Interview Guide

Most of these questions should be regarded as starting points. Where appropriate, always follow up by exploring why. Understanding the 'why' holds the keys to information culture.

1. Please tell me about your role and your responsibilities

Always begin by asking people to explain their position in the organization. This will give you the context you need to follow up and explore specific areas where necessary.

2. How long have you worked in that position/for the organization?

This information will help you know the level of organizational knowledge the interviewee brings to the conversation. If someone has worked in a place for a long time they can be very useful in providing historical context, if they are new it's a good opportunity to learn how a relative outsider experiences the organization.

3. If you were to leave your current role/the organization, what would you have to do to ensure the person who takes over from you would have all the information they needed to do their job at their fingertips?

Responses to this question should give you insight into their everyday personal information management practices, and into their awareness of what they should be doing, but aren't.

4. Thinking about information, and finding out how things have been done and why decisions have been made, is there any particular advice you would give to your successor?

Responses might indicate whether there's a reliance on individuals as sources of knowledge, or whether internal information systems are regarded as reliable and trustworthy.

5. Are you aware of the policies/guidelines you are supposed to follow with regard to information, and if so, are they realistic?

6. Are there any particular challenges that you face in working with information?

7. Are there any systems or processes relating to information that are particularly effective, or work well?

8. Are there any particular features of the ICT infrastructure that you would like to comment on?

9. Do you (or your team) have any personal information systems or procedures that you've developed to help you work more effectively?

[*Workarounds might be mentioned in answers to other questions, but in case they're not this question asks about them specifically. It's very important to encourage people to talk about their unofficial ways of working, as these tell us a lot about information culture. An example of a workaround is keeping own paper working files.*]

10. Are there any particular document types (could be anything, ranging from standardized forms used for reporting to emails) that you think are characteristic of this workplace?

[*Another way of asking about genres might be through talking about language usages, or special terms that are recurrently used in the organization in some specific sense that is only known to insiders. Possible questions may be: "What do you mean by …?"; "Do you have some special way of calling …?"; "I heard you saying '…'. Can you explain that to me?"*]

11. Are there any particular meetings that regularly take place that influence information flow or information practices?

[*These two questions are both specifically asking about genres. Both document types and meetings may have been mentioned in earlier responses, but if not, these two questions target them specifically. Once identified, you can make direct reference to these genres in subsequent interviews. For example, 'tell me more about the blue cards. Do you use them?' or 'Can you access the minutes of the monthly managers meetings?' With reference to meetings, possible sub-questions may be: "Do you like the way in which [a specific type of meetings] is organized?"; "Do you find these meetings useful?"; "If so, to whom (managers, employees, …)?"*]

12. a. Can you tell me which of these terms (or any others) represent your workplace (department/office) best?

Trust	Competitiveness
Transparency	Relaxed
Openness	Pride
Indifference	Professionalism
Sloppiness	Solidarity
Accuracy	Secrecy,
Customer-orientation,	Team spirit
	Respond positively to criticism

      b. Thinking about the whole organization, would you apply the same terms?

13. How would you describe the organizational culture here?