

## **7 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE ACCEPTING A NEW JOB**

"The money sounds good, and so do the benefits.  
But am I making the right decision?"

After all the work you've put into looking for a new position, when an offer comes through, it's easy to accept it and end your search. If it is the right offer, go for it!

So how do you know?

In addition to the salary, benefits and other perks of the new job, you'll want to know what is available in the department and organization to ensure your success. It's also important to know what is *not* available but that you will be expected or need to provide for yourself. Many of these things you will have learned in your research and talking with people about the company as well as the formal interviews. Here are seven areas and sample questions\* worth exploring before you say, "yes." Not all of these questions are appropriate for all jobs, but many may be critical for your success. Consider all seven categories and discuss the issues that are appropriate and relevant for you.

**Responsibilities**      **Authority**  
**Resources**            **Measures**  
**Relationships**        **Culture**  
**Career Opportunities**

**Responsibilities** – You need to know what is expected of you in terms of accomplishments, relationships and other expectations.

1. What are the major responsibilities of the position? What are the priorities?
2. What situations need immediate attention? What would you like to have done in the next 3 months?
3. What are some of the long-term objectives you would like to see completed?
4. What qualifications are needed to be successful?
5. Beyond the job description, what are the boss's expectations? What does he/she want to avoid?
6. What are some of the more difficult problems one would have to face in this position? How do you think these could best be handled?
7. What significant changes do you foresee in the near future?

**Resources** – Many organizations fully support a quick ramp-up for you to become a contributing member of the team. Others rely on the resources you bring to the role.

1. What experience, knowledge and tenure do the people in the department have? Can you meet them as part of your interviewing process?

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2. What type of orientation and training is available? Who can show you the ropes?
3. What budget is available and how is it administered?
4. Is the technology is appropriate for you to be successful?
5. Is the physical environment conducive for your success? (Office space and location, computers, lab, physical accommodations, etc.)
6. What travel is expected to successfully accomplish the goals and objectives? How are the arrangements made and handled?

**Relationships** –We depend on good working relationships with others for our mutual success.

1. What roles does this position play in the organization?
2. What are the reporting relationships?
3. What are the corporate and inter-departmental relationships? Do they support this department's goals?
4. What are the vendor/client relationships?
5. What are the relationships among your potential team/staff members?
6. Who are the champions, allies or opponents or competitors of this company or department's goals?
7. What are the personality styles and preferences among your potential boss and co-workers?

**Authority** – Making good decisions is crucial in all jobs requiring experience and knowledge. It's important to know what decisions you can make independently and when input or approval from others is needed.

1. Who would you supervise/manage in this position?
2. What are the guidelines or procedures for making decisions in this position?
3. What is the level of financial responsibility?
4. What input or responsibility for budget is expected?
5. Would you have authority to hire or terminate employees to meet the goals and objectives?
6. What freedom would you have in determining your own work objectives, deadlines, and methods of measurement?

**Measures** – No one likes to find out that what they thought was important to work on did not meet their manager's objectives.

1. Find out if there is an established set of metrics (revenues, quotas, timeliness, cost containment, etc.) for the role or if you will be mutually developing them.
2. If there is a formal appraisal system, how does it work?
3. How often is performed reviewed – formally and informally?
4. What accounts for success within the company?
5. What work hours are expected? Are there anticipated fluctuations in these (seasonal, new projects, etc.)?
6. How are the short and long-term goals of the position measured?
7. How is successful performance rewarded?

**Culture** – This is a matter of individual style and 'fit' with the people and way the organization does business. This dovetails into all the above areas.

1. What is the management style?
2. How are customers/clients and vendors viewed?

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3. Is the organization environment formal or informal, flexible or structured? Ask for examples such as how meetings are conducted.
4. How do people typically communicate – in person, e-mail/I-messages, phone, etc?
5. Do they operate in a centralized or decentralized manner?
6. Why is the position open? How long has it been open?
7. What is the turnover rate and reasons?
8. Are there any current tensions or HR/EEO issues?
9. Are there any internal candidates being considered for the position?
10. How are resources allocated and managed?
11. Why do people like to work here?
12. How do people have fun with each other?

**Career Opportunities** – Although some people just want to go to work, do the job and go home, many are also looking for how they can advance in their careers.

Consider how this job can further your own career goals.

1. How would this job prepare you toward your ideal job?
2. What is the career path from this job?
3. What happened to the person who previously held this job?
4. How does this organization, and the boss, view individual career development?
5. What professional development activities are encouraged and supported? (Such as professional certifications, association memberships.)
6. What opportunities are there to meet, talk and work with people in other parts of the organization?
7. What 'fast track' programs are available?
8. What is the merger or acquisition strategy, and the history of those actions?

Although there may not be answers, or the answers you wanted to your questions, employers may be impressed with your depth of thinking. You will make a better decision and stay in charge of your career when you incorporate this information with everything else you know about the company and the type of work it does. Combine this with your list of values, benefits and salary requirement to make the best possible decision.

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