CHAPTER 6
SELECTION

CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

We begin this chapter with a discussion of credential fraud. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of employee selection and identification of environmental factors that affect the selection process. Next, we describe the general selection process. The next two sections involve the preliminary interview and reviewing applications and resumes. Then we explain the administration of selection tests including the advantages, potential problems, and characteristics of properly designed selection tests. Sections describing the types of validation studies and types of employment tests follow this. Then the importance of the employment interview, including interview planning, and the content of the interview are emphasized. Next, the general types of interviewing and the growing influence of the behavioral interview are presented. A discussion of the various methods of interviewing and the legal implications of interviewing are discussed next. The final portion of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the use of personal reference checks, background investigations, polygraph tests, the selection decision, the medical examination, and notification of candidates.

KEY TERMS

Selection: The process of choosing from a group of applicants those individuals best suited for a particular position and organization.
Selection ratio: The number of people hired for a particular job compared to the total number of individuals in the applicant pool.
Standardization: Uniformity of the procedures and conditions related to administering tests.
Objectivity: The condition that is achieved when all individuals scoring a given test obtain the same results.
Norm: A frame of reference for comparing an applicant's performance with that of others.
Reliability: The extent to which a selection test provides consistent results.
Validity: The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure.
Criterion-related validity: A test validation method that compares the scores on selection tests to some aspect of job performance determined, for example, by performance appraisal.
Concurrent validity: A validation method in which test scores and criterion data are obtained at essentially the same time.
Predictive validity: A validation method that involves administering a selection test and later obtaining the criterion information.
Content validity: A test validation method whereby a person performs certain tasks that are actual samples of the kind of work a job requires or completes a paper-and-pencil test that measures relevant job knowledge.
Construct validity: A test validation method to determine whether a selection test measures certain traits or qualities that have been identified as important in performing a particular job.
Cognitive aptitude tests: Tests that measure an individual's ability to learn as well as to perform a job.
Psychomotor abilities tests: Aptitude tests that measure strength, coordination, and dexterity.
Job knowledge tests: Tests designed to measure a candidate's knowledge of the duties of the job for which he or she is applying.
Work-sample tests: Tests requiring the identification of a task or set of tasks that are representative of a particular job.
Vocational interest tests: A method of determining the occupation in which a person has the greatest interest and from which the person is most likely to receive satisfaction.
Personality tests: Self-reported measures of traits, temperaments, or dispositions.
Genetic testing: Testing that can determine whether a person carries the gene mutation for certain diseases, including heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer, and Huntington's disease.
Employment interview: A goal-oriented conversation in which an interviewer and an applicant exchange information.
Organizational fit: Management's perception of the degree to which the prospective employee will fit in with the firm's culture or value system.
Unstructured interview: A meeting with a job applicant during which the interviewer asks probing, open-ended questions.
Structured interview: A process in which an interviewer consistently presents the same series of job-related questions to each applicant for a particular job.
Behavioral interview: A structured interview where applicants are asked to relate actual incidents from their past relevant to the target job.
Group interview: A meeting in which several job applicants interact in the presence of one or more company representatives.
Board interview: A meeting in which several representatives of a company interview a candidate in one or more sessions.
Stress interview: A form of interview that intentionally creates anxiety to determine how a job applicant will react in certain types of situations.
Realistic job preview (RJP): A method of conveying both positive and negative job information to an applicant in an unbiased manner.
Assessment center: A selection technique used to identify and select employees for positions in the organization that requires individuals to perform activities similar to those they might encounter in an actual job.
Reference checks: A way to gain additional insight into the information provided by an applicant and to verify the accuracy of the information provided.
Negligent hiring: The liability an employer incurs when it does not reasonably investigate an applicant’s background and then assigns a potentially dangerous person to a position where he or she can inflict harm.
Negligent retention: When a company keeps persons on the payroll whose records indicate strong potential for wrongdoing.
Negligent referral: When a former employer fails to offer a warning about a particularly severe problem with a past employee.

LECTURE OUTLINE

CREDENTIAL FRAUD
One compelling reason for needing accurate reference information is that credential fraud has increased in recent years.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMPLOYEE SELECTION
Selection is the process of choosing from a group of applicants those individuals best suited for a particular position.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SELECTION PROCESS
Numerous environmental factors affect the selection process.

OTHER HR FUNCTIONS—The selection process affects, and is affected by, virtually every other HR function.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS—Legislation, executive orders, and court decisions have a major impact on human resource management.

SPEED OF DECISION MAKING—The time available to make the selection decision can have a major effect on the selection process.

ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY—Different approaches to selection are generally taken for filling positions at different levels in the organization.

APPLICANT POOL—The number of applicants for a particular job can also affect the selection process.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION—The sector of the economy in which individuals are to be employed—private, governmental, or not-for-profit—can also affect the selection process.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD—Many firms use a probationary period that permits evaluating an employee’s ability based on performance.
THE SELECTION PROCESS

RECRUITED INDIVIDUAL

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS AND RESUMES

SELECTION TESTS

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

REFERENCE AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

SELECTION DECISION

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

NEW EMPLOYEE

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW
The selection process often begins with an initial screening of applicants to remove individuals who obviously do not meet the position requirements.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW—The telephone may be the most economically feasible way to exchange information with applicants in distant locations.

VIDEOTAPED INTERVIEW—A videotaped interview is another method that can reduce selection costs in some situations.

VIRTUAL JOB INTERVIEWS—While it remains unclear how popular the virtual job interview will become, there is no doubt that more and more firms are using Internet technology in their recruitment and selection efforts.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS
The application form must reflect not only the firm’s informational needs but also EEO requirements.

REVIEW OF RESUMES
This practice has evolved into a more advanced procedure, with resumes automatically evaluated.

ADMINISTRATION OF SELECTION TESTS
Evidence suggests that the use of tests is becoming more prevalent for assessing an applicant’s qualifications and potential for success.

ADVANTAGES OF SELECTION TESTS—Selection testing can be a reliable and accurate means of selecting qualified candidates from a pool of applicants if they are job related.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS USING SELECTION TESTS—Selection tests may accurately predict an applicant’s ability to perform the job, the can do, but they are less successful in indicating the extent to which the individual will be motivated to perform it, the will do.

Legal Liabilities: Pre-employment testing carries with it certain legal liabilities.

Test Anxiety: Applicants often become quite anxious when confronting yet another hurdle that might eliminate them from consideration.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPERLY DESIGNED SELECTION TESTS—Properly designed selection tests are standardized, objective, based on sound norms, reliable and—of utmost importance—valid.
STANDARDIZATION—Refers to the uniformity of the procedures and conditions related to administering tests.

OBJECTIVITY—Achieved when all individuals scoring a given test obtain the same results.

NORMS—Provide a frame of reference for comparing applicants’ performance with that of others.

RELIABILITY—The extent to which a selection test provides consistent results.

VALIDITY—The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure. If a test cannot indicate ability to perform the job, it has no value as a predictor.

REQUIREMENT FOR JOB RELATEDNESS—The test must work without having an adverse impact on minorities, females, and individuals with backgrounds or characteristics protected under the law.

TYPES OF VALIDATION STUDIES
The Uniform Guidelines established three approaches that may be followed to validate selection tests: criterion-related validity, content validity, and construct validity.

CRITERION-RELATED VALIDITY—Determined by comparing the scores on selection tests to some aspect of job performance.

Concurrent validity: The test scores and the criterion data are obtained at essentially the same time.

Predictive validity: Administering a test and later obtaining the criterion information.

CONTENT VALIDITY—A test validation method whereby a person performs certain tasks that are actually required by the job or completes a paper and pencil test that measures relevant job knowledge.

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY—A test validation method to determine whether a test measures certain traits or qualities that are important in performing the job.

TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT TESTS
Individuals differ in characteristics related to job performance. Various tests measure these differences.

COGNITIVE APTITUDE TESTS—Measure an individual’s ability to learn, as well as to perform a job.

PSYCHOMOTOR ABILITIES TESTS—Measure strength, coordination, and dexterity.

JOB KNOWLEDGE TESTS—Designed to measure a candidate’s knowledge of the duties of the position for which he or she is applying.

WORK-SAMPLE TESTS (SIMULATIONS)—Identify a task or set of tasks that are representative of the job.

VOCATIONAL INTEREST TESTS—Indicate the occupation in which a person is most interested and is most likely to receive satisfaction.

PERSONALITY TESTS—As selection tools, personality tests have not been as useful as other types of tests.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING—Proponents of drug testing programs contend that it is necessary to ensure workplace safety, security, and productivity.

GENETIC TESTING
Given to determine whether a person carries the gene mutation for certain diseases, including heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer and Huntington’s disease.

**GRAPHOANALYSIS (HANDWRITING ANALYSIS)**—Many people in the United States view handwriting analysis in the same context as psychic readings or astrology.

**INTERNET TESTING**—The Internet is increasingly being used to test various skills required by applicants.

**ASSESSMENT CENTERS**—A selection technique used to identify and select employees for positions in the organization and requires individuals to perform activities similar to those they might encounter in an actual job.

**THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW**
A goal-oriented conversation in which the interviewer and applicant exchange information.

**INTERVIEW PLANNING**—Interview planning is essential to effective employment interviews.

**CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW**—The specific content of employment interviews varies greatly by organization and the level of the job concerned.

- **Occupational experience**: Exploring an individual’s occupational experience requires determining the applicant’s skills, abilities, and willingness to handle responsibility.

- **Academic achievement**: In the absence of significant work experience, a person’s academic background takes on greater importance.

- **Interpersonal skills**: If an individual cannot work well with other employees, chances for success are slim.

- **Personal qualities**: Personal qualities normally observed during the interview include physical appearance, speaking ability, vocabulary, poise, adaptability, and assertiveness.

- **Organizational fit**: Organizational fit refers to management’s perception of the degree to which the prospective employee will fit in with, for example, the firm’s culture or value system.

**THE CANDIDATE’S ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS**—While the interviewer will provide information about the company, it is still important that candidates do their homework.

**TYPES OF INTERVIEWS**
Interviews may be classified by the degree to which they are structured.

**THE UNSTRUCTURED (NONDIRECTIVE) INTERVIEW**—An interview where probing, open-ended questions are asked.

**THE STRUCTURED (DIRECTIVE OR PATTERNED) INTERVIEW**—An interview consisting of a series of job-related questions that are asked consistently of each applicant for a particular job. A structured interview typically contains four types of questions.

- **Situational questions**: Pose a hypothetical job situation to determine what the applicant would do in that situation.

- **Job knowledge questions**: Probe the applicant’s job-related knowledge.

- **Job-sample simulation questions**: Involve situations in which an applicant may be actually required to perform a sample task from the job.
Worker requirements questions: Seek to determine the applicant’s willingness to conform to the requirements of the job.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS
The behavioral interview is a structured interview where applicants are asked to relate actual incidents from their past relevant to the target job.

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS—Situational behaviors are selected for their relevance to job success.

EVALUATING CANDIDATES—A rating scale may be helpful in comparing several candidates.

BROAD APPLICATION BUT POTENTIAL PROBLEM—One difficulty with behavioral interviewing is that some jobseekers have gotten wise to the process.

METHODS OF INTERVIEWING
Interviews may be conducted in several ways.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW—In a typical employment interview, the applicant meets one-on-one with an interviewer.

GROUP INTERVIEW—Several applicants interact in the presence of one or more company representatives.

BOARD INTERVIEW—Several representatives of the firm interview a candidate in one or more sessions.

STRESS INTERVIEW—Intentionally creates anxiety to determine how an applicant will react to stress on the job.

REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS—Conveys job information to the applicant in an unbiased manner, including both positive and negative factors.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF INTERVIEWING
Since the interview is considered to be a test, it is subject to the same validity requirements as any other step in the selection process, should adverse impact be shown.

PERSONAL REFERENCE CHECKS
Personal reference checks may provide additional insight into the information furnished by the applicant and allow verification of its accuracy.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE CHECKS
Background investigations primarily seek data from references supplied by the applicant including his or her previous employers.

NEGLIGENT HIRING—The liability an employer incurs when it fails to conduct a reasonable investigation of an applicant’s background, and then assigns a potentially dangerous person to a position where he or she can inflict harm.

At Risk Employers: The risk of harm to third parties, for example, requires a higher standard of care when hiring a taxi driver as opposed to a bank teller.

OSHA’s Role: The law requires employers to provide employees a safe place to work and this responsibility extends to providing safe employees.

Double Jeopardy: Negligent retention occurs when a company keeps persons on the payroll whose records indicate strong potential for wrongdoing.

Due Diligence Required: The employer can be held responsible for the employee’s unlawful acts even if the employee’s actions are not job related.
ELEMENTS TO VERIFY—An effective and comprehensive background investigation will include examination and verification of the following elements: previous employment, education, personal references, criminal history, driving record, civil litigation, workers’ compensation history, credit history, and Social Security number.

FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT—The act was amended in 1997 and places new obligations on employers who use certain information brought to light through background investigations.

OTHER LEGAL ASPECTS—Recognizing the importance of investigations in selecting employees, over half the states in the U.S. have passed laws offering varying degrees of protection to employers who provide good-faith references and who release truthful information about current or former employees.

PROBLEMS IN OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES—There are two schools of thought with regard to supplying information about former employees. One is, “Don’t tell them anything.” The other is, “Honesty is the best policy.”

NEGLIGENT REFERRAL—May occur when a former employer fails to offer a warning about a particularly severe problem with a past employee.

OUTSOURCING INVESTIGATIONS—Firms can outsource their background-checking duties to a handful of third-party investigators that the Fair Credit Reporting Act regulates.

POLYGRAPH TESTS
The Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988 severely limited the use of polygraph tests in the private sector.

THE SELECTION DECISION
The person whose qualifications most closely conform to the requirements of the open position should be selected.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION
Typically, a job offer is contingent on successful passing of this examination.

NOTIFICATION TO CANDIDATES
The selection process results should be made known to candidates—successful and unsuccessful—as soon as possible.