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Chapter 6

Staffing and Selection Strategies for Service Quality

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Have you ever called technical support with a computer-related problem, only to find the representative noncommunicative, generally unhelpful, or even rude? With increased sophistication of goods produced in the United States and abroad, many products are becoming less user friendly, and more customers are turning to service-oriented technical support (for example, one-on-one telephone assistance with an expert) for help. As a result, the notion of quality customer service has gained widespread acceptance as a critical performance feature of many contemporary businesses. This chapter examines the use of a variety of methods for selecting employees with service orientation. We explore the personality characteristics that are associated with good customer service performance and then review methods for predicting the service orientation construct.

Personality Correlates with Customer Service

In the past decade, there has been a resurgence of research on the validity of personality measures for predicting performance. Previously, researchers claimed that individual differences in behavior

were not consistent over time and that behavior was largely determined by situational variables (Mischel, 1968). Two major developments in the field of industrial-organizational psychology have led to research providing contradictory evidence regarding the use of personality for predicting job performance: (1) the use of meta-analysis to cumulate validity results across studies, and (2) the emergence of the Big Five Factor Model as a taxonomy for organizing personality constructs (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Digman, 1990; John, 1990). Although there is some disagreement about the content and names of the factors, they are frequently labeled (1) Extraversion, (2) Agreeableness, (3) Conscientiousness, (4) Emotional Stability, and (5) Openness to Experience (John, 1990). In an often cited meta-analysis, Barrick and Mount (1991), found that some of the Big Five factors predicted performance in a number of occupational settings. For example, Openness to Experience was a good predictor of training performance. Conscientiousness predicted job performance regardless of occupational category. Hunthausen, Truxillo, Bauer, and Hammer (2003) found that when adding an "at-work" frame of reference (that is, instructing participants to think about how they behave at work when responding to each statement), Extraversion and Openness to Experience scales showed increased concurrent validity in a sample of customer service managers. Thus, research has shown that personality traits may be a good indicator of customer service. Below, we discuss four specific traits: service orientation, sales drive, cognitive ability, and vocational interest.

Service Orientation

To the extent that service orientation is a pattern of stable personality characteristics, measurement of this attribute could identify individuals who are predisposed to engage in positive service-oriented behaviors (Bowen, Siehl, and Schneider, 1989). For example, research on the altruistic personality (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, and Switzer, 1991) and prosocial behavior in organizations (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988) indicates that stable cross-situational dispositions may lead to service-oriented behavior (Sanchez, Fraser, Fernandez, and De La Torre, 1993). To measure these dispositions, service orientation inventories typically measure sets of personal-

ity traits associated with good performance in customer service jobs. For example, the Service Orientation Index, developed by Hogan and Hogan (1986), contains items that appear to measure emotional stability, agreeableness, and conscientiousness from the Hogan Personality Inventory. The scale's internal consistency (.69) suggests that the index is made up of items from three independent personality scales.

To understand the set of personality characteristics that make up service orientation, most test developers rely on job analysis. Several researchers (Fogli and Whitney, 1991; Hogan and Hogan, 1992; Paajanen, 1991; Saxe and Weitz, 1982) have operationalized service orientation in this way. The authors of the ServiceFirst Inventory (Fogli and Whitney, 1991) identified four constructs that underlie service orientation: active customer relations, polite customer relations, helpful customer relations, and personalized customer relations. Hogan and Hogan (1986) used three factors: virtuous, empathic, and sensitive. As with the Big Five, the factor names differ among service orientation inventories; however, several themes appear to be common among all measures: friendliness, reliability, responsiveness, and courteousness (Frei and McDaniel, 1998). In their meta-analyses of customer service measures, Frei and McDaniel (1998) found that customer service was highly correlated with Big Five measures of Agreeableness (.43), Emotional Stability (.37), and Conscientiousness (.42). These three correlations suggest that service orientation is an expression of a higher-order personality factor labeled "Socialization" (Digman, 1997).

Sales Drive

Intuitively, one would think that customer service employees and salespeople would share similar skills (for example, friendliness, social skills, and responsiveness to customers). There is evidence, however, that personality characteristics associated with good sales performance may not be the same as those associated with good customer service performance. For example, most studies of personality and sales performance find that the traits of extraversion and aggressiveness are good predictors (Deb, 1983; Oda, 1983). Stewart and Carson (1995), however, found a negative correlation between extraversion and performance in customer service occupations. It

may be that employees with high sociability or extraversion may give insufficient attention to completing customer interactions in a prompt manner. Although this may please the customer, it may be detrimental to the organization because of increased labor costs. But in an analysis of the relation between service orientation and sales orientation, Frei and McDaniel (1998) reported a moderate correlation of .31 between customer service measures and sales drive.

Cognitive Ability

Research over the past eighty-five years shows that cognitive ability tests are the most valid predictors of performance across all occupations (Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). Hunter and Hunter (1984), however, found that the relation between cognitive ability and sales performance was the lowest among all criteria. Thus, service orientation inventories may be able to add some incremental prediction. Rosse, Miller, and Barnes (1991) administered a service-oriented personality measure and cognitive-perceptual ability tests in a concurrent validation study of medical clerical positions. Their results indicate that service orientation measures can predict job performance beyond cognitive ability tests. This finding is supported by Frei and McDaniel (1998), who found customer service measures to be uncorrelated with cognitive ability tests (-.06).

Vocational Interest

To the extent that a set of stable personality characteristics predicts customer service performance, patterns may emerge regarding other manifestations of personality, such as vocational interest. Holland's Self-Directed Search (1985) is a self-administered vocational counseling tool that operationalizes his RIASEC model of vocational interest. The RIASEC model states that vocational interests can be divided in terms of six primary interest areas: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Frei and McDaniel (1998) found a moderate correlation between social vocational interests and customer service (.28) and little to no correlation with the other vocational types. Using a sample of ninety

customer service representatives, Fritzsche, Powell, and Hoffman (1999) found that none of the three hypothesized test scores (Conventional, Social, and Enterprising) were significantly correlated with performance, but there was a significant correlation between investigative interest scores and job performance. Given the low number of study participants, this effect may be explained by sampling error.

Validity of Customer Service Measures

Frei and McDaniel (1998) conducted a meta-analysis to determine the criterion-related validity of pencil-and-paper, self-report measures of customer service orientation. The customer service measures included the Service Orientation Scale (Hogan and Hogan, 1992), the Customer Relations Scale (London House, 1992), and the PDI Customer Service Inventory (McLellan and Paajanen, 1994). The criterion-related validity analysis was based on forty-one coefficients with a total sample size of 6,945. The mean corrected validity was .50 for an aggregated supervisor rating of job performance.

Olesen, McDaniel, and Snell (1998) investigated the construct validity of customer service measures. They administered four measures: the Hogan Personality Inventory's Service Orientation Index (Hogan and Hogan, 1992), the PDI Customer-Service Orientation Inventory (Personnel Decisions, 1992), the ServiceFirst measure of service orientation developed by Fogli and Whitney (1991) for CORE CORP and Saville, and Holdsworth's Work Styles Questionnaire—Service (Saville and Holdsworth, 1995), as well as a measure of the Big Five and a measure of cognitive ability. The measures were administered to 356 undergraduate students at a midwestern university. The intercorrelations among the main scales of the customer service inventories ranged from .35 to .52. The customer service measures used in this study were strongly related to three of the Big Five personality dimensions as measured by the NEO Five Factor Inventory and the Hogan Personality Inventory. Specifically the results of their study support the contention that the construct of customer service is a combination of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability and thus may be considered an expression of the higher-order personality factor of socialization

(Digman, 1997). They also found that the customer service inventories are largely independent of cognitive ability, supporting the findings of Frei and McDaniel (1998).

The remainder of this chapter provides a brief description of various measures and research results regarding the use of several instruments used to predict the performance of employees in customer service jobs. A new meta-analysis was not conducted because there were insufficient numbers of coefficients to warrant a new analysis.

Review of Customer Service Instruments

This review describes several instruments not included in the Frei and McDaniel (1998) meta-analysis: Development Dimensions International's (DDI) Customer Service Career Battery (CSCB), Unicru's Customer Service Assessment, Employment Technologies' Customer Service Skills Assessment Program (CSSAP), Alignmark's AccuVision Customer Service System, Aon's REPeValuator and Applicant Profile: Service Index and Applicant Profile Snapshot Test Series, and Work Skills First, Inc.'s Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service. All instruments are administered using the Web.

DDI's measure, the CSCB, consists of three content sets: a situational judgment inventory, a customer service work styles and dispositional inventory, and a behavior-based inventory of past experiences. Unicru's instrument is a computer-administered assessment in which candidates read about situations and select the best alternative. Employment Technologies' measure involves having candidates watch a video that shows a situation and select an answer from four possible video taped responses. Alignmark's AccuVision Customer Service System is similar to the measure developed by Employment Technologies Corporation in that it also presents videotaped situations followed by four videotaped response options. Aon's REPeValuator also involves having candidates watch a video and answer questions. The two Applicant Profile tests contain more traditional multiple choice or ranking items that are computer administered. Work Skills First, Inc.'s Judgment at Work Survey is administered over the Web and contains situational items that describe a situation that one might encounter at work in a customer service job. Each situation is followed by several possible ac-

tions, and the applicant is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of each action.

This is not a complete list of available instruments. Some considered their data proprietary (for example, eSelex), and others were unable to provide data or information about their selection systems or never responded to the request for information (for example, E-talk and Qwiz).

DDI Customer Service Career Battery

DDI's Customer Service Career Battery (CSCB) has three content sets: Work-Related Judgment, Work Style and Disposition, and Background Experience. The CSCB is a short-form version blending content from three existing inventories: the Situational Judgment Inventory (SJI), the Career Fit Inventory (CFI), and the Applicant Experience Profile (AEP), all of which are designed to predict the performance of applicants for customer service jobs (Sinar, Scott, and Reynolds, 2004). The use of client-specific job analysis and validation information and administering the CSCB on the Web enables the scales administered for each client to be customized. Although the SJI, CFI, and AEP items are typically delivered within the integrated CSCB, we describe them separately below. (For more information about the kinds of reports generated and uses for their tests, go to <http://www.ddi.com>.)

Customer Service Situational Judgment Inventory

The SJI comprises a series of brief written simulations involving customer service, team membership/leadership, problem solving, continuous improvement, and interpersonal effectiveness. It includes behavioral choice questions that reflect realistic workplace situations. In response to these questions, the respondent must choose the best of four options. Several of the items contain a problem-solving component that involves math or interpreting information from charts and graphs. The remaining items contain situations that are more interpersonal in nature and are designed to reflect face-to-face or telephone-oriented customer interactions. The SJI's test-retest reliability over a one-month time period was .64 ($n = 110$ students). Sinar, Scott, and Reynolds (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to average the validities across studies. Corrected validities

ranged from .24 to .33 ($n = 654$ to 754 , number of studies = 6 to 7) with four criterion composites: can-do performance, will-do performance, interpersonal performance, and overall performance.

Customer Service Career Fit Inventory

The CFI collects self-reports of candidates' past behavior, preferences, and motivations as they relate to critical work behaviors. Respondents answer questions using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The scales within the CFI are the Team Member scale, the Supervisory Collaboration scale, four behavioral scales (Work Quality, Positive Disposition, Outgoing Disposition, and Adaptability), and one perception scale (Self-Efficacy).

Meta-analytic results of the CFI's internal consistency shows that the reliabilities fell in the range of .65 to .85, with .75 as the average reliability of the seven scales. Using meta-analytic techniques, Sinar, Scott, and Reynolds (2003) found the individual CFI scales to be correlated with the criteria, except for Outgoing Disposition. Corrected scale-level correlations with overall performance ranged from .06 to .25 ($n = 524$ to 595 ; number of studies = 5 to 6). Except for the Outgoing Disposition scale and the correlation between interpersonal performance and work quality, none of the confidence intervals included zero. Two additional studies revealed that the CFI also predicted counterproductive work behaviors such as disciplinary actions taken against employees, tardiness, and absenteeism.

Customer Service Applicant Experience Profile

The AEP is a behavior-based selection instrument developed to measure an applicant's past experiences. It contains a series of behavioral statements and several multiple-choice questions related to past work behaviors. For each behavioral statement, applicants indicate if they have performed the described behavior. For each multiple-choice question, applicants choose the response that best describes the applicant's behavior.

The AEP contains five dimension clusters that relate to job performance in customer service environments: ability to learn, interpersonal skills, initiative/innovation, work standards, and customer service experience. Two primary studies have been con-

ducted on the AEP. In the first, corrected validities for the AEP administered verbally ranged from .32 to .37 ($n = 105$ incumbents in call center positions) across the four criteria. In the second study, corrected validities for the pencil-and-paper-administered AEP ranged from .20 to .30 ($n = 164$ incumbents in a customer-oriented operations job family).

Operationally, the CSCB consists of items from the SJI, CFI, and AEP combined into an integrated test, and items from the three content sets are combined into a single score for each candidate. Meta-analytic results for the operational CSCB versions ($n = 1,060$; number of studies = 10) show that the CSCB is a valid predictor of overall performance ($\rho = .47$), can-do performance ($\rho = .38$), will-do performance ($\rho = .41$), and interpersonal ($\rho = .45$). Validity coefficients with absenteeism and punctuality were $\rho = .23$ and $.26$, respectively. Each of these coefficients was corrected for sampling error, unreliability of the criterion, and range restriction. Differential validity analyses also indicated that regression line slopes and y -intercepts were similar by race and gender, suggesting that the CSCB's prediction of job performance does not differ by applicant subgroup.

Unicru's Customer Service Assessment

Unicru's Customer Service Assessment is a personality-based pre-employment assessment that measures behaviors such as helping and solving people problems, positive behavior (for example, good mood, politeness, empathy), controlling negative behavior (arguing, anger, criticizing), communication, sociability, and working with others (Scarborough, Paajanen, and Ostberg, 2001). The assessment consists of fifty statements of everyday experience, each of which is rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = "it is definitely false for you or you strongly disagree" to 4 = "it is definitely true for you or you strongly agree." The customer service assessment is integrated electronically with other parts of a selection system.

The validity of the Customer Service Assessment against a global performance composite score (consisting of management ratings of performance, eligibility for rehire, impact of termination on local operation, and type of termination) was .33 ($n = 213$). (For more information about the kinds of reports generated and uses for the tests, go to <http://www.unicru.com>.)

Employment Technologies Corporation's Customer Service Skills Assessment Program

The CSSAP is a video-based, computer-scored job simulation designed to assess the competencies essential for success in a customer service position (Employment Technologies, 1990). It measures six primary skill areas critical to providing high-quality customer service: developing positive customer relations, discovering customer needs, responding to customer wants, anticipating customer needs, working together to meet customer needs, and ensuring customer loyalty. Construction of test items and test scenarios was based on individual tasks and critical situations. Thus, test items focused on key behaviors rather than constructs associated with cluster labels.

The test consists of sixteen videotaped scenarios and forty-six test items that appear on the video test. After watching a video, the practice item given in the manual is, "If you were the charge card representative, what would you do next?"

Option A: Tell Tim to send the minimum payment until you can straighten out the bill.

Option B: Ask Tim if other people might have used his charge card.

Option C: Tell Tim he will need to speak to your manager.

Option D: Tell Tim you will check into the matter and will call him back today with an explanation.

The CSSAP reports, including the CareeRx Developmental Report, the List of Participants Report, and the EEO Group Summary Report can be viewed online (<http://www.ETC-EASY.com>).

The CSSAP criterion-related validity coefficient was estimated to be .40 ($n = 126$ customer service providers at two large automotive companies). In a second sample, the corrected correlation between the CSSAP scores and the performance ratings was .34 ($n = 60$).

The CSSAP also was validated for the job of operator assistance operators whose job consists of assisting customers with a variety of problems, from billing difficulties to the need for emergency services. Successful performance requires a variety of customer service and problem-solving behaviors. The CSSAP test results were correlated with operational quality-of-work ratings yielding a sig-

nificant correlation of .34 ($n = 65$). When correlated with performance checklist ratings developed for the original validation study, the validity was $-.03$. The lack of relationship may have resulted because adaptation of the checklist was not entirely successful or because the managers were not as skilled in the use of this new performance measure.

The Call Center Simulation (LaTorre, 2001) is a computer-based, multimedia test that simulates actual call center workstation conditions. Applicants respond to calls from a variety of customers with real-life issues. Some customers are irate, others are confused, and still others are calm. To perform effectively on the assessment, applicants are required to answer customer calls, enter customer information, listen to customer issues, look up relevant information, identify effective responses, and summarize calls. Applicants also are required to demonstrate basic keyboard and navigation skills.

A coefficient alpha measure of internal consistency resulted in an overall test reliability of .83 ($n = 760$). Validities, reported for each of fourteen calls, ranged from .038 to .168. Eleven of the twelve calls had a significant correlation with supervisor ratings of performance. In order to determine the possible range of validity expected from an eight-call test, the developers correlated overall test scores with performance ratings for ten randomly chosen eight-call tests. Results indicated that the uncorrected validity for an eight-call test ranged from .218 to .240. The internal consistency reliability of the final eight-call test was .78. The observed validity of the eight-call test was .24. When corrected for criterion unreliability, the validity was .34, and when corrected for criterion unreliability and range restriction, the validity was .49. Fairness analyses revealed that the test is equally difficult for males and females and for whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Alignmark's AccuVision Customer Service System

Alignmark's AccuVision Customer Service System (Alignmark, 2001) is a video-based selection test that has been developed to measure customer service skills and abilities. Job analysis information provided the basis for the design and content of the system. For example, varying degrees of customer contact are represented by the different scenarios (for example, employee-to-customer,

employee-to-employee videos, and telephone interactions). A set of thirty-four scenarios was developed and reviewed by Subject matter experts (SMEs) for realism. Behavioral response options were rated for effectiveness. The concurrent validation involved using a consortium of three companies representing a mixture of geographical regions and a variety of job titles.

The validity of the test for the total sample was .34 ($n = 600$). When corrected for criterion unreliability (the correlation between a first and second rating taken six weeks later = .81), the validity was .38. The test-retest reliability was .75 for a sample of thirty-five incumbents. Race and gender differences were found to be negligible when validities were computed separately for the various groups and when the Cleary model was used to test for slope and intercept differences. (For information about the kinds of reports generated and uses for their tests, go to <http://www.alignmark.com>.)

Aon's REPeValuator and Applicant Profile: ServiceFit Index

Aon's REPeValuator (Aon, 2003b) is designed to simulate a typical call center environment and therefore provides a work sample and a realistic job preview as applicants interact with virtual customers via e-mail or telephone. There are a total of six scenarios (customer chat or voice interactions) involving forty-two items. The items can be completed in approximately sixty minutes. The four competencies measured are Managing Customer Relations (MCR), Providing Accurate Information (PAI), Keyboarding Speed and Accuracy (KSA), and Managing Call Center Time (MCT). An overall score is provided as well as a score for each of the four competency areas.

The reliability of the instrument for each of the four competencies is .37 for MCR, .81 for PAI, .85 for KSA, and .89 for MCT. The reliabilities are all in the very good range for these types of tests except for MCR. This is attributable to the multidimensional nature of the scale. The overall score reliability of the assessment is .85. Concerning subgroup differences, Aon (2003b) found no adverse impact for females and marginal adverse impact for minorities if cut scores are high ($d = .60$). These studies note that sample sizes available for these analyses are quite small, so results should be interpreted with caution. Concerning validity, the aver-

age corrected validity ($n = 134$) for the overall score is .40 against the skill rating composites (ranging from .28 to .51), .47 against the work behavior rating composite (ranging from .38 to .53), and .35 against the three summary (single) ratings (ranging from .25 to .41).

Aon's Applicant Profile: ServiceFit Index (Aon, 2003a) is targeted at predicting turnover and key antecedents of turnover and withdrawal. The test contains ninety items that are designed to measure three core dimensions: Customer Service Orientation (preference for working with a variety of people with whom a person is not familiar), Job Structure Orientation (preference for following prescribed rules and procedures rather than vague or ambiguous direction), and Work Environment Orientation (preference for working quickly and with fast turnaround as opposed to more slowly paced work that does not require the same level of immediate intensity).

These constructs are measured using four item types: paired comparisons (selecting between two things, such as job titles or job activities), rankings (rank order six job activities, work descriptions, or challenges that differ on a core dimension), traditional multiple choice (biodata or personality items), and self-report (criteria) multiple choice (job satisfaction, turnover intentions). Examples of each item type are shown in Exhibit 6.1.

The reliability of the instrument assessed in three studies is .74 ($n = 378$), .76 ($n = 233$), and .74 ($n = 113$). Across all three studies, there were no subgroup differences for females or minorities. The only significant difference on the total score was in favor of female test-takers for a pilot version of the test. Concerning validity against supervisory performance ratings, the results indicate statistical significance for seven of the eight work behaviors, with coefficients ranging from .17 to .42 (average, .31) ($n = 113$). Concerning the prediction of turnover, the number of incumbents who have turned over is still relatively small to date. However, when comparing the top half of performers on the test to the bottom half, the turnover rates are 16.4 percent and 17.4 percent for the top half and 24.6 percent and 25.6 percent for the bottom half. This represents about a 32 to 33 percent decrease in attrition if one simply selected individuals in the top half of test scores. A second study showed that screening out the lowest one-third of the test takers would have reduced turnover (in a call center) by 20 percent and

**Exhibit 6.1. Sample Items on Aon's
Applicant Profile: ServiceFit Index.**

Sample Paired Comparison Items:

I would prefer to have a job as a(n):

- A. School principal
- B. Bus driver

I would prefer a job in which I am . . .

- A. Writing letters
- B. Performing calculations

Please choose which word better describes you in a work context:

- A. Excited
- B. Calm

Sample Ranking Item:

Please rank the list of job activities or descriptions provided based on your work interests and preferences (1 = most important or most desired to 6 = least important or least desired):

- ___ Communicate with coworkers
- ___ Document or read information
- ___ Communicate with persons outside the organization
- ___ Interact with computers
- ___ Review documents
- ___ Resolve conflicts or negotiate with others

Sample Multiple Choice Item:

I am too energetic to stay in one place for any length of time.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Neither agree nor disagree
- D. Somewhat disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

Source: Work Skills First (2005).

screening in only the top third of test takers would have reduced turnover by over 30 percent. A comparison of turnover between the two groups (bottom third to top third) showed that the turnover rate in the bottom third was twice the turnover rate in the top third (Daniel P. Russell, personal communication, Sept. 14, 2004).

Aon's Applicant Profile: Snapshot Test Series is designed for use by businesspeople of nearly any background (health care, manufacturing customer contact, telesales and service, service technician). It consists of an untimed sixty-seven-item test that measures Work Orientation (describes work habits, work preferences, and reliability), Fundamental Skills (measures the ability to understand simple instructions, follow procedures, and reason through basic problems), and Job Judgment (assesses the applicant's ability to apply sound judgment in dealing with everyday job situations). Although there are several versions of the test designed for various industries, all versions have sixty-seven items. Sample questions are shown in Exhibit 6.2.

The validities (corrected for criterion unreliability) of the Snapshot tests against the average performance rating are .36 and .37 with a single-item overall performance rating ($n = 2,126$). There were little or no subgroup differences. Specifically, standardized mean differences for male versus female test performance and minority versus nonminority test performance on the cognitive (Fundamental Skills) items were generally less than .40 standard deviations and far smaller for the other items. (To find out more information about the kinds of reports generated and uses for their tests, information is available on the Aon Web site at <http://www.aon.com/talentsolutions>.)

Work Skills First, Inc.'s Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service

The Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service contains situational stems, each describing a situation that one might encounter at work in a customer service job. Each situation is followed by several possible actions and the applicant is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of each action. An example item is shown in Exhibit 6.3.

**Exhibit 6.2. Sample Questions on Aon's
Applicant Profile: Snapshot Test Series.**

Sample Work Orientation Question:

Who do you believe is most responsible for ensuring that safe work practices are followed?

- a. Safety experts
- b. Supervisors
- c. Employees
- d. Managers
- e. Trainers

Sample Fundamental Skills Question:

Assigned

Area	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Area 1	Terry	Pat	Chris	Kelly	Sam	Kelly
Area 2	Sam	Terry	Kelly	Chris	Chris	Terry
Area 3	Kelly	Chris	Terry	Pat	Pat	Sam

Who works neither on Tuesday nor on Wednesday?

- a. Chris
- b. Kelly
- c. Pat
- d. Sam
- e. Terry

Sample Job Judgment Question:

You are busy working. A coworker approaches you and asks for your help for a moment. What would you be MOST likely to do? What would you be LEAST likely to do?

- a. Help the coworker when I am able.
- b. Stop what I am doing and help.
- c. Tell the coworker that I can't help.
- d. Arrange a time when I can help the coworker.
- e. Pretend that I did not hear the request.

Source: Work Skills First (2005).

Exhibit 6.3. Sample Item from the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service.

You are unable to locate a product that a customer insists that you carry.	Extremely Ineffective	Ineffective	Average Effectiveness	Very Effective	Extremely Effective
You explain to the customer that you do not carry the product.					
You check with a coworker about the availability of the product.					
Tell the customer to check with your manager.					
Suggest that the customer look elsewhere for the product.					
Search more thoroughly for the product.					

Source: Work Skills First (2005).

Situational judgment tests tend to measure multiple constructs because the determinants of behavior in a given situation are typically a function of multiple variables, including general cognitive ability, personality, and job experience. Parallel forms reliability is an appropriate reliability for heterogeneous tests. The parallel forms reliability for the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service is .88.

The criterion-related validity evidence rests on two studies. The first is a meta-analysis of the criterion-related validity of a variety of situational judgment measures (McDaniel and others, 2001). The second is a primary validity study using the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service. The first study was a meta-analysis of 102 validity coefficients with a total sample size of 10,640 individuals. The mean validity, corrected for measurement error in the criterion, was .34. Almost all criteria used in the study were supervisor performance appraisals. The 90 percent confidence interval for the validity distribution was .16, indicating that situational judgment tests have validity in almost all applications. In the second study, a group of 126 employed adults completed the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service. Under anonymous conditions, the study participants also completed a self-report job history and performance appraisal survey that yielded three scales: job performance, attendance, and turnover. The validity coefficients for the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service, corrected for unreliability in the criterion measures, were .29 for job performance, .26 for attendance, and .14 for turnover. These validity estimates are likely to be underestimates because no corrections were made for range restriction.

An example score report is shown in Exhibit 6.4. It is intended to be used for all applicants and is e-mailed to the employer. It contains the applicant's score as well as an interpretation of the score and hire or not hire recommendation. (For more information about the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service, go to <http://www.workskillsfirst.com>.)

Summary

This chapter reviewed the personality correlates associated with customer service, including service orientation, sales drive, cognitive ability, and vocational interest. Our review suggested that ser-

Exhibit 6.4. Work Skills First, Inc. Score Report.

Applicant Name: Frank Zappa

Applicant Identification:

Test Administered: Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service
(Test 110)

Date Administered: Mon Mar 15 11:06:41 2004

SCORE: 4

We offer the following hiring recommendations as reasonable. Applicants with scores of 7, 8, or 9 receive our highest recommendation for hire. Applicants with scores of 4, 5, or 6 receive our next best recommendation for hire. Applicants with scores of 3 and below are not recommended for hire. Very low scores, particularly negative scores, indicate that the applicant responded to the items without reading the questions, read the questions but lacked the reading comprehension skills to understand the questions, or was purposely trying to look bad.

Your company may wish to make its own recommendations for hire based on other information collected on the applicants in the local applicant pool, the performance records of employees who were previously tested, and the adverse impact of the test for your applicants. Technical documentation for the Judgment at Work Survey for Customer Service is available on the Work Skills First, Inc. web site www.workskillsfirst.com.

Source: Work Skills First (2005).

vice orientation was highly correlated with customer service, sales drive was slightly correlated with customer service, cognitive ability was uncorrelated with customer service (suggesting the possibility of incremental prediction of customer service measures over cognitive ability), and social vocational interests were moderately correlated with customer service. We also described the validity and reliability of paper-and-pencil self-report measures of customer service. Meta-analysis findings showed that across forty-one coefficients with a total sample size of 6,945, the validity was .50 for an aggregated supervisory rating of job performance (Frei and McDaniel, 1998). Finally, this chapter provided a description of additional commercially available measures of customer service, including video- and text-based situational judgment tests, self-report inventories, and experience profiles. The research supporting their use

showed that there are a variety of ways to predict the construct of customer service.

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