

Finding the Right Fit



How do I know if a company is a good fit for me?

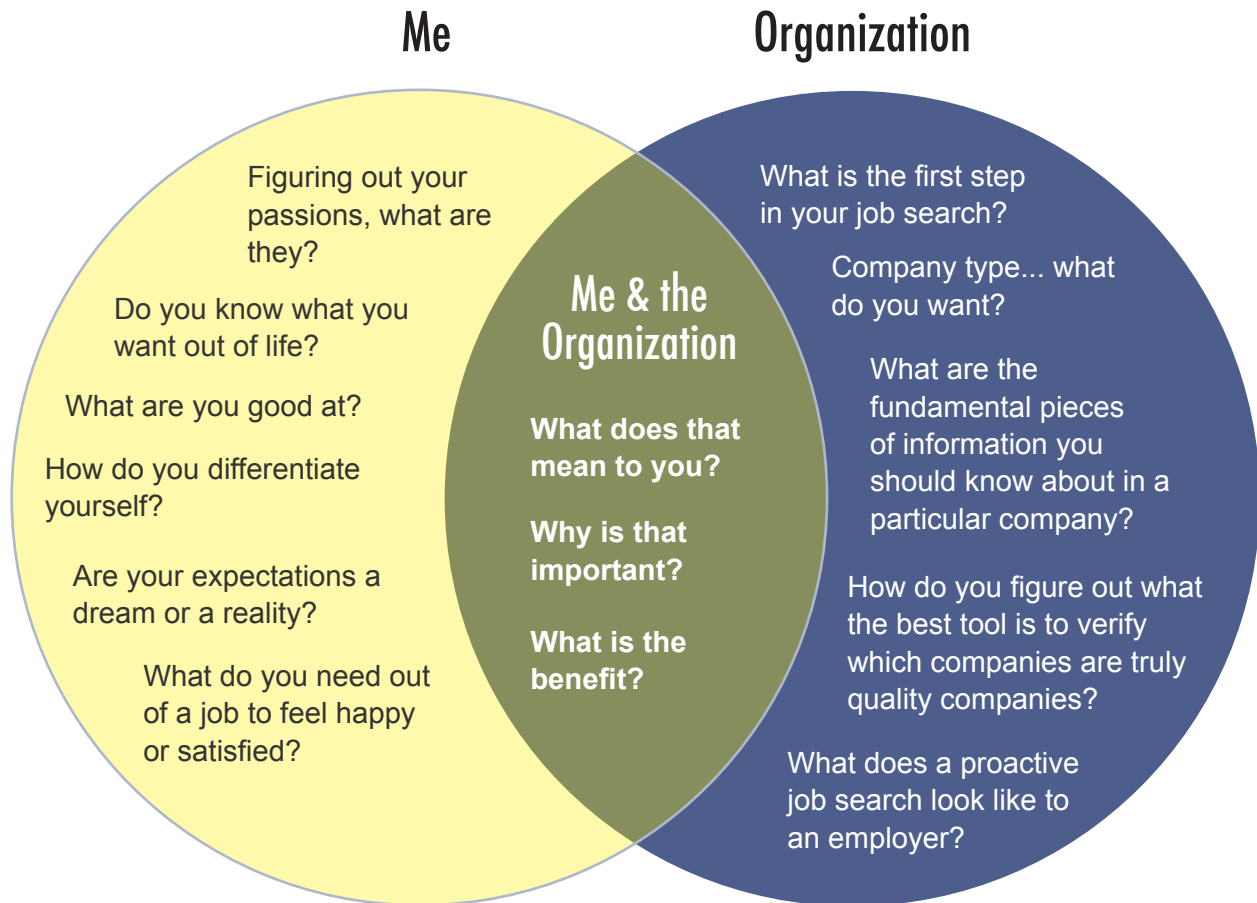
- ▶ A large or small company...or something in between?
- ▶ A privately-held or publicly owned company?
- ▶ A local, regional or national company?
- ▶ A self-performing GC/CM or more of a Program Management or CM-Agent company?
- ▶ Public or private sector clients?
- ▶ To travel or relocate frequently, or not?
- ▶ To build smaller projects with shorter durations or big projects that take more time to complete? Or maybe you want a variety of project types?
- ▶ A pre-planned, rotational type of staff development program, or do you want one that is less structured and more individualistic?
- ▶ To work in the field or in the main office?

Of course, there are still other considerations. The point is that there are lots of ways to define “fit”. With all these options the only way to really figure out what you want is by talking to people in the business about these variables, listening to their perspectives, and then comparing these answers with what feels right for you.

For example, do you excel in a small organizational setting or do you thrive in a larger, geographically dispersed organization? Or, do you have the desire to travel, especially while you are young?

Examining each variable and thinking through how it affects you is crucial to defining “best fit”.

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Q: Figuring out your passions, what are they?

A: "I knew that I always had a love for construction, but what reaffirmed this passion was taking on an internship to see the day-to-day actions. Anything can look good on paper but you need to experience it to confirm your passion." - Power Project Engineer

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Q: Figuring out your passions, what are they? (continued)

A: “Passion for a particular industry counts for a lot. Don’t settle for any old job; be sure you’re seeking a position with the potential for forging a lasting and fulfilling career, follow your passion, and success will follow you, is a quote from Tory Johnson that opened my eyes to many avenues. Going into college I knew I wanted to be an engineer, but I couldn’t nail down a specific discipline. I chose General Engineering so that I could take a wide range of courses that cover many different topics throughout the field of engineering. I found the courses that were hands on and constructive in lieu of theoretical were the areas I excelled in. Construction productivity, material science and controls courses were the classes that flew by because they combined the mental ingenuity that is cultured through engineering with the physical application. I knew I couldn’t sit behind a desk all day and construction is the perfect opportunity to materialize my engineering skills.” – Power Assistant Superintendent

A: “Is there a particular event, a particular topic that makes your whole face just lighten up? Whatever it is that makes you smile, and makes you happy whenever you encounter it, this is a sign of something you are passionate about. I truly believe that happiness and passion walk hand in hand. Both require each other. Doing what you have a passion for brings out your best, and this leads to greatness.” - Frederic Premji, Founder of “I Need Motivation”

Q: Do you know what you want out of life?

A: “Success. I want to wake up in the morning and want to go to work everyday, and enjoy it and not be content just to get a paycheck. My goals are continually changing and I like the fact that I am making choices on the fly. Ultimately I want to be happy, but happy is a moving target that I aim for every day.” – Power Assistant Superintendent

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Q: Do you know what you want out of life? (continued)

A: “The desire to make a difference is a basic human need. Our efforts to make a difference at work help make us feel that we are accomplishing something and that our efforts are worthwhile. The accomplishments that make a difference at work vary from person to person. Interestingly, the worthwhile accomplishments that an individual can feel good about are closely aligned with their strengths, competencies, and personality. Making a difference is therefore different for each person.” – Joe Farcht, Faculty Member at the University of Phoenix and author of the book, *“Building Personal Leadership: Inspirational Tools & Techniques for Work and Life.”*

Q: What are you good at?

A: “Ask yourself, what are my strengths? And when answering that question, it is important to go beyond the basics – don’t be generic by saying I’m a people person, as that doesn’t speak to your knowledge, skills and abilities. You want to ask yourself: what am I really good at? What do I love doing, what excites me? Ask your friends and colleagues for their opinions of your strengths, talk to other people about what they do, which can then open your eyes to a myriad of possibilities. Ask for an informational interview – even by email if it’s not possible to meet in-person. Here you can pose a few questions about their career and the skills required to be successful in a particular line of work.” – Tory Johnson, CEO of Women for Hire and Workplace and contributor on Good Morning America

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Q: How do you differentiate yourself?

A: “If you can’t articulate your value, how can a potential employer know it? It is essential to have a clear, confident, and consistent message about why you are such a unique and valuable asset to a company. There are common answers that people use, so try and figure out what makes you a genuine asset, and capitalize on that. Position yourself, instead of just throwing yourself in the general candidate pool.” – Leo Pusateri, author of the book *“Mirror, Mirror on the Wall Am I the Most Valued of Them all?”*

A: “Companies that are looking for candidates need to know more than simply the scope of your responsibility or even the numbers you delivered. They need to know what it is that sets you apart from the other, equally qualified individuals they are considering. Are you doing enough to set yourself apart? Remember, your brand is your “unique promise of value.” Be sure your career marketing messages convey both the uniqueness and the value, and be clear and consistent in delivering those messages throughout your search. The result will be stronger differentiation and better-fit opportunities.” – Louise Kursmark, author of the book *“How to Choose the Right Person for the Right Job Every Time”* and an Award-winning resume writer and executive career consultant

A: “Be honest with yourself. How much raw talent do you really possess? Ask your peers where they think you are as far as talent. Preface it by asking for an honest opinion of your strengths and weaknesses. You have to know where to grow so you can focus on those areas.” – Derald Schultz, Founder and President of “Mediarail Design, Inc.”

A: “To set yourself apart you will have to develop a good set of stretch marks personally and professionally. Taking risks is one of life’s greatest joys and can be the first step to success or failure. Success can also be found in failure. In the end, intelligence and energy are the two biggest qualities for success and the keys to ultimately rising above the crowd.” - Derald Schultz, Founder and President of “Mediarail Design, Inc.”

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Q: Are your expectations a dream or reality?

A: “Both; I have some dreams that are far-fetched but, I think if you put them in perspective nothing is impossible, you just have to work hard towards them to achieve them.” – Power Project Engineer

A: “Expectations are a reality that I strive to exceed everyday. Although expectations may not be clearly defined, success comes to those who consistently go above and beyond their potential.” – Power Assistant Superintendent

A: “Work expectations are those things people consider likely to happen in their job situation, either now or in the future. Whether spoken or unspoken, met or unmet, expectations have a powerful impact on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and play a key role in driving our attitudes. Research shows that people who have clearly defined, well-communicated expectations find more satisfaction and success in their work than people whose expectations go unspoken or unrealized. In a typical employment situation, certain expectations – such as salary, hours, and job duties – are clearly understood by both employer and employee. Other expectations, however, are so intimately linked to an individual’s concept of work that they oftentimes go unspoken or unacknowledged.” – Harriet Meyerson, Founder and President of “The Confidence Center”

Q: What do you need out of a job to feel happy or satisfied?

A: “I want to see a future with whomever I am going to work with. I need to be challenged and have interesting work. I also need a company who treats everyone with respect. I do not want a large company; I like the smaller company where you are known on a first name basis.” – Power Project Engineer

A: “I need confidence. (1) I need to feel confident my employer wants me to succeed. (2) I need my employer to be confident in my abilities. (3) I need to have confidence in my employer’s mission and values.” – Power Estimator

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Q: What do you need out of a job to feel happy or satisfied? (continued)

A: “I need to continually learn and be engaged by a job. I need feedback, positive or constructive, from my peers and supervisors. I need to have fun... I won’t sacrifice my life for a paycheck so I need to be around people I can relate to and socialize with.”

– Power Assistant Superintendent

A: “People tend to approach work from three perspectives. They view work as a job, a career or a calling. Usually all three perspectives are important, but one or the other is the priority.” – Mayo Clinic Staff

Q: A company has given me an offer, but it has a deadline for making a decision. If I need more time to complete my job search, what should I say to the company?

A: “**Your job search is important.** Feel free to politely explain that you are still in the midst of your job search and would like more time. The stronger you are as a candidate, the more leverage you have in buying more time. Also, there seem to be two schools of thought among employers. One group who pushes hard, early and often, to get candidates committed before their competition gets them. The other group is as concerned about long-term fit as you are; that group will be more understanding of your need for a thorough job search. Again, it is all about finding the “best-fit” for you. Bottom line, taking adequate time to do your job search thoroughly will pay dividends for you and the company over the long-haul.” – Power Superintendent

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Q: I really want to move out of the Midwest and experience other parts of the country. What should I do when a Midwest-only company shows interest in me?

A: “Be honest. Tell them your plans for relocation. Then ask if they know of a company or two that they would recommend. And don’t forget to ask if they can either give you a specific contact person in operations (not in HR) or would they feel comfortable forwarding your resume directly to their contact on your behalf. The Midwest-only company that truly thinks long-term and is truly people-centered will be glad to help you get to where you want to go. Why? Because they know the odds are good that someday you’ll come home to the Midwest... and when you do you’ll remember their good deed.” – Power Project Manager

Have a question you’d like answered?

Email it to Gary Schreiber,
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