Checklist and questions to identify characteristics of your company culture and behaviors:

Here is a checklist for your personal use about cultural fit. There are no right or wrong answers. It is, however, critical, to know the answers so that you can decide if an organization is compatible with your values. For example, I've visited many agencies that are similar in size and services provided but are entirely different in how they work and behave internally. If you have additional observations or advice to share, please email me. Comments are posted without attribution. Judy, jcushman@jc-a.com

CULTURE

Communication within the organization What is the style of communication that is most effective for you? Is it formal, structured, top-down or informal, open access at all levels, or other approaches?

What is your expectation of time to respond e.g. during business hours or all on, all the time; expectation of work hours: normal business schedule, work at home, evenings, weekends. Deadlines: their frequency-are they realistic or too demanding?

Social interaction Does that happen through company sponsored activities? Informal gatherings, celebrating success at work? Is the environment supportive about learning and gaining new skills?

Performance Evaluation How is performance monitored? Is there an annual review, for example, or is there on-going feedback?

Use of technology in the organization Is it highly reliant on technology? Social Media? Virtual meetings, face to face meetings? In-house confidential Portals, Video, Skype, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter? What do you prefer?

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

How do you stay in touch with the leaders of the organization? Formal briefings? Informal quick alerts? How are you able to obtain decisions from leaders about work in progress? Is that a priority for you and them? Do you feel you are respected and that the leadership understands what you are accomplishing?

How do you feel about your ability to be heard in leadership meetings with suggestions about comms and related programs? Would you describe the culture as supportive and open or political (along the spectrum from somewhat to extremely political?)

On a personal note are you recognized for your accomplishments and promoted, or do you find you need to proactively present your case for promotions/increases? Are you rewarded for your achievements in other ways?

Is the company innovative and open to new suggestions about communications programs? Is that important to you? Are you interested in making an impact? If yes, can you do that?

ATTITUDES ABOUT WORK/ LIFE BALANCE and COMPANY VALUES

What were the attitudes about work/life balance? How does that fit with your goals?

Do you work at home or allow staff to work at home? Is that important?

What pace of work is comfortable for you? (Start-up mentality to mature organization?) What are the values of the company and do they align with your ethics?

MANAGEMENT STYLE

What budgetary authority do you have? Is that important to you?

What degree of autonomy are you given?

Under what circumstances do you do your best work?

TEAM & STAFF

Do you have the authority to assess and reorganize your team if circumstances dictate that it is needed? Is that important to you? What is your leadership/supervisory style to build and develop a team?

How large a group do you have reporting to you? How have you structured your team?

Do you prefer a large team (and outside resources as well) where operational responsibilities would be a major component of your job? Do you prefer reorganizing/rebuilding the department immediately or would you prefer to spend several months assessing needs?

Or, would you prefer a small team and use outside resources?

COMPANY STRUCTURE

Have you worked in public, non-profit organizations or privately held companies?

There are significant differences in values and in defining and measuring what outcomes are considered priorities.

Cultural norms and unwritten rules about behavior in non-profits can be daunting. Compensation is generally significantly less in non-profits as compared to Corporate and Agency work at equivalent levels.

Privately held companies often have very specific policies established by the founders/owners. The fact there is no need for oversight or transparency can create unique cultures that can be resistant to change or to listening to alternate viewpoints.