
Unit - 5 : Selection

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5.0 Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and define selection and its process.
- Understand the selection process so as to make it effective.
- Explain how the final selection decision is made.
- Point out the outcomes of selection decision.
- Understand in brief about placement and orientation.
- Develop a selection decision process.

5.1 Introduction: Selection

Human resource selection is the process of choosing qualified individuals who are available to fill positions in an organization. In the ideal personnel situation, selection involves choosing the best applicant to fill a position. Selection is the process of choosing people by obtaining and assessing information about the applicants with a view to matching these with the job requirements. It involves a careful screening and testing of candidates who have put in their applications for any job in the enterprise. It is the process of choosing the most suitable persons out of all the applicants. The purpose of selection is to pick up the right person for every job.

It can be conceptualised in terms of either choosing the fit candidates, or rejecting the unfit candidates, or a combination of both. Selection involves both because it picks up the fits and rejects the unfits. In fact, in Indian context, there are more candidates who are rejected than those who are selected in most of the selection processes. Therefore, sometimes, it is called a negative process in contrast to positive programme of recruitment.

According to Dale Yoder, “Selection is the process in which candidates for employment are divided into two classes—those who are to be offered employment and those who are not”.

According to Thomas Stone, “Selection is the process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify (and hire) those with a greater likelihood of success in a job”.

In the words of Michael Jucius, “The selection procedure is the system of functions and devices adopted in a given company for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not candidates possess the qualifications called for by a specific job or for progression through a series of jobs.”

According to Keith Davis, “Selection is the process by which an organisation chooses from a list of screened applicants, the person or persons who best meet the selection criteria for the position available.”

Thus, the selection process is a tool in the hands of management to differentiate between the qualified and unqualified applicants by applying various techniques such as interviews, tests etc. The cost incurred in recruiting and selecting any new employee is expensive. The cost of selecting people who are inadequate performers or who leave the organisation before contributing to profits proves a major cost of doing business. Decenzo and Robbins write, "Proper selection of personnel is obviously an area where effectiveness - choosing competent workers who perform well in their position-can result in large saving." According to them, selection has two objectives: (1) to predict which job applicants would be successful if hired and (2) to inform and sell the candidate on the job and the organization. Satisfaction of employee needs and wants as well as the fullest development of his potential are important objectives of selection.

Dale Yoder says, "Selection has long held a high rank in the priority of problem areas in management. Investments in good people produce a very high rate of return. A good choice of people can provide a basis for long, sustained contributions."

Difference between Recruitment and Selection: Difference between recruitment and selection has been described by Flippo as, "Recruitment is a process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating and encouraging them to apply for jobs in an organisation. It is often termed positive as it stimulates people to apply for jobs, selection on the other hand tends to be negative because it rejects a good number of those who apply, leaving only the best to be hired." Recruitment and selection differs in following manner:

1. Difference in Objective: The basic objective of recruitment is to attract maximum number of candidates so that more options are available. The basic objective of selection is to choose best out of the available candidates.

2. Difference in Process: Recruitment adopts the process of creating application pool as large as possible and therefore. It is known as positive process. Selection adopts the process through which more and more candidates are rejected and fewer candidates are selected or sometimes even not a single candidate is selected. Therefore, it is known as negative process or rejection process.

3. Technical Differences: Recruitment techniques are not very intensive, and not require high skills. As against this, in selection process, highly specialised techniques are required. Therefore, in the selection process, only personnel with specific skills like expertise in using selection tests, conducting interviews, etc., are involved.

4. Difference in Outcomes: The outcome of recruitment is application pool which becomes input for selection process. The outcome of selection process is in the form of finalising candidates who will be offered jobs.

5.2 Selection Procedure

The selection procedure is concerned with securing relevant information about an applicant. This information is secured in a number of steps or stages. The objective of selection process is to determine whether an applicant meets the qualification for a specific job and to choose the applicant who is most likely to perform well in that job. Selection is a long process, commencing from the preliminary interview of the applicants and ending with the contract of employment (sometimes).

The selection procedure consists of a series of steps. Each step must be successfully cleared before the applicant proceeds to the next. The selection process is a series of successive hurdles or barriers which an applicant must cross. These hurdles are designed to eliminate an unqualified candidate at any point in the selection process. Thus, this technique is called "Successive Hurdles Technique". In practice, the process differs among organisations and between two different jobs within the same organisation. Selection procedure

for the senior managers will be long drawn and rigorous, but it is simple and short while hiring lower level employees.

The major factors which determine the steps involved in a selection process are as follows:

- Selection process depends on the number of candidates that are available for selection.
- Selection process depends on the sources of recruitment and the method that is adopted for making contact with the prospective candidates.
- Various steps involved in as selection process depend on the type of personnel to be selected.

All the above factors are not mutually exclusive, rather these operate simultaneously. In any case, the basic objective of a selection process is to collect as much relevant information about the candidates as is possible so that the most suitable candidates are selected. A comprehensive selection process involves the various steps as shown in Figure 5. 1.

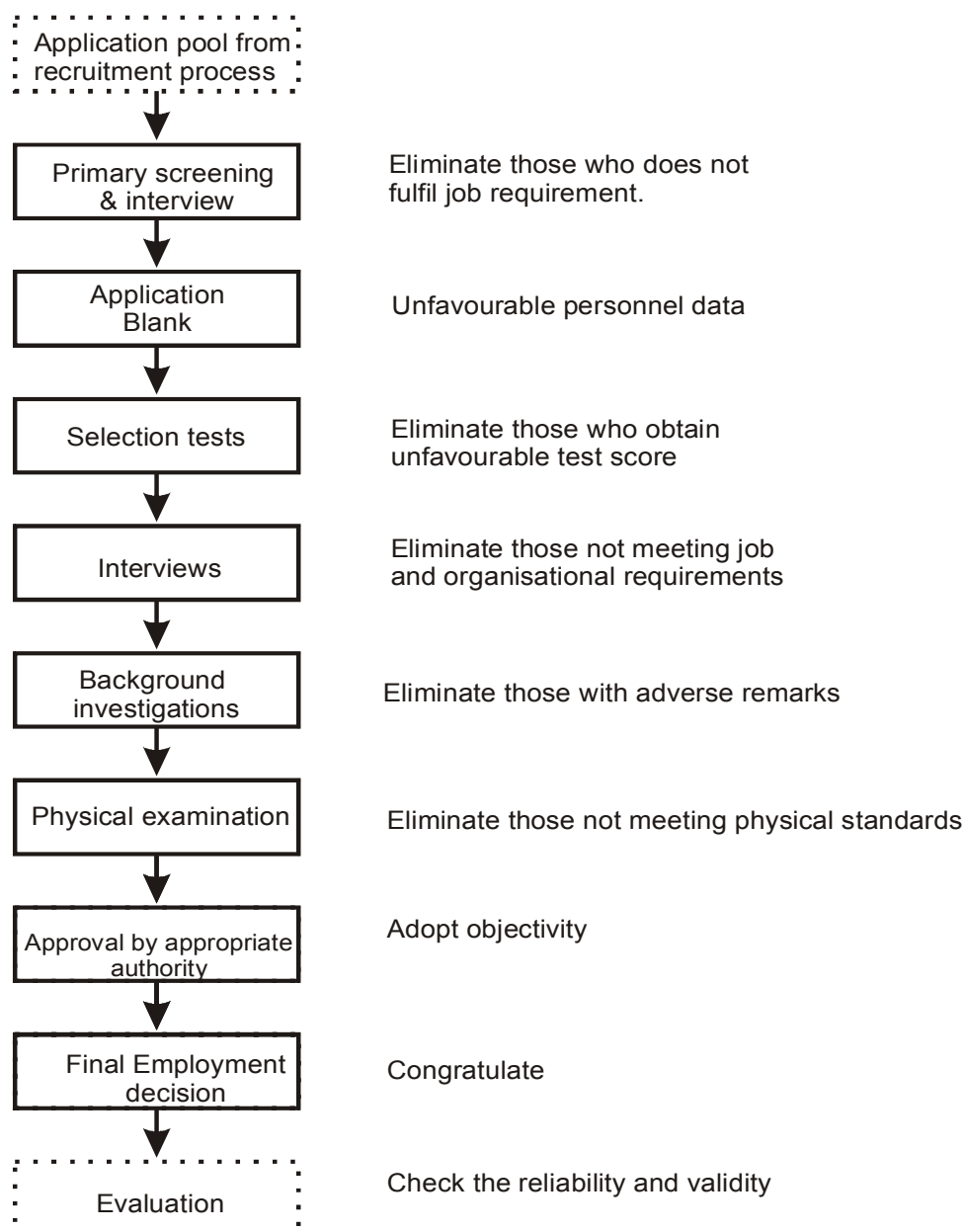


Figure 5.1 Steps in Selection Process

1. Application Pool: Application pool built-up through recruitment process is the base for selection process. The basic objective at the recruitment level is to attract as much worthwhile applications as possible so that there are more options available at the selection stage.

2. Preliminary Screening and Interview: It is highly noneconomic to administer and handle all the applicants. It is advantageous to sort out unsuitable applicants before using the further selection steps. For this purpose, usually, preliminary interviews, application blank lists and short test can be used. All applications received are scrutinised by the personnel department in order to eliminate those applicants who do not fulfil required qualifications or work experience or technical skill, his application will not be entertained. Such candidate will be informed of his rejection.

Preliminary interview is a sorting process in which the prospective candidates are given the necessary information about the nature of the job and the organisation. Necessary information is obtained from the candidates about their education, skills, experience, expected salary etc. If the candidate is found suitable, he is elected for further screening. This courtesy interview; as it is often called helps the department screen out obvious misfits. Preliminary interview saves time and efforts of both the company and the candidate. It avoids unnecessary waiting for the rejected candidates and waste of money on further processing of an unsuitable candidate. Since rejection rate is high at preliminary interview, the interviewer should be kind, courteous, receptive and informal.

3. Application Blank or Application Form: An application blank is a traditional widely accepted device for getting information from a prospective applicant which will enable the management to make a proper selection. The blank provides preliminary information as well as aid in the interview by indicating areas of interest and discussion. It is a good means of quickly collecting verifiable (and therefore fairly accurate) basic historical data from the candidate. It also serves as a convenient device for circulating information about the applicant to appropriate members of management and as a useful device for storing information for, later reference. Many types of application forms, sometimes very long and comprehensive and sometimes brief, are used. Information is generally taken on the following items:

(a) Biographical Data: Name, father's name, date and place of birth, age, sex, nationality, height, weight, identification marks, physical disability, if any, marital status, and number of dependants.

(b) Educational Attainment: Education (subjects offered and grades secured), training acquired in special fields and knowledge gained from professional/technical institutes or through correspondence courses.

(c) Work Experience: Previous experience, the number of jobs held with the same or other employers, including the nature of duties, and responsibilities and the duration of various assignments, salary received, grades, and reasons for leaving the present employer.

(d) Salary and Benefits: Present and expected.

(e) Other Items: Names and addresses of previous employers, references, etc. An application blank is a brief history sheet of an employee's background and can be used for future reference, in case needed.

The application blank must be designed from the viewpoint of the applicant as well as with the company's purpose in mind. It should be relatively easy to handle in the employment office. Application form helps to serve many functions like:

- Its main usefulness is to provide information for reference checking, good interviewing, and correlation with testing data.
- It helps to weed out candidates who are lacking in education, experience or some other eligibility traits.
- It helps in formulating questions to be asked in the interview.
- Data contained in application form can be stored for future reference.
- It also tests the candidate's ability to write, to organize his thoughts, and to present facts clearly and succinctly.
- It indicates further whether the applicant has consistently progressed to better jobs. It provides factual information.

Weighted Application Blanks

Some organisations assign numeric values or weights to the responses provided by the applicants. This makes the application form more job related. Generally, the items that have a strong relationship to job performance are given higher scores. For example, for a sales representative's position, items such as previous selling experience, area of specialisation, commission earned, religion, language etc. The total score of each applicant is then obtained by adding the weights of the individual item responses. The resulting scores are then used in the final selection. WAB is best suited for jobs where there are many employees especially for sales and technical jobs. It can help in reducing the employee turnover later on. However, there are several problems associated with WAB e.g.

- It takes time to develop such a form.
- The WAB would have to be updated every few years to ensure that the factors previously identified are still valid products of job success.
- The organisation should be careful not to depend on weights of a few items while finally selecting the employee.

4. Selection Tests: Many organisations hold different kinds of selection tests to know more about the candidates or to reject the candidates who cannot be called for interview etc. Selection tests normally supplement the information provided in the application forms. Such forms may contain factual information about candidates. Selection tests may give information about their aptitude, interest, personality, which cannot be known by application forms. Types of tests and rules of good of testing have been discussed in brief below:

- A. Aptitude Tests:** These measure whether an individual has the capacity or talent ability to learn a given job if given adequate training. These are more useful for clerical and trade positions.
- B. Personality Tests:** At times, personality affects job performance. These determine personality traits of the candidate such as cooperativeness, emotional balance etc. These seek to assess an individual's motivation, adjustment to the stresses of everyday life, capacity for interpersonal relations and self-image.
- C. Interest Tests:** These determine the applicant's interests. The applicant is asked whether he likes, dislikes, or is indifferent to many examples of school subjects, occupations, amusements, peculiarities of people, and particular activities.

- D. Performance Tests:** In this test the applicant is asked to demonstrate his ability to do the job. For example, prospective typists are asked to type several pages with speed and accuracy.
- E. Intelligence Tests:** This aim at testing the mental capacity of a person with respect to reasoning, word fluency, numbers, memory, comprehension, picture arrangement, etc. It measures the ability to grasp, understand and to make judgement.
- F. Knowledge Tests:** These are devised to measure the depth of the knowledge and proficiency in certain skills already achieved by the applicants such as engineering, accounting etc.
- G. Achievement Tests:** Whereas aptitude is a capacity to learn in the future, achievement is concerned with what one has accomplished. When applicants claim to know something, an achievement test is given to measure how well they know it.
- H. Projective Tests:** In these tests the applicant projects his personality into free responses about pictures shown to him which are ambiguous.

Rules of Good Testing

- Norms should be developed for each test. Their validity and reliability for a given purpose should be established before they are used.
- Adequate time and resources must be provided to design, validate, and check tests.
- Tests should be designed and administered only by trained and competent persons.
- The user of tests must be extremely sensitive to the feelings of people about tests.
- Tests are to be uses as a screening device.
- Reliance should not be placed solely upon tests in reaching decisions.
- Tests should minimize the probabilities of getting distorted results. They must be ‘race-free’.
- Tests scores are not precise measures. They must be assigned a proper weightage.

5. Interview: An interview is a procedure designed to get information from a person and to assess his potential for the job he is being considered on the basis of oral responses by the applicant to oral inquiries by the interviewer. Interviewer does a formal in-depth conversation with the applicant, to evaluate his suitability. It is one of the most important tools in the selection process. This tool is used when interviewing skilled, technical, professional and even managerial employees. It involves two-way exchange of information. The interviewer learns about the applicant and the candidate learns about the employer.

Objectives of Interviews: Interview helps:

- To obtain additional information from the candidate.
- Facilitates giving to the candidate information about the job, company, its policies, products etc.
- To assess the basic suitability of the candidate.

The selection interview can be:

- One to one between the candidate and the interviewer:
- Two or more interviewers by employers representatives-sequential;
- By a panel of selections, i.e., by more than representative of the employer.

The sequential interview involves a series of interviews; each interviewer meeting the candidate separately. The panel interview consists of two or more interviews meeting the candidate together.

Types of interviews: Interviews can be classified in various ways according to:

- (A) Degree of Structure
- (B) Purpose of Interview
- (C) Content of Interview

(A) Degree of Structure:

(1) Unstructured or non directive: in which you ask questions as they come to mind. There is no set format to follow.

(2) Structured or directive: in which the questions and acceptable responses are specified in advance. The responses are rated for appropriateness of content.

Structured and non-structured interviews have their pros and cons. In structured interviews all applicants are generally asked all required questions by all interviewers. Structured interviews are generally more valid. However structured interviews do not allow the flexibility to pursue points of interests as they develop.

(B) Purpose of Interview: A selection interview is a type of interview designed to predict future job performance, on the basis of applicant's responses to the oral questions asked to him.

A **stress interview** is a special type of selection interview in which the applicant is made uncomfortable by series of awkward and rude questions. The aim of stress interview is supposedly to identify applicant's low or high stress tolerance. In such an interview the applicant is made uncomfortable by throwing him on the defensive by series of frank and often discourteous questions by the interviewer.

(C) Content of Interview: The content of interview can be of a type in which individual's ability to project a situation is tested. This is a situation type interview. **In job-related interview**, interviewer attempts to assess the applicant's past behaviours for job related information, but most questions are not considered situational.

In a behaviour interview a situation is described and candidates are asked how they behaved in the past in such a situation. While in **situational interviews** candidates are asked to describe how they would react to situation today or tomorrow. In the behavioural interview they are asked to describe how they did react to the situation in the past.

Principles of Interviewing

To make it effective, an interview should be properly planned and conducted on certain principles; Edwin B. Flippo has described certain rules and principles of good interviewing to this end:

- Provide proper surroundings. The physical setting for the interview should be both private and comfortable.
- The mental setting should be one of rapport. The interviewer must be aware of non-verbal behaviour.
- Plan for the interview by thoroughly reviewing job specifications and job descriptions.
- Determine the specific objectives and the method of the interviewing.
- Inform yourself as much as possible concerning the known information about the interviewee.
- The interviewer should possess and demonstrate a basic liking and respect for people.
- Questions should be asked in a manner that encourages the interviewee to talk. Put the applicant at ease.
- Make a decision only when all the data and information are available. Avoid decisions that are based on first impressions.
- Conclude the interview tactfully, making sure that the candidate leaves feeling neither too elated nor frustrated.
- Maintain some written record of the interview during or immediately after it.
- Listen attentively and, if possible, protectively.

- Questions must be stated clearly to avoid confusion and ambiguity. Maintain a balance between open and overtly structured questions.
- ‘Body language’ must not be ignored.
- The interviewer should make some overt sign to indicate the end of the interview.

Interviewing is largely an art, the application of which can be improved through practice.

6. Background Investigation: The next step in the selection process is to undertake an investigation of those applicants who appear to offer potential as employees. This may include contacting former employers to confirm the candidate’s work record and to obtain their appraisal of his or her performance/ contacting other job-related and personal references, and verifying the educational accomplishments shown on the application.

The background investigation has major implications. Every personnel administrator has the responsibility to investigate each potential applicant. In some organization, failure to do so could result in the loss of his or her job. But many managers consider the background investigation data highly biased. Who would actually list a reference that would not give anything but the best possible recommendation? The seasoned personnel administrator expects this and delves deeper into the candidate’s background, but that, too, may not prove to be beneficial. Many past employers are reluctant to give any information to another company other than factual information (e.g., date of employment).

Even though there is some reluctance to give this information, there are ways in which personnel administrators can obtain it. Sometimes, for instance information can be obtained from references once removed. For example, the personnel administrator can ask a reference whose name has been provided on the application form to give another reference, someone who has knowledge of the candidate’s work experience. By doing this, the administrator can eliminate the possibility of accepting an individual based on the employee’s current employer’s glowing recommendation when the motivation for such a positive recommendation was to get rid of the employee.

7. Physical Examination: After the selection decision and before the job offer is made, the candidate is required to undergo physical fitness test. Candidates are sent for physical examination either to the company’s physician or to a medical officer approved for the purpose. Such physical examination provides the following information.

- Whether the candidate’s physical measurements are in accordance with job requirements or not?
- Whether the candidate suffers from bad health which should be corrected?
- Whether the candidate has health problems or psychological attitudes likely to interfere with work efficiency or future attendance?
- Whether the candidate is physically fit for the specific job or not?

Policy on these physical exams has changed today. Dale Yoder writes, “Modern policy used the physical examination not to eliminate applicants, but to discover what jobs they are qualified to fill. The examination should disclose the physical characteristics of the individual that are significant from the standpoint of his efficient performance of the job he may enter or of those jobs to which he may reasonably expect to be transferred or promoted. It should note deficiencies, not as a basis for rejection, but as indicating restrictions on his transfer to various positions also.”

8. Approval by Appropriate Authority: On the basis of the above steps, suitable candidates are recommended for selection by the selection committee or personnel department. Though such a committee or personnel department may have authority to select the candidates finally, often it has staff authority to recommend the candidates for selection to the appropriate authority. Organisations may designate the

various authorities for approval of final selection of candidates for different categories of candidates. Thus, for top level managers, board of directors may be approving authority; for lower levels, even functional heads concerned may be approving authority.

9. Final Employment Decision: After a candidate is finally selected, the human resource department recommends his name for employment. The management or board of the company offers employment in the form of an appointment letter mentioning the post, the rank, the salary grade, the date by which the candidate should join and other terms and conditions of employment. Some firms make a contract of service on judicial paper. Usually an appointment is made on probation in the beginning. The probation period may range from three months to two years. When the work and conduct of the employee is found satisfactory, he may be confirmed. The personnel department prepare a waiting list and informs the candidates. In case a person does not join after being selected, the company calls next person on the waiting list.

10. Evaluation: The selection process, if properly performed, will ensure availability of competent and committed personnel. A period audit, conducted by people who work independently of the human resource department, will evaluate the effectiveness of the selection process. The auditors will do a thorough and the intensive analysis and evaluate the employment programme.

5.3 Selection Decision Outcomes

Consider, for a moment, that any selection decision can result in four possible outcomes. As shown in Figure 5.2, two of these outcomes would indicate correct decisions, but two would indicate errors.

Correct decisions are those where the applicant was predicted to be successful and later did prove to be successful on the job, or where the applicant was predicted to be unsuccessful and would have performed accordingly if hired. In the former case, we have successfully accepted; in the latter case, we have successfully rejected. Thus the purpose of selection activities is to develop outcomes shown as “correct decisions” in Figure 5.2.

Problems occur when we make errors-by rejecting candidates who would later perform successfully on the job (reject errors) or accepting those individuals who subsequently perform poorly on the job (accept errors). These problems are, unfortunately far from insignificant. Reject errors historically meant that the costs in performing selection activities would be increased. Accept errors, on the other hand, have very obvious costs to the organization including the cost of training the employee, the costs generated (or profits forgone) due to the employee’s incompetence, the cost of severance and the subsequent costs of further recruiting and selection screening. The major thrust of any selection activity, therefore, is to reduce the probability of making reject or accept errors while increasing the probability of making reject or accept errors while increasing the probability of making correct decisions.

		Accept	Reject
Later Job Performance	Successful	Correct decision	Reject error
	Unsuccessful	Accept error	Correct decision

Figure 5.2: Selection Decision Outcomes

In summary, selection have two objectives: (1) to predict which job applicants would be successful if hired and (2) to inform and sell the candidate on the job and the organization. Unfortunately, these two objectives are not always compatible Putting a job candidate through hours of filling out forms, taking tests, and completing interviews rarely endears the organization to the candidate. These are tiresome and often stressful activities. Yet if the selection activities place too great an emphasis on public relations, obtaining the information needed to make successful selection decisions may be subordinated. Hence a manager's dilemma in selection is how to balance the desire to attract people with the desire to gather relevant selection data.

5.4 Placement – Orientation - Socialization

After an employee has been recruited he is provided with basic background information about the employer, working conditions and the information necessary to perform his job satisfactorily. The new employee's initial orientation helps him perform better by providing him information of the company rules, and practices.

According to Pigors and Myers, "Placement consists in matching what the supervisor has reason to think the new employee can do with what the job demands (job requirements), imposes (in strain, working conditions, etc.), and offers (in the form of pay rate, interest, companionship with other, promotional possibilities, etc.)" They further state that it is not easy to match all these factors for a new worker who is still in many ways an unknown quantity. For this reason, the first placement usually carries with it the status of probationer.

A few basic principles should be followed at the time of placement of an employee on the job. These may be enumerated as below:

- The job should be offered to the man according to his qualifications. The placement should neither be higher nor lower than the qualifications.
- While introducing the job to the new employee, an effort should be made to develop a sense of loyalty and cooperation in him so that he may realise his responsibilities better towards the job and the organisation.
- The employee should be made conversant with the working conditions prevailing in the industry and all things relating to the job. He should also be made aware of the penalties if he commits a wrong.
- Man should be placed on the job according to the requirements of the job. The job should not be adjusted according to the qualifications or requirements of the man. Job first; man next, should be the principle of placement.
- The placement should be ready before the joining date of the newly selected person.
- The placement in the initial period may be temporary as changes are likely after the completion of training. The employee may be later transferred to the job where he can do better justice.

In the words of John M. Ivancevich, "Orientation orients, directs, and guides employees to understand the work, firm, colleagues, and mission. It introduces new employees to the organisation, and to his new tasks, managers, and work groups."

According to John Bernardin, "Orientation is a term used for the organizationally sponsored, formalized activities associated with an employee's socialisation into the organisation."