3 questions to Ask HR Before you Join Your New Company

Whether you're starting your first job, are interviewing with a new company, or are changing career paths completely, it's important that you take the time to understand the work environment you're entering into before you sign an employment contract.

While it might seem strange to 'interview' your employer just as they've interviewed you, without this important step, you could find yourself belly up to a desk in an office you're not comfortable in. And, as a recruitment agency, we know better than anyone that the structure, culture, and goals of a company affect the 'fit' just as much as the individual job description and financial benefits do.

Based on the experience of our staff and our industry knowledge, here are the three questions you must ask HR before your join your new company.

How Will My Performance Be Measured?

When taking a new job, it's vital that you know what success looks like and what they are expecting you to accomplish at key milestones (3, 6 and 12 months). While your job description should outline what's expected of you day-to-day, knowing how your performance will be measured (and by who) will give you some insight as to how feasible success actually is. It's important to ask this question before you start so that, in the case of unreasonable expectations, you can manage them.

This also gives you a chance to evaluate what the company values in its employees. Are they looking for someone to form strong relationships throughout the company and with clients? Are they concerned about the amount of time you spend in the office and the sheer amount of projects you complete? Is individual growth important?

The answer to this question will also offer some insight into what's expected before you're given a promotion or raise. For those who are eager to rise through the ranks, this is key.

How Would You Describe the Company Culture?

More than ever, company and corporate culture is a selling point for potential employees. This is especially the case for millenials, who value company culture above all else.

In defining the culture of a company, you're defining its values, hierarchy, and overall image. Even without asking, the culture can be seen everywhere, from how employees dress, to how the senior team interacts with the junior team, to how often people stay at work after hours. These 'small' tendencies shape the organisation as a whole and

will, in the long-term, influence your overall happiness in your role. This, of course, effects staff retention. If you feel that you fit in and that you're 'part of the team, you'll work harder, longer.

You have to ask yourself what's important to you and make your decision based off of that.

Are There Opportunities For Cross-Training?

Some companies are keen to place someone in a role and keep them there. Others look forward to the possibility of finding one person who can wear many hats. If you're the type of person who's always looking to further their education and is interested in new opportunities, make sure your future employer is prepared to offer you those new opportunities.

Ask HR if it's possible to be introduced to a mentor or career development manager in more than one field. You might even ask if the company offers incentives for going back to school or for additional training. This will tell you a lot about the company and your potential to grow within it.

When asking any of these questions, it's important that you really listen to the answer. While the reputation of a company, the salary/benefits, and the job title got you in the door, it's the culture, success measurements, and opportunities for growth that will keep you happy in a role.