? etc).
4. When you visit, do the employees look happy or harried? What do they say about what it's like to work there?
5. Is the industry growing or facing challenges? Is this company well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities and challenges in the industry? What are the company's strengths and weaknesses relative to its competition?
6. Are there specific career tracks within the organization? In other words, what can a typical employee expect to be doing 2, 5, or 10 years after hiring?

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR POSITION:

1. What work will you be doing there during the first year? What responsibilities will you have? How much work will be routine? how much autonomy will you have? what scope exists for decision-making and creativity?
2. What knowledge and skills does the job require?
3. What knowledge and skills can you expect to learn? (esp. important for interns). Does the company have seminars and training workshops, or is training more informal?
4. What opportunities for advancement exist? What can you expect to be doing in two years? Five years?
5. If a technical position: what kinds of equipment do they have? Is it adequate? state of the art?
6. Who will supervise and evaluate your work, and how?
7. Will you be working alone or as part of a team? Does this match your own preferred style?
8. Will the job use the skills you have?
9. Are graduate degrees important to advancing within the organization? Which ones?
10. How many years does the typical employee stay with the company or organization? If you are talking to someone that works there, you can ask what they like about the company, why they stay, etc.