

Office Management

An office is a crucial and an essential part of every organisation, large or small. Whether it is a government institution, trading or manufacturing organisation, a hospital or an educational institution, the existence of an office is vital for the appropriate functioning of any kind of organization. The office acts as a storehouse and a nervous system of every operation within a business organization. A well-managed office is an essential assistance to the management and administration. It assists the management to plan its operations intelligently and to put them into action in a competent manner. The office co-ordinates all the activities and functions of the business. Without an effectual and a well-organised office, the business activities and functions cannot be implemented in a methodical and a systematic manner. The significance of an office arises from the fact that modern business, with its varied and complicated operations cannot be managed without the clerical and technical assistance and other functions such as record keeping, hence, office is an integral part of any organization or an institution. Without a well-organized office, it is not possible to implement all the activities and functions. Production, marketing, finance and personnel are the primary functions of any organization and office is stated to be the place where these functions are adequately put into operation. Information, knowledge and awareness are the key aspects that the workforce is required to possess, hence, office is an area where collecting, processing, storing and distributing of information is carried out. Therefore, it is vital to understand the concept of office management.

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Introduction

Office is considered to be an important place or section or an area for the conduct of any works, jobs, businesses or transactions. By the term business, it is understood, any work that is related to the office. The meaning of the term office is a place for the operation of business, the room or department, where the clerical work is done, or it can be stated that it is a place where professional and commercial transactions are implemented, or it is, a place where all sorts of activities within the organization are dealt with. Office is the centre of an organization (Upadhyay, Ladhe, Rai, Bhatkar & Upadhyay, 2015). Within an organization, there are various kinds of departments such as financial, production, clerical, technical, personnel, managerial, manufacturing, advertising and marketing, sales, training and so forth. The activities and functions of all the departments are implemented in places that are termed

as offices. In educational institutions also, there are various kinds of clerical and technical jobs that are implemented by the office workers, hence, office is stated to be an integral part of any organization or an institution.

Commercial office acts as a central directing and co-ordinating organisation of the various activities of any business. Efficient office management comprises a number of vital functions, including time management, organizing the paperwork in an adequate manner, workspace, managing multiple projects simultaneously, and being in control of all the job responsibilities (Upadhyay, Ladhe, Rai, Bhatkar & Upadhyay, 2015). Office is stated to be a place from where an organization plans, implements, controls and co-ordinates all the activities and functions; therefore, for this basic reason, efficient office management is regarded to be a crucial aspect that all the individuals employed within the organization are required to understand.

Factors Contributing to the Growth of Office Work

The various factors that contribute to the growth of office work have been stated as follows: (Chopra & Gauri, 2015).

In the present existence, there has been a tremendous increase in the office work; with the growth of economy, advancement of technology and with the origin of other innovative methods and techniques, office work has been given significance. The individuals are making use of all the modern innovative techniques and methods in order to increase their business and operations. As the organization expands, then certainly there is an increase in paperwork and other activities and functions, therefore, expansion is considered to be one factor that has led to the growth of office work.

The management has increased awareness and information amongst themselves even about the external affairs. It is important that in order to implement all the activities and functions in an adequate manner, management should be regularly informed and kept updated. Decision making is also regarded to be an important aspect that a person makes when he is aware of all the approaches and the strategies. Therefore, generation of awareness, knowledge and information is regarded to be an important area that has led to the growth of office work.

The recognition of the indispensability of the Research & Development (R&D) activities for the survival and growth during the present existence has given significance to the office work. Business houses are increasingly having R&D in aspects such as marketing,

products, manufacturing, services, etc. In other words, all these activities require Research & Development, which leads to an increase in office work.

The increase in an information demand of the governments are also causing growth of office work on a continuous basis. Every business organisation has to prepare income tax returns, sales tax returns, provident fund deductions, and ESI deduction statements, financial statements, etc., for individuals as well as for the government. All this involves increase in office functions.

With the growth in the number and magnitude of service activities such as, banking, insurance companies, advertising, marketing, mail order houses, and so on, with which a particular business has to deal with, leads to an increase in office work. These activities require great amount of paperwork and large proportions of office workers have to be employed to process the abundant records. When any activities are conducted with the external and internal sources, even when recruitment of the staff takes place, it is vital to maintain records of all the activities and the personnel employed, hence, this factor also leads to an increase in office work.

Another reason that led to an increase in office work is due to the unsuccessfulness that has been experienced to modernize and simplify the office practices in keeping time with the changing requirements of the office. There has been an increase in employment and training of more and more office workers, so that they depict efficiency in maintenance of the records. In the present existence, there has been an increase in the usage of technology, and efficient and skilled personnel are required to make use of technology in order to implement all the activities and functions.

Functions of Office Management

When office management has to be implemented in an operative manner, there are certain functions that need to be taken into consideration and these have been stated as follows: (Office Management and Modern Office and its Functions, n.d.).

Planning – Planning is concerned with dealing in advance what is to be done; it is the first fundamental function of management. It makes provision of the instructions and courses of action that are required by the managers in order to achieve the goals. Planning is the selecting and relating of facts, and making and using the assumptions regarding the future in the conception and devising of activities that are required to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

Organising – Organising is the process of combining the works done by the individuals or a group to perform the facilities that are required by the personnel to achieve the desired objectives. The duties performed by the individuals make provision of the passage for the resourceful, logical, constructive and synchronized application of the available determinations.

Staffing – The function of staffing within an organization refers to the recruitment of the individuals into various jobs and positions in accordance with their qualifications, skills and capabilities. When the employees are recruited, for a certain period of time, they are given training about the organization, its objectives and the job functions, which they are required to perform. Therefore, staffing refers to the methods of selection, recruitment, training, development, promotion and remuneration of employees.

Directing – The function of directing refers to the manners and ways in which the superiors and the employers make provision of directions to their subordinates. Their main objective is to lead them towards the right path. It includes, leadership, communication and supervision. Leadership is the ability to influence the individuals to endeavour enthusiastically for the realization of mutual objectives. Communication is the process of transferring information from one person to the other person; there are various means of communication such as oral, written, and the usage of technological devices to communicate. It includes speaking, listening and responding. The function of supervision also comes under directing, it includes attempts to bring about conventionality between the planned and the actual outcomes.

Motivating – Motivating is the process of stimulating the individual to take action in order to bring about the satisfaction of the requirements and the accomplishment of the desired objectives. The process of motivation moves an individual to perform, work and to take action; this can be done either by the use of power or force, strictness is also sometimes adopted by the employers or the superiors in order to motivate their subordinates. The provision of inducements, benefits and incentives is another way to motivate the employees, when they are offered benefits, then they get motivated to work and satisfying the needs of the employees is another way to motivate them towards the achievement of the desired objectives.

Co-ordinating – It means monitoring, balancing and keeping the team together by ensuring the suitable allocation of tasks and works to various members in accordance to their skills and abilities. Under this function, it is also important to make sure that tasks are

performed with an opinion amongst the members themselves. There should be a synchronization amongst the workforce employed within an organization.

Basic Functions Implemented within an Office

The basic functions implemented within an office are stated as follows: (Chopra & Gauri, 2015).

Receiving Information - Information relating to the functions within an organisation may be received from numerous sources, which may be internal sources and external sources. From internal sources, information may be received from various departments, sections or divisions of the organisation. From external sources, it may be received from suppliers, customers, visitors, other organisations, government departments, and so forth. Examples of the forms in which information is generally received are letters, telephone calls, orders, invoices and reports on the various activities of a business. In addition to receiving the information that may come into the business, the office has the responsibility of obtaining any further information which the management may require.

Recording Information - The objective of keeping records is to make information freely available to the management, whenever it is required. For this purpose, the information that is established, is transformed into some form of written record. The records generally retained in a business office include, financial and cost accounts, orders, progress of work, hours worked by the employees, correspondence, marketing and selling transactions, client records and so forth. While some records are vital to be kept by law, some others should be kept to meet the requirements of the management in planning and controlling the business. The records so maintained by the office serve as a reference library for future use.

Arranging Information - The information collected by an office is infrequently in the form in which it is distributed; facts and data have to be gathered from various sources and the functions such as calculations, tabulations, etc., these are required to be adequately implemented. An office is accountable for supplying information in the form which best serves the purpose of the management, this is a function of the utmost significance and which must be carried out by an accurately trained staff. Examples of arranging information are: preparing invoices, payrolls, cost accounting statements, statistical statements, and reports. The functions of classification of receipts, balance sheet, accounting of non-trading concerns, profit determination etc. also come under arrangement of information (Modern Office Management, 2010).

Giving Information - An office provides information from its records as and when it is required by the management. The information required by the management may be of an

unchanging or of a distinct nature, and may be delivered verbally or in writing. Examples of giving information are instructions, notices, estimations, bills, progress reports, statements of accounts, statistical and financial statements, and instructions issued on behalf of the management. All this work involves typing, duplicating, telephoning, mailing, tele-printing, emailing, messaging and it is in the form of hand written letters.

Administrative Functions Implemented within an Office

There are certain administrative functions that need to be performed for the appropriate functioning of the office and these have been classified as follows: (Chopra & Gauri, 2015).

Management Functions – For the efficient functioning of the office, the management functions are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, communicating, controlling, co-ordinating and motivating. The workforce at various levels are required to possess the adequate knowledge of all these functions; within the organization, the individuals are in the hierarchical level and all of them should possess knowledge of how to implement a plan, organize it and adequately put it into operation. Proper control is required to get exercised upon all the activities of the organization.

Public Relations Functions – Within an organization, the office is required to conduct its operations resourcefully and is required to maintain cordial relations with other departments in the organisation but also with the external sources. Productivity can be enhanced and profit can be incurred only when the organization has maintained amiable relations with the customers and other internal and external sources. Therefore, it has to perform public relations functions in a well-organized manner. Appropriate public relations augment the standing and goodwill of the organisation. Public relations include the reception service, the liaison service, identifying the customer demands and so forth.

Instituting Office Systems and Routines - Systems and routines specify a planned and systematic method to the problem of management. A system may be regarded as a planned strategy to the realization of the preferred goals. An office routine may be defined as a sequence of procedures in the performance of office work, each procedure in the sequence being performed in the same order and in the same way every time. A procedure is a planned sequence of operations for the usage of recurring business transactions consistently and regularly. Office routines, systems and procedures, should be developed to make sure a continuous and an even flow of office work, so that it may be competently performed.

Retention of Records - Office records include directories, books, letters, invoices, information in registers, orders, financial and cost records, reports, statistical records,

minutes, technical records and so forth. These records have to be retained for future reference. Apart from maintaining records, which is a basic function, an office has to perform functions like those of filing and indexing, and the maintenance and demolition of outdated records.

Safeguarding Assets - It is the function of an office to safeguard the assets of the organisation, which may include fixed assets like building, plant, machinery, office equipment, lighting and air-conditioning equipment; or which may be movable assets like furniture, typewriters, calculating or accounting machines, computers, equipment of various types; or which may be in the form of cash, title deeds, securities, records and documents, and so forth. Important records such as main agreements and bonds must be accurately safe; cash must be held in safety or put in a bank; stock records must be adequately maintained and scarcities may be directly brought to the awareness of the management. Fixed assets should be protected against hazards of fire and theft by having appropriate insurance policies and by other means.

Form Designing and Control - Since office work is in most cases regarded as paper work, office forms are comprehensively used to accomplish the recording function of the office. A form is a consistent record which is used to collect and communicate information for reference purposes. Office forms serve as a storehouse of information. It is the job of the management to project, homogenize, produce and control the forms to be utilized in the office as well as the other departments of the organisation.

Stationery and Supplies Control - Office work requires the supply of office stationery of suitable quality and in adequate quantity. It is the duty of the office to cautiously procure and maintain an adequate supply of the stationery items. Since stationery is a costly item, in the present existence, it should be bought at inexpensive prices in economic order quantities; practical levels of stock must be sustained and made available at all times; it should be issued only against authorised applications and stored methodically to circumvent impairment, loss or weakening.

Selection and Purchase of Office Appliances - Office work also requires suitable equipment and machines, which includes, furniture, fixtures, telephones, intercom systems, computers, lap-tops, smartphones, dicta-phones, calculators, accounting machines, filing cabinets and drawers, typewriters, duplicators, and so forth. It is the job of the office manager to purchase and make provision of the right type of machines, equipment or furniture in order to implement all the functions in a productive manner and in accordance to the requirements

of the office, and it is important to make sure that all the appliances are in an appropriate working order.

Personnel Function - The competency and efficacy of the office functions depends on the personnel that are employed. The personnel should be methodically engaged and skilled, and should be assigned work after an appropriate assessment. The personnel function is performed by the personnel department, which is generally assisted by the office. The office manager is required to make a provision of acceptable and trained staff to guarantee the methodical, appropriate and proficient performance of the work duties. Job evaluation and quality rating should be occasionally done; the staff should receive rational compensation and salary and should be accurately encouraged to accomplish the performance to the best of their abilities. Opportunities for improvement and advancement should be made available to the office staff.

Controlling Office Costs – The function of controlling office costs is done by: mechanization of the office, adopting time and labour saving devices in the office, utilizing enhanced forms, procedures, methods and techniques, conducting an investigation of the existing office routines and adopting improved ones and processing the available information in order to make effective decisions, as decision making is a fundamental part of office functions (Distance Training Course on Office Management, n.d.).

Conclusion

Office management is a vital area to understand and research upon, the reason being that in any kind of organization or an institution, the various functions with regards to management, administration, personnel, clerical, technical, finance, marketing, production, advertisement and so forth are carried out at a place, which is known as office. The purpose of the office is mainly to provide services of communication and of record; office is in fact a processing medium, it is responsible for directing and co-ordinating various activities and functions of the organization. An office in an organizational structure is just like the brain in the human body. Office directs and co-ordinates the activities of the various departments, the policies of the business are planned and their implementation is ensured within an office. All the records of the business are preserved; financial, client, employees, production, stock, inventory etc. All the internal and the external transactions and dealings, all kinds of correspondences are the major office functions. The maintenance of accounts, balance sheets, production records, sales information, advertising and marketing concerns, event

management, statutory and non-statutory books are the major functions that are carried out within an office.

The major office functions are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, motivating, and co-ordinating. In an office, the functions have been classified into two categories, basic functions and administrative functions; the basic functions are receiving information, recording information, arranging information and giving information. The administrative functions are, management functions, public relations functions, instituting office systems and routines, retention of records, safeguarding assets, form designing and control, stationary and supplies control, selection and purchase of office appliances, personnel function and controlling office costs. The significance of office within an organization is further understood, taking into consideration, the areas, office is regarded as the information centre, intermediary, co-ordinator, service centre, administrative nerve centre and control centre.

It is vital for the workforce to implement all the major functions and activities of the office in a well-organized manner, plan the operations intelligently, to put the plans into operations in a competent manner, to make sure that planning is done in an improved manner, to determine the effectiveness of the plans in a prompt manner, to evaluate the outcomes without any kind of delay and to co-ordinate all the activities of the business in an effectual manner. All the tasks, functions and activities within the office should be implemented, taking into consideration the objectives of the organization and the needs of the workforce.

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