CHAPTER 5

***Methods for Assessing and Selecting Employees***

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The first step is the evaluation of written materials such as applications and resumes. Basic background information can be translated into numerical values to compare the qualifications of applicants through the use of *weighted application forms* or *biographical information blanks (BIBs).* Employee screening also involves methods, such as references and letters of recommendation. However, the use of these methods is on the decline because they tend to be overly positive and are often uninformative.

The second step in screening is employee testing, which typically uses standardized instruments to measure characteristics that are predictive of job performance. Any screening test or method must demonstrate that it is a reliable and valid predictor of job performance. Three methods for establishing reliability are *test‑retest reliability, parallel forms*,and *internal consistency.* The two forms of validity that are most important for the development and use of screening tests are *content validity*,or whether the test content adequately measures the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the job, and *criterion‑related validity*,or the relation­ship between screening test scores and some criterion of job success.

Employee screening tests vary greatly both in their format and in the characteristics that they measure. Categories of such tests include cogni­tive ability tests, mechanical ability tests, motor and sensory ability tests, job skills and knowledge tests, personality tests, and miscellaneous instruments such as *polygraphs.* For the most part, the standardized tests are among the best predictors of job performance. Often they are used in combination—in *test batteries*—to help select the best qualified can­didates. An important issue regarding the effectiveness of employee screening tests is *validity generalization,* or a test’s ability to predict job performance in settings different from the one in which it was validated. Another concern is *test utility*,an estimate of the dollars gained in increased productivity and efficiency because of the use of screening tests. *Faking* is trying to beat an employment test by distorting responses. *Assessment centers* use the test battery approach to offer a detailed, structured assessment of applicants’ employment potential, most often for high‑level managerial positions.

Employment screening for most jobs includes at least one *hiring interview.* Just like any other selection method, the interview is a measure­ment tool. Unfortunately, research indicates that the hiring interview, as it is typically used, generally has low levels of reliability and validity. Used correctly, the interview should help supply information that cannot be obtained from applications, resumes, or tests and should present the applicant with a realistic job preview. However, most interviews are not conducted with this in mind. One of the greatest sources of problems with hiring interviews stems from interviewer biases.