retention and staffing system management are shown to cut across both types of activities.

Staffing strategy is then explored in detail by identifying and describing a set of 13 strategic staffing decisions that confront any organization. Several of the decisions pertain to staffing levels, and the remainder to staffing quality.

Staffing ethics—the moral principles and guidelines for acceptable practice—is discussed next. Several pointers that help guide ethical staffing conduct are indicated, as are some of the common pressures to ignore these pointers and compromise one's ethical standards. Suggestions for how to handle these pressures are also made.

Finally, the plan for the remainder of the book is presented. The overall structure of the book is shown, along with key features of each chapter.

THE NATURE OF STAFFING

The Big Picture

Organizations are combinations of physical, financial, and human capital. Human capital refers to the knowledge, skill, and ability of people and their motivation to use them successfully on the job. The term "workforce quality" refers to an organization's human capital. The organization's workforce is thus a stock of human capital that it acquires, deploys, and retains in pursuit of organizational outcomes such as profitability, market share, customer satisfaction, and environmental sustainability. Staffing is the organizational function used to build this workforce through such systems as staffing strategy, HR planning, recruitment, selection, employment, and retention.

At the national level, the collective workforces of US organizations total over 112 million (down from a peak of nearly 140 million in 2005), with employees spread across nearly 7.5 million work sites. The work sites vary considerably in size, with 18% of employees in work sites of fewer than 20 employees, 31% in work sites between 20 and 500 employees, and 51% in work sites over 500 employees.[1] Each of these work sites used some form of a staffing process to acquire its employees. Even during the Great Recession, which began in 2007 and ended in 2009, and its slow recovery, there were more than 4 million new hire transactions nationally each month, or over 50 million annually. This figure does not include internal transfers, promotions, or the hiring of temporary employees, so the total number of staffing transactions was much greater than the 50 million figure.[2] Even in difficult economic times, staffing is big business for both organizations and job seekers.

For most organizations, a workforce is an expensive proposition and cost of doing business. It is estimated that an average organization's employee cost (wages or salaries and benefits) is over 22% of its total revenue (and generally a higher