How to Interview for Culture Fit

Company culture is one of the five most important factors job seekers consider before accepting a new job, according to a Glassdoor survey. In our Top 25 Companies for Culture & Values list, we found shared themes including having a supportive, team-oriented atmosphere, a family-like environment and genuinely standing behind company values.

Tips on Interviewing Candidates for a Culture Fit

1. **Assess General Cultural Fit**
   To elicit a candidate’s values and work behaviors, ask questions about work habits, ideal role, problem-solving and how they handle challenges (see the next page for examples). For each question, analyze the response based on how well it complements the way other employees at your company function.

2. **Showcase Company Values**
   List your company’s values, then craft an associated question designed to illuminate how a candidate might react or behave in that environment or circumstance. For example, if “agility” is one of your values, consider asking a question like, “Tell me about a time you were thrown into a new environment and how you handled that.” Evaluate the response based on how well the candidate demonstrates they can embody that value.

3. **Present Team Culture**
   Every team has its own culture based on the natural function of the role and the personalities within it. A talkative, assertive personality might be a perfect fit for a high-energy sales team, but not within a more quiet, analytical department like engineering. Ask the hiring manager to identify key traits of the team and craft a question for each. For example, if you’re looking for someone scrappy, ask a situational question about what the candidate would do in a given situation with limited resources.

4. **Get Outside the Office**
   Take candidates to lunch, for a walk or to a coffee shop. Observe how they treat service workers and cope with any challenges like a crowded street, a long line or weather. A more casual setting outside the interview room will more closely reveal their character.

5. **Beware of Bias**
   Many people have an unconscious tendency to make assumptions about a person based on appearance, background or hobbies. They also tend to want to be around people just like them. To ensure diversity on your teams, make sure candidates for the same position are evaluated on the same objective criteria.