

Identifying Cultural Norms

The following domains are areas in which cultural norms may vary significantly from organization to organization. Transitioning employees should use this checklist to help them figure out how things really work in the organizations they're joining or as a guide for what questions need to be asked/ answered.

Influence

- How do people get support for critical initiatives?
- Do you need to have support from a higher-level staff member or affirmation from your peers that your idea is a good one?

Meetings

- Are meetings filled with dialogue on hard issues or are they simply forums for publicly ratifying agreements that have been reached in private?

Execution

- When it comes to get things done, which matters more- a deep understanding of a processes or knowing the right people?

Conflict

- Can people talk openly about difficult issues without fear of retribution or do they avoid conflict- or even worse, push it to lower levels, where it can wreak havoc?

Recognition

- Does the company promote stars, rewarding those who visibly and vocally drive business initiatives? Or does it encourage team players, rewarding those who lead authoritatively but quietly and collaboratively?

Ends versus means

- Are there restrictions on how you achieve results?
- Does the organizations have a well-defined well-communicated set of values that is reinforced through positive and negative incentives?