

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish among initial, substantive, and contingent selection
- Review the advantages and disadvantages of personality and cognitive ability tests
- Compare and contrast work sample and situational judgment tests
- Understand the advantages of structured interviews and how interviews can be structured
- Review the logic behind contingent assessment methods and how they are administered
- Understand the ways in which substantive and contingent assessment methods are subject to various legal rules and restrictions

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed preliminary issues surrounding external staffing decisions made in organizations, including the use of initial assessment methods. This chapter continues the discussion of external selection by discussing in some detail substantive assessment methods. The use of discretionary and contingent assessment methods, collection of assessment data, and legal issues will also be considered. In a real sense, substantive and contingent assessment are the heart of staffing decisions. This is because substantive and contingent selection are the highlight of actual hiring decisions. Done well, the stage is set for effective organizational staffing. Done poorly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to staff successfully.

Whereas initial assessment methods are used to reduce the applicant pool to candidates, substantive assessment methods are used to reduce the candidate pool to finalists for the job. Thus, the use of substantive methods is often more involved than the use of initial methods. Numerous substantive assessment methods will be discussed in depth, including various tests (personality, ability, emotional intelligence, performance/work samples, situational judgment, and integrity); interest, values, and preference inventories; structured interviews; and assessment for team environments. The average validity (i.e., $\bar{r}_{xy}$) of each method and the criteria used to choose among methods will be reviewed.

Discretionary assessment methods are used in some circumstances to separate those who receive job offers from the list of finalists. The applicant characteristics that are assessed when using discretionary methods are sometimes very subjective. Several of the characteristics most commonly assessed by discretionary methods will be reviewed.

Contingent assessment methods are used to make sure that tentative offer recipients meet certain qualifications for the job. Although any assessment method can