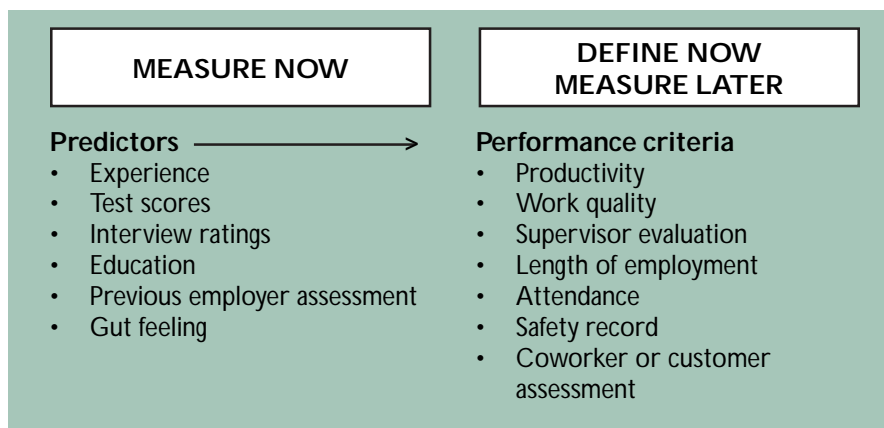## Employee Selection as Prediction

In some cases, employers want to optimize the current fit between applicant abilities and position requirements. In others, they seek worker potential — less what employees can do today than how they will grow to function after assuming their jobs and for some time to come. In either case, the selection decision is one of prediction (Figure 3.3). If characteristics observable or measurable today are known to be lead indicators of performance on the job tomorrow—in such terms as units per hour, attendance, safety record, length of service, and supervisor's evaluation — they make good selection criteria.

The relationship of such predictors to subsequent performance is called selection "validity," and plaintiffs may call it into question when charging employers with illegal discrimination in hiring. Both legally and logically, for example, an employer ought not select for the highest level of education or the largest biceps available, regardless of job requirements. That could be just as illegally discriminatory as hiring only people born in Wyoming, or with black hair, or related to left-handed irrigators from Yakima. It is important to use predictive selection criteria only if there is strong reason to believe they are associated with good future performance of the job.

Figure 3.3. Selection as predicting performance.

MEASURE NOW	DEFINE NOW MEASURE LATER
Predictors ⟶	**Performance criteria**
• Experience	• Productivity
• Test scores	• Work quality
• Interview ratings	• Supervisor evaluation
• Education	• Length of employment
• Previous employer assessment	• Attendance
• Gut feeling	• Safety record
	• Coworker or customer assessment

Layoff and Recall Priorities

Just as approaches to employee selection range from casual to systematic, so do layoff and recall decisions. The coming and going of seasonal tasks in most agricultural operations translates to fluctuations in need for labor and thus the coming and going of people. Decisions about whom to lay off before whom else, and whom to recall first when activity increases again have important consequences. They not only determine who is left to complete the remaining work but also affect everybody's perceptions of management.

Two criteria that may be used in systematizing the layoff order are "merit"

and seniority. Although many employers would like to retain the stronger (more meritorious) workers, workers tend to prefer use of seniority as a more objective and acceptable basis for rights to continue or resume employment. Considering the operational and employee relations impacts of layoff/recall policy is particularly important for employers with large or frequent seasonal swings in production activity.

Steps in a Hiring Process

Employee selection evokes the concept of matching. Fitting people with jobs involves working with information, both about jobs and about people, and multiple sources are available for each (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4. Sources of information for selection decisions.

About the job	About applicants
• Guesswork • Own knowledge • Supervisor • Incumbents • Job description and specification	• Biographical data forms (application, resume) • Tests • Interviews • References • Physical examinations

To avoid over-reliance on chance or intuition, there are several steps to build into the selection process.

Employers may go through few or many steps, in various orders, to hire a person. To avoid over-reliance on chance or intuition, there are several steps to at least consider building into the selection process:

1. Define the objective and set a schedule to meet it.
2. Describe the job to be filled.
3. Decide who will conduct further steps.
4. Recruit potential applicants.
   a. Advertise the opening.
   b. Solicit referrals.
   c. Conduct informal preliminary interviews.
5. Collect applications and other expressions of interest.
6. Screen applicants and inform those not to be considered.
7. Interview candidates.
8. Test candidates.
9. Check references of top candidates.
10. Decide on first and backup choice for job offer.
11. Extend provisional offer.
    a. If accepted, confirm terms of employment and start date.