

allow interviews to be securely stored, shared with others in the organization, and accompanied by ratings and comments.⁵²

One of the advantages of video-based interviews is that they can dramatically lower the cost of initial interviews. This is particularly true for employers that wish to interview only a few applicants at a given location. Another advantage is that the interviews can be arranged on short notice (no travel and no schedule rearrangements). Of course, disadvantages of these interviews are that they do not permit face-to-face contact and that the quality of the video connection can, at times, be poor. The effects of these limitations on validity and applicant reactions are unknown.

Another form of video interviews takes the process a step further. Computer-based interviews utilize software that asks applicants questions (e.g., "Have you ever been terminated for stealing?") or presents realistic scenarios (e.g., an irate customer on the screen) while recording applicants' responses. These responses are forwarded to selection decision makers for use in initial screening. The software can also be configured to inform applicants about job duties and requirements. It can even track how long it takes an applicant to answer each question. Retailers are beginning to use computerized interviews on-site, where applicants walk into a store, enter a kiosk, and submit information about their work habits and experiences. As before, though, the accuracy of these high-tech interviews as compared with the old standby, the person-to-person variety, is unclear. The same holds true for how applicants will react to these relatively impersonal methods.

Evaluation of Initial Interview

Whether high-tech or traditional, the interview has benefits and limitations. Nearly all of the research evaluating the interview in selection has considered it a substantive method (see "Structured Interview" in Chapter 9). Thus, there is little evidence about the usefulness of the initial interview. However, organizations using the initial interview in selection are likely to find it more useful by following a few guidelines:

1. Ask questions that assess the most basic KSAs identified by job analysis. This requires separating what is required from what is preferred.
2. Stick to basic, qualifying questions suitable for making rough cuts (e.g., "Have you completed the minimum certification requirements to qualify for this job?") rather than subtle, subjective questions more suitable for substantive decisions (e.g., "How would this job fit within your overall career goals?"). Remember, the purpose of the initial interview is closer to cutting with a saw than operating with a scalpel. Ask only the most fundamental questions now, and leave the fine-tuning for later.
3. Keep interviews brief. Most interviewers make up their minds quickly, and given the limited usefulness and the type of information collected, a long interview (e.g., 45–60 minutes) is unlikely to add much over a shorter one (15–30 minutes).