

Other Devices

Three other devices have been used in developing standards for employment and placement: the personal record, the interview and the rating scale. These devices collect less objective data considered of value either as records or for the process of placement. They do not admit of the same type of standardization as do tests. However, the personal touch that is lacking in tests is supplied in these more intimate records. It is important, therefore, to determine as accurately as possible the significance of the data collected by these forms.

1. *The Personal Record.* Practically every company makes use of some form of application blank or personal record form for its employees. It may contain a few simple matters such as age, marital status, previous experience and education, or it may have dozens of items. Such forms are usually the product of what some particular employer thinks he wants to know about an applicant, rather than the result of careful investigation of the significance of various items of information. A standardized program of selection demands that each item on the application form shall have some value, some demonstrable significance in separating good prospects from poor. Indeed every item, whether in regard to mental characteristics, interests, or character, should prove its usefulness in separating the wheat from the chaff.

An illustration of the composite photograph obtained from a study of personal history items furnished by insurance salesmen shows the final steps in evaluating such a form. The multiple correlation figure obtained from combining a portion of these data and production records is +.40.

The average life insurance salesman who filled out the questionnaire is in his thirties, is five feet nine and one-half inches tall, is married at the time of contract, has two children, has gone to high school or college, has been out of school about fifteen years, has had four previous jobs, is apt to have been in insurance, the professions outside selling, clerical work, or in business for himself before beginning to sell insurance; has stayed about seven years in some one of his previous positions. He belongs at present to three or four clubs, is a member of a church, and usually holds one office. He has been selling life insurance from five to six years. He has had about one year's experience

selling products or services other than insurance. He carried \$3,000 insurance when he came with the company and now carries about \$9,000.*

If we assume that application forms are only filled out completely by those applicants who appear, on the basis of an interview, to be worth hiring these records may serve as valuable sources of future labor supply and also as checks against reapplications. It is understood, of course, that the validity of these records as a basis for selection can only be established by performance records of the employees over a considerable period on the job. These subsequent records on the job become the really informing personnel records.

2. *The Interview.* The interview has not thus far been successfully standardized. The literature of employment methods is full of general discussions relating to its place in the process and many shrewd observations are made relating to procedures. It would take us too far afield to bring together here anything of value to the establishment of labor standards. Researches now in progress should, however, greatly improve the technique of the interview and finally enable us to standardize certain aspects of it.⁶

3. *The Rating Scale.* Much work has been done in the attempt to increase the reliability and the validity of the rating scale. This instrument is used in some form in all those instances where records are desirable, but the data do not readily lend themselves to quantitative and objective statements. Numerous forms of scales have been developed. The form probably most extensively used is known as the graphic rating scale.

An illustrative item from one such scale is given below:

1. How does his appearance impress you, especially his facial expression, physique, carriage, and neatness?

Creates fine impression	Good appear- ance	Appearance satisfactory	Gives some- what unfavorable impression	Makes a poor appearance
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Instructions to the rater are: "Read and consider carefully all the descriptive statements under the line before attempting to record your opinion. Indicate your opinion on each quality by making a

*Prepared by Dr. Grace E. Manson. Used in Kenagy, H. G., and Yoakum, C. S., "The Selection and Training of Salesmen," New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1925, p. 241.

⁶Bradshaw, Francis W., "The Interview: A Bibliography," *The Personnel Journal*, Vol. 5, 1926, p. 100.

cross (X) on the line just where you think it ought to be. For example, if in Quality 1 you think the prospective salesman is a little lower than indicated by the statement 'appearance satisfactory' but not quite low enough to be recorded 'gives somewhat unfavorable impression,' then put the cross on the line somewhere between these two points."

Such a scale can be treated statistically in a variety of ways. The qualities may be weighted in any manner desired, or they may be used simply for general comparison without being quantified. If one wishes to treat the data numerically, each line may be measured from the left to the position of the cross by a ruler divided into as fine divisions as desired.

Numerous cautions must be observed in the construction and use of such a scale in order to give it any validity whatever. Although both reliability and validity are never high, the scale is an excellent means of giving permanent form to one's impressions and opinions. Where several persons act as judges and fill out blanks independently, reliability will be increased. It also offers a means of comparing judges who, if they happen to be supervisors, foremen or department heads, are then themselves rated on ability to judge others.

The rating scale is an illustration of an instrument which can be used both in the process of prediction for selections and placement and as a part of the employment record. Obviously it should not be solely relied upon where objective data in the form of tests or production records are available. Its use lies in recording impressions and opinions on qualities of behavior for which no objective techniques of measurement exist.

4. *Training Records.* In many business and industrial companies an intermediate stage for the employe has grown up either between employment and beginning production, or before placement, or as a preliminary to promotion. This is the training period. During this stage of adaptation of the employe, records of his proficiency in learning, of his probable aptitudes and interests, are usually kept. From these data assignment to duties takes place on more intimate information concerning capacity than where the employe is placed immediately upon hiring, or transferred without preliminary training.

Under these conditions all of the standard meas-

ures above described must be adapted so that they will throw light on probable progress during the learning period as well as predict degree of success when finally placed. The training period is in itself an excellent criterion of future production, provided essential records of progress are carefully kept. Nevertheless, training is an expensive period of non-production. It is important to reduce it to a minimum. Hence the use of all standards having a fair degree of validity, in assigning individuals to appropriate training courses, is justified.

General Considerations

A successful and useful labor standard is one that correlates with performance. The necessity for adequate performance records becomes obvious. But performance records which actually group employes into reliable groups according to satisfactory service are difficult to obtain. No single form of measure has thus far proved statistically reliable. Numerous criteria of success have been tried and in separate instances certain of these seem fairly useful. Foremen's ratings; various forms of production records, including total pay received, amount of bonus, quantity produced, quality; point systems of weighting results; terminations or length of service, and rate of advancement, have been used singly or in combination.

Difficulties in the use of ratings have been noted. Questions arising in the use of production figures include different conditions of work, different degrees of experience with machines and materials, motivation of the worker, customary limitation of output, and so on. It is true these do not affect the establishment of production standards in bulk, but they do seriously affect correlations between test results and individual production figures. A few terminations may be definitely due to unsatisfactory work, but labor turnover figures of themselves lack that reliability essential to a true criterion. Permanency or length of service is somewhat better, yet it too is complicated by transfer and promotion to new operations which may not have appropriate test records with which to compare. It is also essential to know the relative importance of the several criteria of success if a combined score is sought.

Illustrations of the solutions that have been attempted would require too much space. Enough has been said to show that rough and ready judg-