

# **INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

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## Unit – 1

### Modern Office: An Overview

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#### Learning Objectives

After completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- ▮ Know the meaning of modern office.
- ▮ To improve knowledge on office management and its functions.

#### Structure:

- Introduction
- Meaning and definition
- Office work
- Office Activities
- Factors contributing towards growth of office
- Types of Office
  - Relation of Office with other Department
  - Importance of Office
  - Challenges before Office
  - Key terms
  - Model Questions

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#### Introduction :

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Office is described as the nerve centre of the entire organization. The present day office activities have expanded to a wider extent to keep pace with rapid globalization. Further, office by itself has become an indispensable part of any business organization. Modern offices are organized on scientific principles and their techno-savvy office managers which has paved way for the sustenance of a business amidst cutthroat competition.

In olden days, all the job of the organization had been done mostly by the proprietors. If the work was more, two or three persons were to be appointed. They sat in small rooms and worked in poorly lighted and congested place. There were no modern office amenities as today; clerks were found copying letters tiresomely turning leather bound registers etc. Since the typewriters had not come into general use, most of the office work had to be performed manually and clerks would be found in spending most of

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their time in copying letters for despatch to customers. All the internal and external communications were performed through human agency. The telephones and intercom systems were not generally in use. The proprietor of a business would be found sitting in the office room and supervising the office work. He personally deals with the customers and visitors. In earlier period, production was generally from a limited number of raw materials, that too available locally, and marketing the products was also, in most cases, confined to local market. Thus, in those days, the businessmen were interested in maximizing profits through the two important profit centre, i.e. production and marketing. A few decades ago, the office had been defined as a place where clerical work is performed for the successful operation of an institution. Office work may be done by a clerk within the four walls of a building.

Office activities have undergone vast changes in the last few decades. The World has witnessed spectacular developments and advances in the field of science, technology, industrialization, transport, communication etc., In modern concepts is to view office as a function. When it is taken as a function, it (Office) may direct, control and coordinate the office work wherever it is done and whosoever does it. Here it may be noted that in the modern time, offices are developed on scientific principles and their management and administration is in the hands of qualified and trained managerial personnel.

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### **Meaning and Definition :**

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Office is a place for transacting business where clerical and administrative functions are carried out to coordinate and control activities of the organization. A typical office performs tasks such as framing of



**Fig. 1.1 Modern Office**

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business policies, processing and communication of information, record keeping, handling mails, execution of orders and managing receipts and payments. Office can be described as any place where information converges on paper which is documented, preserved and used for both current and future operations of business.

Office activities have undergone a vast change in the last four of five decades. The old dingy, cluttered, stuffy office rooms have vanished and in their place we have well ventilated well-lighted, air-conditioned offices with up to date furnishings in alluring, designs. Gone are the day when the head of the concern personally supervised the work of clerks. Today, modern offices are organized on scientific principles and their management and administration are in the hands of specialized office manager. Managers do not share the same room with clerks but sit in separate rooms. The clerks are supervised and controlled with the help of supervisors and through standard office systems, routines, office manuals etc.

The vast changes have led to an expansion in the scale of production and business activities. As the size of business enterprises grows, there is corresponding increase in the volume of office work. The office activities of today are not performed by general clerks but by specialized clerks – Receptionist, Cashier, Typist, Telephone Operators etc. There is also a greater division of labour. Departmentalization of office has been effected. The office managers of today welcome greater use of machines and minimal use of human beings in the office work. Machines-typewriter, telephones, computers, calculators, duplicating machines, Dictaphones, accounting machines, intercom, cellular phones, internet system etc. help to save time and labour. Computers are the latest additions to the long list of office machines. They are capable of performing most clerical operations at high speed without errors. Thus modern office are becoming more and more high-tech.

Office is an important section of a business. The term business implies office work. The dictionary meaning of office is “a place for the transaction of business, the room or department, where the clerical work is done,” or we can say “a place where business is carried on”, or it is “a place where all sorts of activities of organization are dealt with”. Office is the centre of an organization. Commercial office acts as a central directing and co-ordinating agency of the various activities of any business.

In modern age, the “office” is used in a broader sense. Prof. Dicksee states, “An office is to a business what the mainspring is to a watch”. An organization cannot be carried on without an office, as a watch without the mainspring is useless. In the present times, the modern office organization has so much importance as the brain in a human body. Thus a commercial office can be called “a clearing house of all essential business information”. The office has to receive or collect all information of the business, process the collected information (analyse, arrange and classify) and put them into understandable form on the one hand. On the other hand, the processed, information has to be presented or communicated to the management of the business, as and when required.

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According to the Random House Dictionary “An office is a place where business is transacted or professional services are available” An office is the place where the control mechanisms for an enterprise are located, where records are initiated for communication, control and efficient operation of the enterprise. According to Mills and Standing Ford, “The office is the administrative centre of a business. The purpose of an office has been defined as the providing of a service of communication and record.

It is generally seen, in commercial offices, there are some persons to receive information, process them (made understandable in form) and supply the processed information to the management. Doing so, can be called clerical job. Clerical job includes correspondence (to collect information or clarify the information received) serving (filing), typing, book-keeping, handling of money etc. so it is confirmed that an efficient management of the organization helps the managers or executives to formulate planning, organizing, controlling and supervising the activities of a business concern. Prompt and accurate decision depend upon timely information.

An office is a place to record the information for the purposes of control through collection (of information) handled and serviced and where the control mechanism for a business is located-paper work is to attain an aimed result. One must give importance to the office function rather than to the place. An office is a place of paper processing and memory centre for all its departments. In office, policies and ideas are formulated through collection and analysis of obtained information. An office maintains all records. And these readymade, scrutinized and processed information are made available to the management to attain the best result.

### **Definitions :**

A few definitions of office are given below:

“An office is the administrative centre of a business. The purpose of an office has been defined as the providing of a service of communication and record”- Mills & Standing Ford.

“An office is a place where business is transacted or professional service is available”- Random Hours Dictionary

“Office is a unit where relevant records for the purpose of control, planning and efficient management of the organization are prepared, handled or preserved. Office provides facilities for internal and external communication and coordinates activities of different departments of the organization.” – *Little field and Rachel*.

“The essential feature of the office is the work itself, not who does it or where it is done. If it is office or clerical work in one place, it is office or clerical work everywhere regardless of where the work is done or who does it”

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“The office is not in one place; no matter how much we centralize its services, there will still be office work at the point of use. Some enterprise are almost all office. The activities of the office do not, strictly speaking, constitute a function, they are parts of all functions”.

In a business organization, the chief executive and his management team cannot deal personally with all the communications and cannot remember all the facts connected with it. There, the office comes to their rescue by providing with relevant facts and figures on the basis of which the management exercises its managerial functions of planning, co-ordination and control. According to Leffingwell and Robinson, “A well organized office makes it possible for the management to plan its operations intelligently, to put its plans into effect surely, to follow their progress currently, to determine their effectiveness promptly, to appraise the results without delay and to co-ordinate all the activities of the business.”

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### Office Work:

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According to the old concept “Office work” is mostly concerned with the records of an enterprise and making, preserving the records for further usage, so from this we can call office work as clerical work. And office work not only deals with records, it also includes communication, mechanical data processing, planning and scheduling etc.

Office work is mainly concerned with clerical work or paper work. But this is a very narrow view and is an old concept of office work. Now-a-days, office work has a very wide scope. Office work is primarily concerned with making, preserving and using records. The records are concerned about purchasing, producing, selling, accounting and correspondence, inventories and written or printed memorandum of all kinds. These records are essential for an efficient and effective control of the organization.

An office serves as the memory centre and control centre of an organization. The office performs many services like communication, reproduction, mechanical data, processing, procuring of stationery, furniture and equipment, secretarial assistance etc. to other departments in an organization.

Office is a unit where relevant records for the purpose of control, planning and efficient management of the organization are prepared, handled and preserved. Office provides facilities for internal and external communication and co-ordinates activities of different departments of the organization.

The purpose of an office is:

1. To preserve all the records of the business.
2. To handle incoming correspondence.

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3. To plan the policies of the business and ensure their implementation.
  4. To direct and co-ordinate the activities of the various department, and
  5. To maintain accounts, statutory and non-statutory books etc. of the business.

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### **Office Activities:**

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Each office has a personality of its own. This personality is a reflection of the purpose for which an office exists. The manufacturing office will have a profile that differs from that of a sales office. The accounting office will have a different orientation from that of a research and development office. In organizing a new office the office manager must first determine the prime reason existence of that office and then add the necessary ingredients to bring about an efficient operation entity that achieves predetermined results:

Although offices differ from one another in prime responsibility, many activities are commonly carried out by all the offices. Some of these activities are:

- a) Processing Incoming mail.
- b) Processing outgoing mail.
- c) Maintenance of records (Filing and Indexing).
- d) Establishing standard at office work.
- e) Designing and procuring at office forms, stationery etc.
- f) Recruitment and training of office staff.
- g) Maintenance of furniture, machines, appliances etc.
- h) Preparation of statements, reports etc.
- i) Maintenance of accounts and other financial records.
- j) Handling Telephone calls and enquiries.
- k) Preparing update information for the whole firm.
- l) Arranging the data in a quickly and accessible form for use.
- m) Safeguarding the assets.
- n) Keeping a prompt and accurate handling of enquiries orders etc.
- o) Maintaining efficient flow of work in the office.

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## **Factors contributing to the growth of office work:**

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The office work has tremendously grown in the modern economy. Due to the expansion of economic activities, the work has been increased manifold. The following factors have contributed to the growth of office work:

- i) The management needs proper and timely information all aspects of business operations in order to arrive at intelligent decision –making.
- ii) When the business grows, office work also grows proportionately.
- iii)The work concerned with the preparation of returns to Govt., financial statements, dealings with employees etc., increase office work.
- iv)With increase of service activities such as accounting, banking, advertising, marketing, insurance damages etc., the paper work has increased tremendously.
- v) The importance of office in relation to customers is of great significance. Office acts as the channel that links the business organization with its customers.

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## **Types of office:**

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The various types of office are as follows:

### **1. Front Office**

It is a business term that-refers to a company’s departments that come in contact with clients including the marketing, sales and service departments. The front office welcomes visitors, meets and greets them and handles their queries.



**Fig. 1.2 Front Office**



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## 2. The middle office:

Middle office comprises departments of financial service that manage position keeping. These divisions ensure that transactions capture profit flows. The middle office is usually a part of operations division, which is also in-charge of settlement. Due to their critical role, middle office functions along with front office and is supervised by the back office managers.

## 3. The electronic office or e-office:

It was a term coined to cover the increasing use of computer-based information technology for office work, especially in the 1980s. It is widely used since all modern offices are electronic offices.

E-office reduces most of the paper work and also makes the office communication electronic. E-office requires the use of individual computers loaded with software applications which are interconnected in Local Area Network (LAN).

## 4. The virtual Office:

It is the combination of off-site live communication and address services that allow users to reduce traditional office costs while maintaining business professionalism.



**Fig. 1.3 Virtual Office**

Virtual office implies space utilization, but a full application includes professional live communications of teleconferencing.

## 5. Back Office:

It is a part of most operations where tasks dedicated to operating the company are performed. The term comes from the building layout of early organizations where the

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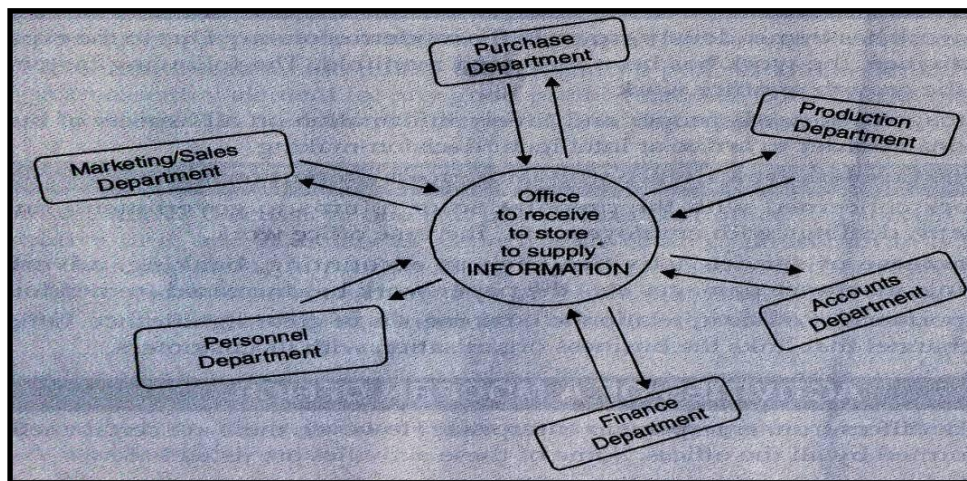
front office would contain the sales and other customer facing staff and the back office would be those manufacturing or developing the products or involved in administration but without being seen by customers. Although the operations of a back office usually not given a lot of consideration, their contribution to the business is significant. Examples of Back Office tasks include Accounting, Computerization of transact running (operation architecture), accounting and human supported by software and database.

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### **Relation of office with other Departments :**

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Large organizations are divided into various departments such as office, production, purchase, sales, finance, personnel etc. It is the office which is concerned with receiving, recording, arranging, analyzing and giving of information. All the departments depend upon the for various information needs. The office serves as the co-ordinating link in any organization. For coordinating the activities of different departments is an organization, office has to keep relations with each and every department. For example, orders for raw materials, sales, complaints, appointments etc. are passed through office only. Office needs information of many kinds from



**Fig 1.4 Relation of office with other Department**

different functional departments for framing general policies. Office supplies information needed in performing the functions of production, sales, personnel etc. and collects information from these departments for general policy framing and co-ordination relationship of office with other department of an organization is given below:

#### **1) Office and production department:**

The production department is concerned with the production of goods and services. Raw materials, machines, equipments etc. are needed to produce goods. They depend

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upon office to get their requirements. The office makes purchases on behalf of the production department and also informs the production department the requirements of consumers and customers. The office is also provide common services to production department, like purchases correspondence, filing, market research, the trend of the market etc.

**2) Office and Marketing/Sales Department:**

The office is always keep relations with customers. It is the office receives enquires orders etc. Enquiries are replied. Orders are executed by the sales department and the bill is sent through office. Complaints from customers are received by the office and convey them to sales department. When sales go down, the office helps in marketing research to find out the reasons for low sales. The reasons are known to departmental heads, who take step to overcome the situations. Office receives information on behalf of sales department and office gives information to sales department, apart from general or common service, such as mailing, filing, communication etc.

**3) Office and Purchase Department:**

Materials, stores, plant, machineries etc. needed for purchase department is arranged by the office. Office assists the purchase department in inviting quotations or tenders, in sending orders, receiving invoices, making payments etc. it also gives general services to purchase department and maintains purchase journals, ledgers etc.

**4) Office and Accounts / Finance Department:**

The accounts department maintains all the records of all business transactions with the help of office. The office prepares various financial statements and reports for the top management correspondence on behalf of accounts department is conducted by the office. It renders assistance to maintain the books of accounts, budgets, salaries and wage bills, invoices, collection of debt etc.

**5) Office and Personal Department:**

The personal department is created only to provide necessary help to the managers in performing the staffing function. Without the productive efforts of human being, material resources would be meaningless and idle. Recruitment, training etc. are routed through office. The office maintains the records of all the employees. The workers or the employees can communicate with the management through office. There is a close link between the office and personal department.

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**Importance of Office :**

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“No organization worth its name can exist without an office”. Thus the office is an important segment in any organization big or small, Govt. or Private and contributes to its efficient and economical functioning. The importance of a office to a business organization is high because of the variety and complications which a business

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enterprise is to face owing to competition, legal and statutory restrictions, role of trade unions and a host of other factors. A business enterprise today cannot face these challenges and problems without the assistance of a well organized office.

Office is the real behind every business activity and the nerve centre of all deliberations. In the words of Dicksee, what office is to business is what the man spring is to watch. All operations are directed, coordinated and controlled through the pivotal point office. A well organized office makes it possible for management to plan its operations intelligently to appraise the results and co-ordinate all the activities of the business.

The importance of office arises due to the following factors

**a) Office as an Information Centre:**

Office can be described as the information centre or data bank of an organization. All kinds of information and figures, whether past or present, are available in the office.



**Fig 1.5 Office an Information Centre**

The information furnished by the office serves as the basis of forecast, planning and control.

**b) Channel of Communication:**

Office is a channel through which communications especially written communications, move from top to bottom and in reverse order as well. An organization would fail in spite of its best talents, if objectives, policies, orders and results are not communicated in either direction.

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**c) Aids in coordination:**

Office serves a coordinating link among all the department of an organization. The process of coordination is almost impossible without the presence of office. Office provides the necessary information and knowledge for coordinating the efforts of different departments such as production, finance, personnel and marketing.

**d) Aids in Managerial Control:**

Control can be described as the measurement and control of performance of subordinates in order to make sure that enterprise objectives and the plans made to achieve them are accomplished. Control is thus a necessary function of management which requires.

- Establishment of standards
- Measurement of performance against standards
- Correction of deviations from the standards and plans

Control cannot be exercised only with the help and support from the office. Required data collected, documented and presented for effective control by the office.

**e) Importance Vis-à-vis workers :**

Effective human relations require effective organization. Preparation of wage and salary sheets and their payment are the responsibilities of office. Office is also responsible for operating employee benefit schemes such as pension and provident fund schemes. Office contributes immensely in maintaining good relations between the management and workers.

**f) Importance Vis-à-vis share holders and creditors :**

Office serves as the link between the share holders and on the one hand and the company on the other. Office helps with the work related to issue of share certificates, dividend warrants and notice of company meetings. Share transfer and answering different enquiries of share holders. Office also links the creditors with the organizations and act as a liaison for them.

**g) Importance relation to customers:**

Importance of office in relation to customers is of great significance. Office acts as a channel that links the business organization with its customers. Their enquiries, orders and complaints are taken care of by the office through direct personal contact print, visual and electronic media are used by the office to inform the customers about the products and their uses.

**h) Importance in relation to Government and general public:**

Today, a business organization is recognized as a social institution. It is required to satisfy government regulations. The office acts a link between different Govt.

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departments and the organization. Office is also the link between the general public and the organization. Office is responsible for building a healthy social image of the organization in the minds of the people.

**i) Office as an intermediary:** An office connects outsiders with different departments and vice versa. All the sales orders are received through the office. It connects the organization with the customers, suppliers, Government and general public. Public relations are very important aspect of the Functions of modern office. The importance of office in relation to customers is of great significance. Office acts as a channel that link the business organization with the customers. Their enquiries, orders, complaints etc. are taken care of by the office. The office acts as the link between different government departments and the organization. Office is responsible for creating a good image for the organization in the minds of the people, Danny Griswold describes public relations thus: “The management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.” Thus the office conveys to the public the objective, policies and programmes of the business.

**j) Store of records:** Office keeps adequate and up-to-date records of the business institution. It is the source of information for conducting, directing and controlling the business activities. To the management the records are the tools to direct the activities of the business. As such, the office plays an important role in the efficient management of the business

**k) Cost reduction:** Office assists all departments in achieving their objectives. Generally customers send their orders to be executed. Of course, there is an additional cost when these orders are handled by the office. But if the orders are not handled properly and effectively, it is possible that some of the customers may stop further orders. And this leads to reduction in the profit. A well organized office with its business policies and plans will surely add to the earning capacity of the business.

**l) Office as administrative nerve centre:** An office is the heart of all business activities. From here information on purchase, sale, financial and communication gets circulated.

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### **Challenges before Office:**

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In the contemporary business world office in our country faces challenges of different kinds-social, political, economical etc. Some of the challenges are stated below:

**a) Mechanization:**

In the modern day the office activity is becoming more and mechanized, says for example, sophisticated mechines, like computers. The challenge before the management



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lies is installing these machines with the cooperation of the employees and their maintenance and proper use.

**b) Growth:**

Owners (Share-holders) are no longer in direct control of the business of a company form of business organization. The top management aims the business to grow even when expansion is not accompanied by adequate profits. However, growth is accompanied by adequate return to the share-holders of the company.

**c) Statutes:**

Various laws concerning the management are being changed frequently to achieve the social and economic objectives. It is essential for the office of an organization to gear itself to face such changes. The problem lies on the office in running the enterprise without evading the various laws.

**d) Recruitment of Staff:**

By the introduction of sophisticated machines, it is an important problem to attract better entrants and train them properly. There must be provision of proper incentive system and promotional opportunities.

**e) Reduction of paperwork:**

The office should distinguish between essential and non-essential records. Some records may be essential. Such records may be retained and other non-essential records should be destroyed.

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Modern office with the complexities of business activities are increasing day-by-day. The unit 1 of the model is carefully crafted for you to present modern office an overview which reveals about that offices are organized on scientific principles with techno-savvy office managers to manage its business amidst cut throat competition. It is described in detail its meaning, definition activities factors contributing towards growth focused upon intelligent decision-making, how to cope up proportionately when business grows, to increase service activities and importance keeping in mind the importance of customers.

Further it is clearly dealt on types of office i.e, front office, middle office, e-office, virtual office and back office. Besides, relation of office with other departments like production, marketing, purchase Accounts and personal have been clearly described.

Emphasis is also given on the importance of office touching various aspects viz., office as an information centre, channel of communication, aids in coordination, managerial

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control, importance of workers, share holders and creditors, customers and relation with Govt. and general public.

It has not lost sight over the challenges of modern office keeping in mind modern day office mechanization, growth, statutes, recruitment to new entrants with techno savvy and how to reduce paper work.

In fine, it is described how managers need to be equipped with the above concepts and changes in a very lucid style.

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### Key Terms :

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- **Office:** it is the nerve centre of the entire organization.
- **Administrative:** Relating to or responsible for administration.
- **Management:** The art of getting things done.
- **Front office:** It welcomes visitors.
- **Middle Office:** It is usually a part of operations division.
- **Electronic office or e-office:** Computer based office
- **Virtual office:** Being actual or in almost every respect.
- **Back office:** Building layout of early organization where tasks dedicated to the operating company.
- **Organization:** It means a group of people who are cooperating under the direction of leadership for accomplishment of commoned.
- **Filing:** Keeping papers in order.
- **Indexing:** Anything giving an indication or table of contacts.
- **Recruitment:** An action of a newly enlisted practice for employment.
- **Computing:** To calculate or estimate.
- **Globalization:** Position that puts worldwide.
- **Cutthroat:** Extremely tough / relent less.
- **Handling:** Someone who to deal with.
- **Execution:** Performing or Accomplishing.
- **Documented:** Collection and keeping documents in order to be done.
- **Maintenance:** Act of protection.
- **Supervision:** To bring about conformity between planned and actual results.
- **Communication:** Process of passing information.



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- **Coordinating:** It means monitoring, balancing and keeping the team together
  - **Planning:** Dealing in advance what is to be done.

### **Model Question :**

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1. Define an office and explain its various activities?
2. “The office is a coordinating factor” Explain?
3. Discuss the various factors contributing to the growth of office work?
4. Explain the various activities of a modern office?
5. List the different types of offices?

## **Modern Office Functions**

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### **Learning Objectives**

After completion of this unit you should be able to know:

- Functions of Office Management
- Intricacies of Office Management
- Role of a Office Manager
- Also understand about office organization.

### **Structure:**

Introduction  
Definition of Office Management  
Functions of Office Management  
Scientific office Management  
Departmentation  
Functions of an Officer Manager  
Office Organization  
Let's Sum-up  
Key Terms  
    Self Assessment Questions  
    Further Readings  
    Model Questions

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### **Introduction:**

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Management simply means to control or to administer. Office management means the method of controlling an office so as to enable to achieve a given aim. In our modern society, all kinds of business are carried on by a group of people, who have enough

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knowledge in their respective filed. But group of people, who are working for a common object, must be guided and controlled by a leader or an authority. This is the function of the management. Management is a technique of leadership or control of an office in order to attain the aimed result through the efforts of other people in grouped activities. This is possible when the office is properly organized and managed. Office function is carried on by a group of people for a common result, by giving services to the organization. The management has to organize the office in such a way to attain the objectives. It is the function of the management to orgnaise, guide and control the whole activities of the office personnel for a common aim. That is why in the present era, the personnel management has become a specialized subject.

**Before to enter into the topic, it would be essential to understand the meaning and definition of administration which is as follows :**

Administration is the function in industry concerned in the determination of the corporate policy, the co-ordination of finance, production and distribution, the settlement of the compass of the organization and the ultimate control of the executive.

According to schedule, “Administration is the force which lays down the object for which an organization and its management are to strive and the broad polices under which they are to operate. Management is the force which leads guides and directs an organization in the accomplishment of a predetermined object. Orgnaisation is the combination of the necessary human beings, materials, tools, equipment, working space and appurtenances, brought together in systematic and effective correlation, to accomplish some desired object.”

According to Milward, “Administration is primarily the process and the agency used to establish the object or purpose which an undertaking and its staff are to achieve, secondarily, administration has to plan and to stabilise the broad lines or principles which will govern action. These broad lines are in their turn usually called policies. Management is the process and the agency through which the execution of policy is planned and supervised. Organization is the process of dividing work into convenient tasks or duties, of grouping such duties in the form of posts of delegating authority to each post and of appointing qualified staff to be responsible that the work is carried out as planned.”

It is known through economics that the factors of production are divided into four- land, labour, capital and entrepreneur. The last one is important under the present study. The entrepreneur is the man, who brings together the other factors in a business. The other factors can be called as organization. For example consider a human body. Human body can be compared as an organization. It has various organs- ears to hear, eyes to see, hands to work, legs to walk, etc. Each organ has a specific work. Each of the organs of course works in coordination with the other organs. All the activities of the different organs combined, can be considered as an organization. Finally, there is a top administrator the brain. Similarly in business, production department, sales department, personnel department etc. have to do the proper function as directed by the

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management. The organization may refer to the function of organization or to plans carried out through persons. Organization is concerned with and exists when an employ is selected, assigned jobs within his ability to work through a clear understanding. He must understand what he should do, how he should do and when he should do.

Office Administration denotes the function of giving birth to major policies upon which the enterprise is to be functioned. In a joint- stock company, the Board of Directors makes the major policies and in a partnership firm, the partners lay down the policies. In all kinds of business the function of administration is the same. Making the policies is the function of administration.

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

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According to Leffingwell & Robinson, “Office Management as an function is that-branch of the art and science of management which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done.”

According to Mill & Standingford, “Office management may be defined as the art of guiding the personnel of the office in the use of materials, methods, machines and equipment appropriate to their environment in order to achieve its specified purposes.”

Wylie defines “office management as the manipulation and control of men, methods, machines and materials to achieve the best possible result- result of the highest possible quality with the best possible effort and expense, in the shortest practicable time and in a manner acceptable to the top management”.

Now we can understand from the above definitions that office management means planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the activities of an office.

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### **Functions of Office Management :**

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There is no universally accepts classification of management functions. This is because different authors, who were considering different organizations, gave separate classification of management functions. Office management is similar to the general or administrative management; it performs the same functions as are performed by the management. The functions of office management in brief, are given below:

#### **I. Planning:**

Planning is a fundamental function of office management. All types of organizations prepare plans. Planning our studies, our careers, new products etc. are examples of planning. It is the determination of a course of action to achieve a desired result. Planning concentrates on setting and achieving objectives of an organization. It is an intellectual process. It is characterized as the process of thinking before doing. Planning function of management precedes all other managerial functions. “Planning is deciding in advance what is to be done. When a manger plans, he projects a course of action for the future, attempting to achieve a consistent, co-ordinated structure of operations aimed at the desired results.” Planning involves projecting the future course of action for the

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business as a whole and also for different sections within it. Planning is thus the preparatory step for actions and helps in bridging the gap between the present and the future. Since planning is essentially choosing, it is dependent upon the availability of alternatives. It is through this process of choosing that office manager can obviously be seen as an important aspect of planning. Planning process comprises determination and laying down of objectives, policies, procedures, rules, programmes, budget and strategies etc. The operations of the office will not run smoothly if they are not planned adequately. Planning makes it possible to occur which would not otherwise happen.

### **Benefits of Planning:**

1. The business objectives can easily be secured through plans.
2. Planning gives direction to activities in the office.
3. It focuses attention on objectives.
4. It provides co-ordinated efforts and reduces risk and uncertainties.
5. It facilitates the process of decision-making.
6. It encourages innovation and creativity.
7. It serves as a basis of control.
8. It encourages the sense of involvement and team spirit.
9. It eliminates unproductive office work and thus helps to minimize cost.
10. It helps in economical operations.

### **II. Organising:**

It is an important managerial activity by which management brings together the human and material resources for the achievement of certain objectives. Organization is the foundation upon which the whole structure of management is built. It may be conceived of as the structuring of functions and duties to be performed by a group of people for the purpose of attaining enterprise objectives. Organizing is the determining, grouping and arranging of the various activities deemed necessary for the attainment of the objectives the assigning of people to those activities, the providing of suitable physical factors of environment and the indicating of the relative authority delegated to each individual charged with the execution of each respective activity.

According to Louis A Allen, "Organisation is the process of identifying and grouping the work to be performed, defining and delegating responsibility and authority, and establishing relationships for the purpose of enabling people to work most effectively together in accomplishing objectives."

According to Liver Sheldon, "Organisation is the process of combining the work which individuals and groups have to perform with the faculties necessary for its execution that the duties so formed provide the best channels for efficient, systematic, positive and co-ordinated application of the available effort."

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## **Steps of Organisation:**

The important steps involved in the process of an organization are:

### **1. Identification of Activities**

Organization structure is developed to achieve objectives. Organisation as a process of management is concerned with identifying and grouping of activities to be performed.

### **2. Grouping of Activities:**

Closely related and similar activities are grouped together to form departments, divisions or sections. Grouping may be done on several bases depending on the requirements of the situation. Such grouping of activities is called departmentation.

### **3. Assignment of Duties:**

Each group of related activities is assigned a position most suited for it. Every position is occupied by an individual. While assigning duties, the requirements of the job and the competence of the individual should be properly matched together. The process of assigning duties goes on till the last level of the organization.

### **4. Delegation of Authority:**

Authority without responsibility is a dangerous thing and similarly responsibility without authority is an empty vessel. Hence corresponding to the responsibility authority is delegated to the sub-ordinates for enabling them to show work performance.

### **5. Fitting Individuals:**

Having determined the various parts and portions of the job to be done, the next step will be to fix suitable and well-qualified persons into these activities. Each person in the group will be given a specific part of the job to do and will be made responsible for it.

## **III. Staffing:**

‘Staffing’ is concerned with the recruitment, selection, placement, training, growth and development of all those members of the organization whose function is to get things done through the efforts of other individuals. After determining the number and type of personnel to be appointed to fill different jobs management starts recruiting, selecting the training the people to fulfill the requirements of the enterprise. According to Franklin Moore, “Staffing is a forward looking activity because tomorrow keeps becoming today. Attrition constantly reduces executive ranks through retirement, death, resignations and occasional dismissal; so young men keep moving up. Besides this, most enterprise grow, providing new openings for managers.” The function of staffing was considered to be a part of organizing but recently it has developed into a distinct function of management, and is, therefore treated separately in the chapter relating to Personnel Management.

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#### **IV. Directing:**

Once plans are drawn up to re-determined objectives competent persons are appointed, the organization is ready to go into action. Directing is the managerial function of guiding, inspiring, instructing and harnessing people towards the accomplishment of desired results. It is that part of the management process which actuates the members of an organization to work effectively and efficiently for the achievement of the goals. Direction is the managerial function of guiding, inspiring, instructing and harnessing people towards the accomplishment of desired results. It is that part of the management process which actuates the members of an organization to work effectively and efficiently for the achievement of the goals. Direction in the words of Koentz and Q 'donnel, "the interpersonal aspect of managing by which subordinates are led to understand and contribute effectively and efficiently to the attainment of enterprise objectives." According to Haimann, "Directing consists of the process and techniques utilized in issuing instructions and making certain that operations are carried on as originally planned Directing is the process around which all performance revolves. It is the essence of operations, and co-ordination is a necessary by product of good managerial directing." Directing consists of the following steps:

1. Issuing orders and instructions to sub-ordinates.
2. Guiding and teaching the sub-ordinates the proper method of doing work;
3. Supervising the work of sub-ordinates to ensure that it conforms to plan;
4. Motivation of sub-ordinates by providing incentives.

#### **V. Motivating:**

The term motivation has been derived from the word motive. Motive is anything that initiates or sustains activity. It is an inner state that energises, activates or moves and that directs or channels behavior towards goals. Motive is a psychological force within an individual that sets him in motion. Behind every human action there is a motive. According to Brech, "Motivation is a general inspirational process which gets the members of the team to pull their weight effectively, to give their loyalty to the group, to carry our properly the tasks that they have accepted and generally to play an effective part in the job that the group has undertaken." The important task of office management is to motivate employees so that they may direct their efforts towards the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Motivating may be achieved by:

1. Providing inducements and incentives to employees;
2. Keeping morals high;
3. Satisfying the needs of the employees.

#### **VI. Co-ordinating:**

Along with specialization there must be conscious efforts on the part of the management to see that all activities, carried on by experts and different departments, should contribute to the achievement of the objective of the business. Smooth working of an enterprise and the definite achievement of its objectives depend on sound co-ordination.

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According to Lundy, “Co-ordination involves the development of unity of purpose and the harmonious implementation of plans for the achievement of desired ends.” According to Mooney and Reiley, “Orderly arrangement of group efforts to provide unit of action in pursuit of a common purpose.” Thus coordination may be achieved by:-

1. Simplified organization.
2. Harmonized programmes and policies.
3. Well designed method of communication.
4. Voluntary cooperation.
5. Coordination through supervision.
6. Clear cut objectives.
7. Clear definition of authority and responsibility.
  
8. Effective leadership.

## **VII. Controlling :**

“To control is to determine what is being accomplished; that is to evaluate performance and, if necessary, to apply corrective measures so that performance takes place according plan. After the plans are put into action, there can be several hurdles in the achievement goals. Results may fall short of targets. Direction may be faulty. Therefore, management must find out what is going wrong, what changes in plans and directions are required and what must be done to set things right. This is the function of control. In words of Anthony “Management control is the process by which managers assure that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently in the accomplishment of an organisation’s objectives.”

### **Basic elements of the control process:**

1. Establishment of standards or objectives.
2. Measurements of actual performance.
3. Comparing actual performance against the standard set.
4. Determining the reason for deviation.
5. Taking corrective action.
6. Feedback.

Control is thus closely related to the planning job of the manager. But it should not be viewed merely as a postmortem of past achievements and performance. In practice, a good control system should suggest corrective measures so that negative deviations may not recur in future.

## **VIII. Communication:**

Communication is a means by which different persons are linked together in a group or organization to attain a common goal. No group activity is possible without communication. It enables the members to coordinate, to exchange and to make progress. A good communication should aim at making everyone concerned aware of the goal which the organization wants to achieve.

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The two main objectives of communication are to inform and to persuade. Communication is the means by which behavior is modified, change is effected, and goals are achieved. Communication is essential for effective control and motivation. Scientific management, as the name implies, means the application of the scientific method for the solution of the problems of management. In its application, the scientific approach is used in meeting problems of all types instead of depending on tradition. In view of the present day complexities and growing magnitude of management responsibilities, scientific office management is perhaps the best solution. It does not mean that office management is a pure science. It is the application of scientific principles to management decision-making. In the words of Frederick W. Taylor, the father of Scientific Movement, “the scientific management means knowing exactly what you want men to do and seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way.” Scientific management is characterized by a scientific method of attack in the solution of business problems and the development of managerial techniques. It looks, considers and evaluates customs and traditions, personal institution and experience, and inductive deductive thinking.

**Techniques of scientific management involve the following steps:**

1. Setting up of standard tasks through scientific investigation and research (time, motion and method of studies)
2. Analysis of operations to evolve the best method of doing the standard task.
3. Scientific selection of personnel and their training in the methods involved.
4. Standardization of materials, equipment and working environment for workers.
5. Introduction of specialization in the administrative and organizational set up.
6. Improvement of worker management relations through good faith, perfect understanding and better incentive wage plans.

The principles and techniques of scientific management are equally applicable to office management and lead to increase productivity of labour. Elimination of waste of all types, whether men or materials is aimed at.

**Elements of the Management:**

The four elements of office management are:

1. **Purpose :** The office manager must be fully aware of the aims and objectives of the organization in order to make correct decisions. If he knows the purpose of office, he will provide direction to the office activities and thus make it easy to evaluate the performance of different individuals.
2. **Environment:** The office environmental is not only the physical environment but also the external factors such as the laws and customs of the community within which the firm operates. Efficiency of office personnel depends upon the perfect understanding of office environment. The environment is always changing and the officer must take decisions accordingly.
3. **Personnel :** It is the most important element. The office manager must select suitable personnel and place them in appropriate jobs. They must be given proper training and then only they can increase their efficiency. To realize the desired objective of the office, the personnel must be provided with sufficient



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incentives to motivate them to contribute their efforts whole- heartedly.

4. **Means :** It is a tool and include materials, methods, machines and equipments with the help of which office activities are performed by the office employees. The office manager must know how to use these means in the best manner. The best use of means leads of greater efficiency and effectiveness in the work.

### **Department:**

Departmentation is the process which is used to group business activities into units for the purpose of efficient administration at all levels. The process of organizing an enterprise consists of (a) dividing and grouping the work to be done and (b) assigning different duties and responsibility to different people. In other words, the total activities of the business are divided into a number of functional departments, each entrusted with a particular type of business activity. A large business house has, therefore, as many sectional offices as there are functional or operating departments. It is difficult to function for a business enterprise unless its activities are divided into group of functions, for example, production, purchasing, financing, accounting etc. These classified functions are performed by a group of specialized employees. A section is a group of workers under one supervisor. There is a general office, under the control of the Secretary, which co-ordinates the activities of the functional departments as well as those of sectional offices.

### **Basis of Departmentation:**

Different concerns follow different bases of departmentation depending upon their size and nature of operations. The bases of departmentation usually followed by most business enterprises are:

1. **Product Basis:** When a firm produces large number of products and the volume of business done in each product is sufficiently large, then internal organization may be formed on the basis of products handled or service rendered. One department is in charge of one line of products. For instance, a firm dealing with paints, chemicals, plastics and fertilizers, it may have four departments each dealing with one product.
2. **Geographical Basis:** When an organization is large and geographically dispersed, departmentation on territorial basis may be made. For instance, a large Fan Manufacturing Company doing business in all the states of India may have separate departments for each state.
3. **Functional Basis:** Most business enterprises, however, prefer to segregate their departments on the basis of the major activities or functions of the enterprise, viz. production, purchase, marketing, accounts etc. The various activities of the business enterprise are divided into a number of functional departments. Thus matters relating to production are dealt with by the production department, matters relating to accounts by accounts department and so on.
4. **Customer Basis:** Under this basis of departmentation, activities are grouped

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according to the type of customers. For example, a large cloth store may be divided into wholesale, retail and export divisions. Each department specializes in serving a particular class of customers. For example, a large readymade store may have a separate department each for women, men and children.

5. **Process or Equipment Basis:** Manufacturing activities may be sub-divided on the basis of their process or production. For example, production department of a textile mill may be divided on the basis of processes of production, like designing, spinning, weaving, dyeing, bleaching etc.

**Advantages of Departmentation:**

1. An organization can avail benefits of specialization.
2. The efficiency of the management increases.
3. It is easy to fix accountability for the results.
4. Better control is facilitated.
5. It is easy to fix responsibility on workers.
6. It facilitates coordination.

The main purpose of the office is to provide efficient clerical work to the functional departments and top management. For reasons of efficiency and economy and to secure specialization, various activities to be performed by an office are divided into different departments. Each department of the office performs a specific function and the clerical staff attached to it becomes specialized in that particular function through constant dealing with the same work. Thus departmentation leads to greater efficiency which reduces the cost of office. Generally, a modern office has cash department, accounts department, filing department, typing department, mail department etc.

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**Functions of an Office Manager :**

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1. **Leadership :** He has to control his office. The office manager is important for the smooth running of the organization. He is in-charge of the public relations. He helps other departments to achieve their goals. He has complete control over the work done in the office.
2. **Coordination :** He has to select the persons- right persons for the right jobs.
  - a. He will have to work and carefully see that the policies laid down by the management are implemented.
  - b. He is the connecting link between the top management and the workers. Workers approach him for their grievances and difficulties and manager has to redress them. If he is not able to do the needful, he must place it before the management
  - c. He has to work and safeguard the firm, where he is an office manager.
  - d. His primary duty is to the management and secondary duty to the workers. He must please both the parties. If either one of the parties is annoyed or neglected, he will be regarded as a bad manager.
3. **Recruitment of Staff :** He has to select the right person for the right job. For that he invites applications, conducts interviews and selects personnel.

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4. **Training of Staff:** He provides training to the new employees as well as old employees to improve their skill in the latest techniques of management.
  5. **Motivation :** He measures the employees work and output and offers rewards which increase their efficiency and ensure their better co-operation and lead to the promotion of the staff.
  6. **Discipline:** Discipline in the office depends upon him. The rules and principles of the management should be followed by the sub-ordinates. He must have ability to speak. New methods cannot be accepted, unless full explanation is followed. He has to convince others about the fact findings.
  7. **Accounting :** He has to keep a close touch with the accounting and costing section.
  8. **Controls Stationary :** He has to safeguard the furniture, fittings, machines , equipments and various types of records.
  9. **Secretarial Services:** He maintains statutory and accounts books, holds meetings, drafts reports and minutes etc. Thus he does the secretary's functions.
  10. **Organizer and Supervisor:** He organizes and supervises the office correspondence, messenger services, communication system, filling and indexing, protection of records etc. There is no hard and fast rule as to the functions of an office manager. His functions depend upon the type and size of the organization.

He has to face difficult situations very tactfully, and must have pleasing manners always in dealing with critical positions and in suggesting suitable ideas. He must be tactful.

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### **Office Organization :**

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An office organization involves the division of office activities into certain departments as well as persons. The office manager defines, and assigns activities, so that they can be most effectively executed. It means the determination and assignment of duties to the workers, and also the establishment and the maintenance of authoritative relationship among these grouped activities. Each department works in coordination with the other departments. Organization is the backbone of the management. With proper care at all levels, it is possible for the management to attain the aimed goal.

Further each department splits the job into many simple processes; and each process is operated by a person. The sub-division of a sub-divided job makes the work simple, easy to understand and quick to perform. The office may be divided on the basis of size and nature of a concern. However, for big concerns there may be the following departments :(1) Accounts Department, (2) Cash Department, (3) Correspondence Department, (4) Purchase Department, (5) Sales Department, (6) Advertising Department, (7) Filling (Record) Department etc. Further if the concern is very large, there may be Credit Department, Personnel Department, etc. In practice, the principle of division of labour to an office organization means the division of office (work) into as many departments as necessary and each department is made responsible to increase the

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sales. The purchase department is responsible for good purchase and is answerable if bad quality of goods are purchased. The credit department is answerable if bad debt increases, so on and so forth. Thus, the responsibility is being fixed on all departments. In addition, a person, who deals in one item continuously, becomes an expert and specialist. Through him better and quicker result is possible for the management.

Functions of office management, are quite interesting and important keeping in mind the objective, and goal of different organizations. There is enough disagreement among management writers on this classification. The terminology is also not always alike, different authors offering different names for the same functions of management. But in this unit it is clearly high lights on planning, organizing, staffing, directing, motivating, coordinating, controlling and communication.

Further an attempt has been made and focused upon scientific office management which implies the application of the scientific method for the solutions of the problems of all types of management which leads to increased productivity of labour. Here it is considered the basic elements of management i.e., purpose, environment, personnel and means.

It is also described about departmentation which is used to group business activities and basis of departmentation drawing attention on product basis, geographical basis, functional basis, customer basis and process or equipment basis. Besides it clearly focuses upon the functions of office manager.

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### **Key Terms :**

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- Office Management: Concerned with the performance of office function.
- Office Function: Represents the work the office is designed to perform.
- Planning: Deciding in advance what is to be done.
- Organizing : Process of so combining the work which individuals or groups have to perform.
- Staffing: Selection of men for various jobs.
- Directing: Issues instructions to his subordinates indicating what it is that should be done.
- Motivating: Stimulating individual to accomplish a desired goal.
- Coordinating: Means keeping the team by ensuring suitable allocation of tasks.
- Controlling: To evaluate performance and if necessary to apply corrective measures.
- Office Manager: An executive who is in charge of a office to organize and control of perform efficiently and effectively.
- Communication: It is a means by which persons are linked together to attain a common goal.
- Scientific Management: Application of the scientific method for the solution of a problem.

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- Departmentation: It is the process which is used to group business activities into units for the purpose of efficient administration at all levels.
  - Product Basis: It is the volume of business done in each product.
  - Geographical Basis: It means territorial base of an organization.
  - Functional Basis: Indicates the basis of major activities of functions of the enterprise.
  - Custom Basis: This indicates activities grouped according to the type of customers.
  - Process or Equipment Basis: Manufacturing activities sub-divided on the basis of their process of production.

### **Model Questions:**

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1. State and explain the functions of an office Management?
2. What do you understand by “Office Management”? Discuss the functions of modern office.
3. Discuss the role of office Manager and the important qualities you think he should have?
4. Planning bridges the gap between the present and the future”. Explain?
5. Define office Management and explain in detail its functions?

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# Accommodation and Environment

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## Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of office accommodation
- Identify the good environment to establish an office
- Learn the types of interior decorations to be made in an office and how it reflects towards employees coupled with security measure.

## Structure :

Introduction to office accommodation

Principles

Location of Office

Site for location of the office building

Layout of the office and Objectives

3.6. Open office and private office

Office Environment

Office Lighting

Types of Lighting

Ventilation and Temperature

Interior Decoration

Office Furniture and Factor

Different types of Furniture

Modular and System Furniture

Security Equipments

Let's Sum-up

Key Terms

Self Assessment Questions

Further Readings

Model Questions

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## Introduction :

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Every Office Manager is concerned about getting office work performed with the maximum efficiency and at minimum cost. But this would be possible only if he makes a proper selection of employees, gives them proper training and guidance, and places them in appropriate jobs. However, if the office staff is to work efficiently, it must be properly accommodated, have a good working environment, and should be properly equipped. Suitable accommodation, modern equipment and proper working conditions are not in any way less important factors in improving efficiency and reducing costs.

The place of work and its surroundings are important factors which affect the efficiency

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of employees to a large extent. Since the staff has to stay for long hours in the office, and since it mainly does brain work and/or concentrates on the repetitive and monotonous activities of filing, indexing, despatching, reporting, etc., its inefficiency would normally be greater in those offices where accommodation is insufficient and the environment and working conditions are not congenial.

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### **Principles :**

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While deciding about office accommodation, the Office Manager should bear the following principles in mind:

- (i) The office must be located at some convenient place so that it may serve the entire organisation in the best possible manner.
- (ii) Office space should be sufficient from the point of view of the present and future needs of the organisation.
- (iii) Due provision should be made for the conveniences and amenities required for the comfort and well-being of the staff, e.g., Washing room, rest room, water coolers, canteen, etc.

Service facilities like telephone, lift, internal communication, etc., should be available in office, while others like banking, transport, market, post office, etc., should be available near the office premises.

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### **Location of Office :**

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Every Office Manager should give a full and proper consideration to a suitable location for his office. This location or site is an important consideration because an unsuitable location may result in a waste of resources and efforts and loss of time inconvenience to the office staff as well as to the persons dealing with it. The problem of location arises under one or the other of the following conditions:

- (i) At the time of starting a business enterprise.
- (ii) The increased volume of work may require a change of office location.
- (iii) The facilities provided in the original locational plan are no longer sufficient for the expanding business, and, therefore, the entire expansion of the existing office or a new location is necessary.
- (iv) The lease for the office premises has expired and the owner of the premises was not prepared to renew it.
- (v) Shifting of the business by the business enterprise from one place or one State to another.

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## **The Office Building :**

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The problem of choosing the right location for the office premises is as complicated as that of getting a proper and suitable building to accommodate it. The office building should not only be of a proper size and shape, it should also be of such design as to serve the particular needs of the enterprise. Often, it is rather difficult to get a building which is exactly suited to the requirements of the organisation. The management should try to obtain such premises which fulfill its requirements in the best possible manner. The first thing the management has to decide about is whether to own the office building or to rent it or lease it. Where should the constructed building be bought? Should a plot of land be acquired and a building appropriate to the requirements of the organization built upon it? If a constructed building is bought, it may be adopted or altered according to the requirements of the enterprise. The construction of one's own office building may be necessitated in the following circumstances :

- (i) When the business is large and well established;
- (ii) When the demand for the procedures or services of the organisation is of a relatively stable character;
- (iii) When there is a cost advantage in the construction of the business premises;
- (iv) When a specific type of building is required for office purposes; e.g., centrally air- conditioned, sound-proof or specially constructed for housing computers, etc.

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## **Office Layout :**

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After acquiring the building for the office, the next important task before the Office Manager is office space planning or office layout. According to Littlefield, "Office layout may be defined as the arrangement of equipment within the available floor space". It can be described as the arrangement of different departments, equipment and men within a given floor space with a view to make optimum utilisation of space and ensure maximum efficiency of the office.

### **Objectives of Layout**

According to Mills and Standing ford, the layout of an office is the arrangement of furniture, machines, etc., within the space available. Having regard to the limitations imposed by the building, the objectives of an office layout are:

- (i) The space should be used to the greatest extent;
- (ii) Service should be available where needed including power and telephone;
- (iii) Good working conditions should be provided for everyone;
- (iv) The supervisor should be able to see the staff at work;



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- (v) A sense of belonging and loyalty to the working group should be fostered;
  - (vi) Communication and work flow should be facilitated;
  - (vii) The movement of clerks between desks, filing cabinets, etc., should be made easy;
  - (viii) Noisy and distracting operations should be segregated;
  - (ix) Mutual interference between clerks should be avoided;
  - (x) Privacy and security should be provided, wherever necessary.'

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## **Open and Private Offices :**

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### **Open Offices**

In planning the general office, one of the major decisions to be made is in regard to the provision of separate rooms for the different departments or sections, or for bringing them together into one large room or "open office". The modern tendency is to adopt the open office instead of accommodating departments or sections in separate apartments. An open office refers to a large room where all the departments, men and equipment are housed under a single room without partitions or walls separating them. Each department-or-section is allotted a separate space in the same room, which is often demarcated by placing filing cabinets between them. One or more gangways throughout the whole floor may be provided and desks may be arranged facing one way so as to facilitate supervision and easy access. It should be noted, however, that private offices are provided for top executives whose work calls for secrecy and concentration.

**Advantages of Open Offices:** Open offices offer the following advantages:

- (1) **Economical:** Since unnecessary partitions and corridors are avoided, open offices make better utilisation of office space possible. It is a common experience that nearly 25 to 33 per cent of the office space is taken up by walls and partitions. Open offices enable the management to effect savings in rent and reductions in the cost of office operations.
- (2) **Better Lighting and Ventilation:** With the removal of unnecessary walls and partitions, open offices allow a free flow of air and natural light, which step up the efficiency of the office staff.
- (3) **Better Supervision;** Open offices encourage better work through better supervision and easier operation. Only a few supervisors are required to supervise the staff. The worker faces the supervisor and therefore he cannot waste time without being found out.
- (4) **Better Communication:** Open offices facilitate better inter-departmental communication. A worker is not required to go to another room for consultation, advice or instruction. It also facilitates better coordination of office activities.

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(5) **Flexibility:** There is a greater flexibility in planning the layout of an open office, which ensures a more effective placement of office machines and equipment. Further, changes in the layout can be effected without much difficulty.

(6) **Other Advantages:** The other advantages of an open office are:

- (a) In an open office, the sharing of machines and equipment becomes possible;
- (b) In an open office the cost of decoration, cleaning and maintenance is lower;
- (c) It wears a smarter look and, to that extent, is an advertisement for the organisation itself;
- (d) It makes for a democratic set-up because all grades of staff are placed in the same room;
- (e) It makes better working conditions possible.

### **Private Offices**

Private offices are small rooms or cubicles which are separated from similar other rooms or the open office by full or half partitions. Private offices are allotted to the top executives of the organisation. Sometimes a private office accommodation is provided for a group of people whose work is of a confidential nature, it may also be allotted for work which should be isolated in order to eliminate noise, e.g., accounting and statistical work.

**Advantages of Private Offices :** The advantages of private offices are:

- (1) Greater privacy is ensured for confidential work and discussions.
- (2) They promote a personal atmosphere and lend a sense of prestige or importance to the concerned staff.
- (3) They increase the efficiency of the workers by facilitating concentration of mind which is possible because of the absence of noise.
- (4) They are more congenial and less regimented.
- (5) There can be better ventilation and heating/cooling arrangements. They are also preferred on grounds of health.

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### **Office Environment :**

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Office environment has an important bearing on the efficiency of employees. An office may be properly laid-out and the best type of furniture and equipment may be installed in it; but its efficiency may be very low if the physical working conditions are not good. Since office work is mainly mental work which is more fatiguing than physical work, adverse physical conditions increase the mental strain on the staff. The emotional response of workers is better if the environment is good.

According to Terry "An individual's performance is significantly conditioned by the

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environment in which he works. The cumulative effect of his total work environment is a strong determinative of how well he marshals his abilities and skills, his attitude towards his work and his colleagues, and his enthusiasm for his work." An office manager should therefore, arrange for good working conditions, if he expects his staff to work efficiently. Office environment comprises of the following:

- (i) Office Lighting;
- (ii) Ventilation and Temperature Control;
- (iii) Interior Decoration and Furnishing; .
- (iv) Office Furniture;
- (v) Freedom from Noise and Dust;
- (vi) Safety from physical hazards;
- (vii) Sanitary Arrangements;
- (viii) Security;
- (ix) Secrecy.

The above components of office environment are discussed in the following paragraphs;

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### **Office Lighting :**

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Lighting is perhaps the most important of office physical conditions. Probably the best way to grasp the importance of lighting to office management is to realise that virtually every office task is a seeing task. Since office work is mostly paperwork adequate lighting should be provided in any modern office. "Office lighting should make possible more than mere seeing; it should make it possible for the worker to see what he is doing - clearly, quickly and accurately." Less than adequate lighting results in delays, and mistakes; delays, because it takes longer to read in poor light: mistakes because the visual image is indistinct, instead of sharp and clear. Moreover, it causes overstrain, fatigue and headache to workers. Similarly, excessive lighting also causes eye strain and irritation, besides causing inferior quality work. Psychologically, inadequate lighting results in loss of morale, which will eventually cause a decrease in the quantity of work performed. Adequate system of lighting must possess certain well-defined characteristics, sufficiently quantity, intensity and no glare and no contrast:

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### **Types Of Lighting System :**

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Lighting systems consist of the following five types:

**1. Direct:** In this type of lighting, approximately 90-100 per cent of the light is directed downward to the working surface. This system makes use of some shade on, or reflector for the source of light. It provides a good intensity of light. At the same time, however, it casts dark shadows around and raises a direct and reflected glare which causes eye strain to the workers.

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**2. Semi-direct:** In this system, a transparent or translucent shade is used which directs 60 to 80 per cent of the light downward; the remaining light is directed upward and is reflected from the ceiling.

This system is an improvement on direct lighting, for it avoids dark shadows on the ceiling and eliminates glare.

**3. Indirect:** In this system, 90 to 100 per cent of the light is directed towards the ceiling or walls and is then diffused and reflected downward on the work surface. This system provides light which is soft, avoids shadows and glare and does not cause eye strain. However, this system of lighting is good for general illumination, not for office work.

**4. Semi-indirect:** In this system, a transparent or translucent shade, shade bowl, cover or reflector is placed under the lamp so that 20 to 40 per cent of the light may be directly diffused downward on the working surface and 60 to 80 per cent of the light may be directed towards the ceiling and walls which is then reflected downward to the working surface. This form of lighting is intermediate between direct lighting and indirect lighting.

**5. General Diffuse:** In this system, an equal amount of light is diffused directly and indirectly by its reflection from ceiling and walls. This system gives more light with the same wattage than the semi-indirect lighting system does.

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## **Ventilation and Temperature Control :**

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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. This is possible only when the office premises are properly ventilated. In the absence of proper ventilation, air becomes stale, causes headache, fatigue and restlessness to the employees. On the one hand, lack of proper ventilation makes a person feel sleepy and unduly tired and adversely affects his health. On the other hand, too much cold or hot air is also not desirable. Arrangements of rooms and partitions should be such as allow a free circulation of fresh and dustless air. In cold areas or months, it is necessary to keep out too much cold air, while in the hot areas or months, hot and humid air has to be kept out. The following methods are generally used to maintain a proper ventilation:

### **1. Natural Ventilation**

Natural ventilation may be obtained by providing enough doors, windows and ventilators of the right type at the right places. They would ensure a regular flow of fresh air from the outside and of stale air from the inside. Natural ventilation can be increased by providing roof ventilators and internal tube ventilators.

### **2. Artificial Ventilation**

Artificial ventilation may be achieved by the use of electric fans, exhaust fans, air

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coolers, air filters, etc.

**Electric fans** are used to circulate air because air circulation is much better than stagnant air.

**Exhaust fans:** These fans expel the stagnant air from the room. They are a very effective measure of ventilation. Exhaust fans must be provided in toilets, basements, crowded rooms, canteens, machine rooms, workshops, etc., so that the warm air is let out and fresh air enters through windows and doors.

**Air coolers** have also become very popular in offices. They draw in the air which place through water vapour and becomes cool. They are especially useful during the dry parts of the summer; but in the wet and warm parts of the year, they become "useless because they cool air through the process of moistening it".

**Room heaters** may be provided during the winter to keep the temperature of the workplace above the atmospheric temperature. **Air filters** may be used to ensure that the outside air which enters the room becomes dust-free and clean.

### **3. Air conditioning**

Air-conditioning is usually the most suitable form of ventilation. It contributes to mental activity and boosts the efficiency of employees. It is a costly system, but it eliminates the problems of cleanliness, heat and ventilation, humidity and noise, etc. An air conditioning system controls the circulation, temperature and humidity of air and removes foreign substances of an enclosed area.

### **4. Modular Design Equipment**

Some equipment have a modular construction starting with a fan unit, to which other units or modules can be added such as air purifiers, air sterilisers, air curtains and humidifiers, as required to provide for proper ventilation.

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## **Interior Decoration and Furnishing :**

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Interior decoration may be described as the art of a careful decoration of the interior of a room or a building. It has been found that an attractive decor not only adds to the appearance of a room, but has a psychological effect on the people working in it. Interior decoration involves:

- (i) A tasteful colouring of walls, doors and windows;
- (ii) Placing of attractive art objects, pictures, paintings and informative charts on the walls;
- (iii) Floor covering, curtains and wall hangings, etc.

Interior decoration stimulates better performance on the part of workers and creates a better impression on the minds of outsiders. According to G. Mills: "The decoration of an office can have a noticeable effect upon the morale of the staff. Drab surroundings

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are depressing, pleasant surrounding as are conducive to good work".'

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### **Office Furniture :**

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After deciding the layout of office accommodation and its decoration, it is necessary to turn to the furniture that is to be put in it. Office work is mostly indoor desk work, suitable furniture should therefore, be provided for office clerks so that they may be comfortable enough to perform office work speedily and efficiently. Office furniture is the basic facility with which the employee identifies himself. It is the duty of the office manager, therefore, to provide the right type of furniture in the office. It has been increasingly realised now that furniture is bought not only for its utility, but also for its appearance, and that its artistic design is worth paying for; it makes the office look more attractive, and appeals to the office workers who must use it." Modern and eloquently designed furniture not only improves the general efficiency of the employees, but adds to the prestige of the organisation as well. At the same time, furniture should be viewed as a long- term investment, for it is often difficult to make quick replacements because of the heavy cost involved in them.

The usual furniture found in any modern office includes desks, chairs and tables, racks, cabinets, cupboards, lockers, safe, trays, almirahs, etc. The number of pieces and the kind of furniture to be purchased for any office depend on various factors:

- (i) The number of departments and employees;
- (ii) The nature and volume of work to be performed; and
- (iii) The office space available for their suitable accommodation.

**Factors:** In selecting the furniture and other equipment to be used for a specific job. The following six questions" should be considered:

- (i) Is the working area adequate?
- (ii) Can the clerk work comfortably?
- (iii) Can the clerk use both hands?
- (iv) Can the job be supervised?
- (v) Is the work adequately protected against dust, loss or damage?
- (vi) Is there suitable provision for the clerk's personal effects?"

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### **Different Types of Furniture :**

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**Desk:** Most office work is handled on a desk, over a desk, through a desk or across a desk. Anything that improves the handling of desk work or which enables employees to work more effectively is, therefore, worth considering. The primary function of any desk is to provide a suitable surface for writing, checking, sorting, examining and conferring. Office machines are kept on desks in a proper position. They provide storage space for supplies, stationery and the papers and files that are in use.

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"Modern office methods are based on the 'clear desks' concept which aims at each person having on his desk only the actual work in hand, all other papers being filed away in their proper place, where people who need them can find them. Flat top desks are therefore, now the rule, and the roll-top desk with its hiding places is out of favour. Even the necessity for providing drawers in the desks of the general office staff is questioned in some quarters, where it is asserted that drawers are used only to hold personal belongings, old papers for which proper filing provision should be made, and jobs put-off from day-to-day. On the other hand, those who continually require certain forms or certain papers should have their supplies right at hand such as the typist and executives." Although it is necessary that each clerk should be provided with a desk which is suitable for his particular job, it is neither economical nor necessary to use more than a small number of designs. Moreover, the use of standardised and uniform desks gives a harmonious look to the office. On the basis of their use, the following types of desks may be provided.

**1. Executive Desks:** Executive desks are made in accordance with the taste of the executive, and are valued mostly for their good looks. Their purpose is to impress visitors and bring home to them the prestige and importance of persons using them. These are, generally speaking, double pedestal desks with a width of 150 cms. to 180 cms. a depth of 85 cms. and a height of 75cms. Each desk contains 3 or 4 drawers on the side the executive sits. Sharp edges and corners are avoided. The table top is covered with linoleum, glass or leather. Some executives prefer to have the entire surface covered with glass, while others cover only the writing area. If the top-glass is used, telephone numbers, visitors cards, etc., are placed under it.

**2. Special Purpose Desks:** These are designed for special use in offices and include the typist's desks calculating machine desks, collating desks, and so on. A typist's desk is the most common and perhaps the most important of this type and may be of the following types:"

- (a) Standard flat topped, single or double pedestal;
- (b) Desk with a fixed sunken well for the typewriter;
- (c) Desk fitted with a collapsible well into which the typewriter is fixed;
- (d) Desk with a fold-away mechanism, which enables the typist to house the typewriter in a cupboard provided in the pedestal of the desk, leaving a clear desk top for ordinary clerical work.

These desks are normally of 150 cms. width, 65 cms. in depth and 70 cms. to 75 cms. in height. Apart from these, L-shaped and Z-shaped modular desks may also be used for typing purposes.

Machine desks are designed to meet the needs of different types of machines - calculating, adding, billing and invoicing machines. A well is provided at either end of the desk for the machine so that it sits lower than the standard desk height.



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**3. Built-in Furniture:** Floor space can be conserved by the use of built-in or of collapsible furniture. Fitted furniture not only saves space, but economy is achieved in the material used for its construction. Permanent fixtures can be tailored to fit into wall recesses.

**4. General Clerical Desks:** There are mostly single pedestal desks of 120 cms. by 75 cms. with three or four drawers on one side. In some' offices, double pedestal desks are provided for the clerical staff.

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### **Modular or System Furniture :**

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In Western countries, modular furniture has become very popular. Modular or system furniture provides greater desk area and takes up the minimum floor space. Interlocking desk furniture, for example, offers as much as 25 per cent more desk area, and effects a saving of up to 33 per cent in floor space.

The greatest advantage of modular furniture is that it costs less per square foot of working area. But while it undoubtedly saves floor space, it suffers from one great limitation, viz., that it encourages talking among clerks or workers. But this difficulty can be overcome by erecting screens between individual desk units. A model of modular furniture is given in the following figure



(Fig.: 1 Modular furniture)



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## **Security Equipment :**

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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. No record or document should be taken out of the office premises by any person without permission from his superior officer. Security measures, however, vary from organisation-to-organisation. In some organisations - in military or defence production, for example - outsiders are not permitted to enter the main premises without the prior approval of the Administrative Officer. Even if permitted, they have to deposit their bags or containers at the gate against tokens. Similarly, in the strong rooms of banks, no outsider is allowed to enter. But this kind of security measures are not applied to other organisations, though care is taken to prevent any possibility of theft, removal or destruction of office records. All office records, however, do not enjoy the same importance. Important and valuable documents such as share certificates, debentures, deposit receipts, title deeds, bills of exchange, promissory notes, contracts, cheque books, registration documents, etc., are kept in office safes or bank lockers. Other documents like office files, correspondence, etc., are kept in safe places so that outsiders may not have access to them. For a proper security of official documents or records, it is necessary that the responsibility of particular employees should be fixed. They should be held responsible for any loss of official records or documents under their charge. In addition, the following modern security equipments as available for office as security device shall be installed which is listed below :

### **Security Equipments**

1. CCTV Cameras
2. Fire Alarm System
3. Spy Pen Camera
4. Intrusion System
5. Visitor Management System
6. Guard Monitoring System
7. Customised Security System
8. Security Surveillance System
9. Biometric Access Control System
10. Mobile Based Security System
11. Biometric Time Management System

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**Office Environment:** People work better if they are given the surroundings and equipment appropriate to their work. Office environment comprises of several things like office lighting, ventilation, temperature control, interior decoration and furnishing, office furniture, freedom from noise and dust, safety, sanitary arrangements, security and secrecy.

**Office Lighting:** The characteristics of office lighting are:

(1) Intensity, (2) Sufficient quantity, (3) No glare, and (4) No contrasts. There are five types of lighting systems.

(1) Direct. (2) Semi-direct. (3) Indirect, (4) Semi-indirect and (5) General diffuse.

**Lighting may be:**

(i) Natural or (ii) Artificial. Artificial lighting may be fluorescent or incandescent.

**Ventilation;** Ventilation in the office refers to the supply of clean and free air in the right amount, at the right temperature and of the right humidity. Proper ventilation is an important aspect of office environment. Ventilation may be natural or artificial. Artificial ventilation may be provided through: (1) Electric fans, (2) Exhaust fans, (3) Air coolers, (4) Room heaters, (5) Air filters, (6) Air conditioners, etc., provision should also be made for temperature heating and cooling and maintaining adequate level of humidity in the office.

**Interior Decoration:** It is the art of careful decoration of the interior of a room of a building and involves a proper choice of furniture. In selecting furniture, therefore, the following points should be borne in mind:

**It involves:**

(i) Attractive and modern furniture influence morale;

(ii) Suitability for the work to be done;

(iii) Suitable design and construction of the furniture;

(iv) Adaptability of furniture to multipurpose use;

(v) Good quality;

(vi) Sufficient quantity;

(vii) Reasonable cost;

(viii) Light weight;

(ix) Safety in use; and

(x) Minimum fire risk.

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Office furniture includes different types of desks, tables, chairs, fittings and accessories, and may be wood or steel, or it may be modular or system furniture.

**Security:** Security arrangements include ;

(i) Fire precaution; (ii) employment of security guards; and (iii) Control of employees by taking out fidelity guarantee insurance for them, by reference checking and by obtaining cash or bond security from them.

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### **Key Terms :**

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- Office environment : Conducive surrounding including both inside and outside.
- Location: Representing a site or place.
- Lease : Contract letting for a term.
- Layout : Space planning within the available floor space.
- Office Building: a Plot of land acquired appropriate to the requirements of the organization built upon it.
- Glare : An oppressive or unrelieved dazzling light or by light reflecting off a terminal.
- Ventilation : Refers the supply of clean and fresh air.
- Exhaust fan: It is the fan that expels the stagnant air from the room.
- Air Cooler: The air which place through water vapour and becomes cool.
- Room heater: Refers the temperature of the work place above the atmospheric temperature.
- Air conditioning: To equip a building bringing of the air to the desired state of purity, temperature and humidity.
- Modular : Some equipment which have units or modules.
- Interior decoration: Careful decoration of a room or building having attraction.
- Wall hanging: Refers paintings and art objects.
- Furnishing: Fittings with furniture, carpets curtains etc.
- Biometric : Finger impression or rating scan.
- Fire Alarm : An indicator of fire.

Spy pen : Short recording of Interactions used for personal protection.

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**Model questions :**

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1. You have been asked by your employer to choose an office location. What factors will you consider in doing so?
2. Briefly indicate the objectives of office layout and the principles on which it should be based.
3. Discuss the various factors that affect office location?
4. Explain the importance of a good working environment for staff. Discuss the considerations you will take into account while planning for office lighting, ventilation and furnishings.
5. "Good-working conditions in an office are a prerequisite for increasing the efficiency of office staff." Examine the statement, discussing the reasons. Also state the factors contributing to good working conditions.

