What this guide contains

This guide serves as an introduction in considering key topics related to analyzing a company's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA). We recognize this is not an exhaustive list, but a starting point to help aid you in your initial journey to answering the question of "Does this workplace support my values, my diverse identities, and those of others?" Some of the topics we will cover are:

- Defining Company Culture and Why It Matters
- Conducting Independent Company Research
- Reflecting on Your Personal Values
- Asking Questions and Analyzing Responses from Interviews

Let's find a welcoming workplace

Thinking about Culture

Workplace culture refers to the collective values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that characterize an organization or workplace. It's the environment created by how people interact with each other, the expectations set by leadership, and the norms that guide how work is done within the organization.

There are many aspects to an effective workplace culture, but key among them are:

Values:

Is the company more people-oriented? Competitive? Process- or product-driven? A company's values ideally will align with your own.

Hiring Practices:

Since employers often present their best versions of themselves in the initial stages, what impressions did you have of the hiring or recruitment process? Did you meet key decision-makers and feel welcomed as a new member of the team or potential colleague? Was there time for you to assess your sense of fit and purpose with the organization?

Ongoing Training and Professional Development:

What opportunities are available for you to feel ready-to-go in your work? Are there accommodations offered to make sure you have what you need to be successful (i.e., flexible work arrangements, disability accommodations)? In what ways does the organization promote growth and advancement?

Voice:

Are employees' voices heard? What does this look like in the workplace? How does the organization show that it seeks to continually improve?

Researching Companies' Commitments

Researching what a company values and how they support employees' varying identities can be helpful in determining if the culture of that company is the right fit for you. Below are some research topics that can help guide this thought activity:

1. **Examine** company website for mission statements, values, and commitments to DEIA.
2. **Utilize** LinkedIn to find CMU alumni who currently and previously work(ed) there. Ask them about their experience!
3. **Locate** info about Employer Affinity Groups through a quick Google search.
4. **Search** diversity job databases, such as the DisabilityIN's - Disability Equality Index, HRC Top Employers, or Diversity Jobs Top Employers to see how this company compares to others in its industry.
5. **Analyze** information related to current events, investments, and support for DEIA initiatives in their local communities, professional organizations, and nationwide.

Self Reflection

Self-reflection is a helpful tool to assess your current values and determine if an organization meets your needs. Consider the questions below to further think about what your personal values and motives are when seeking employment.

Think about your past jobs or experiences where your values were either supported or challenged. What did you learn from these situations?

Review the job description and responsibilities. Do they align with what you value in your work?

Reflect on whether you would feel comfortable and supported in this environment. Would you be able to authentically express your values and identities?

Questions to Ask During an Interview

Asking questions during an interview process can help you to determine a company's commitment to DEI through not only what they value, but the action they take to support employees. You can ask questions about company resources, diversity as a whole, or about support related to a specific identity. The questions below are a few examples of what this could look like:

"What does diversity & inclusion mean at this company?"

"What resources does this company provide to support trans employees, Black employees, employees with disabilities, etc.?"

"How do you celebrate a diversity of people/ideas?"

"How can employees get involved in DE&I initiatives in your workplace?"

Analyze Your Interview Experience

Following an interview, it's important to take time to reflect on your experience. Here are some reflection questions to analyze whether or not you might feel a sense of belonging at

this company.

> Did the employer provide specific or vague answers to your questions?

> Did the interviewers provide specific examples of how the company supports diversity and inclusion in the workplace?

> Did the interviewers mention any DEI policies, employee resource groups, or other initiatives that support diversity and inclusion?

> Did the interviewer use inclusive language during the interview? Did they avoid jargon that could be exclusive or alienating?

Conclusion

While this handout is not an exhaustive list of how to define a company's commitment to DEIA, it is a starting point to the research, self-reflection, and analysis needed to make a choice that honors your personal values in the workplace.

We encourage you to reach out to your Career Consultant at the CPDC to discuss these considerations, and to talk through your options for employment.

In addition, you can visit our website for more information on DEIA resources.