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**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN OFFICE MANAGEMENT
LECTURER NOTES**

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Office

A room, set of rooms, or building used as a place for commercial, professional, or bureaucratic work.

An **office** is generally a room or other area where an organization's employees perform administrative work in order to support and realize objects and goals of the organization.

According to George Terry “Office may be regarded as a place where the control mechanism of an organization are located.”

According to Mills & Standingford “The office is the administrative centre of a business. The purpose of an office has been defined as the providing of a service of communication and record.

THE PURPOSE OF AN OFFICE

The purpose of an Office is mainly to provide the services of communication and of record. office is, in fact, a processing medium. In addition, it is responsible for directing and coordinating the various activities of the organization. It is like the brain in a human body and the mainspring in a watch. It is the central directing force. The main purposes of an office are:

- (i) To direct and coordinate the activities of the various departments;
- (ii) To plan the policies of the business and ensure their implementation;
- (iii) To preserve all the records of the business;
- (iv) To handle inward correspondence;
- (v) To maintain accounts, statutory and non-statutory books, etc., of the business.

Office Work

Work normally carried out in an **office**, for example clerical or administrative **work** for an organization.

According to an old concept, “Office Work” is concerned primarily with the records of an enterprise — making records, using records and preserving them for future reference. For instance, communication, mechanical data processing, planning and scheduling, etc., are all within the scope of Office activities

According to G.R. Terry, “Office Work includes verbal transmission of information as production of written records and reports in order to provide the means for quickly summarizing large amount of data to supply a factual basis of managerial control”.

OFFICE FUNCTIONS

The functions of a modern Office may be classified into two categories:

- I. Basic functions (or routine functions); and
- II. Administrative management functions.

I. Basic Functions According to Terry, “the acts of collecting, processing, storing and distributing information comprise the basic functions of the office”.

In the work of any Office, be it sales, purchasing, personnel or even the drawing office, it will be seen that this is done most of the time. The basic functions of an office may be analysed under the following headings:

1. Receiving Information: Information relating to the activities of an organization may be received from a variety of sources, which may be internal sources or external sources. Internal sources information may be received from various departments, sections or divisions of the organisation.

From external sources, it may be received from suppliers, customers, visitors, other organisations, government departments, etc.

Examples of the form in which information is normally received are letters, telephone calls, orders, invoices and reports on the various activities of a business

2. Recording Information: The object of keeping records is to make information readily available to the management, whenever required. The information received, is converted into some form of written record. The records normally kept in a business office include financial and cost accounts, orders, progress of work, hours worked by employees, correspondence, etc. Some records are required to be kept by law, some others should be kept to meet the needs of the management in planning and controlling the business. The records so maintained by the Office serve as a reference library for future use.

3. Arranging Information: The information accumulated by an office is rarely in the form in which it is given out; facts have to be gathered from various sources and calculations, tabulations, etc., may have to be made. Examples of arranging information are: preparing invoices, payrolls, cost accounting statements, statistical statements, and reports.

4. Giving Information: An office furnishes information from its records as and when it is required by the management. The information required by the management may be of a routine nature or of a special nature, and may be supplied verbally or in writing. Examples of giving information are orders, estimates, invoices, progress reports, statements of accounts, statistical and financial statements, and instructions issued on behalf of the management. All this work involves typing, duplicating, telephoning, mailing etc.

5. Maintenance of records: Recorded and arranged information is maintained, preserved and retained in files for future reference.

II. Administrative Management Functions Apart from the basic functions of an office, there are certain administrative management functions which have to be performed for a smooth functioning of the office. These functions are outlined below:

1. Management Functions: For the efficient functioning of an office, the management functions include:

(a) Planning;

- (b) Organising;
- (c) Staffing;
- (d) Directing;
- (e) Communicating;
- (f) Controlling;
- (g) Coordinating;
- (h) Motivating.

Office work has to be properly planned, and then organised and executed according to the plan. A proper control must be exercised over office activities, and the affairs of the different individuals and departments in the organisation must be coordinated.

2. **Public Relations Function:** An office has not only to maintain cordial relations with other departments in the organisation but also with outsiders. It has, therefore, to perform public relations function as well. Good public relations enhance the reputation and goodwill of the organisation. Public relations include the reception service, the liaison service, etc., provided by the organisation.
3. **Instituting Office Systems and Routines:** A system may be regarded as a planned approach to the attainment of desired objectives.

An office routine may be defined as a series of steps in the performance of Office Work, each step in the series being performed in the same order and in the same way every time. Office routines, systems and procedures, etc., should be developed to ensure an uninterrupted and smooth flow of Office Work .

4. **Retention of Records:** Office records include correspondence, letters, invoices, orders. financial and cost records, reports, statistical records, minutes, etc. These records have to be retained for future reference. Apart from maintaining records, which is a basic function an Office has to perform functions like those of filing and indexing, and the preservations and destruction of outdated records.
5. **Safeguarding Assets:** It is the function of an office to safeguard the assets of the organization, which may be fixed assets like building, plant, machinery, office equipment, lighting and air-conditioning equipment; or which may be movable assets like furniture, typewriters, calculating or accounting machines, equipment of various types; or which may be in the form of cash, title deeds, securities, records and documents, etc. Vital records such as major contracts must be properly protected; cash must be held in safety or banked; stock records must be properly maintained and deficiencies may be immediately brought to the notice of the management; fixed assets should be protected against hazards of fire and theft by taking out suitable insurance policies and by other means.
6. **Form Designing and Control:** Since office work is mostly paper work, office forms are extensively used to perform the recording function of the office. "A form is a standardised record which is used to accumulate and transmit information for reference purposes." office forms serve as a store-house

of information. It is the task of the management to design, standardise, produce and control the forms to be used in the Office as well as the other departments of the organisation.

7. **Stationery and Supplies Control:** Office Work requires the supply of office stationery of suitable quality and in adequate quantity. It is the duty of the office to carefully procure and maintain an adequate supply of stationery items. Since stationery is a very costly item these days, it should be bought at competitive prices in economic order quantities; reasonable levels of stock must be maintained and made available at all times. It should be issued only against authorized requisitions and stored scientifically to avoid damage, loss or deterioration.

8. **Selection and Purchase of Office Appliances:** Office Work also requires adequate equipment and machines — furniture, fixtures, telephones, intercom systems, calculators, accounting machines, filing cabinets and drawers, typewriters, duplicators, (and, in some cases, computers), etc. It is the duty of the Office Manager to purchase the right type of machines, equipment or furniture (according to the requirements of the office), and also to maintain these in efficient working order. The principles which should be followed in the selection of office appliances include:
 - (a) Full and proper use;
 - (b) Suitability for the purpose for which purchased;
 - (c) Simplicity of operation and maintenance;
 - (d) Flexibility and adaptability to different uses; and
 - (e) Analysis of cost and benefit. Appliances should be purchased, keeping in view the financial resources of the organisation.

9. Personnel Function: The efficiency of an Office depends on the personnel manning it. The personnel should be scientifically recruited and trained, and assigned work after a proper appraisal. The personnel function is performed by the personnel department, which is generally assisted by the office. The Office Manager must make a provision of adequate and trained staff to ensure the systematic, timely and efficient performance of Office Work.

10. Controlling Office Costs: With the adoption of scientific methods for Office Management, a modern Office is further supposed to discharge the function of “controlling Office costs”. This may be done by:

- (a) Mechanisation of the Office;
- (b) Adopting time and labour saving devices in the Office;
- (c) Using better forms;
- (d) Analysing the existing Office routines and adopting improved ones.

Importance of Office

An office is an important and indispensable part of every organisation. Be it a government institution, trading or manufacturing organisation, a hospital or an educational institution, an office is vital for its functioning. The office acts as a storehouse and nervous system of every operation of a business concern. A well managed Office is an indispensable aid to management. It helps the management to

plan its operations intelligently and to put them in action competently. The office coordinates all the activities of the business. Without an efficient and organised Office, business activities cannot be carried through systematically.

1. **Office as Information Centre:** An office may be described as the information centre of a business. It collects information from all sources, internal and external, records it, arranges and analyses it and provides it to the management when required. The information furnished by an office helps the management to forecast and plan its operations well in advance and to exercise control over the entire spectrum of business activities. An office is also called a “storehouse of information” or a “memory centre of an organisation” since all kinds of information and figures, whether past or present, are available in the office
2. **Office as an Intermediary:** An office connects different departments with the outsiders and vice versa. For instance, all the “purchase orders” are routed through the office and all the “sales orders” are received through the office. It is office that links the business organisation with its suppliers, customers, the Government and the general public.
3. **Office as a Coordinator:** The processing of information in a modern office may be grouped under four headings: namely, 1. Communications 2. written and oral; computing and summarizing operating results 3. record-keeping through accounting and filing records; and 4. Systematization and cost reduction . These four activities are necessary for the efficient coordination of production, distribution, and financing of the merchandise or services in a business concern.
4. **Office as a Service Centre:** Since an Office is the focal point in a business organisation for the co-ordination of the work of production, distribution, finance and personnel, its activities are in the nature of services to all the other departments and to the business as a single unit. Frequently an Office is referred to as the Office services department. It exists to provide clerical and other services to the various departments, divisions, sections or branches of the organisation, and cannot operate apart from them.
5. **Office as an Administrative Nerve Centre:** As an inclusive executive function, an Office acts as an administrative nerve centre. It helps in making the decisions about the products to be manufactured and sold, when to purchase materials, what reports to prepare, and a variety of similar activities.
6. **Office as Control Centre:** An Office also acts a “control centre” of the organisation, since it helps the management to take decisions and implement them. It prepares and presents all the necessary data, information and plans to the management so that it might take decisions. It is the Office where all the policy decisions originate, and it is from there that the activities of the organisation are controlled and remedial or corrective action taken to ensure that the objectives of the organisation are accomplished.

Important Functions or Role of an Office Manager

- 1. Staffing
- 2. Leadership
- 3. Training
- 4. Coordination
- 5. Work Measurement
- 6. Motivation
- 7. Discipline
- 8. Accounting
- 9. Stationery Control
- 10. Secretarial Services
- 11. Costing
- 12. Organizer
- 13. Supervisor

1. Staffing

An office manager is requested to recruit and select the office staff by the top management. For this purpose, he determines the number of staff required, their qualification and experience if any, decide the sources of recruitment, receiving applications, conduct the interviews and tests and finally select the right personnel.

2. Leadership

He has complete control over the work done in an office. An office manager is necessary for smooth, efficient and performance of office work economically in an organization. Being a leader of office, he is in charge of public relations and helps other departments to achieve their goals set forth.

3. Training

The need of training has been decided by office manager. Besides, the training programmes are also devised and imparted to the new recruits as well as existing staff. Orientation training programme has been provided to new staff and refresher course programme is provided to existing staff.

4. Coordination

The various activities of office staff are coordinate by the office manager. He has to bring coordination between the top management and the workers. He must please both the parties.

5. Work Measurement

An office manager devices methods of work measurement in terms of the output of the staff. It is a difficult task. The reason is that the office work cannot be measured in physical terms. Hence, it is the duty of office manager to decide the accepted norms of work measurement.

6. Motivation

The efficiency of staff is increased by providing proper motivation. The type of motivation can be decided by the office manager. The right type of motivation ensures effective and economical performance of work and lead to the promotion of the staff.

7. Discipline

The implementation of rules and regulation of office is in the hands of office manager. There should not be personal bias while implementing rules and regulations. He also attends to the grievances of office staff. In this way discipline is maintained.

8. Accounting

He has thorough knowledge on accounting. Every figure should be kept in finger tips.

9. Stationery Control

Office manager has to exercise proper control on stationery purchase and issue. For this purpose, he has to frame clear cut procedure for the purchase, for the issue and storage of office stationery.

10. Secretarial Services

All the accounts books are kept under the custody of office manager. An officer manager is responsible to conduct meetings, drafts reports and minutes etc. on behalf of secretary. In this way, he does the functions of secretary.

11. Costing

In small organization, an office manager is responsible to maintain costing records and do the costing work.

12. Organizer

The office work has been assessed and assigned to office staff according to their knowledge, ability, experience, qualification and the like by the office manager.

13. Supervisor

An office manager is head of office. Hence, it is the duty of office manager to supervise the office correspondences, procedures, policy implementation, record maintenance, filing, indexing and the like.

Qualities of an Office Manager

The qualities of an office manager are presented below.

1. The office manager must be able to plan the office work, organize the work among office staff according to their ability and aptitude, direct and motivate staff to perform the work efficiently and economically and to maintain discipline and harmony among the staff fairly and firmly.
2. A good office manager should have as wide and varied a business experience as possible.
3. Office manager must have a good command of language.
4. He must be a model leader to his office staff.
5. He must be deal with the problems more confidently and firmly.
6. He must be a good organizer.
7. He must be able to take sound and firmly decision but there is no hasty decision.
8. He must be well aware of office work and the purpose of doing such work.
9. He must have an ability to give clear direction to others. In other words, the listener should understand what the office manager means.
10. He must be a common man to every office staff.
11. He must be a pioneer in doing the office work.
12. He must be sincere to do his duties.
13. He must understand the feelings of office staff and human nature.
14. He must present the office before the office hour and available throughout the office hour.
15. He must be able to create team spirit among office staff.
16. He should have self confidence and self control
17. He should not get angry at any cost
18. He must be constantly in touch with the new facts and methods of office work in order to increase the efficiency of office staff.
19. Most of above mentioned qualities are inherent or inborn, although some of these qualities can be acquired or improved through practice and training.

The duties of the Manager of Office can be summarised in the following manner:

1. In Relation to his Colleagues and Associates:

(a) He should co-operate with them fully to fulfill the organisational objectives and goals. If necessary, he should transfer the staff so that the work goes on smoothly. However, he has to take permission from his superior to transfer his staff as he cannot take the order and decision on his own.

(b) He should chalk out a plan, a system of integration, and should lay down a principle of administration within the framework of the overall administration, of the organisation, so that he is able to integrate the force working in the office to accomplish the objectives of the office.

2. In Relation to the Top Management:

(a) He should mingle with the top management to know what he is expected to do for them. This will help him to know the procedures, policies and the budgeting system of the management, and then he can implement his actions to achieve the objectives set for him. This will help him to gain the confidence of his superior, and he will be in a position to earn respect and command of the people under him.

(b) He should always seek the approval of his superior or the topline management to implement his decision and, in return, he should report back to them on the decision taken. This will help him to gain confidence of his superior, and the top management will be abreast of his action. The authority will be transparent, as well as the entities outside the office to help him to carry out his work.

3. In Relation to his Sub-Ordinates:

(a) His sub-ordinates consider him as their “only and immediate superior”. Hence he should look to their problems, listen to their grievances and solve them immediately if possible, if it falls within his power, or should forward it to the top management for action.

(b) He should try to find out what his staff is doing, away from him, in the office. He should make an attempt and diagnose whether his staff are moving in the right direction in their job or not, if not, whether they need training etc. He should put his staff on the right track, and the right direction.

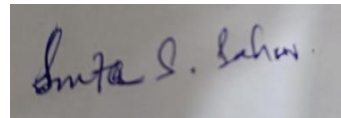
4. In Relation to the Work:

(a) He should see that the stationery items, office machines, furniture and fixtures etc. are in proper order and in good condition, conducive to work.

(b) He should see that the main essence of any job is not to finish the job, but completing the job qualitatively.

(c) He should adhere to the principles and policies of the office and should try to implement these principles and policies etc.

(d) He should be in a position to get the work completed despite of sick-leave, strikes, etc.



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