

GLOBAL  
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# Supervision Today!

EIGHTH EDITION

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**Eighth** Edition  
**Global** Edition

# Supervision Today!

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measure. For example, a few pages ago we introduced a firefighter applicant who uses a wheelchair. Because of the physical requirements of a firefighter's job, someone who uses a wheelchair would be unable to pass the physical endurance tests. In that case, denying employment could be considered valid. But requiring the same physical endurance tests for the dispatching job would not be job related. Thus, the law prohibits supervisors from using any selection device that cannot be shown to be directly related to successful job performance. And that constraint goes for "entrance" tests, too; supervisors must be able to demonstrate that, once on the job, individuals with high scores on this test outperform individuals with low test scores. Consequently, the burden is on supervisors and their organizations to verify that any selection device used to screen applicants is related to job performance.

## HOW EFFECTIVE ARE TESTS AND INTERVIEWS AS SELECTION DEVICES?

Supervisors can use a number of selection devices to reduce accept and reject errors. The best-known devices include written tests, performance-simulation tests, and interviews. Let's briefly review these devices, giving particular attention to the validity of each in predicting job performance. After we review them, we discuss when each should be used.

**How Do Written Tests Serve a Useful Purpose?** Typical written tests include tests of intelligence, aptitude, ability, and interest. Such tests have long been used as selection devices, although their popularity has run in cycles. Written tests were widely used for twenty years after World War II. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, they fell into disfavor. Written tests were frequently characterized as discriminatory, and many organizations could not validate that their written tests were job related. But since the late 1980s, written tests have made a comeback. Managers have become increasingly aware that poor hiring decisions are costly and that properly designed tests could reduce the likelihood of making such decisions. In addition, the cost of developing and validating a set of written tests for a specific job has come down markedly.

**What Are Performance-Simulation Tests?** What better way is there to find out whether an applicant for a technical writing position at Microsoft can write technical manuals than to have him or her do it? The logic of this question has led to the expanding interest in performance-simulation tests. Undoubtedly, the enthusiasm for these tests lies in the fact that they are based on job analysis data and therefore should more easily meet the requirement of job relatedness than do written tests. **Performance-simulation tests** are made up of actual job behaviors rather than substitutes. The best-known performance-simulation tests are work sampling (a miniature replica of the job) and assessment centers (simulating real problems a candidate may face on the job). The former is suited to routine jobs, the latter to selecting managerial personnel.

**What about Personality Profiles?** Are there certain personality types that can be counted on to be more productive than others? And are there effective, reliable methods of selecting applicants who will perform well in the situations encountered on a particular job? Five factors of personality dimensions are identified by the Big Five model. They are the following:

**Extroversion.** Sociable, talkative, and assertive.

**Agreeableness.** Good-natured, cooperative, and trustworthy.

**Conscientiousness.** Responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement oriented.

**Emotional stability.** Calm, enthusiastic, and secure.

**Openness to experience.** Imaginative, artistically sensitive, and intellectual.

Relationships have been shown to exist between these personality dimensions and on-the-job performance. One study of professionals, police, managers, salespeople, and skilled and semiskilled workers has shown conscientiousness to be a predictor of

### OBJECTIVE 5-5

Describe the selection devices that work best with various kinds of jobs.

### performance-simulation tests

Selection devices based on actual job behaviors, work sampling, and assessment centers.

job performance for these occupational groups. The other factors figure differently depending on the occupational group and the situation.<sup>4</sup>

**Is the Interview Effective?** The interview, along with the application form, is an almost universal selection device. Few of us have ever gotten a job without one or more interviews. The irony of this fact is that the value of the interview as a selection device has been the subject of considerable debate.<sup>5</sup>

Interviews can be reliable and valid selection tools, but too often they are not. When interviews are structured and well organized, and when interviewers are held to common questioning, interviews are effective predictors.<sup>6</sup> But those conditions do not characterize many interviews. The typical interview—in which applicants are asked a varying set of essentially random questions in an informal setting—often provides little in the way of valuable information.

All kinds of potential biases can creep into interviews if they are not well structured and standardized. To illustrate, a review of the research leads us to the following conclusions:

- Prior knowledge about the applicant will bias the interviewer's evaluation.
- The interviewer tends to hold a stereotype of what represents a “good” applicant.
- The interviewer tends to favor applicants who share his or her own attitudes.
- The order in which applicants are interviewed will influence evaluations.
- The order in which information is elicited during the interview will influence evaluations.
- Negative information is given unduly high weight.
- The interviewer may make a decision concerning the applicant's suitability within the first four or five minutes of the interview.
- The interviewer may forget much of the interview's content within minutes after its conclusion.
- The interview is most valid in determining an applicant's intelligence, level of motivation, and interpersonal skills.
- Structured and well-organized interviews are more reliable than unstructured and unorganized ones.<sup>7</sup>

What can supervisors do to make interviews more valid and reliable? (See the “News Flash! The Realistic Job Preview.”) A number of suggestions have been made over the years. We list some in the section titled “Interviewing” at the end of this chapter.

<sup>4</sup>S. Robbins and D. Decenzo, *Fundamentals of Management: Essential Concepts and Applications* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 224.

<sup>5</sup>R. A. Posthuma, F. P. Morgeson, and M. A. Campion, “Beyond Employment Interview Validity: A Comprehensive Narrative Review of Recent Research and Trends Over Time,” *Personnel Psychology* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2002), 1–81.

<sup>6</sup>A. I. Huffcutt, J. M. Conway, P. L. Roth, and N. J. Stone, “Identification and Meta-Analysis Assessment of Psychological Constructs Measured in Employment Interviews,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 86, no. 5 (October 2001), 897–913; and A. I. Huffcutt, J. A. Weekley, W. H. Wiesner, T. G. Degroot, and C. Jones, “Comparison of Situational and Behavioral Description Interview Questions for Higher-Level Positions,” *Personnel Psychology* 54, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), 619–644.

<sup>7</sup>See E. Hermelin and I. T. Robertson, “A Critique and Standardization of Meta-Analytic Coefficients in Personnel Selection,” *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 73, no. 4 (September 2001), 253–277; C. H. Middendorf and T. H. Macan, “Note-Taking in the Employment Interview: Effects on Recall and Judgments,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87, no. 2 (April 2002), 293–303; D. Butcher, “The Interview Rights and Wrongs,” *Management Today*, April 2002, 4; and P. L. Roth, C. H. Can Iddekinge, A. I. Huffcutt, C. E. Eidson, and P. Bobko, “Corrections for Range Restriction in Structured Interview Ethnic Group Differences: The Value May Be Larger than Researchers Thought,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87 (April 2002), 369–376.

## News Flash!

### THE REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW

Supervisors who treat the recruiting and hiring of employees as if the applicants must be sold on the job and exposed only to an organization's positive characteristics set themselves up to have a workforce that is dissatisfied and prone to high turnover.

Every job applicant acquires, during the hiring process, a set of expectations about the company and about the job for which he or she is interviewing. When the information an applicant receives is excessively inflated, a number of things happen that have potentially negative effects on the company. First, mismatched applicants who would probably become dissatisfied with the job and quit soon would be less likely to withdraw from the search process. Second, the absence of accurate information builds unrealistic expectations. Consequently, the new employees are likely to become quickly dissatisfied—leading to premature resignations. Third, new hires are prone to become disillusioned and less committed to the organization when they face the “harsh” realities of the job. In many cases, these individuals feel that they were duped or misled during the hiring process and, therefore, may become problem employees.

To increase job satisfaction among employees and reduce turnover, supervisors should provide a **realistic job preview (RJP)**. An RJP includes both

positive and negative information about the job and the company. For example, in addition to the positive comments typically expressed in the interview, the candidate would be told of the downside of joining the company. He or she might be told that there are limited opportunities to talk to coworkers during work hours, that promotional advancement is slim, or that work hours fluctuate so erratically that employees may be required to work during typical off hours (nights and weekends). Applicants who have been given a more RJP hold lower and more realistic job expectations for the jobs they'll be performing and are better able to cope with the job and its frustrating elements. The result is fewer unexpected resignations by new employees.

For supervisors, realistic job previews offer a major insight into the selection process—that retaining good people is as important as hiring them in the first place. Presenting only the positive aspects of a job to a job applicant may initially entice him or her to join the organization, but it may be an affiliation that both parties quickly regret.

*Source:* Based on S. L. Premack and J. P. Wanous, “A Meta-Analysis of Realistic Job Preview Experiments,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 70, no. 4 (November 1985), 706–720.

### PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

Prepare for an interview with an applicant by reviewing job descriptions to find lists of tasks required by the job and lists of skills and experience required for the position. You may then use the lists as a guide during the interview. By using the lists, you can prepare and conduct multiple structured interviews while being certain you asked the same questions of all applicants.

Remember that all interview questions should be job related—don't ask if they're not! You may be able to determine the candidate's qualifications by stating the conditions or requirements of the job and then asking if the condition or requirement presents the candidate with a problem; this allows candidates to provide affirmative or negative responses without the necessity of providing details or specifics.

Remember to check federal, state, and local guidelines regarding employment regulations. You may wish to consult an attorney or the legal department of your organization before beginning the hiring process. Remember that you may inform the candidate that misleading statements or omissions of significant facts may be grounds for nonselection.

#### **realistic job preview (RJP)**

A job interview that provides both positive and negative information about the job and the company.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU SHOULDN'T ASK

During an interview, supervisors should never ask questions that:

- Identify applicants between forty and sixty-four years of age
- Inquire about U.S. citizenship prior to hiring
- Identify applicant's ancestry, place of birth, or native language
- Directly or indirectly relate to race or color
- Identify religious preference, holidays, or customs
- Reveal sex or gender
- Relate to education or training not required for the job
- Identify membership in nonprofessional clubs or organizations that are not job related
- Reveal applicant's family or marital status
- Regard child-care, children's ages, or non-job-related areas
- Identify conditions of discharge from the military
- Identify security clearance level
- Relate to applicant's credit history
- Identify height and weight if these factors do not affect ability to perform job
- Regard home ownership or rental status
- Relate to applicant's arrest record
- Reveal names and addresses of relatives unless they are employed by the organization
- Inquire about pregnancy
- Regard disability-related issues until after a conditional job offer has been made

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

During an interview supervisors may ask questions:

- Related to the applicant's ability to speak English if it is required for the job
- Regarding academic, vocational, or professional education pertaining to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) for the position
- Regarding membership in organizations if they are related to the job or KSAs for the position
- Related to travel, unusual hours, or overtime required by the job
- Stating the type of security clearance required for the position
- Regarding applicant's conviction for crimes
- Regarding applicant's physical ability to perform specific job functions
- Probing attendance at previous employers as long as you do not refer to illness or disability
- Identifying communication skills
- Demonstrating emotional maturity and behaviors
- Demonstrating decision-making ability
- Discussing applicant's experience in preparation for the position
- Identifying appropriate behaviors for specific work-related situations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“Interview Skills for Supervisors: Finding the Best Match,” [www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/Interview%20Skills\\_for\\_Supervisors\\_pg030405.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/Interview%20Skills_for_Supervisors_pg030405.pdf) (accessed June 1, 2008); U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, <http://www.eeoc.gov> (accessed June 1, 2008); and “Human Resources Presents... Personnel Manager: Interview Subjects,” [www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/index.html](http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/index.html) (accessed June 1, 2008).

## Comprehension Check 5-1

1. Employer action to make an active effort to recruit, select, and promote protected group members is called
  - a. equal employment opportunity.
  - b. effective supervision.
  - c. human resource management.
  - d. none of the above.
2. Which one of the following is *not* a traditional recruiting source?
  - a. Internal searches
  - b. Cyberspace recruiting
  - c. Employee referrals
  - d. Advertisements
3. *Validity* means
  - a. consistency of measurement.
  - b. equal employment opportunity for protected group members.
  - c. a proven relationship exists between a selection device and some relevant criterion.
  - d. all of the above.
4. True or false? Interviewers tend to give more weight to negative information than to positive information from a job candidate.

## Orientation, Training, and Development

If supervisors have done their recruiting and selecting properly, they should have hired competent individuals who can perform successfully. But successful performance requires more than possession of certain skills. New hires must be acclimated to the organization's culture and be trained to do the job in a manner consistent with the organization's objectives. To achieve these ends, supervisors embark on two processes—orientation and training.

### HOW DO YOU INTRODUCE NEW HIRES TO THE ORGANIZATION?

Once a job candidate has been selected, he or she needs to be introduced to the job and organization. This introduction is called the new employee **orientation** or onboarding process. The major objectives of orientation are to reduce the initial anxiety all new employees feel as they begin a new job; to familiarize new employees with the job, the work unit, and the organization as a whole; and to facilitate the outsider–insider transition. Job orientation expands on the information the employee obtained during the recruitment and selection stages. The new employee's specific duties and responsibilities are clarified, as well as how his or her performance will be evaluated. This is also the time to rectify any unrealistic expectations new employees might hold about the job. Work-unit orientation familiarizes the employee with the goals of the work unit, makes clear how his or her job contributes to the unit's goals, and includes introduction to his or her coworkers. Organization orientation informs the new employee about the organization's objectives, history, philosophy, procedures, and rules. This information should include relevant personnel policies such as work hours, pay procedures, overtime requirements, and benefits. A tour of the organization's physical facilities is often part of the orientation.

Supervisors have an obligation to make the integration of the new employee into the organization as smooth and as free of anxiety as possible. Successful orientation, whether formal or informal, results in an outsider–insider transition that

### OBJECTIVE 5-6

Identify various training methods.

#### **orientation**

An expansion on information a new employee obtained during the recruitment and selection stages; an attempt to familiarize new employees with the job, the work unit, and the organization as a whole.





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*How are most pilots trained? Through intensive flight simulation programs. Simulators let pilots actually experience a variety of situations—some of them life threatening—without having to suffer the ill consequences of poor decisions. As a result, the pilots are exposed to a wide variety of events, most of which they will never have to deal with on the job. But if they do, they have been prepared.*

makes the new member feel comfortable and fairly well adjusted, lowers the likelihood of poor work performance, and reduces the probability of a surprise resignation by the new employee only a week or two into the job.

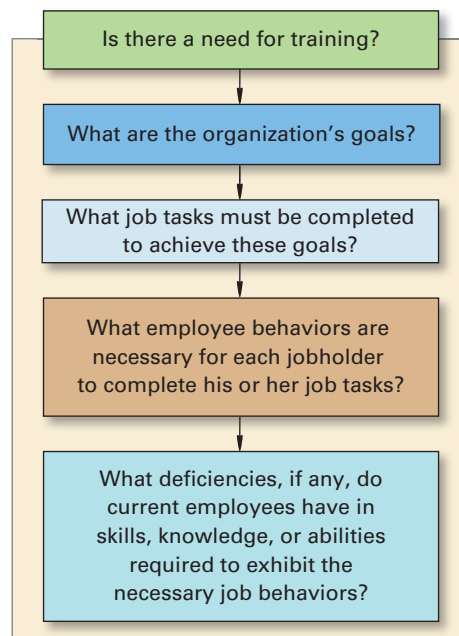
## WHAT IS EMPLOYEE TRAINING?

On the whole, planes don't cause airline accidents; people do. Most collisions, crashes, and other mishaps—nearly three-quarters of them—result from errors by the pilot or air traffic controller or from inadequate maintenance. These statistics illustrate the importance of training in the airline industry. These maintenance and human errors could be prevented or significantly reduced by better employee training.

**Employee training** is a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in employees such that their ability to perform on the job improves. Thus, training involves changing skills, knowledge, attitudes, or behavior. This may mean changing what employees know; how they work; or their attitudes toward their jobs, coworkers, supervisors, and the organization. It has been estimated, for instance, that U.S. business firms alone spend billions of dollars a year on formal courses and training programs to develop workers' skills.<sup>9</sup> Supervisors, for the most part, are responsible for deciding when employees need training and what form that training should take. Determining training needs typically involves generating answers to several questions (see Exhibit 5-6). The leading questions in Exhibit 5-6 suggest the kinds of signals that can warn a supervisor that training may be necessary. The more obvious ones are related directly to productivity—that is, they may indicate that job performance is declining. These indications may include actual decreases in production numbers, lower quality, more accidents, and higher scrap or rejection rates. Any of these outcomes might suggest that worker skills need to be fine-tuned. Of course, we are assuming that the employee's performance decline is in no way related to lack of effort. Supervisors, too, must also recognize that training may be required because of a "future" element. Changes that are being imposed on employees as a result of job design or a technological breakthrough also require training.

### employee training

Changing the skills, knowledge, attitudes, or behavior of employees. Determination of training needs is made by supervisors.



**How Are Employees Trained?** Most training takes place on the job. The prevalence of on-the-job training can be attributed to the simplicity of such methods and their usually lower cost. However, on-the-job training can disrupt the workplace and result in an increase in errors while learning takes place. Also, some skill training is too complex to learn on the job. In such cases, it should take place outside the work setting.

**What Are Some of the Typical Methods Used?** Many different types of training methods are available. For the most part, however, we can classify them in two ways: on-the-job or off-the-job. We have summarized the most popular training methods in Exhibit 5-7.

### Exhibit 5-6

Determining training needs.

<sup>9</sup>M. Dalahoussaye, "Show Me the Results," *Training*, March 2002, 28.