17th Revised & Updated Edition

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Dr. R.K. Chopra
Priyanka Gauri

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

(A Textbook of B.Com., B.A. (V.S.), D.C.L., M.Com., M.B.A. and a Reference Manual for I.C.W.A. (Inter.), C.S. (Prel.), C.A. and other Professional and Competitive Examinations)

DR. R.K. CHOPRA

M.Com., LL.B., D.C.L. (I.L.I.), D.L.L., L.F.I.I., Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Commerce,
College of Vocational Studies,
University of Delhi.

PRIYANKA GAURI

M.Com. (DU), M.Phil., U.G.C. NET
'O' Level, DOEACC/NIELIT (A Grade)
Assistant Professor,
Deptt. of Commerce,
Daulat Ram College,
University of Delhi.

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTEENTH EDITION

Future has suddenly arrived. The onset of twenty-first century has seen the Modern Office undergoing a technical revolution resulting in radical changes. A comparison of today's office with the office of a decade earlier explains the advent of information explosion and tremendous transformations resulting in the way in which the office was managed undergoing a rapid and remarkable change. Information technology is changing with the speed of thought and the management of Modern Office is now much faster, expeditious and a lot better.

The advent of **Internet, E-mail, Pen Drive, Tablet PC, Blue-ray Disc, Voice and Handwriting Recognition Software, PC enabled Mobile Phones, Internet Mobile Phones, 3G, 4G and 4GS 5G, 6 and 6 plus phones, g phones, Voice Mail, Wi-Fi Technology, Broadband spectrum, L.C.D., L.E.D. and Plasma T.V.s, Tele and Videoconferencing, CISCO Telepresence, 3D Videoconferencing, LAN and WAN, Vennfur, Vivid Office 2000, Cloud Computing, Virtualisation and Ubuntu** and several other technologies and gadgets have changed the face of Modern Office. The phrases like "The Paperless Office", "The Global Office", "The Mobile Office", and the "Office in Your Pocket" have come to be recognised as relevant and feasible.

The contemporary office is providing innumerable opportunities to be capitalised by the Modern Office Manager. Unless the Modern Office Manager is willing to think about the future constantly and incorporates the changes that are taking place, he is destined to find a place in oblivion.

The present **thoroughly revised and enlarged sixteenth edition** of the book *"Office Management"* incorporates most of the changes that have taken place in the realm of Office Management. The book has been restructured in the light of advancements made in the mechanisation of office and office communication. Also, a lot of obsolete material has been deleted or updated. The book completely covers the syllabi of Indian Universities and Professional and Competitive Examinations.

The book contains University and Professional examination questions and technological innovations till the end of 2014. While the book is geared specifically for the University and Professional students, it is equally suitable for teaching community and practising managers.

A large number of new topics have been introduced in the book for the first time. Some topics which deserve special attention of the reader, include the following:

Black Berry 373, Blue-Ray Disc 375, Telepresence 375, Cross Wire Communication 340, Computer Conferencing 366, JAVA 219, NEC Vivid Office 2020, 377, Quite Office 133, Radio Telephone 349, Telecommunication 365, Teleconferencing 366, Videophone System 353, Videoconferencing 367, Vennfur 368, Vertu 371, Virtual Office 18, MICR Forms 258, OCR Forms 258, Wi-Fi Technology 374, Cloud Computing 232, Wireless Printing 204, 3D printing, Internet of Things (IoT)239, Sixth Sense Technology 237, Power Bank 237, etc.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

An office is a tool of management. It is intended to assist in managing a business most economically and efficiently. Office Management is that branch of management which is concerned with the performance of office functions, with the application of the principles of management to get work done through the office. The basic functions of a modern office are to receive and collect information, record it, arrange and process it and communicate it. Recently, the term *'Information Management'* has gained a wider currency than the term *'Office Management'*. There are other terms such as the *'Administrative Office Management', 'Scientific Office Management',* etc., which are being used to reflect the new status of office responsibility and to recognise the importance of office functions. The present book 'Office Management' is intended to present knowledge and concepts relating to current developments and authoritative thinking in the area of Office Management.

W.H. Walley writes, *"The problems facing an author who writes about improving office or administrative efficiency are several and conflicting: his book must be succinct yet practical; concise yet detailed enough to serve as a reference book; it must be free from theorising about vague managerial concepts and yet make reference to the broader aspects of company policy from which concerted managerial action can spring".*

This text, although primarily written for College and Professional level Office Management courses, shall prove to be very useful as a reference manual for Office Managers. The 'How to' approach contained throughout the text makes it especially useful as a reference manual. The text is purposive, informative and succinct. Several unique features have been incorporated into the text to aid the student/reader in the learning process.

1. Some topics which deserve special attention of the reader, include the following:

The Changing Office Scene 1.10. Administrative Office Management 2.15. Information Management 2.17. Scientific Office Management 2.17. What Management Expects of Office Manager 2.11. Urban vs. Suburban Location 3.2. Re-layout of an Office 3.13. Open and Private Offices 3.14. New Trends in Office Layout 3.17. How to Save Electricity 4.5. Interior Decoration 4.8. Modular or Systems *Furniture 4.15. Fire Precautions 4.19. Systems Concept 5.3. Systems Analysis 5.4. Flow of Work 5.9. Systems Illustrated 5.16. Departmentation of Office 6.6. Criteria for Selection of Office Machines 7.4. Punch Card Machines 7.32. Electronic Computers 7.34. Forms Control 8.3. Forms Designing 8.6. Form sets 8.15. Continuous Stationery 8.16. Records Management Manual 9.3. Records Management Process 9.4. Visible Card Indexing 9.31. Filing Manual 9.35. Filing Routine 9.34. Records Retention 9.36. How to Keep Down Stationery Cost 10.3. Standardisation of Office Supplies 1.6. Control Over Stationery in Stores 10.12. Office Manager and Stationery Control 10.17. The Communication Process 11.2. Mechanical Communication 11.10. Staff Location System 11.14. Drafting and Composing Correspondence 12.4. The Typing Pool 12.9. Report Writing 13.5. Specimens of Reports 13.8. Precis* Writing *13.10. The Employment Function 14.5. Methods of Training 14.19. Salary Administration 14.24. Morale 14.34. Suggestion System 14.38. Group Insurance 14.39, etc.*

2. A large number of authoritative definitions, opinions and quotations on the subject have been included in the book at appropriate places.

3. A large number (279 in all) of study questions have been added at the end of each chapter. All these questions have been taken only from the question papers of various University, Professional and Competitive Examinations.

4. A select bibliography of over 100 books related to 'Office Management', has been given at the end of the book. The subject index to the book also enhances the utility of the book.

5. The book is intended particularly for the students preparing for **B.Com., B.A. (V.S.), D.C.L., M.Com., M.B.A.,** in the Universities and also for the students pursuing their Professional Courses such as **Co. Sectt., I.C.W.A. (Inter.), C.A.,** etc. The book would also prove a useful companion to the professional executives, who may find in it a source of ready reference. An effort has been made to project the Indian Office Equipment and Machines with which the Indian Office Manager is familiar.

DR. R.K. CHOPRA

CONTENTS

1

Modern Office
and
Its Functions

- -

> *"An Office may be regarded as a place where the control mechanisms of an organisation are located."*
> — GEORGE R. TERRY

INTRODUCTION

The complexities of business activities are increasing day-by-day. With the spectacular developments and advances in the fields of science and technology the manufacturing techniques have undergone a rapid change. The economies of large-scale production have brought into being a number of multinational business organisations. The ever-widening markets also pose a challenge by themselves. The complexities of legal provisions (of industrial and business legislation), which are subject to constant change, to achieve social objectives, also require more than adequate attention. Moreover, modern management has to take care of the new emerging human relations in business. All these problems can be satisfactorily tackled only when adequate information is available. Information is required by all the members of an enterprise. An efficient and effective organisation and management must possess all the information it needs to enable it to come to a variety of decisions. To retain information, to analyse it and furnish it for the management, are the basic functions of a modern office. So much so that the phrase *'Information Management'* has gained currency in preference to the older one *'Office Management'*. The reason is that *Information Management* connotes more precisely the activities performed by a modern office.

MEANING OF OFFICE

In common parlance, an office is understood to be a place where clerical work is performed and where all kinds of paperwork (letters, correspondence, files, records, etc.), is maintained and dealt with. It is "a central place where all sorts of clerical work is done to coordinate and control the affairs of the whole organisation". A few definitions may be noted:

(i) "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."

— Mills & Standingford

(ii) "An Office is the place where the control mechanisms for an enterprise are located; where records are initiated for communication, control and efficient operations of the enterprise."

(iii) "An Office is the place where work in connection with the preparing and furnishing of information is done."

(iv) "The acts of collecting, processing, storing and distributing information comprise the functions of the Office." *—George R. Terry*

(v) "An Office is a place where business is transacted or professional services are available.

— Random House Dictionary

It may be noted that these definitions emphasise "paperwork" as the main and perhaps the only function of an Office. However, in modern business, the term *Office* is used in a still broader sense. Consider the following statement:

"It is a mistake to regard an Office as a specific place — instead we are forced to conclude that an Office exists anywhere, that certain kinds of work are performed."

— Edward Roche

The modern approach to the study of the term *Office* is to view it as a function rather than a particular place. When an *Office* is regarded as a function. "It can plan, organise, coordinate, standardise and supervise paperwork, wherever it is done and whosoever does it." But if it is viewed as a certain place only, the "paperwork" done outside the boundaries of that place called the Office would not be under its control. The Office Manager in such a case is responsible only for the paperwork falling within his own department. For instance, minutes of board meetings, financial records, sales and purchase records, are all integral parts of the operation of a business and must be planned, organised and controlled to ensure an effective administration of the business enterprise.

According to Leffingwell and Robinson,[1] "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."

In the words of Charles O. Libbey: "The office is not in one place; no matter how much we centralise its services, there will still be office work at the point of use. Some enterprises are almost all Office. The activities of the Office do not, strictly speaking, constitute a function; they are parts of all functions."

To conclude, it may be said that an "office" refers to the functions performed by a certain set of persons rather than the place, where clerical work is done; and the act of collecting, processing, storing and distributing information comprise the functions of an office.

---

1. Textbook of Office Management.

OFFICE WORK

According to an old concept, "Office Work" is concerned primarily with the records of an enterprise — making records, using records and preserving them for future reference. This concept postulates Office Work as clerical work. For instance, communication, mechanical data processing, planning and scheduling, etc., are all within the scope of Office activities, and may, therefore, be referred to as Office Work. According to G.R. Terry, "Office Work includes verbal transmission of information as production of written records and reports in order to provide the means for quickly summarising large amount of data to supply a factual basis of managerial control". According to Leffingwell and Robinson: "Office Work is concerned with records and statistics, with communication, with computing, with planning and scheduling. Every office task comes within the scope of one or the other of these activities". *Office Work,* by its nature, is Office Work; who does it or where it is done are of little significance. It may be done by a clerk or an officer at a place called the Office or by a foreman in a factory, or by a salesman on the road or by an executive at his residence. "Office Work is, therefore, primarily concerned with making, preserving and using records — the records about purchasing, producing, selling, accounting and correspondence, inventories and written or printed memorandums of all kinds. These records may be required in an organisation for an efficient and effective control of its operations. It is one of the means by which each department of a business carries out its functions and by which it coordinates its duties with those of other departments."

Various research studies on Office Work have revealed that about one half of the total Office time is consumed in typing and duplicating activities and about one-third of the total office time is taken up in filing, indexing, checking, mailing, communication, etc. Some variations in this matter may be there depending upon the degree of mechanisation of Office activities. An important characteristic of Office Work is the difficulty of its measurement. This is because of the following factors:

1. Office Work is predominantly mental work, which is difficult to measure.
2. There is greater variability of volume of work from office to office.
3. There is irregularity in the flow of Office Work.
4. It is difficult to standardise several operations in the Office.

Since the Office Work cannot be accurately measured, it is difficult to fix precise standards in respect of individuals and sections of the organisation involved in carrying out Office Work.

Factors Contributing to the Growth of Office Work

The amount of Office Work has grown tremendously in our modern economy. With the growth of industrial revolution and the expansion of economic activities, the quantum of Office Work has increased manifold. In addition, the following factors have also contributed to the growth of Office Work:

1. Increase in size and complexity of business caused the growth of Office Work. As the organisation grows in size, the paperwork grows at a geometrical rate.
2. Management is becoming increasingly aware of the need for proper and timely information on all the aspects of the business operations so as to arrive at intelligent decisions.

3. Recognising the indispensability of Research and Development (R&D) activities for survival and growth in modern times, business houses are increasingly having R&D in such aspects as markets, products, manufacturing processes, etc. As a result, additional Office Work is caused.

4. The ever-increasing information demand of governments are also continuously causing growth of Office Work. 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 activities.

5. With the increase in number and size of service activities like banking, insurance companies, advertising, mail order houses, etc., with which a particular business has to deal, Office Work has grown. These activities require large amount of paperwork and large proportions of Office Workers have to be employed to process the voluminous records.

6. A large amount of growth of Office Work occurred because of failure to modernise and simplify office practices in keeping time with changing requirements of the office. There has been a tendency to employ more and more office workers rather than devising ways of dealing with the situation, more effectively.

OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Each office has a personality of its own. This personality is a reflection of the purposes 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 a research and development Office. "In organising a new office, the Office Manager must first determine the prime reason for the existence of that Office and then add the necessary ingredients to bring about an efficient operating entity that achieves predetermined results.[2] Although offices differ from one another in prime responsibility, many activities are commonly carried out by all the offices. Some of these activities[3] are:

   (i) Processing Incoming Mail;

  (ii) Processing Outgoing Mail;

 (iii) Dictation;

 (iv) Transcription;

  (v) Typing;

 (vi) Printing;

(vii) Copying;

(viii) Filing;

2. C. Spencer Everhardt, *Organising and Staffing the Office.*

3. Dicter Jaeger provides a complete list of Office activities which include: (1) Accounting. (2) Internal auditing. (3) Credit and collection. (4) Companywide budgets. (5) Budgets for the Office (6) Planning new Office building (7) Office space planning. (8) Recruitment. (9) Training Office staff. (10) Office maintenance. (11) Office decor. (12) Office security. (13) Administrative systems and procedures. (14) Computer operations. (15) Planning work for computers. (16) Electronic accounting machine room. (17) Management information systems. (18) Purchase of big equipment, *e.g.,* computers, large accounting machines, etc. (19) Purchase of desk type of equipment. (20) Office supplies. (21) Copying and duplicating. (22) In-house printing. (23) Purchased printing (24) Records management. (25) Central-files (26) Microfilm services. (27) Library. (28) Communications (Telephone, Telex, Fax, etc.) (29) Mail and messenger. (30) Cafeteria, dining room, etc. (See Carl Heyel, *Handbook of Modern Office Management,* etc.)

(ix) Records Retrieval;

 (x) Records Disposal; and

(xi) Communication.

THE PURPOSE OF AN OFFICE

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

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

OFFICE FUNCTIONS

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

 I. Basic functions (or routine functions); and

 II. Administrative management functions.

I. Basic Functions

According to Terry,[4] "the acts of collecting, processing, storing and distributing information comprise the basic functions of the office". According to Mills and Standingford,[5] "the purpose of the Office has been defined as the providing of a service of communication and record"; Denyer,[6] however, says: "The basic functions of an office can be said to be receiving, recording, arranging (and analysing) and the giving of information". In the work of any Office, be it sales, purchasing, personnel or even the drawing office, it will be seen that this is done most of the time. In fact, a leading spokesman of the Institute of Office Management has referred to the Office Manager as the "Information Manager".

The basic functions of an office may be analysed under the following headings:

1. Receiving Information: Information relating to the activities of an organisation may be received from a variety of sources, which may be internal sources or 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, etc. Examples of the form in which information is normally received are letters, telephone calls, orders, invoices and reports on the various activities of a business. In addition to receiving such information as may come into the business, the office has the duty of obtaining any further information which the management may require.

2. Recording Information: The object of keeping records is to make information readily available to the management, whenever required. For this purpose, the information that is received,

---

4. George R. Terry, *Office Management and Control.*

5. Mills and Standingford, *Office Organisation and Methods.*

6. J.C. Denyer, *Office Management.*

is converted into some form of written record. The records normally kept in a business office include financial and cost accounts, orders, progress of work, hours worked by employees, correspondence, etc. While some records are required to be kept by law, some others should be kept to meet the needs of the management in planning and controlling the business. The records so maintained by the Office serve as a reference library for future use.

3. Arranging Information: The information accumulated by an office is rarely in the form in which it is given out; facts have to be gathered from various sources and calculations, tabulations, etc., may have to be made. An office is responsible for supplying information in the form which best serves the purpose of the management, and this is a function of the highest importance and which must be carried out by a properly trained staff. Examples of arranging information are: preparing invoices, payrolls, cost accounting statements, statistical statements, and reports.

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

II. Administrative Management Functions

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

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

(a) Planning;

(b) Organising;

(c) Staffing;

(d) Directing;

(e) Communicating;

(f) Controlling;

(g) Coordinating;

(h) Motivating.

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

2. Public Relations Function: An office has not only to maintain cordial relations with other departments in the organisation but also with outsiders. It has, therefore, to perform public relations function as well. Good public relations enhance the reputation and goodwill of the organisation. Public relations include the reception service, the liaison service, etc., provided by the organisation.

3. Instituting Office Systems and Routines: Systems and routines indicate a planned and systematic approach to the problem of management. A system may be regarded as a planned approach to the attainment of desired objectives.[7] An office routine may be defined as a series of steps in the performance of Office Work, each step in the series being performed in the same order and in the same way every time.[8] A procedure is a planned sequence of operations for the handling of recurring business transactions uniformly and consistently.[9] Office routines, systems and procedures, etc., should be developed to ensure an uninterrupted and smooth flow of Office Work so that it may be efficiently performed.

4. Retention of Records: Office records include correspondence, letters, invoices, orders. financial and cost records, reports, statistical records, minutes, etc. These records have to be retained for future reference. Apart from maintaining records, which is a basic function (see 'Recording Information' above under the heading "Basic Functions"), an Office has to perform functions like those of filing and indexing, and the preservations and destruction of outdated records.

5. Safeguarding Assets: It is the function of an office to safeguard the assets of the organisation, which may be fixed assets like building, plant, machinery, office equipment, lighting and air-conditioning equipment; or which may be movable assets like furniture, typewriters, calculating or accounting machines, equipment of various types; or which may be in the form of cash, title deeds, securities, records and documents, etc. Vital records such as major contracts must be properly protected; cash must be held in safety or banked; stock records must be properly maintained and deficiencies may be immediately brought to the notice of the management; fixed assets should be protected against hazards of fire and theft by taking out suitable insurance policies and by other means.

6. Form Designing and Control: Since office work is mostly paper work, office forms are extensively used to perform the recording function of the office. "A form is a standardised record which is used to accumulate and transmit information for reference purposes." office forms serve as a store-house of information. It is the task of the management to design, standardise, produce and control the forms to be used in the Office as well as the other departments of the organisation.

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

8. Selection and Purchase of Office Appliances: Office Work also requires adequate equipment and machines — furniture, fixtures, telephones, intercom systems, dictaphones, calculators, accounting machines, filing cabinets and drawers, typewriters, duplicators, (and, in some cases, computers), etc. It is the duty of the Office Manager to purchase the right type of machines, equipment or furniture (according to the requirements of the office), and also to maintain these in efficient working order. The principles which should be followed in the selection of office appliances include:

---

7. Littlefield and Rachel, *Administrative Office Management.*
8. Leffingwell and Robinson, *op. cit.*
9. Neuner and Keeling, *Modern Office Management.*

(a) Full and proper use;

(b) Suitability for the purpose for which purchased;

(c) Simplicity of operation and maintenance;

(d) Flexibility and adaptability to different uses; and

(e) Analysis of cost and benefit. Appliances should be purchased, keeping in view the financial resources of the organisation.

9. Personnel Function: The efficiency of an Office depends on the personnel manning it. The personnel should be scientifically recruited and trained, and assigned work after a proper appraisal. The personnel function is performed by the personnel department, which is generally assisted by the office. The Office Manager must make a provision of adequate and trained staff to ensure the systematic, timely and efficient performance of Office Work. Job evaluation and merit rating should be periodically done; the staff should receive reasonable remuneration and should be properly motivated to attain the best performance. Opportunities for betterment and promotion should be made available to the Office staff.

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

(a) Mechanisation of the Office;

(b) Adopting time and labour saving devices in the Office;

(c) Using better forms;

(d) Analysing the existing Office routines and adopting improved ones.

Importance of Office

An office is an important and indispensable part of every organisation, big or small. Be it a government institution, trading or manufacturing organisation, a hospital or an educational institution, an office is vital for its functioning. The office acts as a storehouse and nervous system of every operation of a business concern. A well managed Office is an indispensable aid to management. It helps the management to plan its operations intelligently and to put them in action competently. The office coordinates all the activities of the business. Without an efficient and organised Office, business activities cannot be carried through systematically.

"The importance of the office to a business enterprise arises from the fact that a modern business, with its varied and complicated operations, cannot be managed efficiently without clerical assistance in some form or the other." In fact, 'competent clerical service is a precondition for the efficient conduct of business affairs'. It has been rightly said that "the office is to a business what the mainspring is to a watch".[10]

Maynard[11] has outlined the importance of the office in the following manner:

(i) The Office is the locus of company policy — the place in which it is formed and from where it is executed.

---

10. LK Dicksee, *Office Organisation and Management.*

11. Maynard *Handbook of Business Administration.*

(ii) The Office is the information hub of the company. It is the intelligence centre for the coordination of vital activities. Here is "memory" — on papers, cards, tapes and microfilm; in letters, reports, files and ledgers. Here is calculating and data processability.

(iii) The Office is the company's intermediary with customers, vendors and others outside the organisation. It bills, collects, pays and corresponds.

(iv) The Office is an overseer of the office furniture, machines and supplies for all or most of the firm — buying, leasing, maintaining and replacing them.

 (v) The Office is the centre of the personnel function, supplying people for the work-force and setting standards of performance and compensation.

(vi) The Office is the provider of other special services — offering to all divisions, in one way or another, methods, analyses, internal communication systems, copying and duplicating facilities, mass-feeding facilities, environmental controls, and much more.
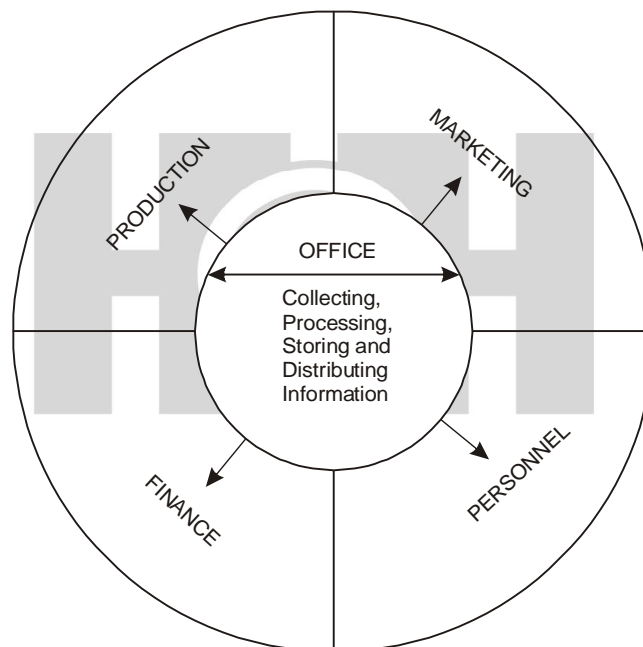
Fig. 1.1 Office as Information Centre

The importance of an Office to a business enterprise may be further studied with the help of the following points:

1. Office as Information Centre: An office may be described as the information centre of a business. It collects information from all sources, internal and external, records it, arranges and analyses it and provides it to the management when required. (See "Functions" above). The information furnished by an office helps the management to forecast and plan its operations well in advance and to exercise control over the entire spectrum of business activities. An office is also called a "storehouse of information" or a "memory centre of an organisation" since all kinds of information and figures, whether past or present, are available in the office.

2. Office as an Intermediary: An office connects different departments with the outsiders and *vice versa*. For instance, all the "purchase orders" are routed through the office and all the "sales orders" are received through the office. It is office that links the business organisation with its suppliers, customers, the Government and the general public. It is, in short, responsible for:

(*i*) Attending to enquiries, orders and complaints of its customers and suppliers;

(*ii*) Creating a good image of the organisation in the minds of people; and

(*iii*) Maintaining liaison with the Government and other institutions.

3. Office as a Coordinator: The processing of information in a modern office may be grouped under four headings: namely, communications, written and oral; computing and summarising operating results; record-keeping through accounting and filing records; and systematisation and cost reduction — through systems and procedures analyses. These four activities are necessary for the efficient coordination of production, distribution, and financing of the merchandise or services in a business concern. This coordination is provided by the focal centre — the office. The process of coordination is almost impossible without an office, which provides competent clerical services to all in the business who need it. It keeps contact with all the other departments, and provides necessary information and knowledge for the coordination of the various activities of the organisation.

4. Office as a Service Centre: Since an Office is the focal point in a business organisation for the co-ordination of the work of production, distribution, finance and personnel, its activities are in the nature of services to all the other departments and to the business as a single unit. Frequently an Office is referred to as the Office services department. It exists to provide clerical and other services to the various departments, divisions, sections or branches of the organisation, and cannot operate apart from them.

5. Office as an Administrative Nerve Centre: As an inclusive executive function, an Office acts as an administrative nerve centre. It helps in making the decisions about the products to be manufactured and sold, when to purchase materials, what reports to prepare, and a variety of similar activities. It becomes the heart of all business activity, through which circulates information on purchases, sales, finances and communication.

6. Office as Control Centre: An Office also acts a "control centre" of the organisation, since it helps the management to take decisions and implement them. It prepares and presents all the necessary data, information and plans to the management so that it might take decisions. It is the Office where all the policy decisions originate, and it is from there that the activities of the organisation are controlled and remedial or corrective action taken to ensure that the objectives of the organisation are accomplished.

Leffingwell, and Robinson[12] have summed up the importance of an Office thus: "A well organised 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 their result without delay and to coordinate all the activities of the business".

---

12. *A Textbook of Office Management.*

THE CHANGING OFFICE SCENE

Office Yesterday

A few decades ago, a typical business Office presented a gloomy picture. Housed in one or two small rooms, poorly lighted and ill-ventilated, it was generally situated in the least conspicuous part of the building. There was a small volume of paperwork, which was handled by a few clerks manually and without the aid of mechanical and labour-saving devices. Since typewriters were somewhat rare, the clerks had to do all the written work with their own hands. Letters were copied before despatch on loose sheets or in fat leather bound registers. All the internal and external communication was performed or carried on through the human agency, for telephones and intercom systems were not generally in use. The proprietor of a business or the head clerk would be found sitting in the office room, supervising and guiding office work, and personally dealing with the visitors or customers. There was no departmentalisation of office activities, and the techniques of scientific management were either not known or not practised.

Historical Developments

The following technological developments made during the last 150 years have led to the evolution of the modern office:

1870 : First commercial typewriter introduced.

1880 : Alexander Graham Bell invented telephone.

1920 : Electric typewriter introduced.

1930 : Important machines like duplicators, dictaphones, intercoms developed.

1950 : Calculators, computers, copying machines, addressographs, franking, tabulating and accounting machines developed.

1961 : Memory electronic typewriters launched.

1964 : Word processing equipment, cash registers, etc.

1970 : Introduction of digital networks local area networks (LAN).

1980 : Computerised telephone networks, picture phone, etc.

1990 : Personal computers, microprocessing equipment, electronic mail, fax machines, modems, pagers, Cellular Phones, Internet Systems, etc.

2000 : Internet Banking, Internet Trading, BPO servicing, Internet Telephony, Digitised office.

2008 : Apple i-Phones, Voice Mails, Teleconferencing, Handwriting and speech Recognition Softwares, Broadband Spectrum, L.C.D. and Plasma T.V.s. 3D image Videoconferencing (telepresence), etc., Black Berry, Google gphone, Robotics; etc.

2012 : Voice/Face/Handwriting Recognition, 3D Printing, Apple iPhones 4S, ITB Hard Disk,

2014 : Blue Ray Disc, Voice Navigation, Wi-fi, Wireless Printers, **Cloud Computing** (Google Drive, DropBox, Skydrive-Microsoft), iPad, **Business Analytics** (for Cash Management, Website Management, Employee Management, etc.) **SaaS** (Software as a Service), **LED, Mobile Banking, Virtualisation, Android, Ubuntu, Internet of all things** etc.

Office Today

Office activities have undergone vast changes in the last five or six decades. A Modern Office is well-planned, well-laid out and well-organised. The scope of office activities has widened tremendously following spectacular developments in science and technology, industrialisation, transport and communication, etc. These developments have led to an expansion in the scale of production and business activities, to greater governmental and legislative interference and control, and the consequent enlargement of the volume of office work. In today's Office, activities are performed not by general purpose clerks but by specialised clerks — by receptionists, accounts clerks, cashiers, stenographers, typists. There is, thus a greater division of labour. The old fat leather-bound ledgers have been replaced by loose-leaf binders. Filing and indexing techniques have been developed. Departmentalisation of office has been effected. A greater and wider use of machines (typewriters, dictaphones, calculators, accounting machines, computers, etc.), is made to save time and labour. Work standardisation, job evaluation, merit rating and other techniques of personnel management are being practised. Telephones, intercoms, telex and other communication device are used for rapid and global communication. Many large sized offices use computers to handle the enormous volume of work. The use of carbonless copy paper has become very popular. In short, Offices today are organised on scientific principles, and their management and administration is in the hands of highly specialised managers. The term "Office Management" is rapidly being replaced by the term "Administrative Office Management"[13] and "Information Management".[14]

Office of the Future

Advancements in technology are having enormous impact on the working of the office. The New Office Technologies are converting the information that was written or typed, transmitted and stored on paper to be processed by computer-based machines more accurately and at much greater speed. However, it may be stressed that the rate of introduction of the new technology is very 'Variable' and it night take many years before all offices resemble *'office of the future'*. In India, we usually find a mixture of traditional and new machines in the same office. Few organisations have the finance or are prepared to take the risk of replacing all their old office equipment with the new machines all at once. We are, in fact, in a period of transition which might extend to a few years or even more.

In the more distant future, we might see an Office that is virtually 'Paperless'. However, in near future, there will be an important reduction rather than a total abolition of paperwork.[14A]

The Office of the future has to face a variety of challenges — social, political and economic. For instance, with the increased mechanisation of office activities and the installation of sophisticated machines like the computers, it seems we are on the threshold of office automation. With the increasing pace of industrialisation and government control of business, the need to employ more experts and specialists to perform office activities has become pressing, and has led to the utilisation of consultancy services to a greater extent. These developments call for a greater "professionalisation of management" and increased application of the principles of management to the Office. The other challenges faced by the office of the future include:

---

13. Neuner and Keeling, *op. cit.*
14. George R. Terry, *op. cit.*
14A. Working in an office: Jennifer Clayton: Botsford Academic and Educational: London: First Ed.

(i) The challenge of legal provisions;

(ii) The challenge of reducing paperwork; and

(iii) The challenge of reducing office cost.

Once these challenges are met, the productivity of an Office would increase, and its importance would be enhanced in relation to the business organisation of the future.

THE PAPERLESS OFFICE

The 21st century Offices will be an electronic wonderland where expensive paperbased routine work will be replaced by result-oriented and advanced information technology.[15] Office automation, with its microcircuitry and visual display screens, is surely to take over the old and wornout methodology, in Office management. In all probability, within next 3-5 years, Office information system would be installed and developed to such an extent that it would replace the desk, the typewriter, the filing cabinet and the plethora of paperwork.

With the evolution of a new work style, based on speed, accuracy and efficiency the Offices which fail to wake up to the implications of modern information technology will find themselves lagging behind. They would become vulnerable to the technological onslaught of their better equipped competitors. A US study[16] on office automation has indicated that 100% of the banking industry has already installed Office automation systems of some kind. An average of 85 word processors per 1,000 employees was reported. Together with these, the banks are likely to add private videotex, electronic mail, online management information systems with graphics and voice information systems. Future developments also imply adoption of multifunctional workstations with a wide variety of capabilities. The technological advances have also invaded Offices in Europe, UK and Japan, etc. However, in India, the position has started to emerge and in certains sectors rapid computerisation is taking place particularly in BPOs, Stock Market Operations, Banking, Retailing, Higher Education, etc. The concept of paperless Office encompasses the following:

(1) The omnipresent desk will now be replaced by the multifunctional workstation with a personal computer linked to other personal computers via a highspeed Local Area Network (LAN) system. The workstation can be further linked to the main station so that the staff positioned at the workstations can contact and manipulate information from the Office records.

(2) Computers, equipped to process words as well as figures, will totally replace typewriters. The present day, word processor will slowly give way to personal computers.

(3) The electronic-magnetic or optical-filing is the one to succeed the paper filled filing cabinets in our offices. Microfilming will also reduce paper records and facilitate retrieval of records.

(4) For outward communication, fascimile (FAX) system will replace despatch section.

(5) For inward communication, shorthand notebooks and typewriters will give way to dictating machines and printer computers, etc.

---

15. Sunny Sebastian: *The Paperless Office,* H.T. Supplement (Adapted).
16. *Op. cit.*

(6) Desktop Publishing System will look after the entire printing work of office. It will write and format documents, create and incorporate graphics, prepare camera ready copy for printing, keep data bases of mailing and subscription lists, create official advertising files and brochures and keep all financial records — no matter how large *or* small it is.

(7) Various machines like accounting machines, billing machines, payroll machines, addressing and mailing machines, punched card machines, etc., shall be replaced by computer network (LAN) system.

(8) The automatic answering devices and automatic electronic branch exchanges will reduce the workload of the reception counter of the office.

(9) The new emphasis will be on LAN system — a low cost method of connecting micro-computers, printers and data storage devices on a single site. Imaginative use of the information technology helps to create new opportunities. It cuts down operating costs, provides faster and more accessible information and reduces time spent on clerical functions and unproductive tasks.

Are the Days of Paper Limited?

The increasing use of Office machines in transmission, storage and data processing has facilitated the Offices to abandon the use of paper to a large extent, but the realisation of the goal of 'Paperless Office' is subjected to the following problems:

1. Transmission: Fascimile transmission is already possible but it requires that the receiver and sender both have compatible electronic apparatus, which will restrict transmission for some-time to come.

2. Storing: Microfilm has long been used as a storage medium but as yet it has made no serious inroads into the use of paper. Data storage of huge quantities of information is already carried out by computers. Yet the most used device of many computers are not video display units (VDU) but printers.

3. Data Processing: Again, computers already perform many data processing tasks which previously were being carried out by clerks armed only with pencils and paper. However, aspects like — financial, organisational and resistance to change — will inhibit the rapid elimination of paper.

As such, the transformation of the Office is not an easy task. An integrated approach where information is treated as a primary resource, is necessary to reap maximum benefits from Office automation. Further, the software supporting an electronic office should be totally reliable, accessible to everybody and easy enough to be operated by everybody irrespective *of* their ability or status, "Office automation can be carried out in a phased manner starting with the clerical staff and later moving on to the professionals and managers". Managers can have desktop on to workstations, which can be used for electronic mail, finding information from large central data bases and typing text while producing reports. Through a properly linked network system, a manager can send electronic messages to his colleagues and arrange meetings and appointments. He can also type letters from his own laptops (screen-based/workstation). For maximum results the technology used should be matched to the needs of the business and business objectives. The persons who are coordinating the 'Information Technology' (IT) activity must be familiar with the business objectives of the organisation.

TIPS FOR A 'PAPERLESS' OFFICE

Many people who use computers — whether it's for their home or business — are moving towards a "paperless" Office. Simply, they are tired and overwhelmed by scraps of paper, heaps of old file folders, envelopes — and they want to reduce the clutter.

Take a look at how many messages are stored in your e-mail's in-basket. Now imagine how much paper would have been generated if they hadn't come to you from cyberspace.

Many companies have made at least a partial move to a paperless Office. They're doing so this way: by using scanners instead of copying machines, sending electronic faxes instead of paper faxes, storing information electronically instead of in filing cabinets, giving staff clients or vendors information on CDs or through Internet attachments instead of in bound folders. In short, they're getting greater return on their hardware, software and technology investments.

Here are six things to keep in mind as you move towards a paperless home or business office.[17]

1. Without paper, make sure you're backing up files. In the traditional backup system, you would make a photocopy of a document and put it in a properly-labeled folder that can later be retrieved from a filing cabinet. Many people and businesses develop electronic filing systems that mimic the old paper systems, using Microsoft Word or customized programs for storing documents by type of document, client, project or other prioritization. But those files can't just be created — they have to be backed up as well. Backup solutions can include backing up to second hard drives, to removable drives or to Internet and off-site locations to minimize the risk of loss of data from a computer failure. So, the message here is to have a system in place for regular and consistent backing up of your information.

2. Realize that a paperless Office doesn't happen overnight. Your home Office or business won't go from all-paper one day-to-paperless the next. It's a progression. You might start out by scanning all incoming bills into your system, and then expand to include all general business correspondence. Initially, you might imagine you're creating more work instead of less —especially if you run a business. It's just another way of backing up information.

3. You'll need to rearrange your office — a good thing. There usually aren't tremendous savings of office space when you first start focusing on using less paper. After all, you still have all those paper documents housed in your big, clunky file cabinets. At some point during your transition to a 'paperless office', however, the difference in your physical storage space will become apparent.

4. "Paperless" often really means "less paper". Yes. it's possible to scan all received documents into your computer, and to store all in-house documents in your system as well. You can virtually eliminate paper faxes by generating faxes on your computer and having in-bound faxes delivered to your computer system. You can even electronically sign or signature-stamp outgoing documents. But you're still likely to have some paper floating through your Office. Not all of your clients or customers will want to be billed electronically. Some vendors will still want to

---

17.   Joseph Authory: Microsoft Small Business Centre. (Google Search)

communicate by snail mail. And tax and regulatory requirements could force you to either do some current business on paper or to keep hard copies of your past home or business records.

5. Everyone has to participate in change. Merely saying as head of household, owner or manager of a business that you want those around you to embrace your paperless office doesn't make it so. Your partner or staff has to buy into the transition as a permanently-new way of doing business. Change can be difficult. People who have been making photocopies, sending paper faxes, putting documents into legal sized folders — or saving tons of mail and catalogues that they just can't part with — are going to have to change their perceptions. They will have to learn new routines that they already feel skilled at.

6. Realize that less paper is just the beginning of the pay-off. The most visible impact of a move to a paperless office is the reduction in the cost of printing, mailing, shipping and storing paper. Overtime, lots of other benefits should become apparent: Less time spent looking for paper lost in the shuffle. Fewer hours looking for bills, documents and, if you're in business, copies of client documents. The ability to access all sorts of information from computer files — in a matter of seconds without having to search your office. If you've got a home Office that serves as a satellite office of a business, you can have access to all of your business files, using a product like Terminal Services or other software, even if you're not at your business location. In short, change can be hard — but it can be profitable.

Working towards the Paperless Office[18]

The paperless office — promised since the first desktop computers started appearing in the 1980s — has yet to become a reality for most companies. Despite the increasing use of computers in all types of businesses, a good portion of most day-to-day work is still paper-based. In addition, basic human behaviour works against a truly 'paperless office': employees will always want to print documents for more careful study or to bring to meetings. For now, the perfect paperless Office system remains an *elusive goal.*

Despite these challenges, you can drastically reduce the amount of paper documents your business depends on by choosing a *document management* system. The term "document management" (DM) covers a range of systems for managing paper and electronic files. To work towards a 'paperless office', a more specific term is "document *imaging* systems" — they include tools to help convert paper records into electronic files.

Benefits of a Paperless Office Solution

One of the biggest benefits of getting rid of paper files is the cost savings :

It provides additional cost savings by eliminating paper records. Converting records rooms into usable office space can let you make much better use of expensive real estate, and to eliminate warehousing costs entirely.

Other benefits include increased security, better disaster recovery protection, *environmental benefits* and remote access for your important documents.

---

18. Jeremy Sacco: Editorial staff Buyer zone. com (Google search)

THE AUTOMATED OFFICE

Till now, it was customary to transfer and store information on paper. With new electronic procedures and systems becoming more and more popular in use in modern *Automated Office,* the so called *"Paperless Office"* is becoming a near reality. A *'Paperless Office'* is one in which paper has been replaced by electronic, digital, micrographic and microprocessing systems and equipments. It is aptly said that.

"The Office is now in a period of transition" where more and more information processing functions are being *automated* through sophisticated electronic systems, the *Paperless Office* is attainable today."[19]

"It may be noted that though paperwork can be reduced by up to 95 per cent in the traditional Office, many people believe that a completely Paperless Office will not be attained in near future."

According to William Benedon in the 'Paperless Society; fact or fiction,' there are six major barriers to a totally paperless office; namely

1. Traditional Values;

2. Legal Requirements;

3. Accounting and Audit Values;

4. Legislative Values;

5. Societal Values and;

6. Procedural Values;

In contrast, the System Analysts, Records Managers, and other management professionals often complain of the high cost of creating, storing, retrieving, reproducing and disseminating paper documents.[20]

Modern offices are increasingly converting all incoming and original data to either electronic form or microfilm, which can then be edited, indexed, stored, retrieved or converted to paper. In some companies' *'Paperless Office'* integrates voice inputs, word processing, optical character recognition, electronic mail, calendars, message sending, filing directions and text editing, computer indexing and processing, COM, Micrographics, automated storage and retrieval, telecommunications and colour graphics systems into a fully automated office facility.[21] The Integrated Office has evolved into *"Communicating Integrated Office"*. Office Systems Communicate with each other by the use of sattelites. Several Modern Offices provide sattelite communication, video teleconferences, electronic mail and computer-to-computer hookups for intra-company use.

---

19. Professor Perkins at Washington State University, as quoted by Nathan Krevolin in *Communication Systems and Procedures* for the Modern Office: Prentice-Hall.
20. William Saffady: "The Automated Office: An introduction to the Technology" Journal of Micrographics.
21. The Paperless Office: A Total Commitment: IRM.

Subsystems of an Automated Office

The Modern Office System is said to have the following subsystems that are integrated into the Automated Office.[22]

1. Voice System.
2. Word Processing.
3. Optical Character Recognition (OCR).
4. Data Processing.
5. Reprographics.
6. Micrographics
7. Communication and Fascimile
8. Graphic systems.
9. Telecommunication
    (i) Teleconferencing
    (ii) Videoconferencing.
    (iii) Computer conferencing
    (iv) Telepresence (Latest innovation by CISCO Inc.)
10. Electronic Mail.
11. Photocomposition.
12. Computer Networking
13. Robotics, etc.

The Business Office is currently undergoing a dramatic change, an abrupt transition from antiquated procedures that have been evolved fundamentally for over a century to sophisticated, integrated systems involving electronic and advanced microcomputer technology.

VIRTUAL OFFICE
(Run Your Business Virtually Anywhere)

What is Virtual Office?

A Virtual Office is an integrated suite of applications that are accessed via the internet and available 24/7. The 18 applications include calendar, addressbook, webmail, etc., and can also synchronise with PDA or Phone. One can receive agenda by SMS/Text Message everyday and send SMS/Text Message right out of *Virtual Office*. One may access the Virtual Office even from a pocket PC or mobile phone.

A Virtual Office may be created by an individual or may be opened up to a group of employees, collergues, vendors or anyone else within or outside the business. One can decide as to who joins, what to share and who can share what. Anyone who has access to the Internet has access to the Virtual Office, if allowed.

---

22. Also see Don M. Avedon: 'The Automated Office, IRM 14, No. 7.

Features[22A]

The Virtual Office offers the following features:

1. Calendar Personal and group calendar. Share public events within your group, view other member's calendar and sync it with your PDA or wireless phone.	**10. Meetings** Schedule your meetings online in seconds and automatically invite others in your group to attend. See the responses as they roll in.
2. Addressbook Personal and group addressbook. Share public addresses within your group and view other member's addresses.	**11. Calls** Don't miss another important phone call. View a list of the calls "while you were absent," marking them off as you return to them.
3. WebMail Compose, send, receive, reply, forward e-mail with your new "@office.com" e-mail address. Includes POP3, folders, attachment, addressbooks, templates, signature, anti-virus and anti-spam.	**12. Notes** Create, save and stick notes to any object in your Organizer. Better than all those "Post-It" notes stuck to your monitor. Keeps the notes where you will see them, when you need them.
4. Documents Full document management centre with automatic backup. Share and jointly edit your personal or group's valuable information.	**13. Reminders** Meetings, birthdays, reminders on time of any events. Reminder displayed by screen pop up, e-mail, messages or SMS.
5. To Do's Be better organized. Manage your tasks, send tasks to other group members and control completion...	**14. Bookmarks** Save bookmarks which can be used from any browser, share them with other members.
6. Forum Broadcast company news and ideas with your group effortlessly. Great for keeping everyone on the same page or brainstorming.	**15. Fax** Using your messaging account, you can send faxes worldwide. You simply send a message in the same way that you send an e-mail.
7. SMS Get your daily calendar by wireless phone via SMS (Short Message Service, commonly known as Text Messaging) or send reminders by SMS, send SMS directly from your address book.	**16. Synchronize** Synchronize your personal calendar, addressbook, tasks and notes with your PDA or PC. Whether it is Palm, Outlook, Lotus Organizer, iPaq Pocket PC or Treo, you can sync up and run.
8. Virtual Drive Using the virtual drive, you can access all your private and group documents directly from your PC or Mac computer.	**17. WAP** Access your Virtual Office through WAP in order to check and enter information, using your WAP enabled wireless phone.
9. Groups Create groups (or Virtual Offices) to share information with other members, such as addresses, documents, and bookmarks.	**18. Encryption** Use secured transfer when required (documents, calendars, addresses, or e-mails) or faster, non-secured transfer for non-secure transfer.

22A. Office.com (Goggle search)

Advantages of Virtual Office[23]

The advantages of working from a Virtual Office may seem obvious, such as

— More freedom, more flexibility
— Opportunity to operate from anywhere, e.g., home, airport, train, car, park, anywhere.
— Time saved (plus savings on Petrol, etc.) in commuting to an office.
— Reduced stress benefits
— A more relaxing work environment.
— More opportunities to hire part-time or contract workers.

Disadvantages Include:

— Lack of face-to-face communication
— Technical difficulties in communication or managing work progress.
— Feelings of disassociation among employees.
— Lack of support — both administrative and managerial.

Both the lists can certainly go on. However, one can always identify the disadvantages and turn them into advantages.

Through good planning, communication, and outside technical support when needed, the virtual office can succeed and help foster future virtual businesses.

THE INDIAN SCENE

While the IT advancements are rapidly changing the office scene in the West, India's attempt in this field so far has remained patchy but rapid progress in being seen in several sectors (explained earlier). In India, the number of computers may not exceed 25 millions and the personnel working on these machines would be around 50 millions only. Indian offices are 1 to 2 years behind their counterparts in West and Japan. In India, Indian Airlines was probably "the first to use computers in their booking operations. Now, most of the Airticket bookings are done online. The Railways have started using computers in all cities for reservations, etc. Banks have been using computers in clearing house operations and in branch banking at many places. Many of the public sector enterprises like the Oil and Natural Gas Commission have ventured into using a fascimile system for inter-office dissemination of data and diagrams. MTNL, DDA, Electricity Boards, Improvement Trusts, Water and Sewerage Departments have also computerised their billing operations. The meteorological department of the Government of India has acquired a Super Computer from U.S. and the Election Commission also has introduced computers in its working. The corporate sector is however racing ahead in automation of office operations. Apart from these, in India the in-things presently are computers and word processors. In metropolitan towns, the cellular phones have also made inroads in matters of office communications. Many corporate houses are providing laptop computers to their senior executives, and mobile phones to their field staff to facilitate communication with them. **The launch of Apple i phone 6, 6 plus and iwatch and Windows 8 in India was almost simultaneous with the rest of the world and the time gap in introduction of technology in India with the advanced countries is fast reducing.**

---

23. Adapted from "How virtual offices work" by Lee Ann obringer. (howstuffworks.com)

Banks are computerising their branches as also opening ATMs in all towns to facilitate banking. Offices of Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments are rapidly being computerised. However, the worst scenario is presented by the post offices and offices of small business units spread over the length and breadth of the country. It is indeed a very long road ahead.

SUMMARY

What is an Office? An Office is generally understood to be a place where clerical work is performed and where all kinds of paperwork is done. According to Mills and Standingford, the office is the administrative 'centre of a business. According to George R. Terry, it is the information centre of the business, and its functions include the acts of collecting, processing, storing and distributing information. According to Leffingwelf, "it is wrong to confine the office to a particular place. If there is office or clerical work in one place, there is office or clerical work everywhere, regardless of where the work is done or who does it". Thus the term *Office* refers to the functions performed by a certain set of persons rather than the place where clerical work is done. "Office work is concerned with records and statistics, with communication, with computing, with planning and scheduling etc."

Office activities include:

(i) Processing incoming mail; (ii) Processing outgoing mail; (iii) Dictation; (iv) Transcription; (v) Typing; (vi) Printing; (vii) Copying; (viii) Filing; (ix) Records retrieval; (x) Records disposal; and (*xi*) Communication.

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

(i) Basic Office Functions, and (ii) Administrative Management Functions.

Basic Office Functions include:

(i) Receiving information; (ii) Recording information; (iii) Arranging information; and (iv) Giving information.

Administrative Office Functions include:

(i) Management functions of planning, organising, staffing, directing, communicating, controlling, coordinating and motivating; (ii) Public relations function; (iii) Instituting Office systems and routines; (iv) Retention of records; (v) Safeguarding assets; (vi) Form designing and control; (vii) Stationery and supplies control; (viii) Selection and purchase of Office appliances; (ix) Personnel functions; (x) Controlling Office costs.

Importance of Office: An Office is an important and indispensable part of every organisation, big or small. The importance of the Office to a business enterprise arises from the fact that a modern business cannot be managed efficiently without clerical assistance in some form or other. The Office serves modern business:

(i) As *an* information centre; (ii) As an intermediary; (iii) As a coordinator; (iv) As a service centre; (v) As an administrative nerve centre; and (vi) As a control centre. It is rightly said that "the office is to a business what the mainspring is to a watch".

REFERENCES

1. **C. Spencer Everhardt:** *Organising and Staffing the Office.*
2. **George R. Terry:** *Office Management and Control.*
3. **J.C. Denyer:** *Office Management.*
4. **Leffingwell and Robinson:** *Textbook of Office Management.*
5. **Littlefield and Rachel;** *Administrative Office Management.*
6. **Maynard:** *Handbook of Business Administration.*

7. **Mills and Standingford :** *Office Organsiation and Methods*.
8. **Neuner and Keeling:** *Modern Office Management.*

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. "The Office is in many respects the brain of a business organisation." Amplify, bringing out the functions of a Modern Office   *(Dip. Corp. Laws)*

2. It has been said that "the Office is to business what the mainspring is to the watch." (*Dicksee*) In the light of this statement, describe the various activities performed by modern Office.
   (B.A. (V.S.), Delhi) (Co. Sect. Pract.) (D.O.O.P. Punjab University)

3. Explain the importance of Office to an organisation. State the challenges that the Office fears in the near future in our country.   *(B.Com., Andhra)*

4. "Office Work is concerned with records, statistics, communication, computing with planning and scheduling." In the light of this statement discuss the importance and functions of a Modern Office.   *(B.A. (V.S.), Delhi)*

5. "An Office may be regarded as a place where the central mechanism for an organisation is located." Comment on this statement and explain the importance and functions of a Modern Office.   *(B.Com., Bangalore) (B.A. (V.S.) Delhi)*

6. What is the modern concept of office? State its characteristics. Why is the Office sometimes called the service department?   *(B.A. (V.S.), Delhi)*

7. No organisation worth the name can exist without an efficient office. Elaborate the above statement and bring out clearly the functions of Modern Office.

   (B.Com., Andhra)

8. (i) Write the objectives of an Office in detail.
   (ii) What is the role of a Modern Office in business?   *(B.Com., Andhra)*

9. 'The Office is the nerve centre of business'. Explain the statement.   *(B.Com., Utkal University)*

10. What is an Office? State the importance of an Office in the business and discuss the various service rendered by it to the business.   *(Co. Sect. Pract)*

11. "Office Work does not produce anything for sale: Therefore, Office Work is relatively unimportant." you agree? Give reasons for your answer.   *(B.Com., Gujarat)*

12. 'Office Work relates to handling of information'. Discuss.   *(B.Com., Punjab)*

13. Write short notes on:
    (i) Basic functions of an Office.   *(B.Com., Punjab, April)*
    (ii) Main challenges before Office.   *(B.Com., Punjab, April)*

14. "Office is the centre to which converge information from each part of a business concern and much useful knowledge goes out of its four walls." In the light of this statement, explain the functions of a Modern Office.   *(Dip. Corp. Laws) (B.Com., Punjab)*

15. Explain the purpose and nature of Office Work.   *(B.com., Punjab)*

16. What is an Office? Discuss its importance in an organisation.   *(B.A. (Prog.) Delhi, April 2006)*

17. Describe the functions of a Modern Office.   *(B.A. (V.S.) Prog/I-2009)*

18. Write notes on:
    (i) Office Management Functions.
    (ii) Office Routines   *(B.A. (V.S.)Prog./OASP-2009)*

19. Explain the functions performed by an office of a Business Organisation.

(B.A. (V.S.) Prog. OASP, Delhi 2010)

20. What do you mean by an office? Explain its functions in a Business Organisation.

(B.A. (V.S.) Prog. OASP, Delhi 2011)

21. Write Short Note on:

(i) Office Functions   *(B.A. (V.S.) OASP, Delhi 2011)*

22. What do you mean by office? Explain the functions performed by an office of a business organisation.   *(B.A. (V.S.) OASP I, Delhi 2012)*

23. 'No organisation can exist without an efficient office'. Explain the above statement in the light of functions performed by a modern office.

(B.A. (V.S.) OASP, Delhi 2013)