

be worth the cost, in some circumstances the costs of work samples may be prohibitive. One means of mitigating the administrative expense associated with performance tests or work samples is to use a two-stage selection process whereby the full set of applicants is reduced using relatively inexpensive tests (e.g., cognitive ability tests and personality inventories). Once the initial cut is made, performance tests or work samples can be administered to the smaller group of applicants who demonstrated minimum competency levels on the first-round tests.⁷⁹

Finally, most performance tests and work samples assume that the applicant already possesses the knowledge, skill, ability, and other characteristics (KSAsOs) necessary to do the job. If substantial training is involved, applicants will not be able to perform the work sample effectively, even though with adequate training they could be high performers. In such situations, work samples simply will not be feasible.

Situational Judgment Tests

A hybrid selection procedure that takes on some of the characteristics of an ability test (especially a job knowledge test) and some of the aspects of a work sample is the situational judgment test. These tests place applicants in hypothetical job-related situations where they are asked to choose a course of action from several alternatives. For example, applicants for a 911 operator position may listen to a series of phone calls and then are asked to choose the best response from a series of multiple-choice alternatives. Or, individuals applying to be a member of a project team may be confronted with a scenario in which the team is in conflict and the applicant must choose a method to resolve the conflict. Exhibit 9.7 provides two examples of situational judgment test items.

As one can see, situational judgment tests are very similar to job knowledge tests and work samples, so much so that the main differentiation in the type of situational judgment test reflects whether the test assesses knowledge (more similar to job knowledge tests) or behavioral tendency (more similar to work samples). Situational judgment tests can also be distinguished from job knowledge tests and work samples. A job knowledge test more explicitly taps the content of the job (areas that applicants are expected to know immediately upon hire), whereas situational judgment tests are more likely to deal with future hypothetical job situations. Furthermore, job knowledge tests are less "holistic" than situational judgment tests in that the latter are more likely to include video clips and other more realistic material. Situational judgment tests differ from work samples in that the former presents applicants with multiple-choice responses to the scenarios, whereas in the latter, applicants actually engage in behavior that is observed by others.

The principal argument in favor of situational judgment tests is to capture the validity of work samples and cognitive ability tests in a way that is cheaper than work samples and that has less adverse impact than cognitive ability tests. How