

have the applicants complete an application blank, which standardizes information about all of the applicants to be considered. Any tests relevant to the job and validated by the organization are then administered to applicants. The next step is usually to interview applicants within the HR department. The background of desirable applicants is checked next, especially their references and employment history. Finally, the few applicants remaining are interviewed by the departmental supervisor or department head. During this in-depth interview, job requirements are discussed so that the applicant as well as the supervisor will be able to judge each other's interest in the job. At this point, a job offer can be made to the applicant best qualified for the job. If that applicant rejects the offer, management can either contact other qualified applicants or begin the recruitment process again if there are no other qualified applicants available. When the applicant accepts the offer, the process of placing the applicant in the organization begins.

Evaluating Ability and Motivation

Maximizing employees' future performance is the objective of the selection process. An employee's performance on the job depends on the employee's ability and motivation to perform the job. The entire selection process hinges on determining which applicants have the best ability and the greatest motivation to be successful employees.

Often failure on the job is due not to a lack of skill or ability to perform the job adequately but to a lack of motivation. Skills and abilities can be developed in employees through training inside and outside the organization, but motivation cannot be developed to the same extent. For example, 85 percent of the persons who failed to be successful sales representatives in one company did so from a lack of motivation rather than a lack of ability. The single most important indicator of how a job applicant will perform appears to

be past performance. Therefore, during the selection process, obtaining an accurate and verifiable record of the applicant's past job performance is critical, though this is very difficult to do.⁴⁶

STEPS IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

Initial Screening

Initial screening minimizes the time the HR department must spend during the selection process by removing obviously unqualified or undesirable applicants. For most jobs, many of the applicants do not deserve the serious attention and time of the HR specialist, particularly if many applications are blind résumés or walk-ins. To maintain a favorable corporate image, every applicant must be given courteous treatment. Primarily, the initial screening determines if the applicant possesses the critical job specifications and expedites the departure of the unqualified applicants to minimize the total cost of the selection process.

In reviewing résumés or letters from applicants, the HR officer must determine which applicants have the minimum qualifications indicated in the job description. Qualified applicants are then queried about their interest in the position. If the initial screening can be done by direct contact with the applicant, then the interviewer may pursue a number of strategies. First, the interviewer should perform a visual screening, rejecting any totally unfit applicant—one who is under the influence of alcohol, unable to fill out an application, and so on. Next, the interviewer should ask so-called knockout questions. Such questions may indicate quickly if an applicant is unqualified. For instance: What are your salary requirements? Can you work weekends or nights? Can you work shift hours? Can you stay out of town three nights per week? Do

you have a specialized degree? Are you registered in this state? How fast can you type and take shorthand? Finally, the interviewer should give a brief job description. Many applicants will not be interested once they learn the exact nature of the job, salary, or hours.⁴⁷

Applicants who are rejected at this point in the selection process or at any other point must be included in an *applicant flow record*. The EEOC requires that companies with federal contracts record for each job applicant the name, race, national origin, sex, reference source, date of application, and position applied for. The applicant flow record should also indicate whether a job offer was made to the applicant and the reason why an offer was not made or rejected. Applicant flow records provide data to be reported in quarterly reports and annual EEO-1 reports.⁴⁸

Application Blank

An **application blank** is a formal record of an individual's application for employment. This record is later used by the personnel department and may be reviewed by governmental agencies. The application blank, which provides pertinent information about the individual, is used in the job interview and in reference checks to determine the applicant's suitability for employment. An example of an application blank appears in Figure 5-7. The agreement section at the end should be read carefully. It contains five critical aspects of a good application blank:

1. The applicant certifies with his or her signature and date that all information provided is correct. Falsification of such information is generally legal grounds for termination.
2. The applicant agrees to submit to a medical examination, with passage being a condition of employment.
3. The applicant authorizes former employers and references to provide background information.

4. The applicant understands and accepts that his or her employment is "employment at will" and thus can be terminated at any time with or without cause.
5. Only a written employment agreement, signed by the chief executive officer, is a valid offer of employment; thus any promises or suggestions that may have been casually made by others during the hiring process are not valid.

Discriminatory Practices In recent years, the greatest changes in application blanks have come about after consideration of what questions should be eliminated from the application or very carefully worded. Primarily these questions concern:

Race, National Origin, Religion Employers have been warned by the EEOC and the courts that application forms which indicate race, national origin, religion, and sex often have been used to discriminate against minorities. Employers eliminated this information from HR records (including the application blank) only to find that to comply with EEO/AA requirements this information had to be gathered in the application process. The EEOC advised that these data should be kept separate from the individual HR files. Such information can be coded, incorporated into payroll or other records, and kept separate from the individual's HR file. Requesting such information on application blanks is not a violation of the Civil Rights Act *per se*, but such information recorded on application forms would be carefully reviewed should discrimination charges be filed.⁴⁹

Age, Date of Birth The ADEA prohibits discrimination against applicants over age forty. Therefore, asking the date of birth or age of an applicant is unlawful. However, applicants may be asked if they are of minimum age in order to comply with state and federal child work laws. The employer may also ask if the individual is over age forty.



KFC Management Company — KFC Corporation

Employment Application



MO	DAY	YR
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All Applicants Will Receive Consideration Without Regard To Age, Race, Color, Religion, Sex, National Origin, Handicap, Or Military Status

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS—FRONT AND BACK

PERSONAL	Last Name		First Name		Middle Name		Social Security#		
	Present Street Address			City	State	Zip	No. Yrs.	Home Phone (Including Area Code)	
	Last Address			City	State	Zip	No. Yrs.	If Under 19 Years Of Age, Date Of Birth:	
	Are You Legally Eligible To Work In The United States? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			Have You Ever Been Convicted Of A Felony? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			If Yes, Please Explain:		
	Notify In Emergency: State Name, Complete Address And Phone (Including Area Code): Minors Indicate Parent or Guardian								

JOB INTEREST	Position (Type of Work) Desired:		Starting Monthly Salary Expected: \$		Have You Ever Previously Applied To Our Firm? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
	Date You Can Start Work:			List Any Relatives Or Acquaintances Working For Our Company:			
	Type Of Employment Desired: <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Summer						
	Are There Any Times When You Are Unavailable For Work? If So, Please Specify:				Are You Known To Schools/References By Another Name? If Yes, By What Name:		
	Special Interests Or Qualifications That May Help Us In Considering Your Application:						

EDUCATION	Circle Highest Grade Completed In Each School Category:	Grade School					High School						College				Graduate School			
	Schools	Name And Address					Dates Attended From To						Diploma Or Degree	Grade Average	Areas Of Specialization					
	High School						XXXXXXXXXX													
	College						XXXXXXXXXX													
	Graduate School																			
	Other																			

HEALTH	Do You Have Any Physical Disability Which Would Limit Your Ability To Perform The Job For Which You Are Applying? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	While Working, Is There Anything To Prevent You From: <input type="checkbox"/> Standing <input type="checkbox"/> Lifting	
	If Yes To Any Of The Above, Explain:	

VETERANS AND DISABILITY INFORMATION	
Answering the questions in this section is completely voluntary and will not affect your chances for employment with the company. They are being asked because the federal government requires the company to maintain records of Vietnam era veterans, disabled veterans, and handicapped individuals seeking employment. The answers to these questions will help fulfill our responsibility in this area, and the company would appreciate your help.	
Did you serve in active military duty 180 days or more between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Were you released from active military duty between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975 because of a service connected disability? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Are you a disabled veteran? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Do you have an emotional or physical handicap (disability)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
If you have a handicap and/or disability, please explain and list accommodations you feel are necessary.	

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PLEASE CONTINUE ON REVERSE SIDE

FIGURE 5-7 An excellent example of a complete application blank from Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation. Used by permission.

EMPLOYMENT RECORD:

List Each Job Held Starting With Your Present Or Last Job. Include Military Service, Summer Employment and Volunteer Activities. If You Need Additional Space, Please Continue On A Separate Piece Of Paper.

Name Of Company	Type Of Business	From (MO & YR)	To (MO & YR)
Address (Including City And State)		Starting Salary	Last Salary
Name And Title Of Supervisor	Telephone	Titles And Duties:	
Reason For Leaving:			
Name Of Company	Type Of Business	From (MO & YR)	To (MO & YR)
Address (Including City And State)		Starting Salary	Last Salary
Name And Title Of Supervisor	Telephone	Titles And Duties:	
Reason For Leaving:			
Name Of Company	Type Of Business	From (MO & YR)	To (MO & YR)
Address (Including City And State)		Starting Salary	Last Salary
Name And Title Of Supervisor	Telephone	Titles And Duties:	
Reason For Leaving:			
Name Of Company	Type Of Business	From (MO & YR)	To (MO & YR)
Address (Including City And State)		Starting Salary	Last Salary
Name And Title Of Supervisor	Telephone	Titles And Duties:	
Reason For Leaving:			
Name Of Company	Type Of Business	From (MO & YR)	To (MO & YR)
Address (Including City And State)		Starting Salary	Last Salary
Name And Title Of Supervisor	Telephone	Titles And Duties:	
Reason For Leaving:			

List Names And Addresses Of People Who Have Known You Over 3 Years. (DO NOT LIST RELATIVES.)

Name	Address	Occupation	Phone

AGREEMENT

I certify that all statements given on this application are correct, and understand that falsification or misrepresentation in this or any other personnel record can result in my dismissal if I am employed by the company. If requested to do so, I agree to submit to a physical examination which I must successfully pass as a condition of being accepted for employment. I agree to provide proof of age upon notification of hire. I authorize my former employers and other individuals to give the company information concerning me, whether or not it is part of their written record, and I release them and their companies from any liability whatsoever on account of such information furnished to KFC. I understand that the above noted examination and reference inquiries will be kept confidential and will not be released to anyone by KFC without my written consent. Also, I agree that if I am offered employment by KFC and accept, my employment will be employment at will, that my employment and compensation can be terminated, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either KFC or myself. I am hereby informed and I understand that no representative of KFC, other than the Chief Executive Officer, has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing and that any such agreement must be in writing and must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of KFC.

Public Law 91-508 requires that we advise you that a routine inquiry may be made during our initial or subsequent processing which will provide application information concerning character, general reputation and credit, personal characteristics and mode of living. Upon written request, additional information as to the nature and scope of the inquiry, if one is made, will be provided.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

WE APPRECIATE YOUR INTEREST AND THE TIME YOU HAVE TAKEN TO PREPARE THIS APPLICATION.

Marital Status Asking if applicants are married or have children may constitute discrimination. Because such questions can be used to discriminate against women and rarely relate to job performance, they are violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁵⁰ Such information is needed for Social Security and tax records. It may be obtained after the applicant has been employed, but not during the selection process.

Education The Supreme Court has prohibited establishing an education requirement as a condition of employment if such a requirement is not job related. The necessity of requiring a diploma, certificate, or college degree should be determined through job analysis.⁵¹

Arrest Record The courts have ruled that requesting arrest records is an unlawful selection consideration unless it can be proven to be a business necessity. This ruling was made because a greater proportion of minority-group members are arrested than nonminority members. Therefore, making decisions regarding employment on the basis of arrest records would discriminate against minority members.⁵² Federal courts have also ruled that a felony or misdemeanor conviction should not be an absolute criterion for rejecting a job applicant. Instead, the employer should consider the nature of the offense and its relationship to the position.⁵³

Credit Rating Any inquiry into an applicant's credit record is unlawful. Since, on the average, minority applicants have poorer credit records than nonminority applicants, using credit records as a basis for employment would have an adverse impact on minority groups.⁵⁴

Photograph Since a photograph would identify an individual's sex, race, or national origin, it can be used to discriminate against mi-

nority applicants. The photograph does not provide any job-related information about the applicant. An employer may request a photograph of an employee for identification purposes after the employee is hired.

Height and Weight Requirements Court decisions have determined that height and weight requirements discriminate against Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and women because many in these groups are shorter and slimmer than white males. Height and weight requirements should be made only if they are shown by the employer to be a business necessity or a BFOQ.⁵⁵

Handicap The 1990 ADA prohibits preemployment inquiries as to whether the applicant has a physical or mental handicap or as to the nature of such as disability. Asking if an individual has the ability to perform job-related functions is permissible.

Union Affiliation The National Labor Relations Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of union affiliation.⁵⁶

Some state EEO laws are more rigid than the federal requirements. An employer could easily be in compliance with federal regulations but not state regulations. A major cause of this problem is the use of application forms from national printing firms that generally comply with federal regulations but contain questions that are illegal in some states. Selection officers are sometimes not aware of state laws. Failure to comply with state laws could be costly to employers. The chief of legal operations for the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, for example, has stated that such violations could lead to employers' being ordered to award back pay to all wronged parties who had completed the application forms.⁵⁷

The local branch of the EEOC or the state civil rights commission will review application forms to be sure that any possible discrimi-

natory practices are eliminated. Although future court decisions may alter the items that can lawfully appear on application blanks, those questions which can appear on the application blanks concern the following:

- Applicant's name
- Applicant's home address and telephone number
- Whether the applicant is of minimum working age.
- Whether the applicant can speak or read and write one or more foreign languages (if job related)
- Applicant's educational background (if job related)
- Applicant's work history, including dates of employment, salary progression, job responsibility and duties, and reasons for leaving
- Whether the applicant can meet special job requirements, such as evening work hours
- Applicant's military experience
- Whether a health problem will impair the applicant's job performance
- Applicant's arrest record (if job related)
- Applicant's willingness to travel
- Applicant's special skills or training
- How the applicant heard about the position opening
- Membership in professional organizations
- Names of relatives who are employed by the company
- Other current employment, either full-time or part-time

Uses of the Application Blank The application blank is a permanent record of the applicant's qualifications for a job. In addition to providing information required for the selec-

tion process, the application supplies input for the EEO/AA report. Human resource specialists use the application to develop background checks and interview questions. An important part of the selection process is verification of the applicant's past work history and references. Applicants and their previous employers sometimes disagree about the duties, responsibilities, and importance of previous jobs, length of employment, salary levels, and especially the reason for leaving employment. In an effort to obtain accurate, complete information from the applicant, the HR specialist starts with the application and follows through with background checks and an interview. During the interview some applicants will give different accounts of prior experience as well as skills from what they provided on their application blanks.

Application blanks can also be used as screening devices to generate *global assessments*, wherein the HR specialist reviews the total applications and determines the general desirability of each applicant. A very subjective technique, global assessment is often used when many applicants are being considered and those lacking an appropriate background or skills can be quickly screened out.

A more objective screening technique using application blanks is to have the HR specialist rate each applicant on particular job-related areas, such as the level of specific skills or experience in particular work areas or in supervisory positions. Such a rating would change from job opening to job opening as different skills and background requirements become more relevant. Generally, if one particularly relevant job specification does not appear on completed application blanks, then these applicants can be screened out.

Testing Practices

The use of testing in the selection process has had periods of growth and periods of decline. Once the cornerstone of the selection process, selection tests, particularly paper-and-

pencil ones, came under attack by the EEOC and the courts. Some tests were not reliable, and others were found not to predict employee job performance accurately. The primary problem in the past was the use of very general tests for many different jobs without serious thought as to their validity. Today most employers are far more careful in the selection and use of tests.

From a 1988 case, *Daniel Construction Company v. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers*, three critical criteria a selection test should meet to withstand legal challenge can be outlined:⁵⁸

1. The test is a valid predictor of employee performance.
2. The test is developed, administered, and evaluated by professionals.
3. Those who fail a test can appeal the results, or have an opportunity to increase their chances through other selection criteria.

Employee testing is generally far more objective than other selection procedures; testing has often proved to be the most valid selection procedure. An EEOC staff psychologist has noted the common misconception that the use of selection testing is the fastest way to incur trouble from the EEOC.⁵⁹ In fact, one of the most rigorous and complete studies of employment testing concluded that, in general, standardized tests do not discriminate against blacks; blacks and whites with similar test scores do equally well in job performance. Although blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans as groups do not score as well as white applicants, those differences are mostly due to less education and other social factors and not because of the standardized tests themselves. Most importantly, no better alternative to a standardized test has been developed. Thus, at least some of the cynicism about testing in recent years has been unfair.⁶⁰

However, a survey of over 7000 HR managers nationwide revealed that many do not use any pre-employment tests. The reason is the EEO requirement for validation. Most companies claim that they do not have the time or the money for test validation. Of the tests still in use, achievement tests, or work sample, and psychological tests are the most common. In general, entry-level positions receive more job-skill testing, while higher-level positions receive more psychological testing. Financial officers and sales managers received the most polygraph testing before a 1988 law was passed restricting the use of polygraphs. In the past the banking industry accounted for over one-third of all polygraph tests; the wholesale/retail, mineral extracting, and health care industries were also big users.⁶¹

General Intelligence Tests Decades ago, general intelligence tests were developed to predict the success of young children in school. Test scores are measures of the ability to do well in a traditional school setting⁶² Testing the success of young school children

Table 5-3 Pre-employment Testing by Employers

Type	Frequency of Employer Use
Achievement and work samples	55%
Clerical and word processing	31%
Physical strength	6%
Writing	6%
Equipment operation	4%
Assessment centers	3%
Personality and psychological	20%
Drug and alcohol abuse	18%
Polygraph/Honesty	11%
Use of Test Results	Frequency
Reject applicants who refuse test	52%
Rate test results	35%
Passage required for position	20%

Note: Responses of 142 organizations surveyed.

SOURCE: Adapted from Paul L. Blocklyer, "Preemployment Testing," *Personnel* 65, no. 2 (February 1988): 66-68.

in their academic careers is still what general intelligence tests are best suited for and should be utilized for.

Research has shown a consistent relationship between occupation or income level and general intelligence. Intelligence tests are useful to roughly categorize possible occupations for job applicants, because general intelligence minimums are required for each occupation.⁶³ But though intelligence and occupation are related, the results of intelligence tests do not predict potential success or failure in an occupation with a great deal of accuracy. Predicting success in an occupation requires testing that is much more specific to the particular requirements of the occupation. The person with higher general intelligence would, however, have a greater range of occupations that could be successfully pursued.⁶⁴

Aptitude Tests Natural ability in a particular discipline or the ability to learn quickly or to understand a particular area reveals an aptitude for that area or discipline. **Aptitude tests** indicate the ability or fitness of an individual to engage successfully in any number of specialized activities.⁶⁵

As the official U.S. Employment Services aptitude test, the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) is recognized as the basic denominator in estimating aptitude requirements. It is the aptitude test by which jobs are categorized in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)*. Also, all state employment agencies use the GATB, which tests:⁶⁶

- general intelligence
- verbal ability
- numerical ability
- spatial perception
- form perception
- clerical perception
- motor coordination

- finger dexterity
- manual dexterity

The GATB consists of twelve timed tests (parts)—eight paper-and-pencil tests and four apparatus tests. Each part requires performance of familiar tasks such as name comparisons, arithmetic computations, reasoning, pegboard manipulations, and so on. Employer use of the GATB in employee selection has increased due to the U.S. Employment Service. The Employment Service conducted validity studies of the GATB over a forty-five-year period and found three general abilities (cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor) to be valid predictors of job proficiency. The Employment Service then began implementing the testing in local Job Service (unemployment) offices. Employers can use the GATB scores as valid predictors of employee success.⁶⁷

Personality and Interest Tests Both personality and interest tests seek to measure an individual's motivation in particular fields. Personality tests, such as the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, measure neurotic tendency, self-sufficiency, introversion and extraversion, sociability, and self-confidence. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is a common projective personality test in which the subject is asked to interpret certain situations. The TAT assesses the individual's need for achievement and has been successful in predicting individual motivation. Other personality tests, such as the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) and the Thurstone Temperament Survey (TTS), have been developed to assess specific personality aspects. However, the validity of using personality tests as useful indices of applicants' possible work motivation is highly questionable.

Although the use of personality tests has declined, a survey of university graduate students reported about 20 percent had taken a paper-and-pencil personality test. There are three primary problems of personality tests.

First, they are generally not reliable or valid predictors of job performance. Second, to be useful, such tests assume that job applicants have sufficient insight to describe themselves accurately—often an unjustified assumption. Third, in a desire to perform well, candidates may give false responses to produce what they believe to be the desired “test score,” despite there being no “right or wrong” answers on personality tests. For example, a study of applicants found that the same applicant appeared to be highly introverted when applying for a librarian’s job and highly extroverted when applying for a sales job. Some tests include lie scales, which developers claim eliminate faked responses. But research evidence shows that applicants can evade such scales.⁶⁸

Interest tests generally are designed to measure individuals’ activity preferences. For example, individuals are asked if they would rather watch a baseball game on television, read a novel, or attend a local little league game on a Saturday afternoon. Interest tests such as the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (SVIB) have been found to predict the occupations people will enter with reasonable accuracy. By matching the interests of individuals successful in different occupations, the SVIB indicates to applicants which fields most closely match their interests. The SVIB has shown that, within professions, people’s interests have been fairly stable. While interest tests are particularly useful for students considering many careers or employees deciding upon career changes, they are not particularly valid in selecting a specific employee for a job.

Achievement Tests Aptitude tests assess a person’s capacity to learn, whereas **achievement tests** assess the degree to which a person has learned. Because achievement tests measure current behavior, they may be the best predictor of future employee behavior. Therefore, personnel departments may use achievement tests to determine whether a

person can do the job and aptitude tests to measure whether or not someone can be trained to do the job. Through a job analysis for a specific occupation, a list of questions can be developed that will test an applicant’s occupational experience. The U.S. Employment Service has developed a series of trade tests that measure an individual’s knowledge of the behavior, tools, and equipment of a particular job. For example, electricians might be required to read wiring diagrams.⁶⁹ Because achievement tests can be validated, they are useful predictors of job performance where specific knowledge or experience is necessary to perform in a skilled occupation.

Work Samples One step beyond the achievement test, which measures knowledge of a particular job or occupation, is the use of a work sample, in which the applicant performs part of the job as a test. Examples of work samples are typing tests for secretaries, assembly tests for production-line workers, and trial-balances computation tests for accountants. Work samples are generally valid predictors of job performance since they measure those behaviors required for successful job performance. But work samples have limited use due to their specific nature; that is, they can only test an individual’s ability on certain duties within the job setting. Other criteria are measured by other selection devices. Work samples are usually limited to jobs which are physical rather than mental in nature. In the future, more work samples for conceptual jobs can be expected.

When selecting a work sample, skills required by the test, ease of administration in scoring test results, and the abilities demonstrated on the test should be considered. For example, of the three major typing tests, the Typing Test for Business (TTB) has been found to be much easier to administer and has a higher demonstrated reliability than the SRA Typing Skills Test or the National Business Entrance Test.⁷⁰

Polygraph and Honesty Tests Two types of tests that employers use are polygraph and honesty tests. The **polygraph** is a device that measures the emotions of an individual by directly measuring galvanic skin response, blood pressure, and breathing rate. A 1977 survey of 400 firms on *Fortune* magazine's list of the largest companies revealed that polygraph use in corporations fell into three common areas: (1) verification of employment application information; (2) periodic surveys to determine employee honesty and loyalty; and (3) investigation of a specific instance of theft within the company. About 20 percent of those companies that responded to the survey used the polygraph in some capacity; 50 percent of the commercial banks and retail companies used polygraph examinations. Transportation and industrial firms also indicated heavy use of the polygraph examination.⁷¹

In 1988, however, Congress passed the *Employee Polygraph Protection Act*, which prohibits the use of polygraphs to screen job applicants or investigate employee's backgrounds. The act also outlaws voice-stress analyzers, psychological-stress evaluators, and deceptographs as applicant screening devices. Exempted employers include security-service firms and pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors. The act does permit polygraph testing of employees as part of work-place investigations into theft or vandalism, but only under strict regulations.

The passage of the act came after years of congressional debate. Supporters of polygraph testing argued that when operated by a trained professional, the device can be a valuable tool in screening job applicants. Problems occurred, they contended, because no national licensing program existed to ensure professional testing. Opponents (and supporters of the act) maintained that stress detected by the equipment is not proof of untruthfulness, and the test results can be unreliable.⁷²

After the 1988 act, many employers began using paper-and-pencil "honesty tests" to

screen job applicants. The tests typically ask applicants their attitudes toward different situations involving drug abuse, theft, or dishonesty. Retailers, banks, and department stores, in particular, turned to honesty tests, which cost \$5 to \$15 for each evaluated test, when polygraphs were banned as an alternative method of identifying potentially dishonest applicants. In general, the tests measure whether a person has the same personality traits as thieves. The validity and reliability of the tests is debated among psychologists, with no general agreement.⁷³ At least one professional psychologist, with over ten years of testing-research experience, Robin Inwald, is openly very critical of honesty tests. Inwald points out that the incidence of being apprehended for stealing or committing violent acts is rare, and therefore extremely difficult to study and predict. Many test vendors, she adds, make false claims and promises in the marketing of their honesty tests.⁷⁴

Interviews

"I dread it."

"Every time we have a vacancy I fall three weeks behind in my own work."

"I never know what I can say because of all this affirmative-action stuff."

"We spent over an hour talking . . . but I'm having second thoughts now that he's been here for a week."

Managers realize that the selection process is critical to their organization, yet they often really do dread the process—particularly the interview. The comments above are typical of managers' thoughts about interviewing.⁷⁵

The purpose of the interview is to determine three things about the applicant: (1) Does the applicant have the ability to perform the job? (2) Will the applicant be motivated for a sufficient length of time? (3) Will the applicant "fit in" with the organization? According to a nationwide survey, interviewing is the most widely used selection method. Some companies have reacted to EEOC and court

decisions regarding testing by using fewer tests and turning to the interview as the primary selection technique. Ironically, interviewing is just as vulnerable to EEOC guidelines as the written test. The interview, however, has not received as much criticism as the written test.⁷⁶

Research has constantly shown that the selection interview is low in both reliability and validity. Reliability is a particular concern with interviews because the interview technique does not have the consistency of form that the written test or the reference check may have. Thus, the interview is not as consistent or reliable a selection technique as other methods.⁷⁷

For many reasons there is low reliability or consistency in the interview process. First, interviewers must constantly work to reduce personal biases. Even when interviewers recognize their personal biases, an interviewee's sex, race, religion, school, or hobbies may influence the final decision. Biases can be positive as well as negative. The sex of the interviewer or the interviewee affects the total evaluation of the interview situation. This even occurs with trained, experienced interviewers.⁷⁸

Second, all interviews are different, as are all interviewees. The content of interviews changes because no two interviewees have the same background and experience; different aspects of the individuals, their skills, and their work histories must be discussed with each individual.

Third, the setting of the interview may affect the outcome. If one interview takes place early in the morning when the interviewer is fresh and the next interview is conducted late in the afternoon when the interviewer is in a hurry to leave, the second interviewee may receive little regard when the interviewees are compared. For another example, an applicant interviewed right after the most impressive applicant the interviewer has ever seen is more likely to get a less positive interview

evaluation than normal, but an applicant following one of the worst applicants the interviewer has seen may get higher scores than normal.

Fourth, if the company has established a maximum number of people to interview and a deadline for filling the position, additional pressure is placed on the interviewer. The last applicant to be interviewed may be offered the position if the interviewer is in a hurry to fill it. Thus, the applicant may fill a position that otherwise would not have been offered.

Primarily, conducting good interviews is a two-step process. The first step is to create a good interview setting before the applicant actually arrives for the interview. The second step is to establish a useful questioning period during the interview. These steps encompass the following characteristics of interviewing:

Setting Prepare a setting which will put the applicant at ease and provide consistent surroundings for each interview. Allow thirty to sixty minutes for an adequate interview.

Documentation Prepare a system of written records and formalized procedures for the interview. Determine how the interview will be documented at its conclusion to provide a formal record of the outcome.

Standardization Standardize the interview format. Determine a line of questioning that includes the applicant's prior work history, military history, skills, and educational background. This will provide a framework for consistency in the information-gathering process.

Scoring Determine how the interview will be scored. That is, how will the applicant ultimately be evaluated as a result of the interview process? An applicant may be scored in each area relevant to the job description, as well as on the basis of the applicant's response to questioning.

Reviewing Job Specifications Review the job description and job specifications for that particular job before each interview. Since the interviewer may see applicants for different jobs, the particular, important aspects of each job must be fresh in the interviewer's mind.

Reviewing the Application Blank Review the application before the interview, looking for possible problem areas that require additional information and areas of possible strengths and weaknesses that should be gone into in more detail during the interview.

Training the Interviewer Train the interviewer to recognize personal biases and other possible detriments to interview reliability.

Job-Related Questions Prepare a line of questioning that keeps the interview job related and does not waste time by straying from the subject or delving into personal areas, which could be seen as discriminatory.

Conducting an interview is an art as much as a science. Only through experience and

training can an interviewer thoroughly question a job applicant and get maximum information in minimum time. Figure 5-8 contains some of the dos and don'ts of effective job interviewing.

The end of the job interview is a critical time. At the end the applicant should be able to ask questions concerning the job, pay, or working conditions. The interviewer should ask when the applicant will be available to work and tell the applicant when the job will be filled. If more people will be interviewed or there will be a waiting period for a final decision to be made, the applicant should be given an estimate—such as ten days or two weeks—of when a decision should be reached. The applicant should also be told whether to call to find out the results of the job decision or to wait for notification. Interviewers should be positive toward all applicants, even those who may have to be ruled out, because applicants may be available and suited for other positions at a later date.

Although the interview concentrates on verbal cues, much nonverbal information is

FIGURE 5-8 The dos and don'ts of effective interviews.

DO

- Ask open questions: Why did you apply here?
What specific skill do you have?
- Ask job-related questions: Can you work the 3-to-11 shift? What COBOL experience do you have?
- Ask reflective or follow-up questions: You said you didn't work the counter. Why? How could you accomplish that?
- Open the interview by putting the applicant at ease—discuss an easy topic such as the last job or education.
- Look for areas the applicant is uneasy about and find out why.
- Ask positive questions: What was your reason for leaving XYZ Company?
- Use summary statements to ensure your understanding: Then you did train employees in COBOL programming?

DON'T

- Ask all closed questions: Could you work here three to five years? Do you enjoy working with figures?
- Ask personal questions: Does your husband work? Are your parents Spanish?
- Ask broad or vague questions: Do you like people?
- Do all the talking. Let the applicant talk as much as possible.
- Ask judgmental questions: Don't you like flextime? I think a good health insurance plan is critical, don't you?
- Be impatient, constantly hurry the applicant, or look at the clock.
- Ask more than one question at a time: Why did you choose accounting? What courses did you like, dislike?

given by the candidate that influences the interviewer's perception. Interviewers allow firmness of the handshake, physical appearance, and eye contact during the interview to affect their selection decisions. Body language is a *nonverbal cue* that can greatly influence the interviewer. Candidates who appear nervous or apprehensive do not make a positive impression. The lack of eye contact during the interview can have a strong negative impact on the selection decision if it is interpreted to indicate a person's lack of self-confidence or inability to communicate. Survey information indicates that some interviewers make a tentative decision about an applicant within a few minutes, largely because of impressions about dress and appearance, eye contact, or other nonverbal cues.⁷⁹

A board or panel interview could replace the traditional one-on-one interview technique. The panel interview minimizes individual bias since all panel members score the applicant. The final evaluation for each applicant is an average of several individuals' evaluations, and, therefore, balances out one individual's bias. The panel technique also forces interviews to become more structured and to the point. The obvious disadvantage of the panel interview is the increased cost to the organization of having more than one interviewer and the increased discomfort for some interviewees.⁸⁰

The Structured Interview A structured or patterned interview requires the interviewer to ask a series of predetermined job-related questions. The answers are often scored on a set scale such as: 1 for poor, 2 for marginal, 3 for acceptable, 4 for above average, 5 for outstanding. The interviewer, shortly after the interview is completed, completes an evaluation form, such as the one in Figure 5-9, and includes a brief rationale for the evaluations.

The structured interview can greatly increase the reliability and accuracy of the traditional informal or nonstructured interview.

A structured interview usually shows the following characteristics:⁸¹

Questions The interviewer asks questions exclusively concerned with job duties and requirements critical to the job.

Scored Responses The interviewer is provided typical answers to questions on a five-point rating scale.

Interview Committee Responses are discussed and rated by a number of people to minimize bias.

Consistency All applicants for a position are asked the same questions, evaluated with the same scoring method, and reviewed by the same people.

Questions asked in a structured interview are of four types:

Situational Questions The applicant must respond with what he or she would do in a certain situation. For example: "How will you assign daily work when two employees are absent?"

Job-Knowledge Questions These are questions that concern the job knowledge the applicant must have before being hired. For example: "Describe a typical boiler and steam turbine operation."

Job-Simulation Questions These are questions that approximate the content of the job. For example: "What are the steps involved in replacing drum-type brakes?"

Worker-Requirement Questions These are questions that concern the applicant's willingness or availability for certain working conditions. For example: "Are you willing to relocate after a six-month training program?"