

Identify Your Work Setting Preferences

By Gail Jean Nicholson, MA, LPC © 2016

Let's imagine you can work anywhere you want. Just for fun. The idea is to first think as big as you can. Identify your ideal factors in a work place, then reach out; locate and explore "what's out there." Considering certain factors, some listed below, sets the stage for you to connect with like-minded and talented people and their market places.

1. Consider your choice of sector: non-profit, government, education, medicine, private enterprise, specifically family/community business or the hybrid business and social service model for social entrepreneurs.
2. Look at the sizes that make sense: small, medium, large, super large or global.
3. Less commute time, great contributor to the all time favorite: life/work/balance. Is walking or biking to work important? Use mass transit?
4. Identify other cultural factors you would prefer; like casual, dog ok? More professional, physical/hands on, technical, creative, outdoors, academic, spiritual, social service, corporate, not corporate?
5. The sad thing is that a lot of businesses/companies that used to feel like family don't feel that way anymore. Consider looking at newer, smaller or established places that explicitly foster life/work/balance, flexibility, inclusion, input and healthy relationships.
6. Look for and evaluate the level of congruence and connection between your personal and professional values and the values of future employers. Values conflicts with employers are sadly a common deal breaker over the long haul.
7. Are there particular physical space/location amenities that you're looking for? Need a window? Corner? Out of the basement? Climb on up. What would you really love? Showers, free parking, art work, a locker room like at Nike? Or are you the minimal or modest needs type? What might this home away from home look like to suit you?

Evergreen trees? Boat ramp? Restaurant scene? Just want to get downtown? Get your note pad out, write this stuff down you don't want to forget it.

8. Interested in caring and/or respect? Nice people? How do you want to be treated by your peers and management? Dealt with marginalization or harassment of any kind lately? Again inclusivity goes far for those looking to succeed.
9. What is your preferred management style in an employer? Looking to get away from a poorly or miss managed, even toxic department or franchise?
10. How organized does your company need to be? Knowing your Myers-Briggs Personality Profile type will help out here. Satisfied needs for structure, direction and predictability or lack there of play strongly in career satisfaction.
11. My “favorite” the dress code. What do you want to wear to work? Jeans? Suits? Business casual is comfortable and professional! What’s the look and range of options you envision for yourself?

It's often difficult to understand the culture of a company or organization observing from the sidelines. Do as much as you can to ascertain the reality of the situation up front, once you've begun exploring. The inside scoop from a trusted source is always best. Feel free to check out the glassdoor.com for employee and former employee reviews of employers. Best of luck.