

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Office personnel refers to the staff/workers who perform various activities in the office or in an organization. Such activities could be administrative, clerical duties or machine operation. They are the backbone of any business because without them the day to day operations of a business will fail.

TYPES OF OFFICE PERSONNEL

Office personnel can be classified based on the nature of work they perform. The classes of office personnel include: receptionists, typists, secretaries, messengers, machine operators, office assistants, office clerks, telephonists, managers and executive officers.

SOURCES OF OFFICE PERSONNEL

Recruitment of office personnel can be through internal and external sources.

- a. Internal Sources: within an organization vacant positions can be filled through promotions or transfer.
- b. External Sources: Recruitment of office personnel from outside the organization. External sources can be through:
 1. Educational Institutions: Graduating students of higher institutions can be recruited directly by organizations once their result is good.
 2. Consulting firms: Organizations can contract consulting firms to recruit applicants for employment.
 3. Personal contact: Some office workers are recruited through personal contact with the director or manager.
 4. Ex-employees: Employees who were previously disengaged can be recalled into service.
 5. Advertising: Organizations can place advert on newspapers, professional journals, internet etc to enable applicants apply for such jobs.
 6. Direct application: Applicants may apply directly to organizations without any advertisement or invitation from the organization.

MAINTAINING LABOUR FORCE IN THE OFFICE

The personnel department must do the following to have a balanced and effective labour force:

1. Develop a reliable source of recruiting office personnel.
2. Appraisal of recruitment forms.
3. Conduct all relevant tests for applicants e.g aptitude tests, interview, medical test etc.
4. Job specifications should be prepared and used.
5. Make an uncompromised selection of successful applicants on merit.
6. Conduct orientation or induction training for newly recruited staff.
7. Monitor and checkmate labour turnover. (The rate at which employees disengage and are replaced in an organization).

DISADVANTAGES OF LABOUR TURNOVER

1. High cost of advertisement rate.
2. Increased cost of training.
3. Loss of materials.
4. Loss in production.
5. It affects the image of the firm negatively.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE PERSONNEL

1. Typist/Computer Operator: He/she is the one that types all or most of the documents in an office. Typists use manual or electric typewriter in the olden days but now type with computer in the modern office so modern typists are also known as computer operators.

2. Receptionist: The person in charge of reception office who welcomes and directs visitors or callers to any person or office. The receptionists' appearance and manner are important in creating a first time impression to the visitor.

3. The Clerical Staff: They include office assistants and clerical officers.

Educational Qualifications: WASSE(with 5 credits and above including English and Mathematics. OND NCE, NABTEB.

QUALITIES OF A CLERICAL STAFF(A clerk)

A. Personal Qualities

- i. Must have a good secondary school certificate at least 5 credits in 2 sittings.
- ii. should dress neatly and smartly.
- iii. Must have good manners.
- iv. Should be cheerful and have good relationship with others.
- v. Must be polite, courteous and respect others.
- vi. Should be trustworthy.

B. Job Qualities

- i. Ability to communicate effectively.
- ii. Must be tactful in order not to hurt other people.
- iii. Must be punctual to work.
- iv. Must be skilful in the job.
- v. Must be loyal and hardworking.
- vi. Must be honest and reliable.
- vii. Always be ready to learn.

DUTIES OF CLERICAL STAFF

- a. Maintaining official clerical records.
- b. filing documents.
- c. Receiving and dispatching of mails/documents.
- d. Writing of simple official letters.
- e. Dealing with customers inquiries and orders.
- f. Address envelopes used for postage of letters.
- g. Collates, sorts and staples documents.

4. Telephonist: A person who operates the telephone switchboard in an organization.

Qualities of a Telephonist

- a. Fast and accurate in typing with speed of 25-50 w.p.m(words per minute).
- b. Obedient and loyal to boss.
- c. Neatly and smartly dressed.
- d. Possess a pleasant and respectful manner.
- e. Ability to read and understand English language.
- f. Basic training in typing, shorthand and office practice.

FUNCTIONS

- a. Typing of financial statements, cards or any form of letters.
- b. Typing from hand-written manuscripts.
- c. Assisting the confidential secretary in typing less difficult manuscripts.

5. Stenographer: A stenographer is one whose job is to write down what somebody is saying using a quick system of signs, abbreviations or shorthand and later transcribes into readable form.

Qualities of a stenographer

She must possess all clerical staff qualities in addition to the following:

- a. A speed of 80/100 w.p.m in shorthand and 40/50 w.p.m in typewriting.
- b. Good knowledge of English, office practice, commerce, shorthand etc.
- c. Ability to transcribe from shorthand outlines into normal alphabetical writing.

Duties of a Stenographer

- a. Taking dictations/notes in shorthand and transcribing same.
- b. Filing of documents and maintaining them.
- c. Transcribing from audio-dictating machines.
- d. Typing of letters, reports and business documents.

6. Confidential Secretary: A person employed to deal with correspondence or duties of a personal or confidential nature and to serve a particular head e.g Director of finance.

Qualifications of a Confidential Secretary

WASSCE, OND, HND, NCE, B.Sc Secretarial studies plus 120/150 w.p.m in shorthand and 50 w.p.m in typewriting. She can also be a chartered secretary under ICSN.

Qualities of a Good Confidential Secretary

1. Loyalty: He/she must be loyal to the boss and the organization.
2. Sociability: Expected to mix freely with all types of people without losing her integrity and self respect.
3. Sincerity: Expected to be sincere in her work and all her dealings.
4. Neatly and smartly dressed.
5. Good and pleasant speaking voice.
6. A high personnel standard: He/she should not be careless or irresponsible with his/her work. Must check and edit all work before passing to the boss.

Duties of Confidential Secretaries

1. Take dictations and transcribe same.
2. Receive documents/letters for the boss.
3. Type minutes of meetings.
4. Take speeches in shorthand at conferences, seminars etc.
5. Open new files and close old ones.
6. Read and sort mails.
7. Book appointments for the boss and keep record of them.
8. Acting as a memory aid (reminder) to the boss.
9. Run errands for the boss.
10. Make hotel reservations and other travel arrangements.

OFFICE ERRORS

Office errors are faults that can occur through the mistakes of any worker whether a clerical, machine operator or administrative staff.

Some Administrative Errors

1. Inadequate staffing
2. Poor staff selection and recruitment.
3. Neglect of staff welfare.
4. Poor placement of staff.
5. Lack of staff training.

6. Ineffective supervision of personnel.

Clerical Faults

1. Mistakes while calculating or posting of figures.
2. Grammatical errors while writing letters.
3. Error while typing letters/documents.
4. Wrong placement of files in the cabinet.

General Causes of Error.

1. Inadequate knowledge of the office systems and procedures.
2. Loss of interest in the job.
3. Laziness and careless attitude to work.
4. Poor handwriting.
5. Poor understanding of English and Mathematics.
6. Emotional disturbance.
7. Impatience.