

# Why values and culture matter so much

Arguably the most important step in your job search is determining how well your own values align with those of your potential new employer. To find the right role it is absolutely key to go beyond the technical requirements and consider the culture of the organisation.

Poor values alignment is one of the most common reasons we see people seeking a new role. For almost all senior candidates we see, this becomes the defining consideration. And for early and midcareer candidates, the experience of a poor or negative workplace culture can have lasting consequences.

## Understanding values and culture in your job search

Values and culture are the skeleton of an organisation. They provide the rules of play, whether spoken or unspoken. When difficult discussions or decisions inevitably arise, the values and culture of the organisation guide how to navigate these challenges. They can be the most important ingredient for a satisfying job. And if the company's values are not clear or your own values do not align, this can hinder you in your role.

An organisation's culture can be hard to assess from the outside. Some companies don't articulate their values, which, in itself, says a lot.

And when a company states its values, how do you assess whether the business lives by those values, or just puts them on the wall? How do you determine if this will be an environment where you will feel comfortable, valued and encouraged to reach your potential?

### Know your own values

To secure strong cultural and values alignment, you need clarity around your own values.

- What are your core beliefs and convictions?
- What is really important to you?
- What is your personal purpose?

If answering these questions is difficult, consider seeking assistance.

## Values and culture checklist



### Purpose

What is the organisation's purpose?



### Alignment

Are my values aligned?



### Respect

How do staff treat each other?



### Behaviours

Are poor behaviours tolerated?



### Diversity

How diverse is the organisation?

## Culture and the board

Together with the CEO and the leadership team, the board is responsible for driving the culture and the values of the business. If you are looking at senior roles, the composition and direction of the board should act as a key compass for you. A good board has a broad skills matrix and a diverse makeup. The board of an organisation should set the tone for the business's culture.

# Use our values and culture checklist to ask the right questions

Good organisations have clarity around their culture and values. Yet there is also a personal element, where you yourself need to determine where your own values align with a business. Use our values and culture checklist as a framework to develop a strong understanding of your potential employer.



## Purpose

**What is the organisation's purpose?  
What is its reputation?**

Tip: What does the organisation stand for, and how well do they live their purpose in the real world? Do they demonstrate a commitment to good governance, sustainability (and ESG) and the communities in which they operate? Search past news articles relating to the company. What type of coverage do they receive?



## Alignment

**Are my values aligned?  
Will I feel respected when there are differences of opinion?**

Tip: Consider how you are treated through the interview process. Observe interactions between other staff within the organisation. Try to meet informally, away from their building, at least once before accepting the role.



## Respect

**How are team members treated?  
How does the company treat you during interactions?**

Tip: Watch the behaviour and body language of the senior staff when more junior team members speak. Ideally they are attentive and encouraging, not distracted, dismissive or disrespectful. Listen to the 'little voice in your head' – your gut instinct is important.



## Behaviours

**How do they deal with poor behaviour in the workplace?  
Are poor behaviours tolerated?**

Tip: Ask if they have policies on workplace behaviour in place and then watch and listen to how they respond. Organisations that proactively address poor behaviour in the workplace will take this question seriously.



## Diversity

**Can I be myself there?  
Do they support diversity?**

**Do I have a sense that I will belong?**

Tip: Look at the board. How diverse is the board, in terms of gender, culture, range of past careers? Look at staff coming and going at lunchtime or after work. What is the overall profile of staff? And look at the profile of your interviewers.

**“If you are not sure this is the right role don't take it.  
Listen to the little voice. The right role will come along”**

– Stephen Moir

## The role of the finance professional across sectors

The finance function is one of the most transferable when considering career progression across sectors. It is generally not necessary to have a specific sector-based match between your own previous experience and the business you are considering.

Cultural fit is more important than a sector-based match.  
This is particularly the case as you become more senior.

**At Moir Group, we're here to partner with you throughout your career. If you would like help to find the right role or candidate, please get in contact today.**