

## 2 EXERCISE

### Selecting from Imperfect Applicants

#### I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To make you aware of the difficulties involved in selecting from a group of applicants who are not well qualified.
- B. To give you practice in making selection decisions.
- C. To familiarize you with possible selection criteria.

II. OUT-OF-CLASS PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes to read the exercise and determine which applicant should be hired

III. IN-CLASS TIME SUGGESTED: 30–45 minutes

#### IV. PROCEDURES

Either at the beginning of class or before, read the exercise and determine which of the three applicants should be hired. You must hire one of the three people, even though none are perfect candidates.

After each class member has individually determined which applicant should be hired, the instructor will divide the class into groups of three or four. Each group must then discuss each applicant and examine each person's strengths and weaknesses. Based on this analysis, applicants are to be ranked in terms of desirability. After all of the groups are finished with their analysis, a representative from each group will present the group's decision as to which applicant should be hired, the criteria used, and the reasoning behind the decision.

#### SITUATION

Buck Fleming operates a two-person saw mill in a small village in one of the northern states. The village has a population of about 60 during the winter months and about 800 during the summer months. It is located on a large lake, and has a general store, a bar, a volunteer fire department building, and a small post office. The nearest larger town is about 45 miles away and has a population of about 5,000.

After contracting with property owners, Fleming cuts trees on their property and takes the logs to his mill, saws them into boards, and then trucks them to buyers. If the trees are veneer quality, he does not cut them into boards himself but sells them to another mill. Fleming does not pay the property owner until after the logs have been sold, thereby minimizing his out-of-pocket expenses. Once logs arrive at his mill, they are run through a machine, aptly called a debarker, which removes the bark. Then, Fleming saws the logs into boards of various lengths and widths, moves them along a conveyor, and stacks them in piles to dry out. When the boards are dry, he loads them onto his truck and delivers them to buyers.

Fleming has had a difficult time hiring the one extra person he needs to run his operation. Most last only a short time and then quit. The job is quite dangerous, extremely dirty, and must be performed outside in the hot summer sun or in the cold, oftentimes snowy fall and spring. Little work gets done during the coldest winter months. Mosquitoes and black flies are another problem, particularly during May and June. Several years ago, an employee was working underneath a piece of heavy equipment when a log brace fell over, killing the man. Everyone in the area knew about this tragic accident, making it harder for Fleming to hire a new person.

Fleming wants to hire someone who could do all the jobs related to his operation, except running the saw that cuts the logs. He reserves this job for himself. He needs an employee who can drive a bulldozer to make a road to get to the trees, cut down trees either with a chain saw or a tree shearer, operate a skidder and a front-end loader, and drive a large logging truck. In addition, the person needs to be able to run the debarker, stack logs and boards, and help perform maintenance on all of the equipment. The employee will frequently come into contact with land owners when cutting trees on their property, so a good first impression is helpful, as well as a friendly personality. Fleming is willing to train someone to perform all of these operations if necessary, but would prefer someone who already has some of the needed skills. Fleming believes that the two most important selection criteria are the employee's ability to come to work on time every day and not to quit after a short time period.

The price of lumber increases during booms in the housing and remodeling business and decreases during a recession. Now, prices are low which makes it hard for Fleming to make a profit. As a result, he feels that he can only pay an employee \$11.00 an hour with no benefits except those required by law. Fleming realizes that this is low, but it is the best he can offer until lumber prices rise. His most recent employee quit because he was offered a job that paid more, leaving Fleming in the position of needing a new helper now.

Fleming recently placed an advertisement in the local newspaper and received calls from three applicants. He then interviewed each and was not impressed with any of them. Nonetheless, he needs to hire one of them soon. The information on each applicant is given below. Some of this information he learned directly from the applicants, and some he obtained by talking with his friends who knew the applicants. In such a rural area, everyone knows almost everyone.

#### **CHUCK MAKI**

Chuck Maki is a polite, personable, nice-looking 22 year old who graduated from high school. He lives within one mile of the saw mill with his parents and knows the area and its people well, having lived here all of his life. Although Maki did not offer the information, Fleming knew that he had been in jail twice over the past three years for a total of about eight months. He was arrested for DUI and his license was suspended. While driving on a suspended license, Maki was arrested again. He has also been arrested for car theft and vandalism. When Fleming directly asked him about this, Maki replied that he knew he had a problem with liquor. In all instances he had gotten drunk and done "stupid things," but he has been sober for two weeks. Maki's driver's license is currently suspended but he hopes to get it back shortly. In the meantime, his parents will drive him to work or he can walk. Chuck has no prior logging experience, having worked as a bartender for a few years after graduating from high school. He is currently unemployed and is willing to start work immediately.

#### **BUD HOOVER**

Bud Hoover is approximately 25 years old and has never finished high school. For the past month, he has lived in a trailer with three friends about 20 miles from the saw mill and is currently unemployed. He grew up in Kentucky and has worked in a variety of jobs, keeping most of them for less than six months. During the past three years, he had held five different jobs, all in different towns. He has had experience as a pizza delivery driver, a car washer, a tire changer, a dishwasher, and a yard maintenance employee. He has no knowledge of logging equipment, but says he likes working on trucks and other equipment. Hoover seems

to be an incessant talker and is a heavy smoker. He has an older car for getting to work and can start work after he returns from a trip in two weeks.

#### JIM BRYCE

Jim Bryce is in his mid-thirties and has worked in the construction trade since dropping out of high school. He was laid off from his job in Florida five months ago due to a lack of work and has not found a new job since. Several years ago he fell off of a barn roof and hurt himself badly. Then, a year later he cut his hand with a miter saw, needing further hospitalization. Jim accumulated so many medical bills that he needed to declare bankruptcy. He wears his hair long, has several tattoos, and needs dental work. He lives about 35 miles from the mill, temporarily staying with his uncle, and has an old truck that needs repair. Jim loves to work outdoors, and the cold and heat do not bother him. He has a good knowledge of construction but not of logging, logging equipment, or the area. He is available for work immediately.