Use the following questions to develop an understanding of your unit’s culture.

| **Ask self  and/or mentor** | **Ask other  leaders** | **Ask managers and/or key stakeholders** | **Ask direct  reports** | **Ask others to access information about available resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What is the current vision and mission of the unit? | What are the three things we should be very proud of as an organization  and why? | Who are our main stakeholders, customers, clients, etc.? | What is a recent management  decision you did  not understand? | How can I help  others advance in  the organization? |
| How are my goals and objectives tied to the vision? | What are the unspoken norms? | Why do customers do business  with us? | What does the leadership team do that gets in the way of you doing your job? | How do I  request training? |
| What is the state of the talent within  my group? | How is personal success measured? | What do our customers need from us now? | How do you feel  at the state of  the workweek? | How does  one register  for training? |
| What are the organizational norms regarding  dress and appearance? | How do you encourage others to communicate the core values? | What will our customers need from us in the future? | How do you feel at the end of the work week? | Which organizations provide professional development opportunities? |
| What are the organization norms regarding punctuality? | How do you help a new employee understand the culture of the organization? | What gets in the way of us doing our job? | What are the  key metrics to  track progress  and success? | With whom should I discuss development opportunities? |
| What is the process for requesting and documenting  time off? | When faced with two equally qualified candidates how do you determine who  to hire? | What are the expectations for my role as  a leader? | What are the  short-term priorities? | How do I find  out about  required training? |
| Are there any  quick wins? | How do I locate information about other departments and offices? | How is departmental success measured? | What tools are used to manage calendars (personal or departmental)? | How can I access available leadership training resources? |
| What support do I need to achieve success for my organization? | What is one  mistake you witness leaders making  more frequently  than others? | What are the organizational taboos? | What is my role in emergency response? | Where can I find recommended reading material? |
| Where can I go to find the most recent employee satisfaction (or other) results for my organization? | What is the one behavior or trait you have seen derail more leaders' careers? | What are some of the challenges  that previous incumbents in this position have encountered? | Where is the alternate operation location and expectations? | When and where are the welcome, orientation activities? |
| What is my role as a colleague? | Why do people stay in this organization? | Where can I  find information about the current administration's priorities? | What process is  used to collect our customers' needs  and measure  their satisfaction? | Are there any organizational leadership tools or resources I should be aware of? |
| What strategic relationships and internal networks should I be  aware of? | What motivates senior management? | What key policies should I be aware of in the first month and which ones do I own? | What are the short-term priorities for the organization and  my offices? | What are a  few resources  you would recommend to someone looking to gain insight  into becoming a better leader? |
| What do I  want to be  remembered for? | What are the organizational norms about travel? | Who are my key partners and what do they do/provide? | What are the results of the most recent external and/or internal review? | What are you doing to ensure you continue to learn and grow as  a leader? |
| What are the major risks associated with my position—to me, to my organization? | In my first twelve months, what can I do to help you and your staff be successful? | What are the results of the  most recent employee survey? | What are three capabilities we have that are underdeveloped or underutilized and what should we do about that? | What are the leadership competencies of  this organization? |
| How does the work I do contribute to the overall success of the organization? | Who are the  "power players"? | What is the current and future year budget outlook? | What are the three things you would change around here  and why? | What skills do I need to be most effective? |
| What is the organization’s commitment to work-life, flextime, etc.? | What is one thing you would change about the organization? | What is the process for budgeting and finance at the  senior level? | What is the most pressing issue for  me to address with our customers? | When should I complete my Development Plan? |

*Unless otherwise noted this work is adapted from: Hit the ground running: Establishing a model onboarding program — United States Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C. October 2011.*