# How to Find an Introvert-Friendly Work Culture

How can an introvert get the alone time they crave and need in an office environment?

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Finding a job that fits your life can also mean finding a company that suits your work style and personality.

“Office environments put employees in group situations fairly often, whether that’s official meetings or even just in the break room at lunch time,” said career strategist Heather Huhman, explaining why sharing anything from a cubicle to an office kitchen can be a struggle for people who prefer one-on-one ways of communication or, quite frankly, to be left alone entirely.

Executive coach Karen Elizaga agreed, adding that, “unlike extroverts who happily absorb energy from being around other people, introverts need time alone. They get and need to recharge their energy in solitude.”

But how can an introvert get the alone time they crave and need in an office environment? Here are four expert tips for finding an introvert-friendly work culture you will love.

## 1. Look for a workspace with a

## door.

You may be focused on salary and vacation benefits during a job search, but there's a less obvious perk you should be on the lookout for: a job that offers you an office – or at least a workspace that boats some kind of door. "Although a new college graduate might not have 'earned' an office, this is the environment where an introvert will perform best," explained Huhman, adding that, "smart companies will have multiple workspace options available – including the ability to work from home, if the job duties allow – so each employee can maximize their work quality and productivity."

A job that offers a flexible schedule or remote work opportunities are ideal for introverts, Elizaga said. "If it's possibility, work from the comfort of your own home," she said. "You can revel in the solitude and a charged battery and then go out into the world with excellent energy."

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## 2. Search for a forward-thinking leader.

Does the organization you're interested in have a leader who plans for the days and weeks ahead, or one who flies by the seat of his or her pants? When it comes to working with higher-ups, introverts respond better to planners, Huhman said. "Introverts like to be able to 'see' what they're going to be working on the next day, the next week, and so on," Huhman explained. So, try to "find a boss who can help you visualize your tasks so you can determine how you will tackle each one." What's more, introverts should look for a "boss who plays to people's strengths," she said. "Introversion, despite popular belief, is not a weakness." Even so, it may be a struggle, and "a great boss will help individuals succeed in a

way that’s natural for them,” Huhman said.

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## 3. Find a company that uses asynchronous communication methods.

Group meetings may make an introvert shutter. But using programs such as Slack – a type of group chat many business use today – and email to talk can make introverts much more comfortable, Huhman said. “Slack and email allow introverted employees to work independently, but still offer channels for support and feedback,” she said. So, “look for companies that use similar tools,” or that are open to allowing you to communicate in writing, not in person.

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## 4. Know your limits.

If you can’t quite pin down a potential boss’s personality type or a company you’re really interested in has never heard of Slack, you can still get a feel for whether you’d be comfortable in its office environment by knowing your own limits and seeing how this place would fit within them, Elizaga said. For example, if networking would give you nightmares, don’t snatch up a job at a company that would require you to attend events on a frequent basis. “You know [best] what you’re comfortable doing,” Elizaga said.

*(By Jillian Kramer)*

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