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**Prepared by**

**Dr.M.Saravanan**  
**Assistant Professor of Commerce**  
**Government Arts College, (Autonomous)**  
**Karur**

# OFFICE MANAGEMENT

## Unit I

### Meaning of Office:

There has been many a definition to define an office. However, in simple language, it can be described as 'a place where business is carried on'. However, this is an inadequate definition because this definition does not take into account the clerical job which is the heart of the office activity.

The meaning of an office has to be clearly understood in common parlance. The moment you spell 'office' it is understood that the business activity, the accountability and its function, and the clerical activities goes into action side-by-side.

### Office Manager

An **office manager** is a person who is responsible for the administrative activities of a company or organization. We sometimes call that person an **administrative service manager** or **business office manager**. Put simply; the person is in charge of running an office.

### Qualities of an Office Manager

#### 1. Personal Qualities:

There is a long list of personal qualities that the office manager should possess more important of which are tact, self-control, enthusiasm, adaptability and sincerity.

## **2. Education, Training and Experience:**

A sound educational background is a great asset of an Office Manager. He should be able to communicate well in writing as well as in spoken words. Besides he should have an analytical bent of mind to take care of different situations arising in office.

## **3. Leadership:**

Need for leadership is inbuilt in the group effort. All equipped business teams accomplishes tasks which are beyond the reach of ordinary well equipped team.

## **4. Organisational Abilities:**

This refer to take a stock of the situation, know the job and the situation, study it, plan and organise the work in such a manner that not only the job gets rolling, but the aim of finishing the job in a manner, which would be recognised, is justified.

## **Duties of an Office Manager:**

The duties of an Office Manager would be established on the same principles of management, but the duties differ from the shape, size and structure of the office, and shape, size and structure of the management or organisation as well.

### **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

(b) He should chalk out a plan, a system of integration, and should lay down a principle of administration within the framework.

**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 will help him to gain the confidence of his superior.

(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

**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.

**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.

## **Office Management**

### **Meaning of Office Management**

Office management refers to the process of planning, organizing, guiding, communicating, directing, coordinating and controlling the activities of a group of people who are working to achieve business objectives efficiently and economically.

### **Definition of Office Management:**

“Office management can be defined as the art of guiding, directing coordinating and controlling the salaried people of an organization in order to achieve specified objective within a time schedule”.

### **Elements of office management**

#### **1. Personnel**

An office provides wages, salaries to their employees. They also keep records of workers attendance, leave due, provident fund, and calculation of overtime. They also help to maintain the relationship between management and workers. It is the main element of office management. Success of office depends upon the employee.

#### **2. Means**

They are the tools which help to perform different activities efficiently. The means are material, methods, money and machines. They are vital for office works. Office must use right types of means. If office doesn't provide right means then it will be difficult to manage all the activities.

#### **3. Environment**

Office should perform efficient and effective work for the good and effective management interior design, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness should be

maintained. The location, government policy, customer should be managed. There must be proper working environment.

#### **4. Purpose**

In this element, office has to set up definite purpose. It has definite objective, personnel, means and other elements. It helps to provide guideline and direction to office activities. It helps in planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, staffing and other office work etc.

### **Effective Management Techniques**

#### **1. Create routines for office management – and make sure everyone sticks to them**

Create routines for handling your paperwork. Prioritise digital communications such as emails and either act on them immediately or flag them for future attention and track and file every piece of paper that comes into the office. Make sure that regular maintenance on office equipment is carried out in a timely manner and also that everyone in the office knows who to call to fix the problem if a glitch arises with your equipment.

#### **2. Delineate responsibilities clearly**

Make sure that things get done by making your employees accountable: ensure that everyone knows who is responsible for what.

### **3. Make sure your records are kept accurately and updates regularly**

Keeping accurate records is one of the most basic office management techniques and sounds straightforward enough, but it's essential to keep your customer database up to date and easily accessible.

### **4. Optimise your office layout**

One of the most important office management techniques is to arrange your office to maximise space and efficiency, making it a better place to work. Keep your office layout as streamlined and spacious as possible.

### **5. Hire outside help**

One of today's office management techniques that you may not have thought of is to reduce some of the time you spend on admin by outsourcing or delegating certain tasks. For example, you can hire a social media company to run Facebook or Twitter accounts for your business, highlighting your promotions and advertising campaigns and updating your blogs and newsletters with fresh content.

### **7. Prioritise business planning**

When you're running your own business, you're often so busy acting and reacting to daily events that it can be difficult to find time for forward planning. One of the key office management techniques employed by successful entrepreneurs is to schedule time every day for setting goals and targets for growth.

## Organization

**Definition:** Organization refers to a collection of people, who are involved in pursuing defined objectives. It can be understood as a social system which comprises all formal human relationships. The organization encompasses division of work among employees and alignment of tasks towards the ultimate goal of the company.

### Types of Organization Structure

1. **Formal Organization Structure:** The organization structure of jobs and positions, with specified activities and relationships, is known as formal organization structure. It is created by management, to attain the objectives of the company.
  - **Line Organization:** Line organization is the oldest and simplest pattern of organization, wherein the supervisor has outright supervision over the subordinate. The flow of authority is from the top level executive to the person at the lowest level of the organization's echelon.





**Functional Organization:** As the name suggests, functional organization structure is one in which the thorough task of managing and directing the employees, is grouped as per the functions or type of work involved.



### Advantages

- The formal organisation clearly outlines the relationships among employees. Hence, it becomes easier to rack responsibilities.
- An established chain of commands maintains the unity of command.
- As the duties of each member is clearly defined, there is no ambiguity or confusion in individual roles whatsoever. Further, there is no duplication of efforts which eliminates any wastage.
- In a formal organisation, there is a clear definition of rules and procedures. This means that behaviours and relationships among the members are predictable. Consequently, there is stability and no chaos existing in the enterprise.

- Finally, it leads to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. This is because there exist systematic and well thought out work cultures and relationships.

### **Disadvantages**

- Decision making is slow in a formal organisation. It is important to realise that any organisational need has to flow through the respective chain of commands before being addressed.
- Formal organisation is very rigid in nature. This means that there prevails perfect discipline coupled with no deviations from the procedures. Hence, this can lead to low recognition of talent.
- Lastly, the formal organisation does not take into account the social nature of humans as it talks about only structure and work. Interestingly, we cannot eliminate this integral part of our nature. Hence, it does not entirely display the functioning of the organisation.

### **Informal Organization Structure:**

The relationship between the employees, that relies on personal attitudes, prejudices and interests rather than procedures. It is system of personal and social connection, whose creation is not needed by formal organization.

### **Advantages**

- In this type of organisation, communication does not need to follow the defined chain. Instead, it can flow through various routes. This implies that

communication in an informal organisation is much faster relative to formal organisation.

- Again, humans are social animals. The needs to socialize exists deep within our existence. The informal organisation ensures that there is socialization within the enterprise. Consequently, members experience the sense of belongingness and job satisfaction.
- Informal organisation, getting true feedbacks and reactions is not easy. Hence, in informal organisation, various limitations of formal organisation is covered up.

### **Disadvantages**

- The informal organisation is random and can result in the spread of rumours. Again, we cannot manage and control informal organisation. Consequently, this may result in chaos within the enterprise.
- It is important to realise that it is not possible to effect changes and grow without the support of the informal organisation. This can work in both ways, for growth or decline of the enterprise.
- To point out again, informal organisation conforms to group standards and behaviours. If such behaviours are against the organisational interests, they can eventually lead to disruption of the organisation.

## **Departmentation**

Departmentalization (or simply departmentation) refers to the grouping of operating tasks into jobs, the combining of jobs into effective work groups and the combining of groups into divisions often termed as 'Departments'.

According to Koontz and O'Donnell, "A department is a distinct area, division or branch of an enterprise over which a manager has authority for the performance of specified activities."

## **Bases of Departmentation**

There is no single best way of departmentation applicable to all organizations or to all situations. The pattern that will be used will depend on the given situation and what managers believe will yield the best result for them in the situation they face.

there are a few basic methods for dividing responsibilities within an organization.

They are as follows:

1. Functional basis.
2. Territorial basis.
3. Process basis.
4. Product basis.
5. Customer basis.
6. Time basis.
7. Number basis.

### **1. Departmentation by Function**

The most commonly accepted practice is the grouping of the activities in accordance with the functions of an enterprise. The basic enterprise functions

generally consist of production, marketing, finance, etc. This method is more logical and hence present in almost all enterprises at some level.

## **2. Departmentation by Territories**

When the organization is large and geographically dispersed, departmentation on territorial basis is the best. This is also considered suitable where the branches produce the same goods or perform similar services at various locations.

## **3. Departmentation by Process**

Activities can also be grouped according to the process involved or the equipment used, This form of departmentation is often employed in manufacturing enterprises. It is also called equipment departmentation. Large retail or marketing enterprises may also have process departments for receiving goods in stores, transportation, wrapping and delivery. Departmentation by process is usually decided on the basis of costs that is mainly on economic considerations.

## **4. Departmentation by Product**

This type of departmentation is desirable for large undertakings which deal with a variety of products or product lines. To departmentalise on product basis means to establish each product or group of closely related products in a product line as a relatively autonomous integrated unit within the overall framework of the company. Under this method, an executive will be in charge of and responsible for all the activities relating to a particular product from production to distribution.

## **5. Departmentation by Customer**

Departmentation can also be made on the basis of customers served that is customer departmentation. In this case, the firm shows its paramount interest in the

welfare of the customer and attention given to them. Under this method, the customers are divided into separate categories, such as distributors, retailers and consumers, and the task of satisfying the needs of different categories of customers assigned to specific departments.

## **6. Departmentation by Time**

It is a common practice to departmentalize activities on time basis. Enterprise engaged in continuous process can follow this pattern. We are familiar with the second shift, third shift, or night shifts, etc. Under this method, the activities performed in each shift are similar and almost identical. But they are departmentalized on time basis. This kind of departmentation is generally found in public utilities and manufacturing establishments.

## **7. Departmentation by Number:**

In case of departmentation by number, activities are grouped on the basis of their performance by certain number of persons. For instance, in the army, soldiers are grouped into squaders, battalions, companies, brigades and regiments based on the number prescribed for each unit. However, this type of departmentation is not found in business concerns.

## **Delegation**

### **What is Delegation?**

Have you ever seen a CEO himself writing the accounts of a company? He only reviews the financial statements, he does not prepare them. He delegates all such clerical and routine tasks to his team. Delegation is one of the most important functions of organising. delegation somewhat relates to transfer of authority. Indeed,

delegation is the downward transfer of authority from a superior to a subordinate. This is important because the superior cannot look after all the processes.

The delegation of authority allows for concentration of time on more important activities in an organisation. Further, it provides a sense of responsibility, a chance to grow and exercise initiatives to whom the authority is delegated. One important point to remember is that transfer of authority from a superior to a subordinates does not mean a transfer of accountability.

## **Elements of Delegation**

### **Authority**

Generally, authority is highly concentrated at the top level of an organisation and reduces as we move to lower levels. In other words, the authority has a top to bottom flow i.e. superior has authority over his subordinate. Lastly, the limit or scope of authority also depends on the laws, rules and regulations of the organisation.

### **Responsibility**

Delegation also involves some transfer of responsibility. Technically, responsibility is the obligation of a subordinate to properly perform a duty. Again, this arises from the subordinate-superior relation as the subordinate is responsible for a job given by his superior. A key point here is that responsibility has a bottom to top flow as the superior is always responsible to his superior.

## **Accountability**

Although delegation eases out the job of superiors and has several benefits for both superior and subordinate, the superior is still accountable for the task. Accountability is the answerability for the final outcome of a job. All things considered, regardless of the delegation, we consider the superior completely answerable for the tasks. This further means that delegation involves no transfer of accountability.

## **Importance of Delegation**

### **Effective Management**

Delegation provides a breathing space to managers by sharing their workload. As a result, managers can concentrate on tasks with higher priority. Further, freedom from routine work allows for exploration of new ideas.

### **Employee Development**

With the help of delegation, we assign new responsibilities to employees. This allows for them to work on a domain which is different from the monotonous routine work, helping them to develop new skills and discover hidden talents.

### **Motivation of Employees**

Through the process of delegation, superiors entrust suitable subordinates with the tasks that are assigned to them. This not only leads to the development of talent but also has various psychological benefits. This is because, the faith and trust



displayed in the subordinate build his confidence and self-esteem, which ultimately drives him to work harder.

### **Facilitation of Growth**

As mentioned, delegation provides employees with opportunities to develop and effectively trains them as better decision makers and managers. This further aids in the process of expansion of an organisation, as it already has the suitable workforce which is competent enough.

### **Management Hierarchy**

Delegation establishes the superior-subordinate relationship. Also, it directly relates to the extent and flow of authority. This is because authority determines who has to report to whom.

### **Centralization**

**Definition:** Centralization refers to that organizational structure where decision-making power is confined to the top management, and the subordinates need to follow the instructions of their seniors. Centralization of authority is essential for the small-scale organizations which lack resources and finance.

Example: A person running a departmental store appoints a manager, a cleaning staff, a salesperson and a helper. The owner delegates the work among the staff according to their skills and positions. However, he retains the decision making authority related to display, discounts, offers, stock, orders, workers' salary, leaves and increment with him. He also keeps firm control over the routine activities of the staff and instructs them from time to time. This type of organization has a decentralized structure where the owner is the decision-maker, and the staff has to follow his instructions.

### **Factors Determining Centralization of Authority**

In small organizations, the owner or the top management is responsible for making all the business decision solely. Whereas, the delegation of work among the subordinates takes place; therefore, centralization persists in these business units. The following factors result in the centralization of the organization:

#### **1. Nature of Organization:**

When the organization is generally a sole proprietorship or partnership entity with less number of employees to be managed, it can have a centralized system.

#### **2. Size of the Organization:**

The organization which are small in size and operating on a small scale can be efficiently managed by the top management hence following a centralized system.

### **3. Nature of Task:**

The organizations engaged in business operations which does not require much expertise or specialization, can be managed through centralization.

### **4. Delegation Ability:**

The capability of the management to delegate the responsibilities to the subordinates while keeping the charge in their hand is another factor determining the organizational structure.

### **5. Employee's Efficiency:**

If the employees lack skills and efficiency to take up the responsibility and accountability of the work to be performed, the management will go for centralization of the organization.

## **Advantages of Centralization**

You must be wondering; What is the need for centralization of authority in an organization? Why can't all the organizations be decentralized? Yes, centralization and decentralization are equally crucial for a business. The reasons for which some o organizations mainly centralizes its structure are as follows:

**Cost Efficient:** The management need not spend much on the office and administrative expenses in a centralized organization. Even the cost of hiring experts and highly experienced personnel at each level is saved due to the centralized decision-making process.

### **1. Better Command:**

The management can hold a better command over the subordinates and the subordinates also clearly know whom to follow. There is proper control over the

subordinate actions, and the management is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subordinates.

## **2. Enhances Work Quality:**

The subordinates are answerable directly to the top management, and therefore they continuously aim at improving the work quality. It also leads to standardization of the process and reduces the wastage.

## **3. Uniformity in Action:**

When the control lies in the hands of few, the methods and techniques used are usually the same throughout all the levels and departments, thus encouraging the subordinates to perform uniformly.

## **4. Focus on Vision:**

The top management clearly defines and better understand the organizational vision. Therefore, it aligns all the resources, subordinates, activities and strategies towards the achievement of the vision.

## **5. Proper Coordination:**

The top management frames a uniform policy for subordinates at different levels, integrate their course of action and ensures coordination among all the subordinates.

## **Disadvantages of Centralization**

Centralization is not suitable for all type of business organizations. When we talk about a brand like Nestle, it wouldn't have expanded its business to such a vast extent if it had a centralized organizational structure. Let us now discuss the various shortcomings of centralization in an organization:

### **1 .Slows Down Operations:**

The top management directs the day to day operations, and the subordinates have to report directly to the senior management. At times when there is no managerial staff, the subordinates are unable to take immediate decisions. Thus, resulting in slowing down of business operations.

### **2. Delays Decision Making:**

In centralization, the decision-making process slows down since all the decisions are to be taken by the top management. It is not suitable for handling emergencies or unexpected circumstances.

### **3. Reduces Scope for Specialization:**

A person cannot specialize in all the activities alone. Therefore, in a centralized structure where all decisions are taken by the top management, the organization lacks specialized supervision and management.

### **4. Discourages Initiative:**

The subordinates are given instructions which they need to follow without questioning the decisions of the top management. In centralization, the subordinates are intimidated from giving their input or suggestions.

### **5. Lacks Adaptability to Change:**

The centralized organization runs in a conventional manner where the top management is somewhat rigid with its policies, methods and techniques. Thus, it creates a barrier to adopting modern and improved practices for organizational growth.

### **6. Overburden on Top Management:**

All the planning and decision-making work is done at the topmost level of management, they control even the day to day operations. Due to this reason, management becomes overburdened and is unable to concentrate on business expansion and growth.

### **7. Bureaucratic Leadership:**

Centralization can be seen as a dictatorship by some, where the top management plans every course of action and the subordinates follow the instructions. Problem-solving becomes quite difficult in such circumstances since the decision-maker, and the implementer is two different individuals.

### **8. Poor Upward Communication:**

The subordinates are supposed to follow instructions while the least attention is paid towards their suggestions and feedback. All this hinders the upward communication in the organization.

### **Conclusion**

Centralization is taken as a dominating or dictatorial practice nowadays. The reason may be that the current employees do not like to be ruled. Instead, they feel more comfortable in the organizations which treat employees as their associates and value their knowledge, skills and suggestions.

## **Decentralisation**

Decentralization is the process in which decision making authority is dispersed throughout the organization. Decentralization helps top management to focus more on major decisions by allowing middle and lower level management to take decisions about daily operations. For a small organization, growth may create a need for decentralization in order to continue operations efficiently. Therefore,

- Decentralized Organization is the organization which often has several individuals responsible for making the business decisions and running the business.
- It relies on a team environment at different levels in the business.
- This type of structure is generally suitable for larger organizations as they can have several divisions or departments. Business owners may need to consider changing the organizational structure depending on the growth and expansion of business operations.

In an organization, Top managers would decide to increase the level of decentralized decision making authority due to the various advantages decentralization offers.

### **Advantages of Decentralization**

1. **Relieving the Burden:** Decentralization relieves the top executive of performing various functions such as hiring new employees, ordering supplies etc. and they can easily focus on bigger tasks such as planning for expansion or meeting with important clients.
2. **Ease of Expansion and Diversification:** For example, if a company wants to expand by opening a new business unit in a different geographical area, then

decentralization allows the new unit to operate as an independent business unit. And also helps in diversifying its activities and start the additional lines of manufacture or distribution.

3. **Efficient Decision Making:** Decentralized organization is able to make quick decisions as they are not required to follow the scalar chain of command. This way, they can quickly react to the real situations and take informed decisions.
4. **Motivate Employees:** Decentralization gives employees a sense of importance and boost their morale as they get involved in decision making process. It helps them gain better knowledge and experience by allowing them to implement their own ideas.
5. **Better control and Supervision:** The subordinates at the lower level ensure better coordination and control as they have authority to make independent decisions. As a result they have complete knowledge of the assignment under their control and are in a position to make amendments and take corrective actions.

In spite of many benefits that decentralization can offer to the organization, it does have some disadvantages.

### **Disadvantages of Decentralization**

1. **Problem of Coordination:** It becomes difficult to coordinate amongst various divisions and subordinates as authority is dispersed throughout the organization. Decentralized organizations can struggle with multiple individuals having different opinions on a particular business decision.
2. **Requirement of Qualified Personnel:** Decentralization require competent and qualified personnel so that they understand the company's strategies and goals



well. If they fail to do so, they may make decisions that are not in the best interest of the company.

3. **Uniform policies not followed:** Due to authority in the hands of middle and lower level managers, they will work and frame policies according to their talent. Therefore, uniformity cannot be expected.
4. **Financial Burden:** Decentralization leads to increased cost of control as management needs to closely monitor the performance of lower level management to ensure that delegated decision making authority is being used in the best interests of the organization.
5. **Loss of Control:** Top management faces the danger that they may lose control of the organization, as they have less insight about detail of underlying operations and unaware of the decisions being made by lower level managers.

## **Organizational Development techniques**

An organization will work together with a team of change agents in order to draft up the intervention plan and agree on the changes and techniques that are to be implemented. The following activities aim to help both organizations and employees get closer to and fulfill their potential.

### **1. Survey feedback**

The survey technique involves data be collected via a questionnaire. The collected information is meant to help managers make decisions. The answers to the survey feedback will range from quality of work, working condition, working hours, salaries, and employees' attitude in relation to all of the above.

The team of managers proceeds to analyze and interpret the gathered data. They pinpoint problems, assess the results and start drafting plans for solutions. All the members of the organization are expected to submit this data. Manager meetings are meant to bring subordinates and superiors together in order to discuss the information and interpret it. All levels of management play an active role in this technique whose end result is implementing necessary changes.

## **2. Team building**

Team buildings have been increasing in popularity as an independent component of Organizational Development. Within OD, team buildings are designed to improve the capacity of the organization's members of working together in a harmonious environment. Organizational effectiveness can be boosted through enhancing work group dynamics and promoting a safe and understanding working place.

In order to help team members open up and speak their minds on work related issues, the professional trainer will lead group discussions. The trainer does not actively participate in the discussion, but merely guides the conversation in order to ensure maximum efficiency. Team buildings' main purpose is to increase sensitivity to team members' behavior by promoting a healthy group functioning. Interpersonal interactions and behavior play a significant part of team buildings, encouraging employees to express their views.

## **3. Sensitivity Training**

One of the most popular Organizational Development techniques, sensitivity training asks employees to interact in order to better understand each other. As a result, team members get better acquainted, form bonds, cease to be judgmental

and prone to become more motivated and efficient in the working environment.

Carrying out free communications and forming interpersonal relationships are bound to improve their group experience as a team, offering members the chance to unequivocally express themselves in a safe and controlled workplace. Sensitivity training will not only increase awareness of self but also awareness of others. These two are some of the main pillars of Organizational Development, on which trust and comfort are meant to build a new order within the company.

#### **4. Brain Storming**

This Organizational Development technique involves six to eight managers coming together and pitching ideas for solving a problem. Brain Storming aims to promote creative thinking, whilst bringing team leaders together and helping them engage in a lucrative discussion of fixing a common issue. The participants are required to critically assess the matter that is put forward. They are then asked to contribute new ideas or new angles on tackling the conflict. The principle behind brain storming is that managers come together and build a plan based on all of their suggestions.

No expert conducts the discussions, which encourages all leaders to speak freely and make suggestions. The brain storming technique is meant to get participants to debate potential solutions and choose the best ones. All of this is done in a safe environment where members can express themselves freely.

#### **5. Management by Objectives**

Part of Management Development, this technique is also successfully used in Organizational Development as a method of reviewing and assessing

performance. Management by Objectives implies clearly pinpointing the goals of the organization and assigning them to managers. Their responsibility is to deliver results in a time efficient manner. This result oriented technique is meant to promote the joint effort of team leaders, laying the grounds for an excellent appraisal system. The accomplished objectives will be used to measure the performance of the managers. The Management by Objectives technique is generally carried out in four essential steps:

- a. Objectives set by top management.
- b. Individual targets and objectives.
- c. Autonomy in choosing strategies.
- d. Performance review and appraisal.

## **6. Quality circles**

This technique requires up to a dozen team members to come together on their own accord in order to discuss important work related issues and come up with efficient solutions that can be implemented by the management team. The method that has its roots in the 60s is meant to be carried out once a week during working hours. Any team member who feels they can bring their contribution is free to join the discussion.

Quality circles have been shown to heighten moral, reduce costs and boost quality in the working environment. All the success of the technique is owed to the effort of the participants who are willing to devote their time in order to pitch solutions and join forces to fix problems.

## **7. Process consultation**

An expert or an Organizational Development consultant gives feedback to the trainee and offers insight into solving problems. Process consultation can help team members experience a change of perspective and experiment with various

problem fixing suggestions. The clear insight provided by the expert or consultant is extremely valuable since it offers both team members and top managers guidelines on how to approach, handle and tackle a wide array of work-related problems.

## Unit 2 – Office Management

### **Meaning of office accommodation**

It is the process of selecting appropriate building in a favorable location, establishing different sections and departments, proving or arranging resources in a scientific way. The purpose of office accommodation is to create sound working environment and to bring efficiency and rapidness in office work.

### **Selection of office building**

#### **1. Shape and size of office building**

It is one of the major factors that should be considered while selecting office building. It should have adequate space to accommodate all machines, equipment, and employee with furniture and enough space for flexibility. It should be considered taking the base of both present and future needs.

#### **2. Lighting and ventilation**

An office building should have adequate lighting and ventilation. It helps a lot to increase efficiency and enhance worker's morale. Well lighted and ventilated accommodation puts less pressure on the employees and also reduces the physical and mental strain and consequently the efficiency is higher.

#### **3. Convenience to customers and employees**

While selecting office building it should consider the convenience of customer and employees. It should not be far from the related trade center, must have proper toilet and canteen services and food hospitality and utilities.

#### **4. Cost**

The cost of building effects on total budget of organization. The building purchased or built must be within the budget of organization. There should be balanced between requirement of space, capacity of the organization and the cost for covering the expanses.

## 5.Flexibility

Flexibility of office building in its shape and size should be considered while selecting the office building. It must also match the nature of organization.

## 6.Layout-facility

The efficiency of men and machine depend upon the layout. The proper layout makes office attraction. For this furniture, machine and other goods are necessary. This also helps in the internal arrangement of office.

### Selection of office location:

1. **Nearness to customer:** The office should be accessible to customers. They do not like long distances to make business inquiries. The office should be accessible to other parties who are in regular contact.
2. **Nearness to related business:** It is desirable to locate the office near the offices of related business. It should be established in the same line of trade.
3. **Availability of infrastructure:** The infrastructure should be available in office location. It consists of transport, communication, power, water and parking facilities.
4. **Nature of business:** The nature of business affects location of office. Office of manufacturing business is located near the source of raw materials, labor and service facilities. Office of trading and banking business is located in commercial centers near the customers. Office of perishable goods business is located near the market for such goods.
5. **Availability of human resources:** Needed human resources should be available for office. They can be skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. All facilities must be available for employees
6. **Environment:** The office location should have healthy environment. It should not be near polluted rivers or waste disposal sites. It should be free from noise, dust and pollution.
7. **Cost of space:** Sufficient space should be available at reasonable cost for the office. Space should be available for future expansion.
8. **Government laws:** The selection of location should comply with government laws and regulation at national and local levels.

## **Office layout**

### **Meaning of office layout**

It is systematic arrangement of office amenities. It is arrangement of staffs, machines, equipment, furniture and other physical facilities within the limit of available floor space. Its purposes are to utilize space in the best possible manners, to make the outlook of the office attractive and to increase efficiency of the staff. It is defined as arrangement and placing of men, material, machines and money to the optimum level.

### **Definition of Office Layout**

According to Littlefield,

“Office layout is the arrangement of equipment within the available floor space”.

According to Hicks and Place,

“The problem of layout relates to the arrangement in the space involved so that all the equipment, supplies, procedures and personnel can function at maximum efficiency”.

### **Main aims are**

- To utilize the floor space properly
- To run the office work smoothly
- To help for the motivation of person.
- To help for the minimization of physical hazards and accident
- To make proper supervision
- To maintain the attractiveness for impressing the customers and visitor.
- To try for the provision of comfort and satisfaction of employees
- To help to provide security

### **Principle of office layout**

#### **1. Principle of flow of work:**

It is the layout which helps for smooth and effective flow of office works. Simple, easy and prompt work flow and essential for work progress



2. **Principle of free movement and observation:**

Office layout should allow the free movement of employees. There should also be proper supervision and observation of works of movement too

3. **Principle of effective supervision:**

There should be free supervision of flow of works, movement of personnel, cost, wastage, balance of budget, quality of office works etc.

4. **Principle of departmental relationships:**

For the office layout related departments are inter related and those inter related departments should be placed side by side.

5. **Principle of flexibility:**

Office should be flexible enough to facilitate the expansion in the future.

6. **Principle of maximum utilization:**

As the time flows, there is increase in cost of every thing as per the situation of the economy if the country and the area where office is established. There are very fewer cases of deflation basically in developing countries. Therefore, when office is set up then there must be maximum utilization of employees, materials, space, machines and resources. There should be reduction of wastage.

7. **Principle of pleasing appearance:**

Interior design, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness should be maintained. Office must be well furnished and pleasing enough to make it attractive to all the customers and visitors

8. **Principle of good ventilation:**

Office must have enough doors, windows, and ventilation for constant supply of fresh air.

**9. Principle of good lighting:**

Office should try to provide natural light that is sunlight. Dark places should be avoided for establishment of office.

**10.Principle of safety:**

An office layout must be based on the safety. It should reduce office accidents like theft, fire, damage and so on. Office machine must be implemented properly

**11.Principle of service facilities:**

There must be provisions of good canteen, lights, lifts, telephone, and toilets.

**Office Environment:**

Office environment has an important bearing on the efficiency of employees.It is common experience that people work better if they are given the surroundings and equipment appropriate to their work. According to **Terry**, “an individual’s performance is significantly familiarized by the environment in which he works”.

**Lighting:**

Lighting is the most important of all the physical conditions in the office. Proper lighting is important because it offers the following advantages:

- Increased productivity
- Better quality of work
- It results in fewer errors
- Reduction in eye strain and mental fatigue
- Better employee morale

## Factors in Good Lighting:

Basic factors in good lighting are:

- i. **Quantity of Light:** It is necessary that the correct quantity of light is available for different types of work in the office.
- ii. **Brightness of Light:** The light should provide the right degree of intensity and brightness. It can be described as the amount of light reflected from an object. It also controls contrast which affects seeing.
- iii. **Diffusion of Light:** Proper diffusion of light can be obtained by having light in different amount that come from an adequate number of sources and directions and should not throw any shadow. It should also be spread uniformly over all parts of the working place.

## Sources or Kinds of Lighting:

There are two main kinds of light available:

1. **Natural Lighting:** The sun is the source of natural lighting which is considered as the best form of lighting from the point of view of the health and efficiency of the employees. Day light is admitted through large windows in the walls or from the roof.
2. **Artificial Lighting:** Artificial lighting may be used to supplement natural light. It is generally not possible to provide natural light over the whole working surface; artificial lighting has to be provided so that the working surface may be properly and evenly illuminated. Artificial lighting is of two kinds
  - a. **Fluorescent:** The illumination produced by fluorescent lighting closely resembles that of natural lighting. The light is evenly distributed and produces less heat and fewer glares and lasts longer even though it is very expensive.

**b. Incandescent:** It is most commonly used, less expensive lighting produced by filament bulbs. It consumes more electricity and produces more glare and shadows. Incandescent lighting may also be used to provide heat for the office building.

**c. LED:** The light-emitting diode (LED) is one of today's most energy-efficient and rapidly developing lighting technologies. Quality LED light bulbs last longer, and are more durable. They also offer comparable or better light quality than other types of lighting.

**d. Solar Lamp:** A solar lamp also known as solar light or solar lantern, is a lighting system composed of an LED lamp, solar panels, battery, charge controller and there may also be an inverter. The lamp operates on electricity from batteries, charged through the use of solar photovoltaic panel.

### **Types of Office Lighting System:**

The lighting system consists of the following five types

#### **1. Direct Lighting:**

Approximately 90% to 100% of the light is directed downward to the working surface in this type of lighting. This system uses some shade or reflector for the source of light. It provides a good intensity of light. At the same time, it casts dark shadows around and raises direct and reflected glare that could cause eyestrain to the office employees.

#### **2. Indirect Lighting:**

In this system, 90% to 100% of the light is directed towards the ceiling or walls and then the directed light is diffused and reflected on the work surface. This type of lighting system is soft and avoids shadows and glares and does not cause eyestrain. This type of lighting system is highly useful for general illumination but not for office work.

#### **3. Semi-Direct Lighting:**

In this type of lighting, a transparent or translucent shade is used which directs 60% to 80% of the light downward. The remaining light is directed upward and the directed light is reflected from the ceiling. This lighting system is an improvement of direct lighting. So, dark shadows on the ceiling and glare are eliminated in this system.

#### **4. Semi-Indirect Lighting:**

A transparent or translucent shade, bowl, cover or reflector is placed under the lamp in this lighting system. In this way, 20% to 40% of the light may be directly diffused downward on the working surface. The remaining 60% to 80% of the light may be directed towards the ceiling and walls. Such directed lighting is reflected downward to the working surface. This form of lighting is intermediate between direct lighting and indirect lighting.

#### **Ventilation:**

Ventilation in the office refers to the supply of clean and fresh air in the right amount, at the right temperature and of the right humidity. Proper ventilation is an important aspect of office environment. Fresh air must pass through the office regularly. Arrangements of rooms and partitions should be such as to allow free circulation of fresh and dustless air. The following methods are generally used to maintain proper ventilation:

**(i) Natural Ventilation:** Natural ventilation may be obtained by providing enough doors, windows and ventilators of the right type at the right place. Natural ventilation can be increased by providing roof ventilation and internal tube ventilators. They would ensure a regular flow of fresh air from outside and of decayed air from inside.

**(ii) Artificial Ventilation:** Artificial ventilation may be achieved by the use of electric fans, exhaust fans, air coolers, air filters, air conditioners etc in the toilets, basements, crowded rooms, canteens, machine rooms etc so that the warm air is let out and fresh air enters through windows and doors.

**Temperature and Humidity:** Temperature and humidity are two vital factors in the office that exercise a great influence over the worker and his output. Temperature and humidity in the rooms should be maintained at a proper level because too much heat or cold induces physical discomfort and affects the efficiency of the staff. The ideal office temperature is approximately 68 degree fahrenheit and humidity is between 40 to 60 percent. Leaving a fan running overnight over the summer wastes enough energy to power the laptop for a year and iPhone for 25 years. A two degree increase in office temperature creates enough carbon di oxide in a year to fill a hot air balloon.

### **Freedom from Noise:**

A noisy place is never an efficient office. Noise is one of the great disturbers. A noiseless and quiet atmosphere is a must for an office to maintain the efficiency of the employees at high level. Noise may be internal and external. Noise can be controlled through following measures:

- i. Separating noise making machines from the main office.
- ii. Fitting doors with door closers and rubber lining.
- iii. Housing the telephone switchboard away from the general office.
- iv. Using sound absorbing material on floors, walls and ceilings.
- v. Covering floors with rubber, coir or plastic mats, etc.

### **Cleanliness:**

A clean and tidy office is important as it offers the following advantages:

- It is healthier as a work place for different types of office workers.
- Since people react to their surroundings, a clean and healthy office contributes to accuracy and efficiency
- A clean and tidy office also projects a good image of the organization in the eyes of the people who visit it.

**Disposal of Waste:** Proper disposal of waste and waste paper is very essential.

**Toilets:** Proper provision of toilets and their proper cleanliness are important. Toilets should be conveniently located with adequate number. It must be properly stocked with soap, toilet paper and towels. Paper napkins or towels are convenient and hygienic. The cleaning work should be undertaken either before or after the business hours in the office. In addition to the daily cleaning, a definite programme of special cleaning should be laid down and followed. This sort of special cleaning should be a comprehensive one and no part of the office should be left uncleaned.

## **Safety Measures:**

One of the vital functions of a modern office is to keep and preserve documents and records for future guidance or reference. All documents or records of office should therefore be kept under proper security. The following precautions should be taken to secure documents and employees:

**(i) Fire Precautions:** Adequate fire precautions should be taken for the preservation of office records and documents, machines against risk of loss or destruction by fire. Similarly precautionary measures to safeguard the employees in the office should also be provided in the office. Adequate fire extinguishing equipment should be installed and the staff should be trained in its use. Fire alarms should be fixed in conspicuous places. Such appliances should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are in working order.

**(ii) Accident Prevention:** Most accidents occur due to overcrowding in the office; use of obsolete machines and equipment, improper and careless handling of machine etc. Hence adequate precautionary steps to prevent accidents should be taken in the office. The employees should also be made aware of the safety arrangements and should be advised to handle the office machinery and equipment carefully. Office machines and equipments should be placed on firm foundation and proper fitting of desk and file drawers should be ensured.

**(iii) Provision of Safe Working Place:** Arrangements should be made to provide a safe working place for the employees. Shape and size of the office rooms, location and size of doors, gangways, etc., must be such as to eliminate hazards of accident. Office floor should be covered with nonslippery material, lighting of stairways, gangways, etc should be adequate and desks and chairs should be free of sharp edges.

**(iv) Provision of First Aid Service:** To ensure immediate treatment to injuries, there should be a first aid box in every office with sufficient medicines. These should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are stocked with all necessary materials.

**(v) Safety Education and Training of Employees:** Each employee should be made thoroughly aware of the dangers of his job. Training should be given to employees in the correct and safe way of doing the job and trained in first aid and fire fighting work. Safety regulations should be carefully framed and strictly enforced.

## **Office furniture**

Office furniture is an important part of office management; it is mostly used for indoor activity. Employees working in the office should be provided with comfortable and convenient furniture so that they can work efficiently. The major and most popular office furniture are chair, table, cabinets, cupboards, sofas, racks etc. office furniture are common in all offices. Office furniture should have good design which can help the office to look attractive and pleasant. In a well furnished office, employees feel comfortable and are motivated for work

## **Importance of office furniture**

1. It increases the efficiency of work
2. It makes the office more attractive and pleasant.
3. It helps to maintain the prestige of office
4. It provides better working environment for the employees
5. It helps in reducing the fatigue.
6. It helps in protection of documents from fire, dust, insects etc.
7. It helps in proper storage of files

**There are certain factors which must be taken into account while choosing office furniture:**

### **1. Fund:**

The amount of fund available for the purpose would obviously affect the choice, but at the same time it would be essential to keep in mind to have the most suitable type of furniture.

### **2. Durability:**

Durability is a very important factor. Steel furniture which is becoming quite popular is more lasting than the furniture made out of wood. The furniture which has a sun-mica surface too are very lasting, durable and sturdy.

### **3. Weight:**

The furniture selected should be of light weight and it should be easy to lift it to move around if required. It is necessary, if frequent changes are made, that a furniture should be light weighted.



**4. Adaptable:**

As far as possible, furniture should be adaptable to different uses in the office. Hence the need for standardisation of the office furniture.

**5. Risk of Fire:**

As far as possible, the furniture selected should withstand fire. It should be such that if it is subjected to fire it should not get destroyed or burned totally into ashes.

**6. Appearance:**

Good appearance of furniture adds greatly to the looks of the office. Thus furniture should not only be functional but should have a pleasing appearance.

**7. Finish:**

Finishing appearance of furniture should be such that it should attract the eye. Glossy surface should be avoided because they create glares and increases tension.

**Office Furniture and Types of Furniture:**

Many a type of furniture are needed in an office. It can be classified on the basis of purpose or on the basis of appearance. The furniture classified on the basis of purpose are executive, special purpose furniture, and the furniture which are classified on the basis of physical appearance are desks and chairs.

**1. Desk:**

The desk is the work bench of the office employee influencing much of his efficiency. The main purpose of a desk is to provide a suitable space for writing and for processing the information. The desk also is used for stationing a machine for use and to provide a storage space for supplies needed by the person.

An average desk is a desk which is about 150 cms in length, 75 cms in height and about 70 cms in breadth. This is an average desk. These dimensions provide a sufficient space for work and comfortable place of work.

**Type of Desks:**

**The various types of desk are:**

1. Executive desk

2. Clerical desk

3. Typist desk

4. Machine desk

5. Secretarial desk

### **1. Machine Desk:**

These desks are designed to meet the need of different machines which have important place in the office. For example, a desk holding a Xerox machine should be different in size, shape as compared to a desk which holds a Guillotine Machine or a Duplicating Machine.

### **2. Clerical Desk:**

This kind of desk used in our country are mostly single pedestal desk with a maximum top of 1.2 meters by 75 cms, and possesses 3-4 drawers on one side of the desk. In some offices double pedestal desks are provided for the clerical staff.

### **3. Typist Desk:**

This is a unique structured desk for the computer and this is not a common sight in our office in India. Typist desks are with a fixed in important countries like, France etc. with the height and the drawer adjusted to suit the need of the typist.

### **4. Secretarial Desk:**

These desks are needed for the secretaries of the executives. It can be single pedestal or double pedestal desk. In our country most of the secretarial desks are same as the other clerical desks with little change. Secretaries may often be provided with a separate typist table to do the typing work.

### **5. Executive Desk:**

These desks are designed to the individual taste and quite often they are designed as a show piece of an organisation. Their purpose is to impress the visitor with the prestige and importance of the persons using them.

## **2. Tables:**

In many government and other offices, tables still serve as clerical desk and thus they may be fitted with one or two drawer. Tables are needed for sorting of mails, dispatches, temporary housing of files and file tray, holding meeting of committee etc.

## **3. Wooden Furniture:**

In our country wooden furniture made of teak and rosewood is by far the most popular kind of furniture.

### **Wooden furniture has the following advantages over the metallic furniture:**

1. It can be designed and shaped as per the need.
2. With its properly polished surface and its dense look, it is more cost-effective and it creates a feeling of greater comfort.
3. It can be re-polished at a cheap cost.

### **Metallic furniture is considered to be ideal from the following viewpoint:**

- (i) It is safe against fire.
- (ii) A large variety of it, especially chairs, is light and if needed it can be easily moved from one place to another.

As far as India is concerned, there is very little to choose and the choice between the two types of furniture would depend mainly on factors like individual need and comparative weights.

## **4. Chairs:**

Chairs are perhaps the most important item of furniture from the point of view of the worker since he sits on them all through the day in the office. In our country most of the chairs have standardised height of 41 cms or 16.5 inches (sixteen and a half inches). A chair greatly influences correct posture while at work and consequently influences health.

## **5S Implementation in the Office**

The 5S management philosophy eliminates waste and improves office organization and standardization. 5S serves as the foundation for continuous improvement activities and provides the base for applying other Lean methodologies. It also supports the cornerstones of employee engagement.

Some of the benefits of 5S implementation include

- reduced mistakes or errors from employees
- reduced search time in locating files, information and supplies
- improved employee safety and morale
- improved customer service.

5S comes from the first letters of five Japanese words, namely, Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu and Shitsuke. Translated to its English equivalent, 5S means: Sort, Set In Order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain.

The first three S's: Sort, Set In Order and Shine build the basic pillars of 5S. They form the core of the 5S program and must become a part of every employee's day-to-day activities. The fourth and fifth S's support the implementation of the first three-S's.

Let us take a closer look at each of the 5S principles:

### **Sort (Seiri)**

Sort means to distinguish between the necessary and unnecessary. Get rid of the items you do not need.

Go through all the desks, shelves, cabinets, files, equipment, storage areas, etc. in the office and discard unnecessary items.

Keep only the essential items. Store frequently used items near the workstation. Store seldom used items further away.

When going through the sort process for 5S implementation in the office, create a temporary collection area. If the employee feels the unnecessary object may have value for someone else, place the object there until all employees complete this stage. This allows other employees to review the items and keep items they may need.

## **Set In Order (Seiton)**

Set In Order during the 5s implementation in the office articles means to arrange essential items in order for easy access. Here you focus on functional storage and eliminating the need to look for things.

All items should be arranged for easy access. For a good system, one can find any item in less than 5 seconds. There must be a place for everything, and everything should be in its place after use.

The following are some practice tips for Set In Order:

- Remove old and obsolete information on notice boards, intranet and the shared drive.
- Archive electronic files.
- Install cabinets for storing cleaning supplies and materials used occasionally.
- Label or mark off all storage areas.
- Define filing standards.
- Align workstations in order that work is done.
- Ensure that the latest version of work instructions and job aids are posted.
- Remove hazards such as materials blocking corridors, doorways and stairways.

## **Shine (Seiso)**

Shine means to keep things clean and tidy. It should be understood that cleaning is a form of inspection.

Practice tips for Shine include:

- Divide office areas into zones and assign accountability.
- Obtain appropriate tools and supplies for cleaning.
- Inspect equipment and tools while cleaning.
- Repair faulty equipment, e.g. creaking office chairs.
- Clean your computer keyboard regularly by dusting off crumbs and cleaning with an appropriate disinfectant.

## **Standardize (Seiketsu)**

Standardize during 5s implementation in the office means to establish standards and guidelines to maintain an organized office. Here you focus on standardization

and the application of visual management tools such as colored labels and sign boards.

Practice tips for Standardize include:

- Set in place rules and policies that support the first three S's, e.g. designated areas, proper labeling of storage areas, a log of what goes where, etc.
- Define a schedule for 5S activities and make it a part of the work routine.
- Put in place an emergency plan for fires, medical emergencies and natural disasters.
- Install automated external defibrillators (AED).
- Train new employees on the 5S system.
- Put up a bulletin board to keep employees informed and aware of the 5S system and activities.

**Reward and recognize participation and achievement in the 5S program.**

### **Sustain (Shitsuke)**

Sustain means to make 5S a habit and teach others to adhere to established standards. Make 5S a habit and develop a disciplined office environment.

Practice tips for Sustain include:

- Regular communication of the 5S program, e.g. monthly newsletters.
- Regular housekeeping on your computer hard drive.
- Hold all-together cleaning sessions. Conduct monthly 5S inspections and audits.
- Gemba walk by the CEO and/or 5S steering committee members.
- Conduct monthly review by the 5S steering committee.
- Establish 5S standards and continuous improvement of the standards.
- Develop 5S manuals. Reward and recognize individuals and teams for good 5S practices.

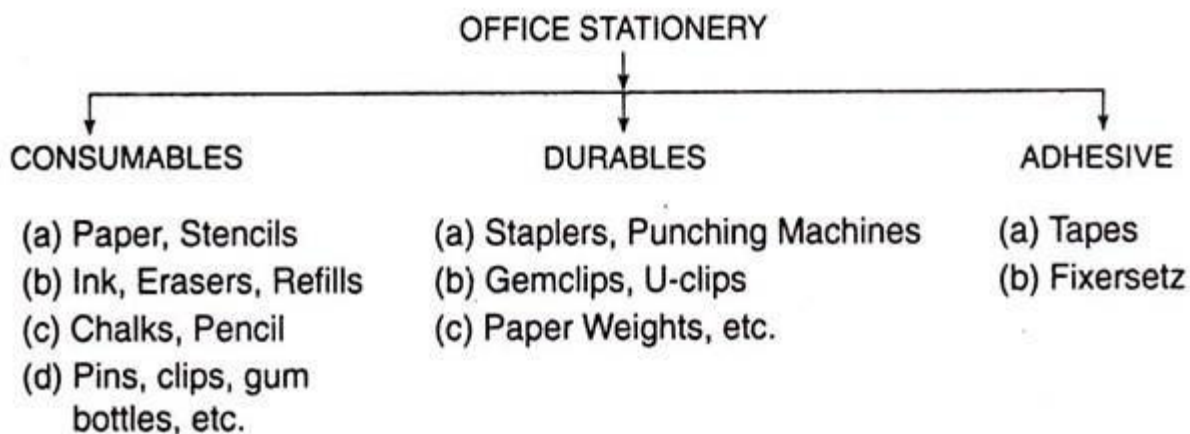
For a 5S initiative to be successful, make it an organization-wide effort. Senior management must commit and involve all staff. For successful 5S implementation, you must provide sufficient resources, manpower, training and publicity. Be sure to align the 5S program to the company's goals and objectives. Finally, there must be regular 5S audits and management review, as well as recognition and reward for good 5S practices.

### Meaning of Office Stationery:

Stationery, precisely the office stationeries, is a group of commodity which is used to, or which is needed to, do the office job for completing the office job, as per the requirement and specification.

Every office has to maintain certain records, both in the form of filings, and in the way and method of information technology. These records which has to be filed for a longer duration of time, has to be typed and preserved for a longer duration of time. This gives birth to, or thus arises the need of office stationeries.

**Office stationeries, broadly, can be divided into three categories:**



As evident from the chart, the items, certain examples of which are stated, are classified into the durable consumables and adhesives category.

Here a brief study and introduction is needed to distinguish between the durables and consumables. Items like pin, clips are consumables and within no time these items are consumed, however it is not sure and known when the entire packet of clip purchased will be consumed, and at what point of time it will be consumed.

Hence till the moment it is not consumed it remains as it is—it falls into the consumable category. The definition would make the understanding of the subject very clear. Consumables are those items which are used by the office very quickly, in a very short period of time and which cannot be re-used.

Durables are those items which find a constant use and which remain in its shape, form and size for a very longer period of time. These items can be re-used or these are often used.

### **Types and Forms of Office Stationeries:**

Having discussed the three categories of stationeries mentioned above, let us study the type of stationeries and the various forms of stationeries.

### **For example let us take paper. Papers are of following types:**

1. A4
2. A3
3. B4
4. B3

These are the following four types of papers which are occasionally and mainly used in any office. A4 is smaller than A3 and A3 is smaller than A2 size of paper; B4 is smaller than B3 and B3 is smaller than B2.

A4 and A3 paper are mostly used by every office located and situated at India. These papers are manufactured and supplied by Gesteter (I) Ltd, JK Papers, Birla Papers etc.

These papers are specially used by the Government departments for typing etc. A3 papers are used for typing the large documents which can be a statement chart etc.

B3 and B4 papers are slightly longer in length and breadth as compared to A4 and A3 papers. These are thicker and a bit more denser as compared to A3 and A4 papers. These are basically used for Xerox and for the purpose of duplicating etc.



**Stencils:****Stencils are of two types:**

- (a) The back cover stencils
  
- (b) Without front cover stencils paper

The back cover stencil has a cover at the back. It has the main paper, in which certain dimensions are inscribed on the front page, and is supported by a carbon paper in the middle. If any matter has to be duplicated the stencil is inserted into the type-writer for typing. While typing, if there is any mistake of words that has occurred, it can be corrected with a correction fluid and the spelling or the words can be corrected easily.

Once the entire matter is typed then the back cover is torn off and the stencil is put or inserted into the duplicator to get the duplicated copies, The other form of stencil paper is the without front cover stencil. In this the front cover is not there at all and a carbon paper is affixed to the back cover.

This is inserted in a scanning machine to scan the matter of duplication, so that the matter to be duplicated is seen on the paper. After the matter is scanned, the carbon paper is inserted into the duplicating machine, so that the duplicating matters are into our hand. The back cover here is torn off before inserting the paper into the duplicating machines.

**Carbons:**

These are basically a paper which is black in color or blue in color at one side and a silver screen forming layer in the other side. The silver screen side of the paper is inserted into the typewriter, facing the characters of the typewriter, along with the paper in which the impression of the type-writer or the matter to be printed is obtained.

The character of the type-writer into the screen and the impression formed on the carbon is printed on the paper. Carbons in India are manufactured by GESTETNER, J. K. PAPERS, CAMLIN (I) LTD to name a few.

**Erasers:****Erasers are obtained in two forms:**

1. Fluids for correction
2. Whiteners for covering the spelling or words.

Fluids are liquids, made of chemicals, which are sprayed over the stencils, while typing a matter on stencils duplicating.

**Durables:**

In the durables, the commodities like stapler, punching machines, paper weights etc. needs neither any description nor any introduction.

These commodities, if seen once, are good enough to understand what are they and what is the mechanism.

These commodities are stored, used and maintained for a very longer duration of time, hence they are known as durables.

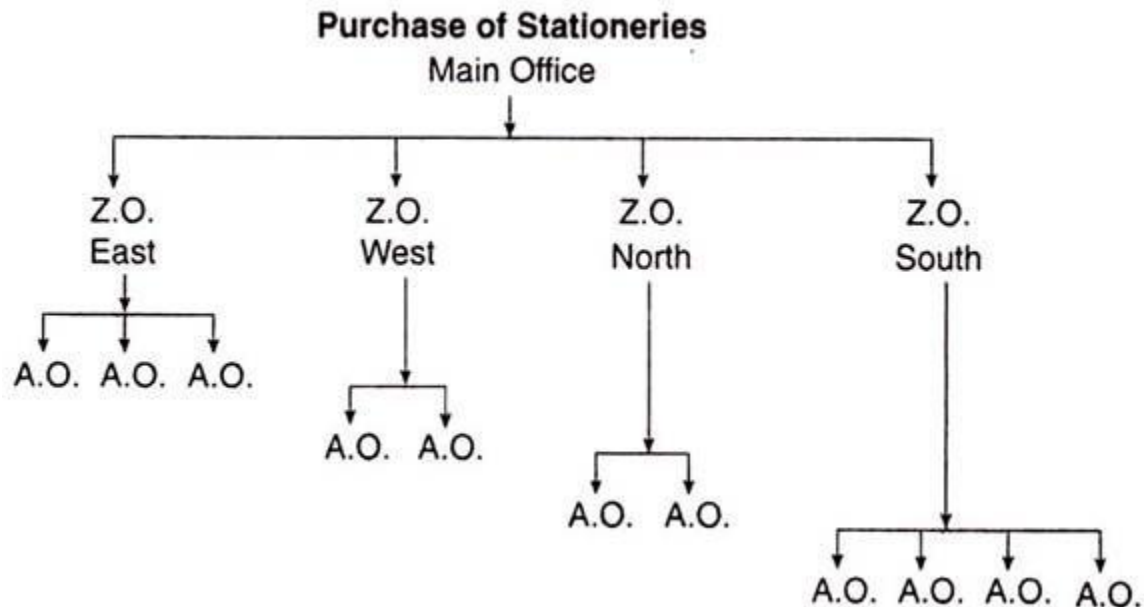
**Adhesives:**

Adhesive are items like the tapes, quick-fix, etc. These are also made of chemicals and they are used in the office for fixing certain envelopes, parcels etc. which have to go out of the office.

**Purchase of Office Stationeries:****A purchase of stationeries is generally done by two methods:**

- (1) Centralised Purchase or
- (2) Decentralised Purchase.

Let us understand what is at first, the centralised system of purchase:



Now suppose the main office of the company, say TOMCO, is situated at Mumbai. It purchases the stationeries from the main office, situated at Mumbai, and it supplies these stationeries to all the offices, i.e., the Zonal Office, and the Area Office under the Zonal Office.

This system of purchasing the stationeries by the Main Office alone, for the entire office under it, and supplying the stationeries to the various offices under it is known as centralised purchasing.

This system of purchase does not find favour nowadays, for purchasing items like the stationeries etc. Hence the main office, which is also known as the Head Office, gives certain power to the Zonal Office and the Area Office under the Zonal Office, to purchase the stationeries, as and when required, under certain amount, which we call a “ceiling amount”.

A ceiling amount is the amount fixed by the Head Office which entails the purchaser not to buy anything above the amount that is fixed for spending on the particular head for that particular item. This method of purchase, where certain limits are fixed by the Head Office for the offices under them to buy certain items or commodities for office use, is known as the “Decentralised” system of purchase.

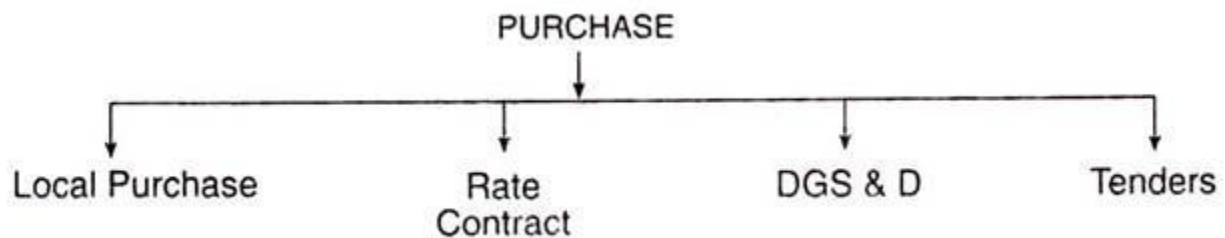
Generally, all over the country, the purchasing of stationeries are done by the SYSTEM OF DECENTRALISED purchases.

### **Types of Purchases of Office Stationeries:**

**Purchase of stationery in the office or the organisation is done by the following methods:**

1. Local Purchase
2. Purchase by the rate contract
3. Purchases by the DGS & D system
4. Purchases by Tenders.

**This can be represented:**



**We shall describe each method in details:**

#### **1. Local Purchase:**

This type of purchases is done in the local area, i.e. the area within the limit of the municipality corporation in the city, town, or the district. These take place instantly or immediately when there is an urgent requirement of a particular commodity of routine nature. An indent is raised for the commodity to be purchased and, after receiving the approval by the competent authority of that office, the material is purchased. This type of purchase is suitable for the items which are of routine nature and where the cost is less or bare minimum.

#### **2. Rate Contract:**

This type or this system has gained importance in the Public Sector Undertakings, and the Government Sectors. Here, any organisation furnishes on the newspaper, or they get in touch with the suppliers directly, by the yellow pages etc., about the items that will be required to be purchased. The suppliers are asked

to quote their own rates along with the information on the taxes etc. for the items that they can supply.

In the rate contract system, the supplier who gets the contract has to supply the materials at the same rate, over a period of time, say 12 months, irrespective of the rates being revised, changed, escalated, gone high etc.

### **3. Purchasing by the DGS and D System:**

The Directorate General of Supplies and Disposal (DGS and D) system was established in 1961 by the Central Government in order to fix price for commodities ranging from pin to vehicles, to enable and to help the Government Sectors to buy material as per the prices fixed by the Government, from the suppliers.

In this case, a Sales Tax Declaration Form (STDF) has to be supplied or provided by the buyer, who buys, to the supplier who sells. This system enables a Tax Reduction or a Tax Deduction of only 4% by the seller when he raises a bill or an invoice on the buyer. This system saves a lot of money on tax for the buyer.

In the DGS and D rates, the rates are binding on the suppliers for a period of one year. After one year, if the same commodities are taken under its fold by the DGS and D, a new rate will be fixed, taking into account the various business factors.

### **4. By Tender:**

A tender is a notification by a buyer, either in the dailies, or by the method of communication, about the requirement of buying certain commodities, by the buyer from the suppliers in the open market under certain terms, conditions and the time, for the suppliers to supply certain commodities to the buyer.

One who wants to participate in the tender has to fulfill all the obligations required by the buyer. The buyer has to open the tender on a specified date, in front of the buyers and has to declare the prices and the other information as quoted by the various suppliers.

Once the material is supplied, the materials are checked, inspected by the buyer before acceptance and the payments are released as per the terms and conditions set by the buyers.

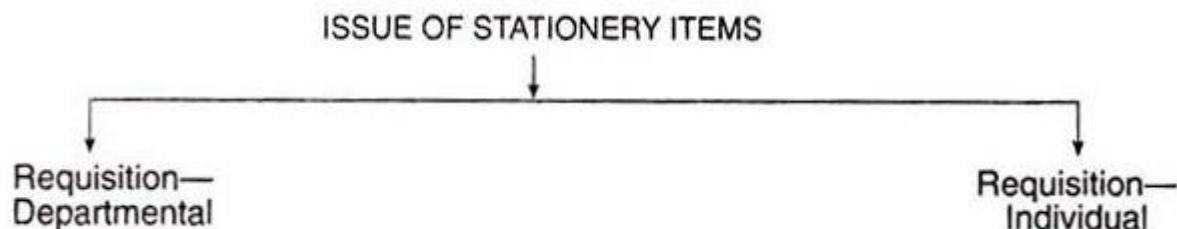
### **Storage of the Office Stationeries:**

Stationery items for any office are kept and stored in almirahs. Every almirah has compartments, along with a locker. Important items like Punching Machines, Staplers, Paper Weights, etc. which expensive and have a very long use can be stored in the locker of the almirah. Items like the pen, refills, etc. should be stored in the locker.

Routine items like pins, clips, papers etc. can be kept into different compartments in the almirahs. The stationeries should be under the control of the Chief Administrative Manager, in the Administrative Department, and it should be issued by the said department. A proper record of the receipt and the issues of the stationeries items should be maintained in the office for the purpose of Auditing.

### **Issues of Office Stationery:**

**The stationeries items can be issued basically by two different methods:**



In the Requisition Department, the Head of the department issues a circular to all the employees working in the department to furnish a list of the stationeries, in number, or in units, that will be required by each employee.

The requirement of the stationeries by all the employees is sent to the issue department. One particular employee in each department is given the responsibility by the departmental head to take the charge of the stationeries and maintain a record of the issue of the same.

The second method is the Requisition—Individual. In this method, each employee is asked to furnish the statement of the stationery items that they would be using during every month. The list is collected by the one who issues the stationeries and a record is maintained by them of the stationeries issued by them.

## OFFICE MANAGEMENT

### Unit III

#### Records Management

Records management is meant as the **creation, distribution, maintains retention, preservation, retrieval and disposal of records** for purpose of keeping the planners and decision-makers informatively in a business organization.

#### Definition of Records Management

According to **Littlefield**, “Records management forms, reports, reproduction of written material, filing of records, retention, microfilming and related services”.

#### Principles of Records Management

1. **Justification**: The purpose for which records are maintained should be justifiable. There is no need of keeping all information on the ground that they may be useful in future. If the records are maintained in the light of the principle of purpose, there may be many records which have no purpose and should not be preserved at all.
2. **Verification**: A record should be capable of verification. A record has no value if the concerned record cannot be verifiable.
3. **Classification**: Records should be properly classified according to its requirements in future. If the facts of a business are recorded chronologically, it is



very difficult to analyze the facts of a business. In certain cases, classification itself is a form of analysis of the recorded facts.

4. **Simplicity**: Records should be maintained in a simple manner and according to the requirements of the business office.

5. **Availability of Information**: The desired information should be available when required. All the records are not necessary at one time. Hence, there is no need of instant availability of all the records. But, the required records should be available in the shortest possible period of time.

6. **Accuracy**: Records should be maintained accurately so as to minimize the chances of errors and fraud.

7. **Reasonable Cost**: The expenses of records management should not be ignored. All types of records have no equal importance. More safety arrangement is necessary to keep valuable and important documents. Some records are more important than others. Hence, safety lockers may be used to keep such records. Under strict control of the office manager, less important and less valuable records are also maintained.

8. **Flexibility**: The systems of records maintenance should be elastic. The system may be changed as and when on account of changing requirements of the business organization with out difficulty.

### **Objectives of Records Management**

The records management has the following objectives. They are

1. To keep the accounts of progress in an order.
2. To facilitate the preparation of financial statements.
3. To know the true condition of the business organization

4. To facilitate in business plans and decision making particularly in the context of changing environment.
5. To facilitate comparisons between one period of time with another.
6. To facilitate comparisons between different product lines.
7. To facilitate comparisons between two similar business firms.
8. To detect errors, prevent frauds and avoid wastage.
9. To facilitate the performance of the business functions.
10. To keep the various records under various laws and fulfill the legal requirements.

### **Importance of Records Management**

Efficient records management is necessary to every nature of business office. The reason is that records management has the following significance.

1. **Barometer of Progress**: Records reveal the progress of business organization in stage by stage. The performance and achievements of business are disclosed during different periods which can be compared to know the trend of progress. The true position of a business can be identified by keeping the records up to date. This is the historical function of records.
2. **Future Reference**: Records constitute the reservoir of information (memory) relating to the business organization. Management takes every decision only after verifying and confirming the information. Here, information is used as a tool to management for vital decision making. Therefore, records must be maintained accurately.

3. **Reduction of Errors**: Keeping up to date accurate records can minimize errors and prevent frauds. Records are an essential part of internal control system. Records management is a part of performing control function of management.

4. **Legal Evidence**: Records serve as a written proof of the transactions in case of a legal dispute. Some records such as Indirect Tax Returns, Value Added Tax Return and the like have to be maintained for a specific period of time.

5. **Efficiency**: A good system of records management ensures the supply of required information with speed and accuracy. It helps to improve the efficiency of office operations.

### **Characteristics or Features of records systems**

To operate effectively, records systems should have the following characteristics:

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>The records system should...</b>
<b>Reliable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routinely capture records within the scope of the business activity it supports</li> <li>• routinely create process metadata</li> <li>• provide adequate information about the records within them</li> <li>• have controls that will ensure accuracy and quality of records created, captured and managed</li> <li>• present records in useable and readable form</li> <li>• provide timely access to records</li> <li>• prevent unauthorised access, use, alteration, concealment, deletion, destruction or removal of records</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage and store records for as long as they are needed</li> </ul>
<b>Secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allow setting up access and permission controls to protect records from unauthorised use, alteration, deletion or removal, such as user registration/deregistration</li> <li>• have security controls that allow logging, monitoring and termination of access and use. The logs should be protected from tampering.</li> </ul>
<b>Compliant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be designed and managed in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements that apply to the business documented within them. Please note that the records system's compliance should be regularly monitored and assessed.</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehensive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create, capture and manage records and associated metadata resulting from the business activities supported by the system</li> </ul>
<b>Fixity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capture and preserve records as an accurate, unaltered record of the business activity or systems event it documents in a fixed point in time. Records may be captured through the process metadata which shows information on the changes made to the record, when</li> </ul>

	and who changed the records.
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## Functions of records systems

In addition to having these characteristics, records systems must be capable of performing a range of standard functions.

<b>Functions</b>	<b>The records system is able to...</b>
<b>Registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create and/or capture records by assigning them unique identities and when necessary allow users to provide additional description, such as a title and date of the record</li> <li>• create and/or capture process metadata such as date of creation and/or capture and by whom.</li> </ul>
<b>Indexing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build a list of keywords or index, associated with the record. The index aids in searching and retrieval of records and may be built using metadata or the record content.</li> </ul>
<b>Search and retrieval</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a mechanism to identify and show records in response to search queries.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and security monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assign and implement rights or restrictions that protect records against unauthorised or inappropriate use or access</li> </ul>
<b>Tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• log, monitor and show events such as user access, additions,</li> </ul>

<b>Functions</b>	<b>The records system is able to...</b>
	alterations and deletions carried out on the record, date of the action and by whom.
<b>Disposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate authorised disposal of records</li> <li>• log and show information on disposal actions such as date and time of disposal and by whom.</li> </ul>
<b>Export</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extract select or all records (including associated metadata, when needed) regardless of format without loss or degradation of content or metadata</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generate any reports deemed necessary by the organisation.</li> </ul>

## **FILING SYSTEM**

Filing can be described as the core of records management. The files of an organization are its memory and any malfunction of this memory will severely affect the overall efficiency of the organization. According to J.C. Denyer” filing is the process of arranging and storing records so that they can be located when required.”

## **FUNCTIONS OF FILING**

A good filing system performs four important functions. They are as follows:

### **1. LIBRARY FUNCTION**

Library function involves sorting and arranging the records for future reference.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION**

A good filing system performs certain administrative functions also. Administrative functions here imply maintaining, protecting and supplying the various documents to the management for developing the business policies.

### **3. HISTORICAL FUNCTION**

Important records relating to the progress of the enterprise are preserved. These records clearly reveal the history of the organization.

### **4. INFORMATION FUNCTION**

Various types of information for various uses and purposes are preserved and protected. Besides, they are also supplied to the users in times of need.

## **ADVANTAGES OF FILING**

A business firm derives various concrete advantages by adopting a suitable system of filing. They are mentioned below:

### **1. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

Files constitute valuable documentary evidence of the transactions. They will be very useful in case of any disputes, which may arise in future.

## **2. VALUABLE ASSISTANCE**

Past records are valuable assistance to formulate new policies and programmes. Policies based on past experience will have greater realism in their approach.

## **3. NO DELAY IN HANDLING CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence can be handled properly without any delay. Systematic handling of correspondence will contribute to build up goodwill and reputation of the firm.

## **4. CONTROL OF PROCESS**

Process of control is greatly facilitated by a carefully devised system of filing. A check is kept on the incoming and outgoing letters and letters requiring action are thus disposed off quickly.

## **5. PROTECTION OF RECORDS**

Documents are protected against possible loss or damage. Some documents are to be preserved permanently. Particularly care must be taken in protecting documents like title deeds, agreements etc. Proper filing system ensures protection of all vital records.

## **6. FOLLOW-UP MEASURES**

Follow up measures for sales are unthinkable without a good system of filing. When a firm introduces a new product in the market, it should approach its old customers and win their co-operation first. Price changes should also be informed to them promptly. All these activities are possible only when records are maintained properly.



## 7. TRACING OF REFERENCE IS EASY

Tracing out references with regard to various matters is facilitated by an efficient system of filing. This will avoid the need for duplicating or repeating such matters once again.

### Essentials (or) Characteristics of Good filing system

1. **Compactness**: The **compact filing system should be adopted** by every business office. It means that the filing system should not require any unnecessary space.
2. **Simplicity**: The filing system should be **simple and not too elaborate**. At the same time, the usefulness of the filing system cannot be sacrificed for the sake of simplicity.
3. **Accessibility**: A good filing system should be arranged in such a way that **the records are easily available whenever required**. The filing system **should allow the insertion of additional documents** without disturbing the existing order of files.
4. **Economy**: The filing system **should be economical** in time, space, money and operations. The cost of installation and operation of filling system should be as low as possible. The selected filing equipment **should occupy minimum space** but can accommodate maximum number of files.
5. **Flexibility**: The **filing system can be expanded** if the volume of business transactions increased. An inflexible system is not useful after crossing a certain limit.
6. **Classification**: The filing system should be **supported by a proper system of classification**. Proper classification reduces the number of files to be maintained and helps in inserting as well as locating the documents in the files.

7. **Safety**: The filed documents and **records should be in safe condition** and available whenever required. The documents and records should be protected from insects, rain, dust, or mishandling.
8. **Cross Reference**: A cross reference should be given wherever a document can be filed more than one head to avoid confusion and **facilitates easy location of files**. It saves time and human resources.
9. **Easy Location**: Documents and records should be kept in such a way that they can be easily located whenever required with the minimum delay possible. At the same time, it **does not require heavy expenditure** to achieve this purpose.
10. **Indexing**: A well designed index is also used to supplement the filing system. **It will help to locate the file quickly** when it is required.
11. **Retention**: Every documents and records are maintained for a minimum period of time. Then, the dead records and documents can be discarded without too much disturbance. The remaining documents and records are retained even after a storage period.

## METHOD OR CLASSIFICATION OF FILING

Classification of files refers to the process of selecting heading under which documents are grouped or classified on the basis of common characteristics. The bases of classification are as follows:

### 1. Alphabetical classification

The filing method under which files and folders are arranged in order of alphabets of the names of person or institution concerned with such file is alphabetical classification. It is the most popular and common method of filing. In case name of more than one person starts with same letter then the second letter of

name is taken into consideration. It is a flexible method. It is used in both small and large organization.

### **Advantages**

- Simple and easy to understand
- Doesn't need a separate index
- It is flexible

### **Disadvantages**

- Time-consuming
- Difficult to arrange files
- Difficult to locate in case of common names

## **2. Numerical classification**

The filing method under which files and folders are arranged in order of number is called numerical classification. All files and folders are given separate numbers. It is an indirect method of classification of filing. In this filing alphabetical index is required. It includes name, address, phone number, subject and other information along with file number.

### **Advantages**

- Suitable for large offices having a large number of files and folders
- An accurate method of filing
- It is flexible
- A separate index can be easily developed using numbers.

## **Disadvantages**

- It is expensive
- It is time-consuming
- Not suitable for small organization
- It is not easy to operate
- Separate alphabetical index is required.

### **3. Subjective classification**

In this filing method, records are classified according to their subject; letters and documents are classified and arranged in files and folders into subject or sub-subject wise. In this filing, subject must be arranged alphabetically. It is widely used in those cases where subject is more important than the name of the person or organization. All documents relating to same subject are filed together in one file.

## **Advantages**

- Simple to operate
- Flexible
- Convenient
- Easy to locate

## **Disadvantages**

- Not applicable for filing miscellaneous subject
- Time-consuming
- Difficult to locate when subject matter is not properly understood

#### **4. Geographic classification**

In this method, files are grouped according to the geographical location of firm, organization or person. Under this method name of places are written in file and are arranged in drawer either in alphabetical or numerical order whichever is suitable for organization. It is used in multinational companies or those organizations whose business and branches are located in many places of the nation or the world.

##### **Advantages**

- Easy to understand and use
- Can be arranged in alphabetical and numerical order
- It used in those organizations whose business is engaged in correspondence with the businesses all over the globe or the nation.

##### **Disadvantages**

- Expensive
- Not suitable for small scale organization
- Time-consuming
- No use of card or index

#### **5. Chronological classification**

In this method, files and folders of documents are arranged in an order of their date, day, and time. In an office, several letters and documents may be received and dispatched. They all are arranged according to time and date when they were received and dispatched

## **Advantages**

- Simple to understand and easy to operate
- Quickly located if their dates are known.
- Less expensive

## **Disadvantages**

- Not suitable for large offices
- When clear dates are not mentioned then there can be difficulty.

## **CENTRALIZED FILING SYSTEM**

The records of all the departments of the business organization are maintained at one place i.e. **centralized filing system**. The **centralized filing records** are controlled by a common index plan. For which, a separate department is created i.e. known as **filing department**. All the files of the organization are preserved by this department. The functional departments of an organization are relieved from the headache of maintaining records. All files, filing equipment and filing staff are located in the filing department.

### **Advantages of Centralized Filing**

The main advantages of centralized filing are as follows.

1. There is no duplication of filing arrangements. Therefore, cost of filing maintenance is very low.
2. There is better utilization of storage space.

3. Easy location of documents and records are possible. It saves time and human resources.
4. There is full utilization of storage space available.
5. Duplication of filing equipment is avoided at the maximum and required only few filing cabinets.
6. It enables uniformity and standardization of the filing system and method.
7. It ensures easy location and delivery of required documents.
8. This system utilizes trained and qualified staff which leads to greater accuracy in the filing of records.

## **DECENTRALIZED FILING SYSTEM**

Decentralised filing system is done by the various functional departments of an organization according to their requirements. Every department has to install separate filing equipments and appoint specialized staffs to look after the filing work. This system is known as **decentralized filing** or **departmental filing**.

### **Advantages of Decentralized Filing**

Decentralized filing offers advantages over centralized filing. They are briefly discussed below.

1. It ensures **efficient operation of functional departmental** activities since the documents needed by a department are readily available in the department itself. Reference becomes easy and quick.

2. Specialized knowledge about the department **prevents misfiling**. The safety of the papers is also ensured.
3. There is **no difficulty in maintaining the secrecy** or confidential nature of documents.
4. Filing work is an additional work to the existing departmental staff. Therefore, it **reduces the cost incurred on the employment of staff**.

### **Disadvantages of Decentralized filing system**

Decentralized filing suffers from the following drawbacks.

1. There is a **duplication of efforts**, space and equipment which are responsible for the increased cost of filing operations.
2. If specialized staffs are employed, it would not be fully utilized but it leads to **high cost of staff utilization** and **under utilization of human resources**.
3. **Standardization of filing work is not possible** when each department has its own system and method of filing.
4. There is a **lack of uniformity** in the filing maintenance.
5. The **co-ordination of records becomes difficult** because of their decentralized location.
6. The same type of documents is maintained in more than one department. It creates confusion among the staff and **cause interruptions in filing work**.



## **OFFICE MANAGEMENT- UNIT: IV**

### **What is electronic records management?**

Organizations use ERM applications to efficiently and systematically manage and share documents. It allows companies to reduce the physical space required to store paper documents and physical records, and it keeps critical documents safe from physical hazards like fire, floods or other damage.

### **Why is electronic records management important?**

An ERM system is important for any modern business because of the efficiency it provides. By electronically creating, storing and managing your documents, ERM systems allow any employee to access any record or document at any time.

### **What are the benefits of electronic records management?**

Implementing an ERM system in your business can make nearly every day-to-day task that involves documents quicker and easier to accomplish, and it helps your team stay organized, which enables them to work more efficiently.

Here are some of the main benefits of an ERM system.

#### **Efficiency**

The main benefit of a CRM system is the impact it can have on your business's efficiency. Having one centralized place where all of your organization's digital records are kept can increase your business's productivity and make day-to-day operations smoother. An ERM enables employees to track changes on

documents, pull up any document through advanced search and indexing, and make sure all regulations and policies are being followed.

### **Cost-effectiveness**

If you're a new business, or even a small business looking to save money, an ERM system can help you cut costs by reducing the time your staff spends manually processing documents. It also eliminates the need for physical storage space for paper records.

### **Compliance**

If you're in an industry that deals with sensitive information (healthcare, legal, etc.) or are a government agency, this feature may be of particular interest to you. Many document management systems and ERMs come with automatic compliance features that make it easier to comply with federal, state or industry regulations such as HIPAA.

### **Security**

Data security is vital in today's world, so it is important that your business can assure customers that their information is safe in your hands. An ERM system can help you do that by providing and automating key security features such as user access controls, document tracking, password protection, automatic backups, determining a records manager and more. Electronic storage is also useful for digital preservation by storing all documents in a safe digital space, such as the cloud.

## **Scalability**

A major benefit of ERM compared to traditional paper document management is its ability to grow with your business. No matter how big or how quickly your business grows, your ERM system grows with you and keep track of all your documents.

## **Collaboration**

An ERM system makes it simple for users to share and collaborate on documents. Look for tools such as live editing, file sharing, plugin integrations and access restriction controls.

## **How to digitize and name your files**

If your company has recently implemented or you're on the cusp of implementing an ERM system, decide exactly how you want to name and organize your files so it's easy for anyone in your organization to find and use them effectively.

## **Digitizing documents**

While most documents are digital from creation these days, if you are in the process of converting your document management system from analog to electronic, you may have many papers waiting to be digitized and entered into the system.

To convert these paper documents to electronic files, here are the steps you must follow:

1. **Gather your documents.** Gather the files you need digitized and organize them loosely – for example, you can make piles of invoices, piles of receipts, etc. Make sure your stacks are neat, and don't be afraid to adjust your piles as needed. Keep in mind that this is just the start of your organization and that you will dive deeper into indexing later.
2. **Find a scanner.** Next, you need a device to scan the physical piece of paper into a digital format. This can be a scanner built into your printer, or you can download a mobile app such as AdobeScan, Dropbox, or Genius Scan. A scanner uploads a digital file to your computer, while a mobile app creates a PDF or JPG file that is stored on your phone or an online storage site and can be exported to wherever you need it.
3. **Organize your digital files.** This is the most important part of the process as it determines how your company finds and works with documents. It is very important that you implement a sensible, organized system from the very start and create a companywide policy for naming documents. You can organize files in any way you want that makes sense for you and your business. Your system must make sense to you, first and foremost, but an outsider should be able to find a document easily.

### **Naming your files**

When organizing files, a file name is the main identifier for the document. It provides metadata that helps contextualize that document with other records and record series. Having a consistent file-naming policy can increase collaboration and efficiency as well as help your organization stay compliant if you are in an industry with information-based regulations.

## **How to choose an ERM system**

Besides price, consider your business's unique needs and what you hope to get out of ERM software. You should also consider:

- How many documents you have (i.e., how much storage you will need)
- What types of documents you have (Do you have sensitive material? Large-format documents?)
- Whether your documents need to comply with regulations
- How many security measures you need
- What features you want
- The level of automation you are looking for

## **How to keep electronic files secure**

If all of your documents are digital, it is important that you have a system in place for keeping files safe and secure from threats like hackers or malware. A data breach can mean severe financial and PR-related consequences; it is in your best interests to do all you can to avoid one.

### **Here are five things you can do to protect your electronic files.**

1. **Regularly back up your files.** This should be a no-brainer, but it's a step many people overlook. If a virus infects your systems, you'll likely need to wipe your computer and reinstall programs, which may result in you losing important files. Make sure you are regularly backing up your files; make it a

monthly recurring task to help you remember.

2. **Use an external hard drive.** If you want to be extra secure about having backups, use an external hard drive to store copies of files. As the name suggests, external hard drives are entirely separate from your computer; your files are protected no matter what happens to your computer. You can even change the default storage location of your files to automatically store in the hard drive.
3. **Use cloud storage.** Cloud storage is an increasingly popular option, since it is simple to use, easy to secure, and can be accessed from anywhere. If you decide to use cloud storage, make sure the site you're using is reputable and has multiple security measures in place.
4. **Have user controls.** Most ERM services come with user controls, which allow an administrator to decide which documents users can access and what changes users can make. This helps you protect the integrity of your files, and creates an audit trail that identifies who made what changes and when.
5. **Encrypt your hard drive.** While many computers come with built-in encryption, you can add your own for an extra layer of security. The most common way to encrypt files or applications is to add a password requirement for access.

## **Meaning of Indexing**

Indexing means an arranged system through which the required documents and papers are easily located for the speedy disposal of urgent and/or ordinary matters. The various files are maintained for different departments on various topics. Therefore, an indicator (index) is necessary to locate the files.

## **Objectives of Indexing**

The objects of indexing are presented below.

1. To assist filing so that the filed documents are located easily and quickly whenever they are needed.
2. To increase the efficiency of the filing method.
3. To improve the efficiency of the office operation.
4. To state the key information regarding any subject in a condensed form.

The right system of indexing must be chosen in order to achieve the objectives of indexing. Indexing is not required if files are arranged in an alphabetical order.

## **Essentials of a Good Indexing System**

The following are the essential features of a good system of indexing.

1. **Simplicity:** An indexing system should be simple to understand and operate. It should not involve unnecessary complex in operation.

2. **Economy:** It should be economical in terms of money, space, and effort. The purchase of indexing equipment requires heavy investment during initial period. Therefore, proper attention should be devoted to ensure economical use in the end.
3. **Flexibility:** The selected index system should have sufficient scope for expansion. A single system may be used for several purposes. For example, the location of file, supply of important information and the like.
4. **Efficiency:** Any index system should ensure speed in operation and requires minimum time for operation.
5. **Safety:** The index system should protect the records against dust, fire, water, rats, insects, water etc. The safety should be equipped with lock facility to prevent pilferage of records.
6. **Conformity with Filing System:** The selection of index method depends upon the nature and type of filing system adopted in an organization. Hence, there must be a correlation between the filing system and index method.
7. **Cross Reference:** There should be Cross reference under the head under which a document could be filed but has not been filed.
8. **Signaling:** A tab or slip should be attached at the edge of the card or file. The tab or slip contains facts of the document briefly. This is used to draw the attention of the needy persons of files.

### **Types or Methods of Indexing office files**

The main types or methods of indexing office files are briefly discussed below.

#### **1. Book Index**

The other name of book index is page index and ordinary index. The names of customers or documents or other information are entered in a book in an



alphabetical order under this type. One can trace the page number of a customer by referring first letter of the concerned customer. Then, the desired information or data have been obtained.

For example, if one wants to know the debts due to him by a customer named Sankar, refer the page number allotted to Sankar by seeing the name of the customer (i.e. Sankar) in “S” series: There is no need of much time to know the accounts or information relating to Sankar. This system is highly suitable to small concerns and not suitable to large organization. In case of large organization, there may be many customers in a similar name. Besides, enough space is not available for making many entries in a single name.

## **2. Vowel Index**

are many names beginning with same alphabet. Therefore, it is very difficult to find the particulars of a specified customer. For example. Anand, Anandaraj, Anandan, Anand Babu, and the like. The first five letters are common in these names. Hence, these names are sub-divided again based on vowels. If so, one can easily locate the page number of respective customers.

This is an improved system of book index. Moreover, vowels are adapted to differentiate the system. Hence, this system is called vowel index. This method of index is suitable to small and medium size business office.

### **Merits of Vowel Index**

1. It is a permanent record.
2. There is no loss of index.
3. Less time is required in searching the index.

### **Demerits of Vowel Index**

1. Only an experienced staff alone found the name of customer in vowel index.
2. The system is inelastic.
3. Only limited pages are allotted to a same letter. (i.e. A, B or C). Hence, addition of a new name under the same letter is very difficult.

### **3. Bound Book Index**

This type of index is maintained as in the form of bound book or register. This book is divided into alphabetical sections in which the names of customers or documents are entered, The leaves of each section may be out at the top of right hand side. If so, the initial letters of all the sections are seen at a glance.

The entries pertaining to a specific letter of the alphabet are arranged in the same section or page reserved for the same letter of the alphabet very strictly.

The cost for maintaining a book index is very cheap. Besides, the durability of book index is very long period. The pages cannot be lost, discarded, or disarranged since they are bound. This type of index is very suitable to small business office.

### **Defects of Bound Book Index**

1. This method is an inflexible.
2. Only small number of entries is recorded.
3. If any wrong entry is made, the alteration or correction in the index is difficult.
4. The names are entered on each page in the order in which they first occur. Therefore, much time is required to locate a name,

#### **4. Loose Leaf Index**

This index is other wise called Loose Leaf Book Index. This is another form of book index. Loose Leaf is a ruled sheet like the pages of ordinary index. These sheets are inserted in or taken out from metal hinges or screws, when necessary. Each customer is allotted a leaf in which the name of customer, the address, phone number, call number, fax number, E-mail, the file number etc. are arranged. These loose indices are kept in a drawer.

#### **Merits of Loose Leaf Index**

1. This type of index is elastic.
2. The removal of index of dead file is very easy.
3. Full information can be obtained from this type of index.
4. Additional information can be included without much difficulty.
5. Less time is required to locate the name of the customer and obtain the maximum information.
6. The cost of operation and maintenance of this type of index is very low.
7. The despatch of monthly statements and trade circulars is easy.

#### **Demerits of Loose Leaf Index**

1. The cards may torn quickly by continuous use.
2. Trays cover and cards are necessary to adopt this type of index. Hence, this method is an expensive one.
3. There is a possibility of misplacement of cards if the cards are inserted or taken out.

4. This method is a mere waste for small business office.

### **5. Card Index or Vertical Card Index**

A uniform size of the cards is used under this method. The length of the card may be 4" or 5" and width of the card may be 2.5" or 3". These cards are maintained vertically. Hence, this method is called vertical card Index. The name and important particulars of a customer are indexed. The file number of the concerned customer is recorded at the top edge of the card.

Different colour cards may be used to differentiate and easy location of the files. Cards are arranged in an alphabetical or numerical order. Cards are placed in drawers or boxes in suitable dimensions. Each drawer may have a rod running from one end to other end to hold the cards in a position.

#### **Advantages of Card Index**

The following advantages can be derived by adopting card Index.

1. This method is very simple to understand and operate.
2. The cards can be arranged in any order and the order can be changed at any time according to the requirements of the business office.
3. The cost of installation of this method is very cheap and the cost of maintenance is very low.
4. The cards provide complete information like names and addresses of the persons with whom the dealings take place.
5. This method is highly elastic. New cards can be inserted or dead cards can be removed at anytime without affecting the sequence of card maintenance.

6. Each card can be used according to the particulars desired to be recorded.
7. Many persons can use card index at a time.
8. Only alive cards are kept under this method since the dead cards are removed periodically.
9. Cards can be put to many uses. For example, two types of cards are prepared in a library, one is prepared in author wise, and another is prepared in title of the book wise.
10. Guide cards may be prepared to highlight certain information. For example, the extent of overdue of the customer, Replacement for damaged goods and the like.

### **Disadvantages of Card Index**

Card index has the following drawbacks.

1. There is a high possibility of loss of cards, mutilation, or destruction.
2. A large number of cards are maintained under card index. Hence, not all the cards can be seen at a glance.
3. Much time is required to locate a specific card.
4. Cards are torn due to continuous handling. Therefore, the turned cards should be replaced quickly.
5. It is costlier than the page index.
6. There is a need of continuous supervision, which ensures that the reference cards are put in their proper places.

### **6. Visible Card Index**

This method is an improvement of card Index. Hence, this card index removes the defects of card index. A large number of cards cannot be seen at one sight. Even though, a limited cards can be seen at one sight since many cards are placed flatly in transparent covers. These covers are kept in a shallow tray or metal frame. The metal frame is placed in such a way that the name and address are visible without touching another card. Then, the trays or frames are fitted vertically to metal stands or horizontally into cabinets. The cards are arranged in alphabetical, numerical, or alphanumeric order. The details can be written on the either side of the card without removing the card from the frame.

### **Advantages of Visible Card Index**

1. Less space is enough to maintain visible card Index.
2. Less time is required to locate a specified card since card is visible.
3. Management can get information very quickly to take timely decision.
4. It helps management in controlling of purchases, sales etc.
5. Large number of cards may be maintained under this method.
6. Signals can be used to draw the attention to certain facts recorded on the cards.
7. The dead cards can be removed very easily whenever necessary.
8. Additional information can be easily written on the cards without disturbing other cards.
9. The preparation of list of customers and suppliers very easily.

### **Disadvantages of Visible Card Index**

The disadvantages of visible card Index and presented below:

1. Costly equipment are necessary to maintain visible card Index.
2. Additions or deletion of entries on the card takes much time.

### **7. Strip Index**

There is a need of maintaining a list of names and communication address of customers and suppliers in every business office for ready reference. Hence, strip index has been designed to meet the above mentioned purpose. One line entry is made on a narrow strip of cardboard. Each strip contains a single item. The strips are placed in a frame in such a way that the strips can be inserted or removed without much difficulty.

### **8. Wheel Index**

The very purpose of maintaining index is quick reference. Therefore, a new method is developed i.e. wheel index. The cards are mounted round the hub of a wheel under this method. The wheel moves on ball bearings. The wheel can be rotated to locate a specified card. Hence, this method is very economical and highly flexible.

### **9. Frames**

Frames are placed on a table as a book form. Sometimes, the frames are arranged on a rotary stand. This method is a developed method of visible card Index.

#### **Merits of frames**

1. Quick reference is possible under this method.

2. It is very easy to maintain the index.

### **Demerits of frames**

1. There is a much scope for occurring errors under this method.

2. Only skilled employees are necessary to a top frames.

### **How to select Suitable Index method?**

The following factors have been considered while selecting a suitable method of index.

1. The purpose of keeping the index.

2. The type and extent of information is required.

3. The requirements of the filing system.

4. Whether the information is to be added and deleted frequently.

5. The space is available and required for maintain index.

6. The frequency of card taken out for recording information.

7. The cost of equipment, labour, stationery, and supplies necessary for each method.

8. The need of using the signals.



## **Office Mail Service**

What is a Mail?

The term “Mail” in the common parlance refers to written communication. Mail may be described as any written communication which passes through the messenger, courier or the post office. There is need of continuous contacts with the customers, suppliers, branches, departments, banks, financial institutions, government agencies, non — government organization, and the like.

### **Definition**

**George R. Terry** rightly remarked that “it is doubtful that a modern office could exist without mail”. The reason is obvious that every business house has to maintain close contact with the outside world.

### **Types of Mail Service**

Business mail is of three distinct types. They are listed below.

1. Incoming or inward mail.
2. Outgoing or outward mail and
3. Inter — departmental mail.

The form of these types of mails are letters, documents. packets, parcels, telegrams, orders, remittances etc. Prompt and correct handling of mail is necessary for achieving purpose of mail. Moreover, proper handling of mail increases the goodwill of the business office.

## Handling of Mail Service

The existing relationship of business office with outsiders is strengthened through efficient operation or handling of mail service. Thus handling of mail is an important supplement to other office operations, viz., making original records, typing and duplicating etc. The mailing service should be planned and organized properly to ensure prompt and correct handling of mail.

## Procedure for Handling inward Mail (or) Outgoing Mail



*Fig. 8.2. Incoming Mail Handling Procedure*

**1. Receiving the Mail:** Generally mails are received once or twice a day as delivered by the postman, when the volume of correspondence is large, a post box or post bag is hired in the post office, and an office peon is sent to collect the mail from the post office. Sometimes letters are received through the messengers of the offices. In the emerging scenario private courier services rendering very speed post service to the office.

**2. Sorting the Mail:** After the mail has been received in the mailing department, it should be sorted out before it is opened. It is easier to sort out sealed envelopes than different sized pieces of paper. Private letters of the employees may be sorted out at first than comparing to the business letters.

Business Letters should be sorted out into three groups:

- a. Registered and unregistered letters or mail;
- b. Sealed and unsealed envelopes; and
- c. Confidential and urgent letters, private or personal, secret, and other official letters.

Sorting of letters means grouping of letters on definite order. Sorted mail makes the delivery of letters convenient and quick.

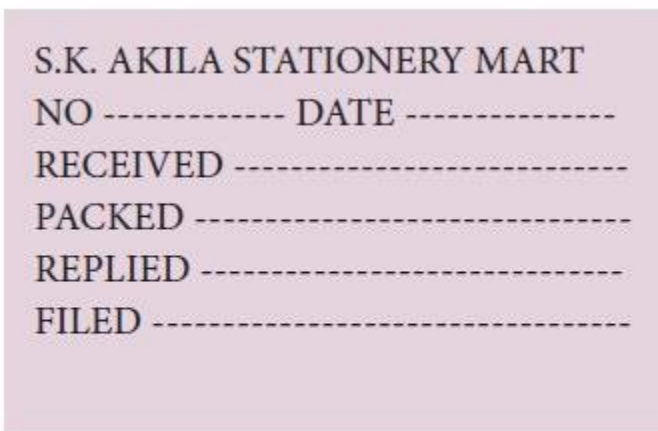
**3. Opening the Mail:** Letters may be opened by hand or by letter opening machines. A paper knife is mostly used in offices to split open envelopes etc. If the number of letters is very large, a letter opening machine may be used with advantage. In small organisation letters are opened by the officer or head clerk. The following guidelines may be followed for opening the mail.

- a. The sorting and Opening of the mail should start atleast half an hour to one hour before the opening time of the office.
- b. The office manager should see to it that the work in the office start immediately after the opening of the mail, otherwise the time and money spent on an early opening of the mail would be wasted.
- c. The staff is incharge for opening the mail should be fully conversant with the method of sorting and opening the mail. If possible, a mailing manual should be used in this regard.
- d. After an envelope has been opened, it is necessary to remove the content from it. Empty envelopes should be fastened by a pin or clip or stapler.

**4. Scrutiny of Contents:** After the removal of the contents, it must be scrutinised to find out for whom and for which department, they are meant for. The sorting of letters has been done on a departmental basis at this stage. Before sending the mail to the concerned departments, the enclosures to the letters should be checked, compared and verified with the covering letter to find out whether they are in order or not. Occasionally, the enclosures may be a cheque, bank drafts, postal order or a valuable document. If any discrepancy or omission is found while scrutinising then the matter should be immediately brought to the notice of the mailroom supervisor. Letters in which certain previous references are given may be sent to the filing department from where the letters and the relevant files may be sent to the concerned department.

**5. Stamping the Mail:** After proper scrutiny is done, the date stamping of letter must be done. Sometimes the date and time of receipt would be stamped on the letter. For stamping of letters, a stamp is prepared which contains the serial

number, the date of receipt and time of receipt if necessary. A references stamp is attached if the letters relate to numbers of departments. A design of specially design stamp is given below.



S.K. AKILA STATIONERY MART  
NO ----- DATE -----  
RECEIVED -----  
PACKED -----  
REPLIED -----  
FILED -----

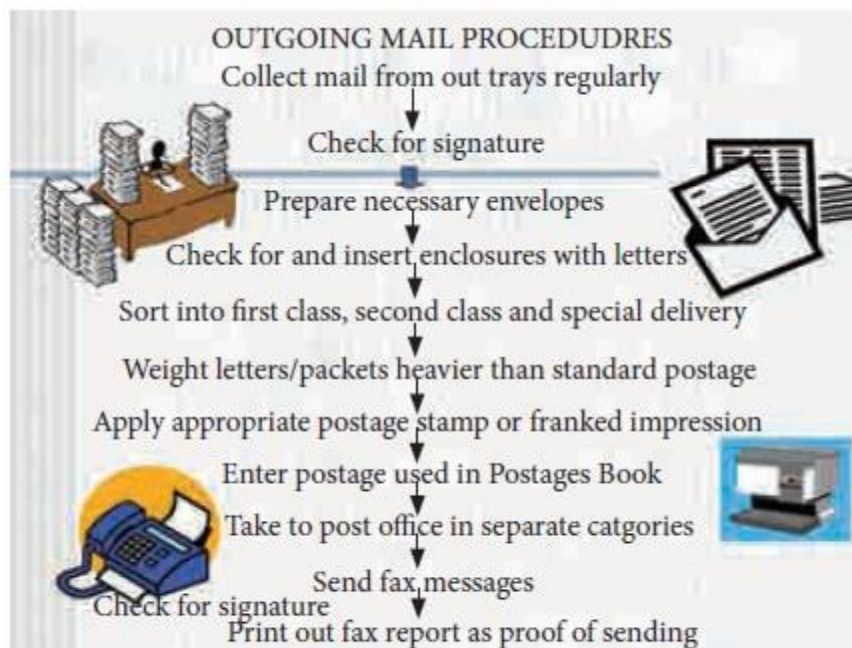
*Format of Stamp*

**6. Recording the Mail:** After the stamping work, letters received are recorded in inward mail register or letters received book. Before recording of letters in the register, the contents are scrutinized properly so as to ensure the department to which it belongs. The inward mail register contains 1. Serial number 2. Date of receipt 3. Senders name and address 4. Nature of contents 5. Subject of the letter in brief 6. Remarks and initials of the officer with date.

**7. Distributing the Mail:** This is the last step in the inward mailing routine. In this stage letters are handed over to the concerned departments. The letters are distributed through messengers or sometimes with the help of mechanical devices like conveyor-belt or pneumatic tube.

**8. Follow up Action:** Follow up action is very important because it is concerned with keeping track of mail. This stage makes an enquiry whether the letter is replied or not.

### Procedure for Handling Outward Mail (or) Outgoing Mail:



*Fig. 8.3. Outgoing Mail Procedures*

### Handling of outgoing mail involves the following steps:

1. **Collecting of Letters:** Letters prepared in various departments should be sent to the despatch section as quickly as possible. In many business houses, different departmental letters should be typed, duly signed by the executive along

with the addressed envelopes to the mailing department. The letters should be put in a tray labelled “Outgoing Mail”.

**2.        Sorting Out the Letters:** After the mail reaches the mailing room, they are sorted as to whether intended for internal or local delivery or to be sent to outside firms and individuals. At this stage, sorting is also necessary because sometimes there may be letter from different departments, addressed to the same firm or to the same individual. All such letters can be sent under one cover.

**3.        Recording in the Outward Mail Register:** After sorting, the letters are entered in the mail register or peon book. The letters sent through post office alone are entered in the “Outgoing Mail Register”. Letters to be sent through the office peon or messenger are recorded in the peon book. This register also serves as a record of postage expenses. Each letter is given a serial number as per the despatch book or peon book. The same serial number is also recorded on the register.

**4.        Folding and Inserting:** After recording, the letters are folded and inserted into envelopes. Generally the addresses are typed on the envelope in the department itself and the envelopes are sent along with the letter. The despatching clerk before inserting the letter into the cover should verify – (i) whether the address given on the letter agrees with the address typed on the envelope, and (ii) the number of enclosures are in agreement with the number specified in the letter. Envelopes can be addressed by machine where communications are regularly sent to the same addressee. For ensuring quick and prompt delivery, complete address along with pin code should be specified.

5. **Sealing:** The envelopes can be sealed with paste or gum. The envelopes and inland letters should be folded carefully and sealed with gum. When window envelopes are used, it should be checked whether the address is fully visible through the window.

6. **Stamping:** After sealing, the letter should be adequately stamped. The mailing clerk should have a thorough knowledge of the postage rates so that no more or less stamps can be affixed. If more stamps are affixed than needed, it will be a mere waste of money. On the other hand, if the value of the stamp is less than the actual rate, the recipient has to pay a fine, which will damage the reputation of the firm. For this purpose, the latest copy of Post and Telegraph Tariff Guides can be kept in the mailing department for reference. Franking machines are also used now-a- days.

7. **Posting or Delivering the Mail:** Posting the mail is the last step in the process of handling the outgoing mails. Office messengers can send letters to local addresses. Registered letters, V.P.P. should be sent to the post office. In cases where “Certificate of Posting” is required, they should be sent to the post office along with the list of letters with the required stamp affixed on the list. This list may be pasted in the outgoing mail registers. Likewise, acknowledgements or receipts issued by the Post Office should also be pasted in the register.

### **Benefits of Office Mail Service**

In the modern globalized business world, mail service is an integral part of office work. Hence, adequate facilities should be provided for efficient and successful performance of mail service. An efficient mailing service offers the following benefits.



1. It ensures continuous contacts with outsiders.
2. A good impression is created in the minds of outsiders and thereby improves the goodwill of the business.
3. The interdepartmental co-operation is also improved with the help of efficient mail service.
4. It helps the business office in the creation of correspondence and record keeping of all the departments.
5. It helps to reduce the cost of the mailing service.
6. The new employee of business office gets training very easily and makes them familiar with the organizational set up, work routine, authority and responsibility, organization structure and the like of the firm.

### **Components of Mail Service**

The mailing service should be planned and organized properly in order to ensure prompt and efficient handling of mailing service. The following elements are included in the efficient mailing service

1. Adequate facilities are provided for the mail service.
2. Creation and organization of mailing department correctly.
3. Arrangements made with post office.
4. Establishing inward and outward mail procedure.
5. Mechanization of mail service.
6. Supervision of mail service.

## **Centralized Correspondence**

A separate division or section or department is created for handling correspondence to the entire organization under centralized correspondence. A separate person is appointed to organize and look after the work of the correspondence department. The volume of correspondence is very large in large organization; hence, a separate correspondence department is created and assigned to the qualified person. He exercises full control on the department.

The correspondence department receives all letters, gathers the necessary information from various departments, drafts, letters and replies, dictates letters dispatches them and follow up all letters. But at the same time, personal secretary is dealing the letters of top executives of an organization. A correspondence manual is prepared by the correspondence department for reference of all the departments.

### **Advantages of Centralised correspondence system**

1. **Specialization:** The trained and experienced staffs handle the work of correspondence. It ensures speed and accuracy in correspondence.
2. **Economy:** There is no duplication of work under centralized correspondence. Besides, the work has been completed in a systematic way. It leads to saving of time and money. Mistakes and delays are also reduced.
3. **Secrecy:** The letters of confidential nature are routed unopened to the concerned officials.
4. **Continuity:** If all the correspondence with any customer is handled by the same staff member, the staff acquires an intimate knowledge of the customers. Hence,

customer enquires can be answered quickly and better follow – up of letters is possible.

5. **Easy Training:** The employees of correspondence section have been easily trained and the cost of training can be reduced.

6. **Specialization:** The routine work of correspondence staff tends to increase the rate of output as well.

7. **Mechanization:** The production of correspondence is made by either typewriter or computer. Franking machine is used for stamping the correspondence. Effective use of these devices helps to save clerical labour.

8. **Avoids Congestion:** A time schedule has been prepared and followed for receiving and dispatching of mail. It avoids congestion of mail during the rush hour.

9. **Concentration of Work:** Departmental staffs are relieved from handling of mail work. They can devote their full attention on the work.

10. **Checking of Postage:** Centralization ensures effective control over the use of postage stamps. It avoids under stamping, over stamping and non – stamping.

### **Disadvantages of Centralized Correspondence**

The disadvantages of centralized correspondence system are listed below.

1. **Delay in Dispatching:** The correspondence has been finalized only after final approval given by the respective functional area managers. For which, the correspondence has been sent to various functional areas and receives the same for dispatching. This process makes delay in dispatching.

2. **Interruption of Work:** The centralized correspondence section or department has collect information from various departments before drafting a letter. The

drafted letter was sent to various departments for getting approval. This may dislocate the work of various departments.

**3. Lack of Basic Knowledge:** A centralized correspondence staff may lack adequate technical and specialized knowledge of various functional departments. This may lead to inaccurate correspondence.

### **Decentralized Correspondence**

Each functional department is expected to make an arrangement for correspondence under decentralized correspondence system. A separate person is nominated to do the work of mail handling. He is responsible for receiving, drafting, production and dispatching of correspondence independently. The stamping work is also performed by the concerned staff. The other name of decentralized correspondence is departmental correspondence.

### **Advantages of Decentralized Correspondence system**

#### **1. Quick Reply**

The required information to draft a correspondence is available within the department itself. Therefore, correspondence can be prepared and send the same quickly.

#### **2. Smooth Flow of Work**

There is no interruption of work under decentralized correspondence system. Hence, there is a smooth flow work in every department.

#### **3. Clear cut Information**

The letters are based on first hand information. Therefore, valid correspondence is possible.

#### **4. Flexibility**

Decentralized permits every functional department to work independently. It results greater flexibility in handling correspondence.

#### **5. Loyalty**

Functional staffs tend to develop a sense of loyalty towards the department. They take personal interest in the work of their department.

### **Disadvantages of Decentralized Correspondence**

The disadvantages of a decentralized system are

#### **1. Lack of Proficiency**

Drafting a correspondence is an art. But the departmental staff lacks such proficiency. This may create a poor impression about the organization and adversely affect its reputation.

#### **2. Operational Problems**

The departmental staffs perform the correspondence work in addition to their routine work. There may be congestion of work and effectiveness may be reduced.

#### **3. Lack of Quality and Approach**

The letters are written by various departments in different style and approach. There is no uniformity in dealing with customers.

#### **4. Lack of Specialization**

The departmental staffs do all the work along with dealing of correspondence. Hence, he is not specialized in any work. So the benefits of specialization are not available.

**5. Under Utilization of Resources**

Mechanical devices cannot be used effectively. Most of the time, the typewriting machine is kept ideal in every department.

**6. Duplication**

Each department handles its own correspondence. Such duplication may cause delays and unnecessary expenditure. For example, purchase of stationery.

## OFFICE MANAGEMENT – UNIT V

### Office furniture

Office furniture is an important part of office management; it is mostly used for indoor activity. Employees working in the office should be provided with comfortable and convenient furniture so that they can work efficiently. The major and most popular office furniture are chair, table, cabinets, cupboards, sofas, racks etc. office furniture are common in all offices. Office furniture should have good design which can help the office to look attractive and pleasant. In a well furnished office, employees feel comfortable and are motivated for work

### Importance of office furniture

8. It increases the efficiency of work
9. It makes the office more attractive and pleasant.
10. It helps to maintain the prestige of office
11. It provides better working environment for the employees
12. It helps in reducing the fatigue.
13. It helps in protection of documents from fire, dust, insects etc.
14. It helps in proper storage of files

**The following are some other points indicate the importance of office furniture:**

#### 1. Efficiency

Office furniture increases work efficiency of employees. They feel comfortable to work in a pleasant environment. The office work can be done smoothly with speed and productivity increases.

#### 2. Labor saving

Systematic layout of office furniture facilitates easy movement of employees. Properly designed furniture reduces unnecessary movements. Therefore labor can be saved.

### **3. Fatigue reduction**

Right type of office furniture reduces fatigue in employees. Fatigue is the feeling of tiredness. Employees can work longer hours without feeling tired and monotony of work decreases.

### **4. Safety**

Safety is also one of the major importance of office furniture. Systematic layout of office furniture ensures safety in office. Records can be safely kept in cabinets and drawers. The risk of damage from rats, insects, fire, water and dust decreases. The chance of theft decreases.

### **5. Employee satisfaction**

Comfortable and properly designed furniture maintains employee satisfaction. It develops positive attitude towards the organization. The level of employee motivation is maintained.

### **6. Image**

Attractive furniture provides favorable impression to visitors. This improves the image of the office. Customers are attracted and goodwill of the organization increases.

### **Basic considerations before selecting office furniture**

There are certain factors which must be taken into account while choosing office furniture:

#### **1. Fund:**

The amount of fund available for the purpose would obviously affect the choice, but at the same time it would be essential to keep in mind to have the most suitable type of furniture.



**2. Durability:**

Durability is a very important factor. Steel furniture which is becoming quite popular is more lasting than the furniture made out of wood. The furniture which has a sun-mica surface too are very lasting, durable and sturdy.

**3. Weight:**

The furniture selected should be of light weight and it should be easy to lift it to move around if required. It is necessary, if frequent changes are made, that a furniture should be light weighted.

**4. Adaptable:**

As far as possible, furniture should be adaptable to different uses in the office. Hence the need for standardisation of the office furniture.

**5. Risk of Fire:**

As far as possible, the furniture selected should withstand fire. It should be such that if it is subjected to fire it should not get destroyed or burned totally into ashes.

**6. Appearance:**

Good appearance of furniture adds greatly to the looks of the office. Thus furniture should not only be functional but should have a pleasing appearance.

**7. Finish:**

Finishing appearance of furniture should be such that it should attract the eye. Glossy surface should be avoided because they create glares and increases tension.

**Types of Furniture:**

Many a type of furniture is needed in an office. It can be classified on the basis of purpose or on the basis of appearance. The furniture classified on the basis of purpose are executive, special purpose furniture, and the furniture which are classified on the basis of physical appearance are desks and chairs.

**1. Desk:**

The desk is the work bench of the office employee influencing much of his efficiency. The main purpose of a desk is to provide a suitable space for writing and for processing the information. The desk also is used for stationing a machine for use and to provide a storage space for supplies needed by the person.

An average desk is a desk which is about 150 cms in length, 75 cms in height and about 70 cms in breadth. This is an average desk. These dimensions provide a sufficient space for work and comfortable place of work.

**Type of Desks:**

**The various types of desk are:**

1. Executive desk
2. Clerical desk
3. Typist desk
4. Machine desk
5. Secretarial desk

**1. Machine Desk:**

These desks are designed to meet the need of different machines which have important place in the office. For example, a desk holding a Xerox machine should be different in size, shape as compared to a desk which holds a Guillotine Machine or a Duplicating Machine.

**2. Clerical Desk:**

This kind of desk used in our country are mostly single pedestal desk with a maximum top of 1.2 meters by 75 cms, and possesses 3-4 drawers on one side of the desk. In some offices double pedestal desks are provided for the clerical staff.

### **3. Typist Desk:**

This is a unique structured desk for the computer and this is not a common sight in our office in India. Typist desks are with a fixed in important countries like, France etc. with the height and the drawer adjusted to suit the need of the typist.

### **4. Secretarial Desk:**

These desks are needed for the secretaries of the executives. It can be single pedestal or double pedestal desk. In our country most of the secretarial desks are same as the other clerical desks with little change. Secretaries may often be provided with a separate typist table to do the typing work.

### **5. Executive Desk:**

These desks are designed to the individual taste and quite often they are designed as a show piece of an organisation. Their purpose is to impress the visitor with the prestige and importance of the persons using them.

### **2. Tables:**

In many government and other offices, tables still serve as clerical desk and thus they may be fitted with one or two drawer. Tables are needed for sorting of mails, dispatches, temporary housing of files and file tray, holding meeting of committee etc.

### **3. Wooden Furniture:**

In our country wooden furniture made of teak and rosewood is by far the most popular kind of furniture.

#### **Wooden furniture has the following advantages over the metallic furniture:**

1. It can be designed and shaped as per the need.
2. With its properly polished surface and its dense look, it is more cost-effective and it creates a feeling of greater comfort.
3. It can be re-polished at a cheap cost.

**Metallic furniture is considered to be ideal from the following viewpoint:**

(i) It is safe against fire.

(ii) A large variety of it, especially chairs, is light and if needed it can be easily moved from one place to another.

As far as India is concerned, there is very little to choose and the choice between the two types of furniture would depend mainly on factors like individual need and comparative weights.

**4. Chairs:**

Chairs are perhaps the most important item of furniture from the point of view of the worker since he sits on them all through the day in the office. In our country most of the chairs have standardised height of 41 cms or 16.5 inches (sixteen and a half inches). A chair greatly influences correct posture while at work and consequently influences health.

**Conclusion**

Office furniture not only enhances the beauty of an office but also creates a good impression on the clients. Different office chairs and tables have different comfort levels and also different price ranges. The office can choose furniture as per its own comfort but it is good if it focus on its position as well.