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## UNIT 5 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the objectives of office management;
- discuss the importance of office management;
- explain the various functions of office management *viz.* planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling; and
- describe the various activities of office.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the centre of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work is done to plan, organize, coordinate and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management. In this unit, you will be introduced to some of these aspects.

First of all, you will learn about the objectives and importance of office management. You will further learn about the important functions of office management such as Planning, Organizing, Coordinating and Controlling, which are required for smooth conduct of offices. Next, you will learn about various activities of office.

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## 5.2 OBJECTIVES OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

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An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Different authors have defined the term office management differently. Some of the definitions of the office management are given below:

*“Office management is that branch of management which is concerned with the services of obtaining, recording and analyzing information of planning and communicating, by means of which the management of a business safeguards its assets, promotes its affairs and achieves its objectives.”*- Institute of Administrative Management, England.

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

*“Office management as a function is that branch of the art and science of management which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done.”*- Leffing well and Robinson

Above definitions clearly indicate that aim of the office management is the organization of an office and this office organization helps in achieving specific office objectives. For achieving these objectives, office management aims to put human and non-human resources to optimum use.

Some of the main objectives of the office management are as given follow:

- 1) **Achievement of Organizational Goals:** All organizations have certain goals and objectives which they strive to achieve over a period. Organizations have long term as well as short-term goals. All the functional areas/ departments of the organizations derive their departmental objectives from long-term organizational objectives and decide their mid to short term goals in terms of activities to be carried out. Office management helps in deciding goals and objectives of the office in order to help organization to achieve its long-term goals. Office manager can make plans, collect information, hire and train staff and organize resources to contribute to organizational goals.
- 2) **Optimum utilization of office resources:** One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources- both human and material. Optimum utilization means achieving both efficiency (maximum outputs with minimum inputs) and effectiveness (timely completion of tasks). It involves doing things right as well as doing right things. Optimum utilization can be ensured by proper planning, organizing, directing and controlling of office work.
- 3) **Ensuring operational workflow:** Another objective of office management is to ensure smooth flow of work in office. This involves supervising the administrative staff to ensure that they are performing the allotted duties in a proper manner. For example, receptionist greets visitors, phone calls are answered in time, phone etiquettes are followed, customer service representatives are courteous, and timely and accurate handling of mail. It may also involve overseeing cleaning, maintenance, repair and other functions essential for office operations. Standard office procedures, written policies, procedures, and rules can be of great help in achieving functionality. Office staff may be sent for training to improve operational workflow.
- 4) **Effective communication flow:** Effective communication flow is another important objective of office management. It includes all types of information flows in office *viz.* horizontal, vertical, diagonal, written, verbal, upward, downward, formal, and informal. Communication channels should ensure fast and timely flow of accurate and relevant information. Office interactions should be meaningful. Interpersonal communications should be frank, open, supporting, and inculcating cooperative relations in the office. Employees should be comfortable in approaching office manager. They should feel valued. Visitors should feel welcome in the office environment. Effective communication will help in inculcation of supportive office culture.

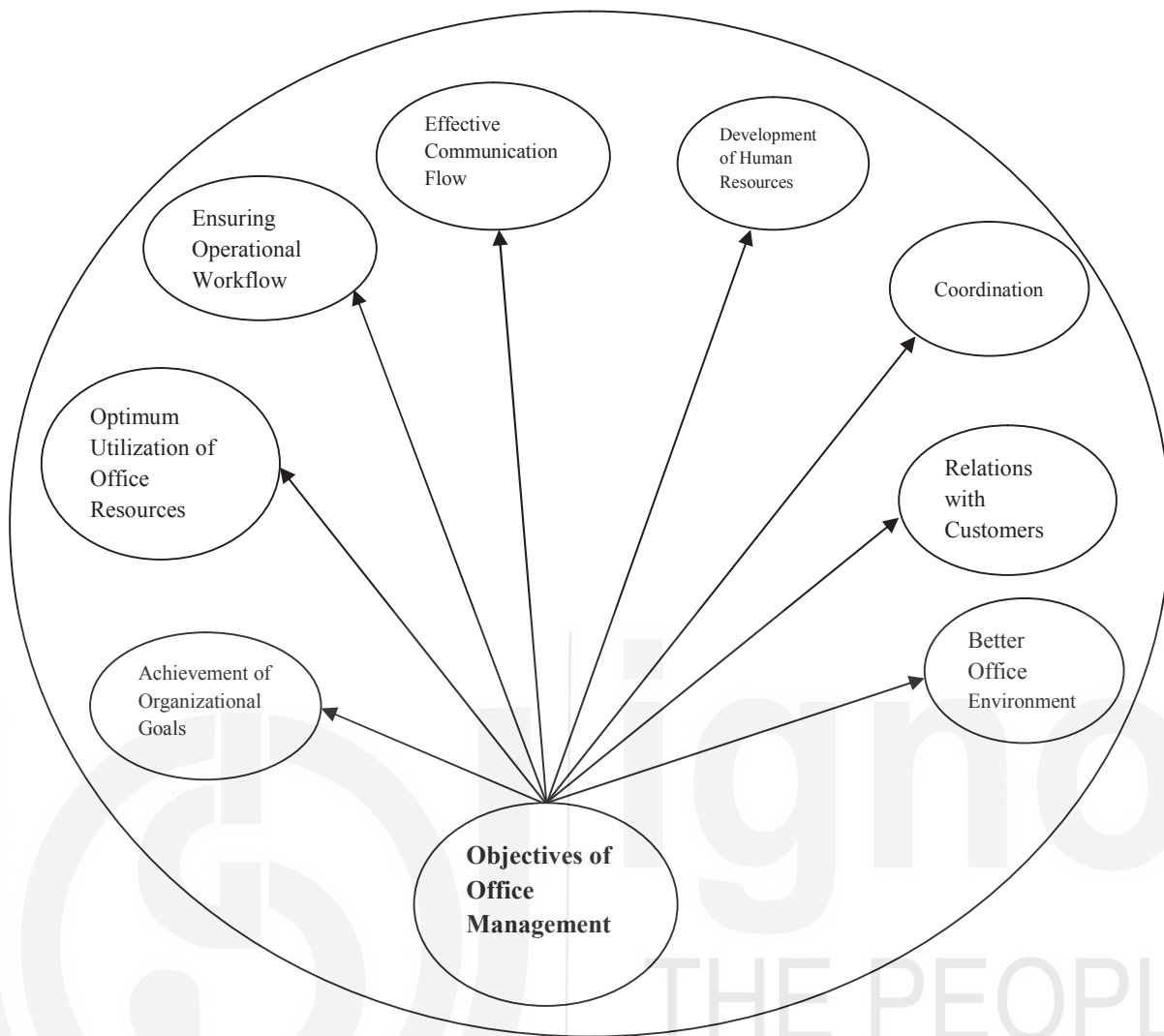


Figure 5.1: Objectives of Office Management

- 5) **Development of human resources:** Development of human resources in the office is a crucial objective of office management. It is extremely important to develop human resources, as they are the only thinking resource and greatly influence the proper utilization of other resources. For this, objectives of office management are to ensure proper supply of work force, training of employees, their remuneration, evaluation, motivation, supervision etc.
- 6) **Coordination:** Diverse activities are performed in the office. These include handling of mail, record management, inventory management, organizing of events and meetings, taking notes, report writing, reporting, information collection and dissemination, handling phones, managing visitors etc. to name a few. Coordinating these diverse administrative operations is must for smooth operational office flow in office. Office management ensures that there are no inter and intra team conflicts. Office management also ensures that rest of the organizational activities and tasks take place unhindered.
- 7) **Relations with customers and suppliers:** It is the objective of office management to ensure good working relations with customers and

suppliers. Customers bring business to the organization and should be treated with dignity by customer service representatives. Their concerns and grievances must be addressed. Good relations with suppliers help in getting better prices and preferential treatment. This ensures adequate level of supplies at best prices.

- 8) **Better office environment:** Office management plays a significant role in making office a better place to work. It is the job of the office manager to stock adequate supplies (for example stationery items) in the office. Regular supplies of copier paper, notebooks, file folders, staples, tape, pencils and pens, batteries, toiletry items etc. should be maintained as employees depend on the administrative staff for such items. S/he should maintain tools, equipment and machinery (working telephone and internet connections, photocopying machines etc.) needed to run office. Office management helps in ensuring safety measures such as fire extinguishers at work place. It helps in ascertaining that company vehicles are properly maintained, are in working conditions and having proper legal documents etc. (license, registration, pollution control certification and insurance).

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### 5.3 IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

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Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Below given points emphasize the importance of office management:

- 1) **Helps in achieving goals:** Office management helps in achievement of office goals in a smooth, efficient and cost-effective way. This becomes possible due to proper planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of various office activities and by managing change, challenges and innovations in office.
- 2) **Optimum utilization of office resources:** Office management can ensure optimum utilization of scarce office resources such as human, material, machines and equipment. Managers can guide the human resources as to how to use resources efficiently. Managers can remove unnecessary activities and avoid duplication of efforts using principles of organization. Coordination, integration and control of various resources will also lead to better utilization of resources.
- 3) **Cost reduction:** Optimum utilization of resources (money, man, material and machines) leads to reduction of wastage and helps in doing the office activities in a cheapest manner. Work simplification, mechanization and digitalization of office work can also lead to cost reduction. Similarly sound planning, suitable organization structure,

coordination among activities, and effective control will help in reducing costs of operating an office and make an organization more competitive.

- 4) **Maintains and enhances office efficiency:** Office management helps in enhancing as well as maintaining efficiency in office work and activities with the help of optimum utilization of resources and cost cutting techniques employed in office.
- 5) **Smooth flow of work:** Office management helps in uninterrupted workflow in office. Smooth flow of work is made possible through proper planning and exercising effective control.
- 6) **Helps in managing public relations:** Office management is helpful in maintaining good public relations in the office. Good office management helps in effective redressal of grievances of consumers and other publics and makes it look more trust worthy to various stakeholders. All this enhances goodwill of the enterprise.
- 7) **Managing change:** Change is inevitable in the life of an organization and most often employees in the organization are averse to change and resist the change. Proper planning, implementation and control of change can help managers to overcome this resistance. Office management helps in coping with changes in efficiency and economy, which are affected due to technology and work practices changes. Office management thus acts as a change-agent in such situations.
- 8) **Helps in attracting and retaining talent:** Good and comfortable working environment, smooth flow of work, efficient work practices etc. may help in attracting and retaining capable employees. Employees do not want to leave good offices and become loyal to the organization.
- 9) **Managing challenges for survival and growth:** In order to grow and survive, an organization has to meet and overcome many challenges. Challenges such as changes in competition, changes in technology and changes in work practices must be anticipated. Also, organizations need to adapt to these changes for survival and growth. Office management helps managers to achieve goals in time by overcoming these challenges.
- 10) **Supports innovation:** Good office management helps and supports new, better and different ways of accomplishing work in office. Good record keeping, indexing and filing (online or offline) can help in finding and incorporating suggestions of employees, customers and other stakeholders to improve existing system.
- 11) **Facilitates coordination of office functions:** Office management coordinates and integrates various office functions in order to achieve office goals in an efficient and effective manner. It helps to ensure that no important activity is left and no activity is duplicated. In addition, work is broken down into smaller units to facilitate work specialization. Planning helps in setting goals, organizing function helps in

departmentalization, centralization/ decentralization and delegation of work activities. Coordination helps in integration of various activities and control ensures conformity to plans.

**Check Your Progress A**

1. How does office management help in cost reduction?

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2. Discuss the importance of office management in an organization.

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3. How does office management help in ensuring operational workflow in offices?

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4. “One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources- both human and material”. Comment.

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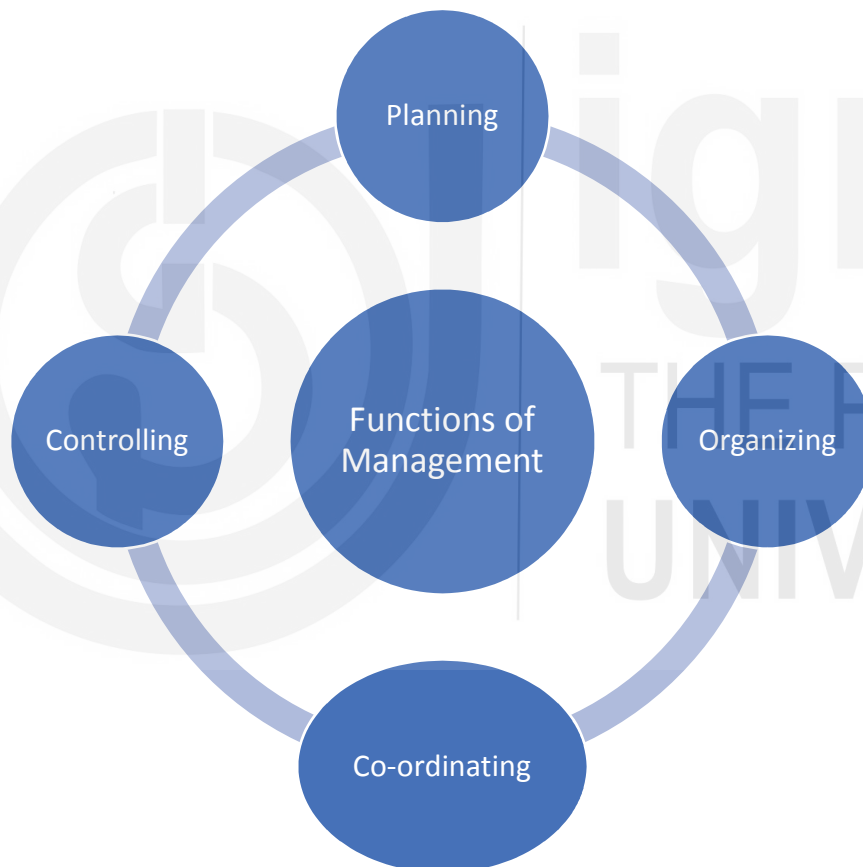
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**5.4 FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

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Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office.

Through office management individuals are provided centralized guidance to direct the individual efforts towards the common goals of office. Every office thus needs to decide office objectives, choose course of action to achieve these objectives, co-ordinate office activities, direct and evaluate human resources to check whether their performance is directed toward the objectives. As per George R. Terry “*Office management may be defined as the art of guiding the personnel of the office in the use of materials, methods, machines and equipment appropriate to their environment in order to achieve its specified purposes.*” Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.



**Figure 5.2: Functions of Office Management**

### **5.4.1 Planning**

Planning is the primary function of office management. It precedes all other office management functions. It establishes the purpose and direction for all other functions of office management. It is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when it will be done, how it will be done, where it will be done and who will do it. Planning is future oriented and forward looking. It can be called a blue print for future course of action. Planning is all about

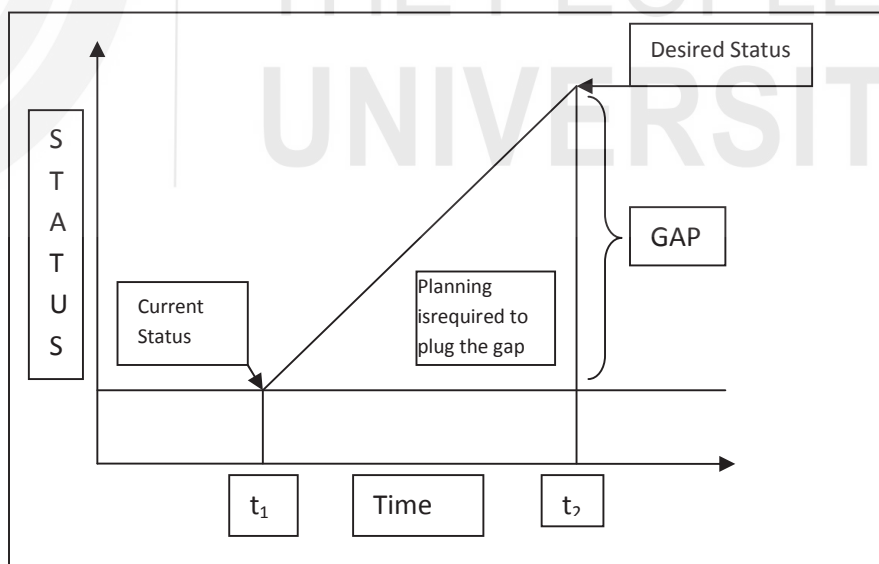


anticipation of future and making a conscious choice for an action. Plans, which are the result of planning process, outline the steps to be taken to achieve the office goals.

*“Planning is the function that determines in advance what should be done. It consists of selecting the office objectives, policies, programs, procedures, and other means of achieving these objectives.”-Haimann.*

*“Planning involves selecting office objectives, departmental goals, and programs and determining the ways of accomplishing them. Planning thus provides a tactical approach.”- Koontz and O’Donnell.*

Forecasting, decision-making, strategy formulation, policy-making, programming, scheduling, budgeting, problem-solving, innovation, and research are some of the sub-functions of planning. Thus, planning is the process of deciding the office goals and then selecting course of actions to achieve these decided goals within the internal and external office environment. Office objectives and the actions are decided with reference to overall organizational objectives. As shown in figure 5.3, planning helps in taking office from current status (at time  $t_1$ ) to a desired status (at time  $t_2$ ) by identifying and then suggesting ways for reducing the gap in both the statuses. Planning quality and implementation leads to positive financial results, higher profits and better returns on investment in office. Planning is necessary for deciding the kind of organization structure, deciding the kind of people required, deciding the ways to effectively lead the people and how to ensure implementation of plans by providing standards of control in office.



**Figure 5.3: Reduction of gap between current and desired status with the help of Planning**

### 5.4.1.1 Nature of Planning

1. Planning is a goal-oriented activity and paves way to achieve office objectives by suggesting actions to be taken.
2. It is the primary function and lays foundation for all other managerial functions of office. All other functions *viz.* organizing, staffing, directing and controlling are designed to support the achievement of office objectives.
3. Planning is a pervasive function as it is preformed in all offices at all levels.
4. Planning is a thinking, intellectual, and rational process. It involves use of mental faculties.
5. It is a continuous process as old plans need to be revised and new plans needs to be made as per changed circumstances in office.
6. It is futuristic in nature as it involves anticipating and affects future of office.
7. Planning is based on decision-making, which involves choosing among alternative courses of actions. Planning assumes existence of alternatives, which are evaluated, and then best is chosen for implementation.
8. Planning is an integrated process. Planning results in different plans, which are independent, yet need to be interrelated. This process of integration results in end-means chain.

### 5.4.1.2 Importance of Planning

The importance of planning is as follows:

- 1) **Focuses on objectives:** Planning helps office mangers to focus attention on office objectives. It ensures that members do not get lost in maze of routine activities and lose sight of the desired ends of office.
- 2) **Provides direction:** Planning keeps office action oriented and provides a results-driven sense of direction to the activities being carried out in office.
- 3) **Reduces uncertainty:** Planning helps in anticipating future events and environment. Though planning cannot predict future with certainty but can help in coping with uncertainty.
- 4) **Minimizes waste and redundancy:** Planning eliminates unproductive office work. Planning ensures that all essential office activities are done in a proper way and non essential, unproductive, out of place activities are not done. Thus, planning ensures that all resources are used to best advantage and cost and redundancy are reduced.
- 5) **Sets the standards for controlling:** Planning is the foundation of control. No planning is successful without control and no control is

possible without planning. Plans provide the standards for performance evaluation using which performances in the office are gauged.

- 6) **Priority oriented:** Planning ensures that the most important objectives get first attention.
- 7) **Change oriented:** Planning helps in coping with change by anticipating problems and opportunities in time to deal with these in best possible manner.
- 8) **Acts as basis for delegation:** Well made plans serve as guides to subordinates and make the job of delegation easier for managers.

#### 5.4.1.3 Problems in Planning

The various problems and hindrance in planning are listed below:

- Lack of accurate information
- Time consuming and expensive process
- Detailed plans and procedures may result in inflexibilities and curb employee initiatives.
- Office managers may lack the ability to plan
- Lack of simplicity in plans
- Lack of specific, clear, measurable, attainable goals
- Uncontrollable external factors

#### 5.4.1.4 Planning Process

As offices differ in size and complexity, no single planning process is followed in the offices. However, given below are some of the main/common steps generally followed in planning process:

- 1) **Establishing objectives:** First step in planning process is to set clear and measurable office objectives. Objectives should clearly specify what is to be done, where would the action take place, who is to perform the action and when is it to be performed. For example, mistake free letters, achieving typing speed of 60 words per minute, reducing customer complaints by 30%, make any defective machine operational within 24 hours are clearly spelt objectives.
- 2) **Developing planning premises:** Planning premises are the assumptions about the future environment. Planning is made for future and no one can predict future with certainty. Hence, office managers make certain assumptions about the future and these assumptions become the boundaries within which plans are implemented. Planning premises can be internal (such as resources of the office), external (such as customer demand), controllable (such as hiring policies of the organization) and uncontrollable (minimum wages policy of government).

- 3) **Searching for alternatives:** There maybe many ways to achieve a target. For example, efficiency in office work can be achieved by training the existing staff, by hiring more skilled staff, by mechanization of office work or by outsourcing of office work. Thus, alternative courses of action should be searched using imagination and foresight. Critical factors must be kept in view while deciding alternatives.
- 4) **Evaluation of alternatives:** Alternatives developed in previous step should be evaluated. Alternatives may be evaluated based on costs, benefits, risks, organizational capabilities, short term and long term impacts etc. Strong and weak points of the alternatives should be carefully analyzed. Computer based mathematical models and techniques can be used for evaluation.
- 5) **Selection of optimum course of action:** Most suitable course of action out of the ones evaluated in step 4 is chosen for implementation. At this point, a decision is made about which out of the evaluated alternatives is most suitable to adopt.
- 6) **Formulation of derivative plans:** This is the final step of the planning process. Necessary sub-plans to support and help the main plans are formulated. These are the tactical plans, budgets and action programs for timely implementation of the main plan.

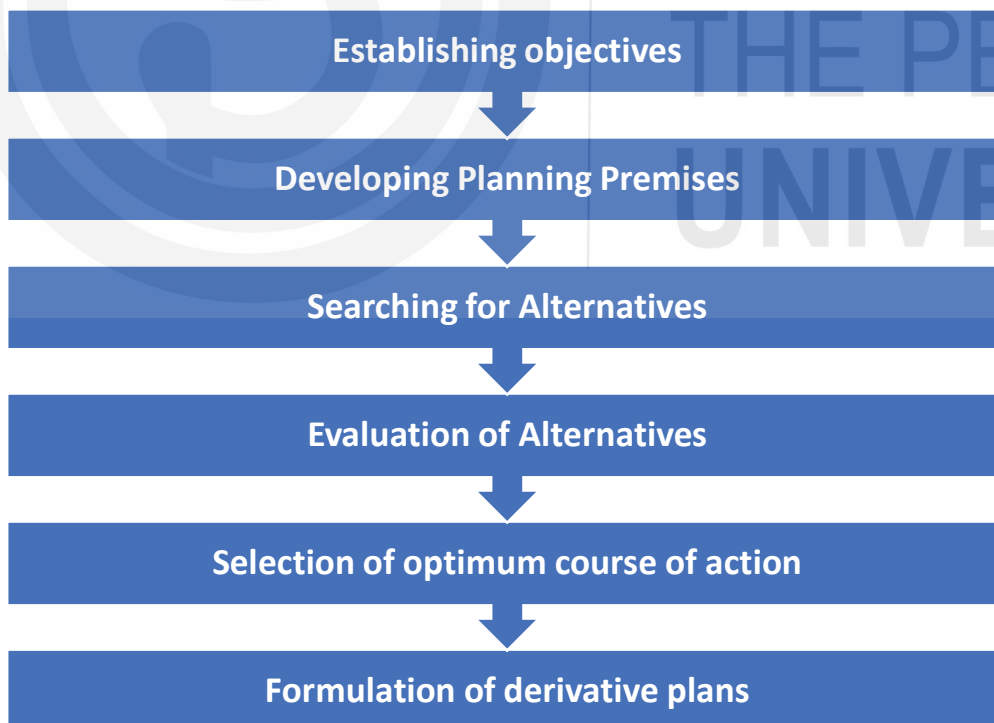


Figure 5.4: Planning Process

## 5.4.2 Organizing

- i) As a process, organizing is an important function of the office management. Organizing refers to the process of identifying, ordering, classifying and allocating the actions to be performed for the achievement of office objectives. Haimann defines “*Organizing as the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed.*”

Organizing process comprises differentiation and integration of activities of organization. Differentiation demands division of work and integration involves unification of the effort. Thus, organizing involves a harmonious blending of specialized parts of organization. This blending is effected through coordinated system of authority responsibility relationships.

Result of organizing process is organization structure. Organization structure is the network of relationships among various job positions in the organization. Structure is the skeleton of the organization within which efforts of different individuals are coordinated with each other.

### 5.4.2.1 Steps in Organizing

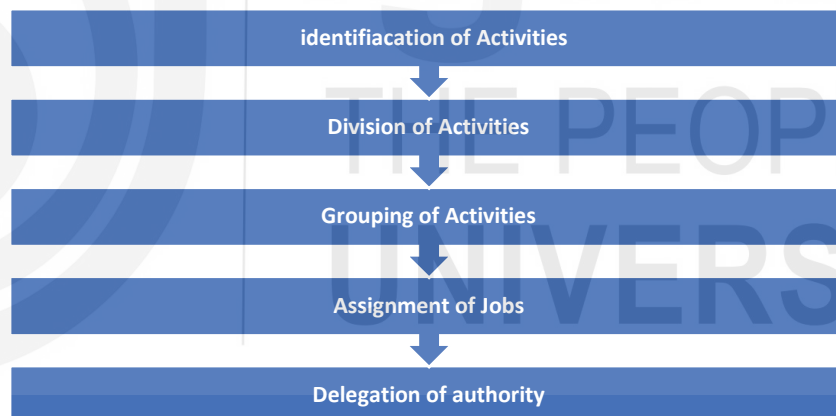


Figure. 5.5: Steps in Organising

- 1) **Identification of activities:** All activities needed to accomplish the office objectives are identified.
- 2) **Division of activities:** Total work is divided into manageable activities as no one can accomplish all the work. It should be ensured that no important and necessary activity is left and no duplication of work takes place.
- 3) **Grouping of activities:** Similar or closely related activities are combined together to make positions, jobs or sections or departments. This grouping of similar activities is called departmentation.
- 4) **Assignment of jobs:** All created jobs are assigned to individuals by matching individual capabilities with the requirement of job.

- 5) **Delegation of authority:** Appropriate authority is delegated to each position in the organization. Authority and responsibility are balanced for each position in the organization. Delegation of authority creates hierarchical relations in the organization.

### 5.4.3 Coordinating

As per Henri Fayol, *“To coordinate is to harmonize all the activities of a concern so as to facilitate its working and its success. In a well-coordinated enterprise, each department or division works in harmony with others and is fully informed of its role in the organization. The working schedule of various departments is constantly tuned to circumstances.”*

Coordinating function of management is all about unifying the efforts and activities of different individuals, groups and departments in an office to achieve office objectives with minimum friction. It is about bringing together the efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives. It involves blending, integrating and harmonizing the diverse activities performed in an office. Balancing, timing, and integrating are three main elements of coordinating process.

#### 5.4.3.1 Importance of Coordinating

- 1) **Provides unity in diversity:** Coordination provides much needed unity to the diverse activities performed in the office. It is like a silken thread keeping the pearls together in necklace.
- 2) **Facilitates team work:** Without coordinating, no teamwork is possible. Team consists of individuals working on different aspects of a problem. Their efforts need to be coordinated to get fruitful results.
- 3) **Propels growth:** Coordination is a must in big offices as large number of employees are performing variety of jobs. Personal contacts and communication are difficult in big organizations. In such an event, coordinating function facilitates the growth of offices.
- 4) **Creates synergy:** Coordination brings synergy to office efforts. Coordination integrates and blends the individual efforts and such coordinated efforts far exceed the sum total of individual efforts.
- 5) **Economy and efficiency:** Coordinating helps in bringing economy to office operations by reducing duplication of efforts. Proper integration and blending of activities and efforts ensures optimum utilization of resources.
- 6) **Good human relations:** Coordinating individual employee interest with office interest can improve job satisfaction and morale of employees. Coordination can also be instrumental in reducing conflicts in offices. All these can result in good human relations at work.

### 5.4.3.2 Nature of Coordination

Following statements describe the nature of Coordination:

- Coordination is. The basic responsibility of office manager.
- Coordination is the result of deliberate efforts.
- Coordination is a continuous process.
- Coordination is mandatory where group efforts are involved.
- Coordinatino is based on systems concept.

### 5.4.3.3 Techniques of Coordination

The various techniques of coordination are as follows:

- Clearly defined goals of office
- Harmony in various policies and programs
- Cooperation among staff
- Clear chain of command
- Sound organizational structure
- Effective communication flow
- Liaison officers such as project managers
- Effective leadership
- Commonality of interest

## 5.4.4 Controlling

Controlling is an important function of office manager. Controlling ensures that office objectives are being achieved in a predefined manner and as per pre-decided time schedule. In order to seek pre-decided outcomes from office staff, office manager needs to effectively control the activities of the subordinates. Controlling ensures that office activities are performed as per the plans and office resources are used optimally for the achievement of predefined office goals. Controlling is required in all kinds of offices. Controlling is not the last function of management rather it brings management cycle back to planning stage. The controlling function provides feedback to planning function by pointing out deviations from standards, by analysing the causes of the deviations, and by suggesting corrective actions. This feedback helps in reviewing and revising the existing plans in the light of encountered problems and results in better plans in future.

### 5.4.4.1 Nature of Control

- Controlling is a universal process as it is exercised for all activities of the office.
- It is a continuous process as employee efforts need to be continuously monitored to keep them on right track.

- Control is forward looking, as past cannot be controlled.
- Control involves measurement, as it requires comparing actual performance with the standards.
- Control curbs the undesirable behavior and makes people conform to rules and regulations.

#### 5.4.4.2 Importance of Controlling

The importance of controlling is discussed bellow:

- 1) **Guide to operations:** It acts as a guiding light to office operations by keeping the activities aligned to office objectives through continuous monitoring and correcting deviations.
- 2) **Policy verification:** Control helps managers to verify the relevance of the plans in the changed circumstances. It points out need to review, revise and update the plans before things go out of control.
- 3) **Employee morale:** Control helps in motivating employees by providing clear, attainable, and measurable performance standards to employees.
- 4) **Psychological pressure:** Sound control system puts pressure on employees to perform well as they know their performance will be measured and evaluated.
- 5) **Helps in uncovering deficiencies:** There are various controllable and uncontrollable forces which can put the achievement of goals off the track. Controlling helps in uncovering deficiencies in the system caused due to such forces and remove the causes in time.

#### 5.4.4.3 Steps in Control Process

Below mentioned are the various steps in control process:

- 1) **Establishment of standards:** First step in control process is to establish the control standards. Actual performance will be measured and evaluated against these benchmarks. These standards can be qualitative (such as goodwill, image, human relations in office) or quantitative (such as quantity of output, number of customer inquiries to be handled). These standards should be as far as possible quantitative, objective, accurate, clear, flexible, and reasonable.
- 2) **Measurement of actual performance:** In this step, actual performance is measured. Measurement should be accurate and reliable. For quantitative standards, performance should be measured in quantitative terms. For qualitative standards, opinion surveys can be done to measure the performance.
- 3) **Comparing performance with standards:** In this, actual performance is compared with the standards to find out any deviations between actual results and desired results.



- 4) Analysis of deviations:** Deviations noted in third stage are analysed. There can be three outcomes no deviation, actual performance exceeding standards and actual performance falling short of standards.

Not all deviations need to be reported to higher authorities. Insignificant deviations (both positive and negative) do not demand any attention. Only exceptional deviations demand some actions. Such deviations and their causes are reported to the concerned managers.

- 5) Taking corrective action:** This is the final step of the control process. This step ensures that deviations do not occur in future and objectives are achieved. Corrective actions can be taking no action, revising objectives, training of the employees etc.

Two mistakes are to be taken care of at this stage – taking an action when no action is required and taking no action when an action is required. Effective control system would suggest a right action at the right time.

#### **5.4.4.4 Essentials of an Effective Control System**

Following are the essentials of an effective control system:

1. It should be as per the needs and objectives of the office.
2. It should be simple to understand.
3. It should focus on future actions.
4. Control system should focus on strategic or critical deviations.
5. It should be adaptable and flexible to changing conditions.
6. It should be economical.
7. It should not only point out deviations but also lead to some corrective action.
8. It should be objective.

#### **5.4.4.5 Control Measures for an Office Manager (W. H. Leffingwell's)**

Below mentioned are the various control measures for an office manager by W. H. Leffingwell:

1. Plan and schedule the day's work in writing
2. Ensure that day's work is started in time
3. Determine the amount of unfinished work
4. Determine the amount of current work to be done
5. Measure the working force by the work
6. Check daily output
7. Insist on a full day's work
8. Check standard workpractice instructions

9. Plan daily supervision work for the week
10. Establish daily inspection of maintenance
11. Establish overall inspection of filing and record keeping
12. Get acquainted with the staff

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## 5.5 ACTIVITIES OF OFFICE

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Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices.

Some of these common activities have been listed below:

1. Processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail
2. Taking dictation
3. Producing transcription
4. Typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums etc.
5. Various kinds of printing jobs
6. Making duplicate copies of documents
7. Records maintenance (filing and indexing), records retention for future reference, records retrieval and records disposal (office records includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.)
8. Developing office systems, procedures, standards, and methods
9. Maintaining communication flow
10. Designing and improving of office forms
11. Procuring stationery and other office supplies
12. Recruitment, selection, placement and training of office staff
13. Maintenance of furniture, machines, appliances etc.
14. Preparation and maintaining of accounts statements, pay roll, other financial records and reports etc.
15. Handling telephone calls
16. Prompt and accurate handling of customer and supplier enquiries, orders, and complaints
17. Preparing up to date information for the organization
18. Recorded, arranging and processing of collected information so as to convert it in a quickly accessible form for use by converting it into notes, reports, diagrams, graphs etc.

19. Safeguarding the office assets such as cash, machinery, office equipment, buildings, plants, equipment, lighting and air conditioning, furniture, title deeds, records, documents etc.

20. Maintaining efficient workflow in office

**Check Your Progress B**

1. What are the benefits of planning in an office?

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2. Describe the process of controlling the activities in an office.

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3. List any four activities of office.

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4. What are the various control measures for an office manager?

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**5.6 LET US SUM UP**

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Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the center of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work are done to plan, organize, coordinate, and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to

understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management.

An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Some of the main objectives of the office management are achievement of organizational goals, optimum utilization of office resources, ensuring operational workflow, effective communication flow, development of human resources, coordination, relations with customers and suppliers and better office environment.

Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Office management helps in achieving goals, optimum utilization of office resources, cost reduction, maintaining and enhancing office efficiency, smooth flow of work, managing public relations, managing change, attracting and retaining talent, managing challenges for survival and growth and coordination of office function etc.

Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office. Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.

Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices. Some of these common activities are processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail, taking dictation, producing transcription, typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums, making duplicate copies of documents, maintaining efficient workflow in office etc.

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## 5.7 KEYWORDS

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**Controlling:** Controlling can be defined as that function of management which helps to seek planned results from the subordinates, managers and at all levels of an organization. The controlling function helps in measuring the progress towards the organizational goals & brings any deviations, & indicates corrective action.

**Coordinating:** It is about bringing together of efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives.

**Functions:** Functions are various activities/ tasks that are natural to a person in a particular job

**Office Record:** Office records are some written/permanent office communication for future reference. It includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.

**Objectives:** In context of an organization, objectives are office target or purposes to attain or accomplish and for which employee's efforts or actions are intended

**Office Management:** It refers to that branch of the art and science of management, which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done.

**Organizing:** It is the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed.

**Planning:** Planning is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when will it be done, how will it be done, where it will be done and who will do it.

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## 5.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. Write a short note on office management.
2. What is office management? What are the objectives of office management?
3. "Office management is the task of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the efforts of employees in the office to achieve the objectives of office". Elucidate the statement.
4. Describe the functions performed by an office manager for running an office smoothly.
5. Enumerate the key activities, which are performed in an office.
6. Describe the importance of office management.

**Note:** These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.