

INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE PRACTICE

An office is a room or suite of rooms set aside for business purposes. Practice is a term professionals use to describe the various skills and actions they use in the course of performing their job.

Office practice is therefore a location of a set of rooms where a professional performs skills and activities related to the person's particular training and job.

Office practice can also be defined as a way of performing business activities in a room or place called office. It is also defined as the study of activities performed in an office.

The businesses performed in an office includes:

1. Administrative duties e.g preparation of financial records, consulting, preparing duty schedules, supervision etc.
2. Clerical duties e.g receiving, sorting, dispatching, filing, mailing etc.
3. Machine operations e.g photocopying, typing, scanning, shredding etc.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES OF OFFICE PRACTICE

1. To enable employees know their various functions, duties and roles to play in their offices.
2. To inculcate the spirit of effectiveness and efficiency in the office workers.
3. To equip, develop and empower the office personnel on their various areas of specialisation.
4. To provide general guide of business operations through a reliable office system.
5. To help in adjusting the attitude of office personnel in their jobs.
6. To guide the management in efficient running of their organization.

IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE PRACTICE

1. To provide proper and sufficient information.
2. It helps in effective handling of customers/clients.
3. It enables efficient handling of administrative and productive processes
4. It enables individuals to render quality services to the organisation.
5. It helps facilitate functions of other departments.
6. It facilitates decision making.
7. Helps to handle inward and outward problems.
8. It helps to prepare all the records of the business.

SCOPE OF OFFICE PRACTICE

Office practice helps to coordinate every activity of a worker to achieve a set organisational goal. Office practice covers the following areas:

- i. Business operations: i.e business techniques, functions etc.
- ii. Office environment: i.e office location, layout, services etc.
- iii. Machine operation: involves operating machines like typewriters, computer, duplicating machine etc.
- iv. Material storing and transporting: includes stock inventory, packaging, transporting etc.
- v. Manpower development: involves personnel training, record management, work ethics etc.

THE OFFICE

An office is a room or suite of rooms set aside for business purposes.

An office is a place set aside for clerical work which includes: writing, book keeping, sorting papers, filing etc.

It is also a building, room or part of building where clerical or administrative duties are performed.

It is also defined as a building premises or part of a building premises that contains staff, workforce or personnel with the purpose of performing clerical and administrative work. An office is important because it act as:

1. An administrative centre.

2. A coordinating centre.
3. A control centre.
4. A business information centre.
5. A service centre.

TYPES OF OFFICE

There are two main types of office namely: small/closed/private office and open/large/general office.

SMALL/CLOSED/PRIVATE OFFICE: This is where the total floor space is divided into rooms or offices to accommodate one person e.g office of directors, managers and school principals etc.

ADVANTAGES

1. Privacy: It allows workers to enjoy some degree of privacy.
2. Concentration: Distraction is eliminated as workers can concentrate more in their individual room.
3. Security: The security of equipment and other forms of property of the firm is maintained.
4. Morale: Boosts morale of staff by giving them a feeling of individuality.
5. It increases the productivity of staff.
6. Confidential meeting can be held.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Cost of construction: Different rooms will be constructed, different equipment to perform same function will be bought and increase the running cost of the firm.
2. Communication block: Partition between offices create artificial communication block and flow of information from superior to subordinate is difficult.
3. Makes supervision of staff to be ineffective and difficult.
4. Makes it difficult to introduce standard procedures.
5. Time may be wasted in passing information and work from one room to another.

OPEN/LARGE/GENERAL OFFICE: This is a large open floor space with no partition where several workers or related departments work together e.g bank industry, schools staff room, hospitals, post offices and some government parastatals.

ADVANTAGES

1. Energy and construction costs: It is cheap to construct and less furniture, machines and equipment will be required.
2. Effective Supervision: Supervision of staff is less stressful. The supervisor easily notices who is absent.
3. Floor space and equipment requirements: More economic use of space and equipment is possible e.g two persons may share a telephone or furniture.
4. Flexibility of rearrangement: It is easier to arrange the positioning of clerks and equipment to suit the flow of work.
5. Removal of barriers: Employees feel free to ask questions, discuss individual problems.
6. Flow of work: The flow of work from one table to another is very effective and better than in private offices.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Lack of privacy: There is no privacy in an open office.
2. Too much noise: When too many people are in the same office space, it brings too much noise.
3. Individual requirement: The larger the numbers of people accommodated in one room, the harder it is to satisfy them all with regards to heat and ventilation.

4. Spread of contagious diseases: Germs and infectious diseases can spread easily in an open office.
5. Improper sitting arrangement may disturb free movement of workers and information in the office.