



## Course Learning Outcomes for Unit V

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

5. Relate different selection criteria and selection methods to organizational considerations.

## Reading Assignment

### Chapter 6:

Selecting Employees Who Fit

## Unit Lesson

Over the years in HR, many organizations have hired exceptional employees and have hired some employees that ended up being exceptionally terrible. For many in HR, early on in their careers, before they really understood how to select well, both categories of employees were hired by chance; sometimes they got lucky, and sometimes they did not. This unit is about minimizing reliance on chance and maximizing reliance on science and proven practices. There are ethical and legal aspects to hiring, but the overall purpose is to hire the right person, with the right skill set, at the right time. Selection is one of the primary ways the HR function contributes to the bottom line of the company.

Amy Rees Anderson authored an article in *Forbes* magazine in 2013. The article was appropriately entitled “Successful Companies Put The Right People In The Right Jobs.” The title is a bit of a play on the Jim Collins statement:

We expected that good-to-great leaders would begin by setting a new vision and strategy. We found instead that they first got the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats—and then they figured out where to drive it. (Collins, 2011, p. 41)

Choosing the right person to hire is much more difficult than it sounds. There is a great deal to take into consideration. “The cost of a bad hire—both direct costs such as placing ads and the intangibles such as lost productivity and morale—can drain company resources” (Kelly & Williams, 2015, p. 247). This lesson will provide five considerations for hiring managers.

*Consideration #1:* The starting point for selection is a good job analysis and subsequent job description. These defensible documents will inform the hiring manager of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) the candidate must possess to do the job well. This is often done by examining the current workforce to see what KSAs current top performers in the job already have and utilize. It is impossible to hire the “right” person until you have first identified what “right” for this position must be.

*Consideration #2:* Most people say that basketball player LeBron James (or any other athlete) is a great athlete due to his high ability. That is not necessarily the case. LeBron James is great due to extremely high fit with his job. He is large, fast, strong, understands the game of basketball, and has fine motor skills. If LeBron James was hired as a chief financial officer, he may not rise to greatness. This “fit” principle is often forgotten during employee selection. Hiring managers need to understand at a fundamental level that the best hire does not have the highest ability, but rather, he or she is the best fit. Most positions do not require the smartest, tallest, or best-looking candidate but do require the right fit to the requirements of the job, manager, and organization. All three components (person-job, person-organization, and person-supervisor) of fit must be considered.

*Consideration #3:* Decorated and retired General and Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki was once asked what he looked for when promoting soldiers to officers. His answer was simple: “good judgement.” Unfortunately, hiring for nebulous competencies (which is often the case in leadership positions) can be quite difficult. When

faced with this challenge, it is critical to use multiple methods of selection. Screen resumes, conduct interviews, acquire work sample tests, bring the applicant into the job for a realistic job preview, have multiple people on the interview and selection panel, and call many references. Try to acquire as much information as possible before making the decision to hire. Bear in mind the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, not what people say they will do. Giving a scenario-based interview where the candidate provides responses with what they would hypothetically do is typically a fruitless practice. You want to know what they have done (because this is what they will do in the future), not if they can simply give a good answer to an open-ended question.

*Consideration #4:* Human beings have an intelligence quotient (IQ), also referred to as general mental ability, with a test-retest validity coefficient of .99 after their early teen years. Basically, IQ does not change. On the contrary, most human beings can learn to weld at pretty much any age. If you are hiring a welder, what will you use to select? Herein lies the trait versus state debate. An HR heuristic is that you hire for what cannot be trained. Good training does *not* make up for bad hiring. You want to select based on stable traits, and train for what is developable. This means you hire the smart person with a little welding experience over the less-smart person with more experience as the latter will likely not reward your hire with better performance over time.

*Consideration #5:* Resist the urge to move fast; the pressure will be there. Many bad hires come from situations where the hiring manager feels the pressure from upper management to make a hire and select the best applicant available, even though he or she is not optimal. If your applicant search has yielded average at best talent, in most cases (with the exception of high turnover/low skilled labor) it is best for the firm to keep searching using multiple methods to find the best fit.

#### References

- Anderson, A. R. (2013, February 27). Successful companies put the right people in the right jobs. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/amyanderson/2013/02/27/getting-the-right-people-into-the-right-seats-on-the-bus-is-essential-to-a-companys-success/#7c615bdb1071>
- Collins, J. (2011). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap . . . and others don't*. New York, NY: Harper/Collins.
- Kelly, M., & Williams, C. (2015). *BUSN: Introduction to business* (7th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

#### Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

For additional information regarding the topics discussed in this unit, please see the following video. This video visually demonstrates the concepts discussed in the unit lesson and readings.

#### [Chapter 06: Selecting Employees Who Fit](#)

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.