

Chapter 10: Furniture, Equipment, and Supplies

Overview

While the elements discussed in this chapter may seem separate from the job tasks of an administrative professional, they are really very important. Be sure to emphasize the importance of the way a workspace is designed; it can have a lot of impact on the productivity and smoothness of the work flow. Purchasing procedures are also very well defined in an organization; familiarizing one's self with those procedures should be a priority.

Lecture Notes

A. Office Layout and Design

Make choices carefully – the work environment affects employees psychologically, sociologically, and physically. Choices include traditional or modern office, private office separated from general work areas, open office using the office landscaping, or modular approach.

1. **Planning an Office** to allow employees to function efficiently and productively is an important part of the decision-making process.
 - a. Strategic planning for the business should be aligned with planning the physical facilities.
 - b. Cost of work area design refers to costs associated with equipment, furniture, remodeling, and replacements.
 - c. Job functions are constantly changing so the designs must be flexible.
 - d. Computer requirements are a consideration since 50% of business personnel use computers for more than five hours a day.
 - e. Employee expectations revolve around the work environment and employee health and comfort (ergonomics).
2. **Designing Appropriate Office Layouts** should be a collaborative effort representing various levels of the organization.
 - a. The goal of office layout should be an effective arrangement to accommodate tasks and facilitate an efficient workflow.
 - Analyze information and workflow patterns
 - Allocate space for office functions
 - Allow for proper lighting, sound, and interior design
 - Eliminate structural barriers for accessibility
 - b. Flexible workplace layouts allow for better communication and future changes to accommodate growth.
3. **Types of Office Design** can be broken down into traditional (private) or modern (open).
 - a. The private office is also known as a traditional (closed) office or a bull-pen approach.

- Offices are separated from the general office areas where support personnel are located.
 - Confidential or private nature of the work is better accomplished.
 - A higher level of concentration is accomplished.
 - Prestige is conveyed.
- b. The open-office design uses a minimum of permanent walls, popular since 1960.
- Office landscaping concept emphasizes analysis of office procedures and controlling workflow.
 - Modular office focuses on planning workspaces with interchangeable pieces to allow for expansion, built-in fixtures for task lighting, color and texture used to complement design.
 - Home work areas should also consider ergonomics – lighting, equipment, atmosphere, acoustics, and workflow.
 - Hot desking reduces office space costs by sharing the space between multiple employees that are not in the office full-time.
 - Hotelling is a design with unassigned desks; workspaces are reserved for periods of time.
 - Motelling is similar to hotelling, but space does not have to be prebooked.

4. **Space Design** and allocation of space depend on the way it will be used. Planning should be continuous to improve communication and productivity.

- a. Analyze the physical factors related to allocation and utilization of space:
- Nature and type of furniture
 - Structural barriers
 - Windows and doors
 - Nature of work to be performed
 - Space requirements for job functions
 - Storage needs
 - Communication requirements
- b. Keep the basic steps in planning a workspace in mind; they include
1. Define goals after work is identified.
 2. Establish space requirements once information regarding work activities has been collected and analyzed.
 3. Develop new workspace plans to facilitate different patterns of information flow.
 4. Select and implement the best alternative for testing and implementation.

5. **Computer Software for Workspace Design** is available to display proposed layouts and designs before final decisions are made.

B. Work Area Use and Maintenance

The work area should be planned and designed to meet individual needs in a safe manner.

1. **Organizational Needs**

- a. Face-to-face communication to plan and complete work assignments.
- b. Electronic communication needs include computers, telephones, fax, and others.
- c. Information flow from task to task or department to department is as important as external flow to other organizations.
- d. Record system provides access to information in the correct form as it is needed.

2. **Task Performance Needs** should consider the design and equipment for efficiency and productivity.

- a. Arrange the work center (office equipment, desk accessories, office supplies, and reference materials) to coincide with the flow of work.
- b. Utilize devices for personal comfort like adjustable-height chairs, work surfaces, monitors, and keyboards.
- c. Place items carefully to maintain security and privacy of information.

3. **Behavioral Considerations** related to adapting to the environment include:

- a. Need for territoriality and a sense of personal space is an individual need.
- b. Personalizing the workspace with plants or pictures makes people feel more comfortable.
- c. Social needs like cafeterias, lounges, or fitness centers are near work areas.

4. **Network Requirements** should be considered as design plans are made; cabling is important to connect pieces of equipment and make the presence of the network transparent to users.

C. Procurement Procedures

There are three major benefits from purchasing and inventory management – cost, quality, and technology. Understanding the organization’s policy is very important for administrative professionals.

1. **Materials Management** means that one division manages the combined related functions of purchasing, inventory control, receiving, and storage.
2. **Global Procurement** has made a difference in the levels of competition (higher quality at a lower price), innovations in technology (every few months), and availability of global networks (intranets, extranets, and e-commerce).
3. **Types of Purchasing** include:

- a. Capital equipment is a nonrecurring asset intended for use over a period of years, including office furniture and computers.
 - b. Services include equipment repair, upkeep of the grounds, and maintenance not performed by staff.
 - c. Maintenance, repair, and operating supplies (MRO) includes items purchased for in-house repairs and maintenance.
4. **Procurement Cycle** includes a number of stages.
- a. Identify a need for procurement (reorder point or receipt of a requisition).
 - b. Evaluate the available suppliers.
 - c. Select a supplier through a bid process or negotiation.
 - d. Procurement occurs with a purchase order to initiate the process.
 - e. Continually monitor the performance of the suppliers to improve the cycle over time.

D. Inventory and Storage

1. **Inventory Management** (*Review figure 10-1 on p. 255.*)
 - a. A supplier-buyer partnership supports a close relationship to lower costs and improved control.
 - b. Electronic data interchange (EDI) provides a computer-to-computer exchange of documents between two businesses.
 - c. Inventory reviews force organizations to define requirements.
 - d. Cross-functional teams control costs and standardize processes.
 - e. An inventory record system maintains control.
2. **Inventory Costs** include the price of the item, storage costs, and costs of obsolescence.
 - a. Inventory risk includes theft, damage, spoilage, and obsolescence.
 - b. Inventory control is maintained through an honor system or a locked system with limited access (authorized access only).
 - c. A full-service supplier is a single supplier for maintenance, repair, and operating supplies to lower prices with convenient delivery.

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old):

- Calkins-Fulton, Patsy J. and Joanna D. Hanks. *Office Technology and Procedures*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Champoux, Joseph E. *Organizational Behavior: Integrating Individuals, Groups, and Processes*.

- Davis, Fruehling, and Oldham. *Psychology: Human Relations and Work Adjustment*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*.
- Keeling, B. Lewis and Norman F. Kallaus. *Administrative Office Management*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Kupsh and Rhodes. *Automated Office Systems*.
- Northcraft, Gregory B. and Margaret A. Neale. *Organizational Behavior*. The Dryden Press.
- Oliverio and Pasewark. *The Office: Procedures and Technology*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Quible, Zane K. *Administrative Office Management – An Introduction*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Ray, C., J. Palmer, and A. Wohl. *Office Automation: A Systems Approach*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Regan, Elizabeth A. and Bridget N. O'Connor. *Automating the Office – Office Systems and End-User Computing*. Macmillan City.
- Robbins, Stephen P. *Organizational Behavior*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Scriven, Kozell, Myers, and Hapke. *Professional Office Procedures*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.
- Steers, Richard M. *Introduction to Organizational Behavior*. Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.
- Tilton, R., J. Jackson, and S. Rigby. *The Electronic Office: Procedures and Administration*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Wagner, J. A. and J. R. Hollenbeck. *Organizational Behavior*.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

<i>Current Periodical</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
<i>Business Week</i>	http://www.businessweek.com
<i>Fortune</i>	http://fortune.com
<i>Gregg Reference Manual</i>	
<i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm

*Modern Office
Technology*

OfficePro

<http://www.iaap-hq.org/officepro/toc.htm>

The Office

Wall Street Journal

<http://online.wsj.com/public/us>