

Office and Office System

Objectives:

On completion, you will be able to

- Define the term office
- Define the term system
- State the advantages in following a system in office
- Explain why information is processed in office
- State common office functions

OFFICE

1.1.What is an Office?

Most people define an “Office” as a workplace where people perform a series of activities for achieving the organizational goals/objectives. Office is also used to refer to the people who work there. The organization pays its employees a salary. That is, work is done in an office for monetary considerations. In some cases it also refers to the position held.

If we consider the issue from yet another angle, an organization is set up with specific goals/objectives. To achieve, various decisions are taken by people who are authorized to decide, as and when the clientele group approaches them. The information is processed to take decisions. From functional point of view, we may now define an “Office” as “**Information Processing Center**”.

You have seen that the term ‘office’ is used in different context. Therefore, there are different ways of defining ‘Office’. One of the most common definitions is from the geographical point of view. Another refers to people working there. Yet another is from the point of view of the position held. These are normally the definitions from the common man’s point of view. For someone concerned with office management, it is from the functional point of view. Hence, the most appropriate one may be in terms of processing of information, since all offices are collecting data, processing it, taking decisions, communicating and storing the information. Hence, we may define:

Office is a work place where teams of people work together, mostly in a hierarchy. People are paid for their efforts by the organization. An office is a kind of control tower where information is processed to facilitate a competent authority to take decisions to achieve organizational goals.

SYSTEM

1.2. Why do we need a System?

Let us start with a story;

STORY OF FOUR PEOPLE

*There were four People in an Office named
EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY & NOBODY.*

*There was an important work to be done and
EVERYBODY was sure that SOMEBODY would do it.
ANYBODY could have done it, but NOBODY did it. SOMEBODY
got angry with that because it was EVERYBODY's job.
EVERYBODY thought that ANYBODY could do it, but NOBODY
realized that*

*EVERYBODY would not do it. It ended up that
EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY, When actually
NOBODY accused ANYBODY.*

You might have noticed that the above situation occurred because there is no system in the office. No specific duties and responsibilities were entrusted to them. Do you feel a system is required in office?

1.3. What is a System?

Everyone expects that things should happen in an office as a routine on the basis of certain prescribed procedures or norms without waiting for any individual. In fact, a system is very much required for smooth and effective functioning of an office. In government offices the procedure to be followed is prescribed by rules. We can define

A "System" is "doing things methodically by following certain procedures laid down with a clearly defined roles and responsibilities for smooth and effective functioning of the office".

1.4 Common Office Functions:

Now, let us have a look at the office functions. “Function” here refers to the activities you perform in office, irrespective of the kind of work assigned to you. In other words, whether you work in administration section or accounts section or any other section, you all perform “some” common office functions. The first activity in any office is ***collecting information***.

Once you start collecting information, you would like to keep them in such a manner that you are able to retrieve it when it is time to take a decision. For this purpose, you have to ***classify the information***. One of the mechanisms you most commonly use in office to perform this function is through filing of information.

The next function after you have filed the receipts is to ***process information***. Processing is the act of bringing all the relevant ***facts*** at one place, apply the relevant rules or guidelines or quote precedent to enable the competent authority to take decisions. This is what we call noting.

After the competent authority has taken the decision, it will have to be communicated to the person(s) concerned for implementation. Therefore, the next function is ***communication of decision***. Here it is types of communication and drafting.

The next function is ***monitoring the progress***. This is an area that needs greater attention, particularly, in government offices. Monitoring helps the conveyor of the decision whether it has been implemented in the manner the conveyor desired. The tools used to perform this function are “Reports” and “Returns” obtained on an annual, half-yearly, quarterly, monthly or fortnightly basis.

After you receive a feedback that the decision has been implemented, you have to ensure whether action on the case is complete. If it is, you need ***to store this information*** for future use. The principles of record management are the tools that are to be adopted to perform this function.

The various functions performed in an office could be Schematically presented in the following manner:

