**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ASKING AT THE END OF YOUR INTERVIEW:**

**Culture Question #1: What’s the difference between a good employee in this role and a fantastic one?**

Lucas loves this question because it’s a covert way to get a glimpse into whether a company’s core values, like innovation or creativity, are aligned with yours. “Most jobs can be done 100 different ways, but a company’s culture — or even a specific department’s culture—often dictates what’s important,” she says.

So, what should you hear? Answers that involve working well with others, being a great communicator, and being an effective leader.

As for red-flag responses to watch out for, be wary if an interviewer mentions traits that sound like unattainable personal victories — such as winning a lot of awards and being chummy with the CEO — or the ability to exceed results-driven expectations at all times.

**Culture Question #2: What’s the process for on-boarding employees, and how do you handle beginner mistakes?**

Asking about the kind of support that’s provided to new employees can give you a sense of the organization’s commitment to helping the workforce grow and learn.

If your interviewer doesn’t really tackle the latter part of the question, follow up with something along the lines of, “What is the process for managing an employee who makes a mistake?”

“If your interviewer says that rookie mistakes happen to the best employees, and everyone at all levels of the organization is coached on how  to improve and learn, it indicates that the company’s culture is supportive and encourages professional development,” says Nicki Morris, a Toronto-based business consultant and coach.

But, beware of any interviewer who says something along the lines of, “Are you planning on making mistakes?” or “Well, we really hope people don’t make mistakes.”

“It indicates that the company may not be supportive when it comes to learning or taking  risks,” Morris says.

**Culture Question #3: What are some ways the company focuses on team development?**

According to one [Gallup poll](https://hbr.org/2013/07/we-all-need-friends-at-work/), not only do close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by 50% — but those with a best friend at work are also seven times more likely to engage fully in their job. So, make sure to ask your interviewer about how the organization fosters such relationships.

“If an organization offers interesting and unique perks that encourage employees’ growth and teamwork, the person interviewing you will love to talk about them,” says Carol Cochran, the director of human resources at career site [Flex Jobs](http://www.flexjobs.com/).

Maybe your interviewer will mention off-site brainstorming meetings, clubs meant to help develop employees’ skills or even the company softball team. “But, if they skirt this question, that tells you a  lot about their culture…or lack thereof,” Cochran says.

**Culture Question #4: What do you love about working here — and what do you dislike?**

Along with the usual questions about what your specific tasks will be, it’s a good idea to ask your interviewer a few personal questions about his role at the company.

“The catch is to really listen and try to figure out whether your interviewer gives you a rehearsed, company-spiel kind of response,” says Matthew Reischer, CEO and hiring partner at [Legal Advice](http://www.legaladvice.com/).

For example, if your interviewer says she loves running the company’s town hall meetings, where employees get regular updates on how the business is doing, it’ll show you a lot about the kind of open communication that’s valued at the company.

But, if the answer is incomplete — for instance, she flatly says she’s “fulfilled” and “challenged” by her work — you might follow up with, “what are the most challenging aspects of working here?”

And, keep in mind that there’s a difference between a “good” worst thing about working at a company and one that should make you raise an eyebrow. One example of a positive challenge could be a heavy workload, which is likely proof of a company’s success. But, a more concerning response would be if the interviewer brings up some aspect of the management team as being a challenge.

**Culture Question #5: What would your employees say are the top three reasons they love working for you?**

Trying to suss out what your potential coworkers think about their work — and the manager you’ll report to — can be wonderful insight into how happy you’ll be as one of their colleagues.

Sure, it’s great that employees enjoy three weeks of vacation each year, but what you really want to hear is a sense of pride and appreciation employees feel working for the company. A good hiring manager will use this as an opportunity to humbly brag about her capabilities — and all of the ways you’ll be able to learn from her and further your own skill set and career as a result.

Not getting specific-enough answers? File that away, and then do something a little nontraditional once you have a job offer: Ask to meet some of your prospective new coworkers.

“The hiring manager is never going to tell you in an interview, ‘I’m not going to support you, I’ll yell at you for minor mistakes, and I’ll take all of the credit for your hard work,’” Lucas says. “So, arrange a lunch with the people you’ll work with and it will start out all positive…but halfway through lunch you’ll get the whole truth.”

**Culture Question #6: How does this position support the company’s mission, goals, and projected success?**

If you’ve done your homework and researched your potential new employer’s mission statement and future goals, you might ask this question after saying how impressed you are by the projected growth — and that you’re wondering how your role will help the company execute and succeed at those goals.

“You’ll quickly learn how the person interviewing you views your role at the company, and whether or not they believe you will be a key player,” says Jenee Kapela, a Florida-based career coach with over 10 years of experience as a hiring manager.

An encouraging response will include specific tasks and duties that give you a clear idea of whether your position is integral to the company’s success. For instance, those seemingly insignificant spreadsheets you’ll be in charge of creating might be used by the entire sales force when they’re going after new business.