

BCOE-144 Ofice Management and Secretarial Practices





BCOE-144 Office Management and Secretarial Practices

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

In the present times, office management is a blend of workplace design, culture and technology. The contemporary business world would come to a standstill without computers and the internet. In today's world, automation software is the need of the hour, and we are also ready to welcome artificial intelligence as the part of office mechanization. Who would have believed that all this office transformation started with the simple typewriter? Indeed, the office has come a long way since it became divergent from the home in the 17th century.

Educational Institutions like Indira Gandhi National Open University which is pioneer in self paced technology enabled learning, played an important role in building contents for learners in this regard. Office management and secretarial practices course mainly provide opportunities to learn the use of latest technologies such as using personal computers, laptops, word processing, spreadsheet, payrolls and desktop publishing software to run the office smoothly.

This course is offered in both online as well as offline mode under the Program B.Com (G) and BCOMOL. BCOE-144 is one of the Discipline Specific Elective Course (6 credits) that is taught in 6th Semester of B.Com (G) programme offered under CBCS scheme. Intention behind Discipline Specific Electives (DSEs) is specific to the subject of the study with an extended scope.

Office Management and Secretarial Practices course may be considered as one of the skill oriented courses which make IGNOU learners well versed with office administration, office management, business administration and business management. The main objective of this course is to familiarize the learners with the knowledge and understanding that makes them familiar with the contemporary ways of understanding the functioning of office management and secretarial practices. Self Learning Material (SLM) has noteworthy features that consist of 21 units bifurcated into 6 blocks.

Office Management and Secretarial Practices trains manpower with knowledge and skills for handling varied responsibilities of an office for the efficient management and administration of staff and resources such as safeguarding of data, files & records, payrolls administration, space management, office communication, office facility management for day to day functioning, coordinating meetings, etc. It also provides the management knowledge required by those who will eventually acquire the position of office managers. After passing this course, the learners will acquire many administrative avenues both in public and private sector organizations.





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BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION TO OFFICE

This is the very first block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices." This block will give a proper glimpse about the conceptual framework of the office. It enlighten the learners with various aspects related to office, office space and virtual space. This block is structured to cover the fundamentals and preliminary aspects of office and office etiquette. The block on the theme "Introduction to office" comprises of three units, the detail of which is mentioned below:

Unit 1: Discusses about the concept of office and lists the factors affecting the office. It talks about office layout and office location. The later part of the unit deals with office procedures and their importance and makes the readers familiar with the role of a company office and lists the various skills and equipment needed in the office and discusses the various types of offices.

Unit 2: Makes the learners aware about various important aspects related to office space and virtual office in terms of its features, advantages and disadvantages. It discusses the concept of a hybrid office. It states how a virtual office is different from a physical office. The unit also emphasizes virtual meeting space and its benefits. It also discusses the work from home culture, its advantages and disadvantages.

Unit 3: Discusses the meaning of office etiquettes and explains why it is important. It also explains the do's and don'ts of office etiquette. The later part of the unit deals with a case study for a deeper understanding on office etiquettes.



UNIT 1 ABOUT THE OFFICE

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Meaning of Office
- 1.3 Office Layout
- 1.4 Office Location
- 1.5 Office Procedures
- 1.6 Role of A Company Office
- 1.7 Equipments & Skills Used in Offices
 - 1.7.1 Equipments Used in Offices
 - 1.7.2 Skills Used in Offices
- 1.8 Types of Offices
- 1.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.10 Keywords
- 1.11 Terminal Questions

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- understand the meaning of office;
- know about office layout and its various objectives;
- list the factors affecting office location;
- know about office procedures and their importance;
- understand the role of a company office;
- list the various skills and equipments needed in the office; and
- understand the different types of offices.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Complexities of business are increasing day by day. In the earlier times, products were usually made of locally available raw materials and served to the local market only. But advances in science, technology, industrialization, transport, communication, etc. have reformulated the concept view of the office. Now offices are developed on scientific principle and their management and administration are in the hands of qualified and trained managerial personnel.

There is no secret that office environments are changing very fast over the last few decades. Office cultures are in constant flux; with a growing interest in collaboration and teamwork. Many corporations are opting for a flatter corporate structure. Companies are knocking down walls and installing treadmill desks, collaboration rooms, and nap spaces. It is not to deny the open office environment is becoming more prevalent and appears to be here to stay, at least for now. In many ways, this new environment offers a plethora of positive outcomes, such as a higher level of interaction and transparency, more willingness to collaborate, higher level of trust and accountability. However, this big change can come with a host of negative consequences as well, namely, employees not adjusting properly to their new surroundings.

1.2 MEANING OF OFFICE

The English word "Office" first came into light in 1395, which alluded to a "place where business is executed", however, the word has more established roots. Office word is taken from the Latin word Officium, which didn't guarantee to allude to a particular spot but instead a department in the feeling of staff, or on the other hand, the more theoretical significance of formal position. In layman's terms, an office is a workplace where people are engaged in an assigned task in a hierarchical manner for the fulfillment of the organization's common objectives and goals. It is basically an information processing unit facilitating the responsible authorities taking sound decisions for achieving the organization's goals. An office is a space where an association's representatives perform administrative work to help and acknowledge the items and objectives of the association. "Office" may likewise indicate a situation inside an association with explicit obligations joined to it; the last option is as a matter of fact a prior utilization, office as spot initially alluding to the area of one's an obligation. Whenever utilized as a descriptor, the expression "office" may allude to business-related assignments.

In modern terms, an office is usually the location where white-collar workers carry out their functions. As indicated by James Stephenson, "Office is that part of the business undertaking which is dedicated to the heading and coordination of its different exercises." The size of an office ranges from a little office the seat toward the edge of a small business of minuscule size, through whole floors of structures, up to and including enormous structures devoted completely to one organization. Both the structure and shape of offices are impacted by the top management. Office management involves the planning, design, and implementation of work in an organization and its offices. This includes creating a focused work environment and guiding and coordinating the activities of office personnel.



1.3 OFFICE LAYOUT

Office layout means the systematic arrangement of office equipment, machines, and furniture and providing adequate space to office personnel for regular performance of work with efficiency. In simpler words, it is the blueprint of the office floor, and hence, also called the office floor plan. While taking decisions about office layout the onus lies on the office manager. An office manager should make sure the proper allocation of space to each section and interlink them with other sections. Faulty or improper arrangements lead to unnecessary wastage of time and energy and thus lead to an increase in the cost of office operations. A standard office layout should ensure proper allocation of floor space, easy supervision, no waste of time and energy of office personnel, efficiency to staff, and better use of office resources and equipment. Office layout can be divided into two major categories: Process Layout and Group Layout. In the process layout, both the machines and employees are arranged in sequence of the activities to be carried out. Whereas, in a group layout, employees are placed in a separate place where similar activities are carried out. Whereas the machines are placed in the other sections. By keeping all these in mind the main objectives of office layout are:

- To ensure effective use of the available floor space;
- To facilitate managers with better supervision and control of their workforce;
- To ensure steady and effective workflow;
- To ensure a wholesome environment for the workforce:
- To facilitate inter-communication between various departments as and when needed; and
- To include provisions for future expansion of the company etc.

1.4 OFFICE LOCATION

Office location means the place or site where the office organization is situated. Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks, as it largely affects employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance. An organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location. The location could be one where the entire company can be served efficiently at an economical cost. Various factors which must be taken into consideration while making the decision about the office location are listed below:

1. Availability of sufficient space: Sufficient accommodation and facilities should be there in an office to meet present requirements to future expansions. The office should have sufficient accommodation and facilities, rooms and storage space, etc.

- **2. Proximity to other departments:** The office should ensure appropriate proximity to other departments and must be located in a central place to be easily accessible to other sections or departments.
- **3. Availability of transport facilities:** An office should have a proximity to transport facilities, providing convenience to office workers and other outsiders dealing with it.
- **4. Service facilities:** Besides transport, the office location should have proximity to other linked facilities as well such as banking, postal, internet, telephone. insurance etc.
- **5. Healthy environment:** The office surroundings should be free from dust, noise, congestion, obnoxious smell, and fumes as these factors may lead to reducing the work efficiency of office employees.

1.5 OFFICE PROCEDURES

Office procedures are the set of standards for the staff working in an office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business. An office procedure basically is an organization's formal process to collect necessary information for effective and efficient decision-making. Having stringent and clearly defined office procedures helps in creating a uniform way of doing things which leads to consistency, efficiency, and professionalism within the office environment. It can also help employees to better understand the job description and focus on priority tasks. Office procedures often fall in line with company policies. The office can be presented to the employees in any way; they can either be put on bulletin boards or can be distributed in office manuals or any other way desired by the company. For example, an office procedure can mandate employees' actions while at work (i.e., no personal phone calls, checking voicemail in the mornings, no unnecessary conversations with clients). They can also include the handling of office equipment such as reloading empty copy machines and refilling staplers. The importance of office procedures is discussed below:

- 1. Ensures efficiency in the workplace;
- 2. Allows for effective training for new staff;
- 3. Enhances performances of old staff;
- 4. Facilitates the better flow of work in the office and between departments;
- 5. Ensures, consistency, and professionalism of an office task;
- 6. Instills discipline in an organization;
- 7. Reduces the general cost of operations; and
- 8. Reduces chances of errors and fraud.

About the Office Check Your Progress A: What do you understand by the term Office? "Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks." Comment. Differentiate between Process layout and Group layout. "An organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location." Comment.

1.6 ROLE OF A COMPANY OFFICE

The main functions of offices are decision-making and providing information. Decision-making involves executing managerial functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, motivating, innovating, and integrating and providing information and other services to company departments and units, customers, suppliers, investors, employers and regulating authorities. In any organization an office has two different

roles, those are; a Contributory role and a vigilant role. These roles are dependent on the function being performed as discussed below:

- 1. Office work in a contributory role, when it;
 - Assist sub-units to regulate the business activities in the light of external situation changes;
 - Receive information from internal and external units;
 - Transmit decisions, views, and comments to other linked units;
 - Maintain records and other important historical information;
 - Provide professional services in ancillary activities such as selecting and hiring, maintaining personnel records, providing legal advice, corresponding with external units, training, designing systems etc.
- 2. Office work in a Vigilant role, when it;
 - Assist in maintaining discipline;
 - See that employees adhere to rules and regulations;
 - Is responsible for budgetary control, etc.

1.7 EQUIPMENTS & SKILLS USED IN OFFICES

One needs to have a set of specific skills and certain types of equipment for working in an office. The skills and equipment may vary slightly depending upon the type of office but overall, they are quite the same.

1.7.1 Equipments Used in Offices

- 1. Paper-Related Equipment: Certain office equipment are vital for the paper aspects of the business. Examples include photocopy machines for making copies of documents, printers for printing documents and emails required for the purpose of documentation or shredders for disposing off sensitive materials which are no longer required.
- **2. Computers:** Nowadays computers have become the most important equipment in the office. They are used for mailing, creating documents, scanning or data entry depending upon the type of office.
- **3. Internet:** A good speed internet connection is must for any office, it contributes to the completion of daily tasks. Without a sound internet connection, the office's procedures will be hindered or delayed, which will lead to inefficiency while completing a task and thus will hamper the sharing of internal or external information within an office.
- **4. Furniture:** A right type of furniture in place makes the office look more pleasant and professional. Choosing the right type of office furniture plays an important role in increasing the employee's efficiency thus contributes to a positive attitude at the workplace.

1.7.2 Skills Used in Offices

- 1. Communication Skills: An employee must have good communication skills for being successful in an office environment. The type of communication varies on the basis of job description. Both written and oral communication are important. Some employees need to write well and communicate through regular emails or some need to answer phone calls and speak to clients of the company on a regular basis. Depending on the job, negotiations may even be necessary.
- 2. Management Skills: Every employee needs to manage themselves in their job. He must be able to look at their workload and set priorities by determining which tasks need to be done first and which ones can be done later. He must be able to manage his time efficiently for completing a maximum number of tasks throughout the day.
- **3. Problem-Solving Skills:** An employee must have problem-solving skills for figuring out the best way to complete tasks and fix the issues that may arise. Employees must have coordination qualities to work together as a team and they may use brainstorming techniques for solving problems and completing projects.
- 4. Computer Skills: Various offices give priority to people who have experience and knowledge with specific types of software that the company uses, for instance, financial software or accounting software. If the company hires someone who does not have these skills, he needs to be provided with additional training for doing his job well. The ability to catch and learn things quickly and solve simple computer issues is also an important skill for employees to have.

1.8 TYPES OF OFFICES

Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. The various types of offices are discussed below:

- 1. Traditional Office: A traditional office is ideal if the business is indulged in financial services, hedge funds, law firms or similar. The traditional or classic office layout includes a reception, boardroom and private offices and gives quiet and private areas that help employees work and converse with the clients.
- 2. Creative Office: It focuses on teamwork and collaboration. It is characterized by fewer barriers and more transparency. Creative offices are more popular in start-up companies, creative agencies, advertising agencies, and others. They are also space-efficient and employees can be fitted in tables rather than cubicles.

- **3. Private Office:** It is rented to an individual entity which comes in all sizes ranging from one person to hundred. It is characterized by a lockable room which is located within a shared office facility. It provides a quiet, secure and confidential space to work and allows one to join in with the wider professional community.
- 4. Coworking Office: It is one of the most flexible and favored types of office which allows one to work alongside other businesses in an open communal office. There is flexibility in terms of the number of desks that one may rent. It is common among start-ups and small companies which need a workspace for an indefinite period of time. Many of these may have unique features like roof terraces or chill-out zones.
- **5. Contiguous Office:** Contiguous offices are usually rented to a single tenant and are made up of multiple but combined suites on the same floor of a building.
- **6. Executive Suites:** It is a fully furnished and serviced office space that is pre-wired for phone and internet services. It is often secured as a sublet with flexible terms: monthly, quarterly or yearly.
- 7. Enterprise Suite: It is a type of managed office that is customizable to suit the needs of larger teams. It is a type of Coworking or serviced office.
- **8. Sublet:** A sublet office allows to rent conventional office space without taking on the responsibility and lease cost. The lead tenant has permission to sublet their office. These offices give an independent feel of the commercial lease without binding any long-term contract or large deposits.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	What is a private office?
2.	Define coworking.

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٠.	successful in an office environment." Comment.
4.	List the features of a private office.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Complexities of business are increasing day by day. In the earlier times, products were usually made of locally available raw materials and served to the local market only. But advances in science, technology, industrialization, transport, communication, etc. have reformulated the concept view of the office. Now offices are developed on scientific principle and their management and administration are in the hands of qualified and trained managerial personnel.

The English word "Office" first came into light in 1395, which referred to a "place where business is transacted" but the word has older roots. Office word is taken from the Latin word Officium, which didn't necessarily refer to a specific place but rather a bureau in the sense of staff, or the more abstract meaning of formal position. In layman terms, an office is a workplace where people are engaged in an assigned task in a hierarchical manner for the fulfillment of the organization's common objectives and goals.

Office layout means the systematic arrangement of office equipment, machines, and furniture and providing adequate space to office personnel for regular performance of work with efficiency. In simpler words, it is the blueprint of the office floor, and hence, also called the office floor plan. While taking decisions about office layout the onus lies on the office manager. An office manager should make sure the proper allocation of space to each section and interlink them with other sections.

Office location means the place or site where the office organization is situated. Deciding about the business location is one of the most crucial tasks as it largely affects employees' job satisfaction and work-life balance. An

organization's present and future plans must be taken into consideration while deciding about the location. The location must be one, where from the entire organization can be served efficiently at a reasonable cost.

Office procedures are the set of standards for the staff working in an office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business. An office procedure basically is an organization's formal process to collect necessary information for effective and efficient decision-making. Having stringent and clearly defined office procedures helps in creating a uniform way of doing things which leads to consistency, efficiency, and professionalism within the office environment.

The main functions of offices are decision-making and providing information. Decision-making involves executing managerial functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, motivating, innovating, and integrating and providing information and other services to company departments and units, customers, suppliers, investors, employers and regulating authorities. In any organization an office has two different roles, those are, a Contributory role and a vigilant role.

One needs to have a set of specific skills and certain types of equipment for working in an office. The skills and equipment may vary slightly depending upon the type of office but overall, they are quite the same. Various equipment used in offices are paper-related equipment, computers, internet, and furniture, whereas, various desired skills in offices are communication skills, management skills, problem-solving skills, and computer skills.

Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. The various types of offices are traditional office, creative office, private office, coworking office, contiguous office, executive suites, enterprise suite, and sublet, etc.

1.10 KEYWORDS

Contiguous office: Contiguous offices are usually rented to a single tenant and are made up of multiple but combined suites on the same floor of a building.

Coworking Office: It is one of the most flexible and favored types of office which allows one to work alongside other businesses in an open communal office.

Creative office: It focuses on teamwork and collaboration. It is characterized by fewer barriers and more transparency.

Enterprise Suite: It is a type of managed office that is customizable to suit the needs of larger teams. It is a type of Coworking or serviced office.

Office Management: Office management involves the planning, design, and implementation of work in an organization and its offices.

Office Layout: Office layout is defined as the arrangement of all physical components within the available floor space to provide the maximum effectiveness and the coordination of these components into an effective or attractive unity.

Office Location: Office location means the place and site where the office of an organization is situated.

Office Procedures: Office procedures set the standard for how a staff works together in the office. It is often a set of rules or policies guiding the operations of an office or small business.

1.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the office layout? State its objectives.
- 2. What do you understand by office location? List the factors affecting office location.
- 3. State the significance of office procedure.
- 4. Why is coworking the most common in start-ups?
- 5. What are the different types of offices? Discuss in detail
- 6. There are different equipment and skills required in an office. Explain.
- 7. Which two types of roles are played by office in an organization? Explain.

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.

UNIT 2 OFFICES SPACE & VIRTUAL SPACE

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of Office Space
- 2.3 Virtual Office
- 2.4 Advantages of Virtual Office
- 2.5 Disadvantages of Virtual Office
- 2.6 Hybrid Office
- 2.7 Differences Between Virtual Office and Physical Office
- 2.8 Virtual Meeting Space
- 2.9 Work From Home (WFH) Culture
 - 2.9.1 Advantages of Work From Home
 - 2.9.2 Disadvantages of Work From Home
- 2.10 Future Trends in the Office Environment
- 2.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.12 Keywords
- 2.13 Terminal Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- know about office space;
- explain the concept of virtual office;
- list the advantages and disadvantages of virtual office;
- know about virtual meeting space;
- understand virtual meeting vendors; and
- explain the work from home culture.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Businesses that keep their workforce at the core of their digital transformation now will be market leaders tomorrow. Workers expect more from their employers, and technology is critical capitaliz on the chance to transform the firm. Organizations obtain the competitive advantage of sustainable and productive employees by deploying solutions that improve the worker experience and increase productivity.

2.2 MEANING OF OFFICE SPACE

Office space basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs.

When it comes to selecting an office space, nowadays business owners and entrepreneurs have a variety of alternatives. They can opt not just traditional office options, but also relatively recent ones, such as co-working spaces and virtual offices. As we all know, the term "office" refers to a role or service linked with a trade or profession, or a specific relationship to others. The primary function of an office environment is to assist its employees in carrying out their duties. Office workstations are often engaged for basic office tasks such as reading, writing, and computer work. Ergonomic furniture, multipurpose workplaces, integrated technology, collaborative surroundings, open spaces, leisure and rest rooms, lighting, decorative motivation, and so on are all part of today's modern office.

Touch-free technologies such as automatic doors, voice-activated elevators, cellphone-controlled hotel room access, hands-free light switches and temperature settings, automated luggage bag tags, and improved airport check-in and security are now being used in office areas to reduce infection.

2.3 VIRTUAL OFFICE

A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space – including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms — without the requirement for physical office space. With the rise of mobile solutions such as laptops, cellphones, and tablets, a person may do business practically anywhere in the globe without the need for a permanent office site.

The virtual office has grown in popularity since the COVID-19 pardemic made remote or blended work a necessity. Besides the financial savings involved with having a physical office, virtual offices provide a dynamic environment that is particularly appealing to entrepreneurs, self-employed employees, and small businesses.

Technology has enabled us to bring home the work that we can complete more conveniently on our own. It can also help us better understand how humans work socially, which can lead to more successful social space design and utilization. Virtual offices enable companies to increased productivity, lower commute expenses, and greater flexibility. Virtual offices also have fewer overhead and technological expenditures, giving them a more cost-effective answer to contemporary working.

Virtual offices are not ideal for every business, but they are a wonderful alternative to explore for smaller firms, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and emerging brands that generally operate remotely but want access to occasional office space and outstanding traditional office advantages.

Virtual offices can also contribute to increased productivity because they relieve employees of administrative responsibilities as well as commutes. Each person may work from wherever it is most convenient for them, and the company is not limited to employing people who reside nearby. As more individuals find methods to work remotely, the advantages of a virtual workplace become clear. However, not everything is as simple as it appears.

Virtual offices include the following features:

- Instantly obtain a professional business address;
- Access to conference rooms on demand;
- Handling phone calls and letters;
- Easy access to places across the globe;
- Reduced overhead expenses;
- More satisfied employees; and
- Greater scalability.

2.4 ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL OFFICE

The most significant advantages of acquiring virtual office space include the following:

- 1. **Flexibility:** One may work primarily or completely from home. This implies that none are limited by geography, and one may recruit the finest individuals for the position regardless of where they are. One may even choose their own working hours and choose to work from home in their comfort if they like.
- 2. Costs less than hiring a traditional office space: In virtual space, businesses are not renting a full office large enough to accommodate the entire team on a daily basis. This means there is no need to furnish an office, deal with commercial renter's insurance, or pay electricity expenses. There is access to various services, such as assistants or receptionists, which is far less expensive than hiring someone full-time.
- 3. Access to additional services: One significant advantage of virtual offices is the services they provide, such as virtual assistants, answering services, in-office receptionists, and teleconferencing. They may also provide postal services and accept actual mail on your behalf. This means one can never skip a delivery that requires signature, and ideally, every client call will be handled by a virtual receptionist for a human touch before being sent to the voicemail. It is much easier to obtain all of

these services from one source rather than attempting to pay for and manage them through many separate businesses or contractors, so if one wants these advantages, a virtual office is a terrific option to investigate.

- 4. **Established and professional appearance:** Startups enterprises are more widespread than ever before, but it can also be more difficult to win client confidence and establish credibility in some circumstances because "everyone owns their own business." Having an actual company address in an established building and a meeting location for the personnel is as established as it gets, and it helps to inspire client trust in the brand.
- 5. **No maintenance concern:** There is no need to repair those creaking chairs or worry about what would happen to the structure in the event of a severe natural disaster. Because the building's upkeep is not a concern for the company, the business can concentrate on establishing its brand.
- 6. An additional layer of privacy and security: Many startups and small enterprises that work remotely do not have a traditional physical workplace. As a result, the home address of the business owner is frequently disclosed on everything from official business licenses to internet business listings and even customer contracts. This may offer a privacy and security risk, since individuals may simply identify the home address by conducting a Google search with the company's name. One obtains an actual postal address with a virtual office that one may use on any official papers, making it more difficult for others to identify the personal home address. They can even block consumers from seeing the personal phone number if they use their virtual answering service as the primary business line.
- 7. **Fixed address with low overhead costs:** When it comes to establishing a business, having a fixed, permanent location may be a huge benefit. And in certain states, if a business address changes during the year, there is a need to pay for renewing the business license paperwork. Depending on the state, this might cost a few rupees more. It's a pain to notify every single client, banking institution, and business service every time a business switches the location. Having a single permanent address when traveling around is beneficial, especially merely moving around the same city and wanting something more stable.

2.5 DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL OFFICE

While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. These include the following:

1. **The use of the offices necessitates planning:** Virtual office space is not the same as a coworking space, where firms pay a monthly payment to lease a single table or even a conference hall. If a business wants to hold



- a meeting at the office, it may need to schedule ahead of time to rent or ensure that the conference room is available. This might be challenging if having a site to meet clients on a routine basis is one of the company's main draws.
- 2. **There may be limited services available:** Similarly to how conference rooms are not always accessible, teleconferencing and videoconferencing services may be restricted at any particular moment. Planning ahead is feasible, but it may be difficult in fast-paced enterprises.
- 3. Access might be restricted: It is conceivable that the membership only allows to visit the office on particular days of the week or during specific hours. It is quite usual for virtual workplaces to only provide access during conventional business hours and on weekdays.
- 4. **Working in different places:** Working remotely is not suitable for every organization, especially if it is conducted full-time with no in-office days. Some organizations are more productive in-office if their duties make it impossible to interact virtually, which inhibits employees from getting to know each other well and creating deeper personal relationships. While many organizations are equally as productive (if not more) working remotely than in-office, this may not be true for all organizations.
- 5. **Less cohesion:** Giving a virtual staff the freedom to set their own work hours, business may become more divided. For example, if there is an emergency, such as a significant equipment failure or critical IT troubles, it is difficult to organize a meeting of the whole group to deal with these emergencies.
- 6. Lack of community spirit: Social interaction promotes more efficient teamwork. However, in a virtual workplace, there is not much chance for employees to assemble for unplanned chats, which may frequently improve cooperation.
- 7. **Risk to reputation:** If potential customers learn that the business run a virtual office with remote personnel, they may not consider the company to be "genuine."
- 8. **Security and compliance concerns:** It is exceedingly dangerous in several sectors to keep secret information remotely. For example, in some areas, such as financial services and healthcare, the inadvertent loss or leakage of data might have serious consequences.

2.6 HYBRID OFFICE

A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times. The purpose is to provide employees and employers the perfect blend. A hybrid office, often known as "office + anywhere," may need employees to come in person one to three days each week rather than the conventional five. Alternatively, it may employ a mix of workers who are always remote, workers who are constantly in the office, and workers who

rotate between the two. There are several variants on hybrid work. Some firms may enable every person to work on-site and remotely for a portion of the week. Other businesses may have people that work either full-time remotely or full-time on-site. Others may allow a combination of the two.

It often indicates that employees have the option of working from either the office or virtually. It's "hybrid" in the context that it blends remote and typical in-office work. The exact ratio of days at the office against days away will vary, but a "hybrid office" is one that allows for a mix of where people work. In addition, hybrid offices usually contain different sorts of areas for different types of work. In contrast to a "conventional" office, where each employee has a designated desk, hybrid offices may feature "hot desks," where employees do not have assigned seats and can work anywhere they like on any given day. Hybrid offices may also designate area for various sorts of work under a hybrid work paradigm, employees primarily execute individual tasks at home (or at their preferred remote location) and come into the office for collaborative projects.

Cł	neck Your Progress A:
1.	What is office space?
	THE BEOBLES
	HE PEOPLES
2.	List the features of a virtual office.
3.	How does a virtual office provide flexibility?

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4.	Why are hybrid offices termed "hybrid"?

2.7 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VIRTUAL OFFICE AND PHYSICAL OFFICE

There are various differences between virtual office and physical office which can be understood by the following table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Difference Between Physical Office and Virtual Office

Basis	Virtual Office	Physical Office
Meaning	A virtual office is a business alternative that provides access to a remote working space and office-related activities without the requirement for a permanent office lease.	A physical office is a core work area for everyday duties in a business organization.
Spending	A virtual office is much in comparison to a physical one.	A physical office is costlier as compared to virtual office because it includes many costs such as; monthly rent/bills, equipment and supplies, cleaning fees or daily commute.
Expansion cost	If a company wishes to grow into other areas, a virtual office can assist. Because it may set up a virtual office in another country, the company can have a presence there without actually physically being there.	Physical offices comparatively have greater expansion costs than virtual offices.

Commute time and cost	Ĭ	It has to spend money as well as time on traveling
Working hours	It provides flexible working hours.	Workings hours are not flexible

2.8 VIRTUAL MEETING SPACE

A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room. Team members join the same virtual area via their mobile, laptop, or desktop, and connect with microphones and video cameras, rather than being present in the same physical place. A virtual meeting occurs when individuals from all over the world, regardless of geography, utilize video, audio, and text to connect online. Virtual meetings enable individuals to share knowledge, experiences, and data in real time without having to be physically present in the same room. The following are the types of virtual meetings: Teleconference (just audio), Video conference (with audio and video), and Web conference (audio, video, and content-sharing).

The following are some of the benefits of virtual meetings:

- Time wastage gets minimized.
- Agendas get tighter.
- Cost-cutting measures
- Ease of declining
- Communication directness
- Ability to personalize and level

2.9 WORK FROM HOME (WFH) CULTURE

For many workers today, a world in which interdepartmental messages were actual papers sent from floor to floor is a fantasy confined to historical television dramas and films. The workplace has changed dramatically. The typical 9-to-5 workday that Millennials and Generation X followed is on its way out, as are the days of being limited to a business network in a single office. Companies are broadening their workforce to include bright people wherever they happen to dwell more than ever before. In fact, the number of remote and work-from-home employees has increased by 115% in the previous decade. There are countless additional reasons why working from home is the way of the future. The rising cost of real estate makes it impractical for even huge firms to build offices in various places. Providing



work-from-home options avoids significant investments in terms of both money and people.

So it can be said that work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office. Many businesses have a Work from home policy, also known as a remote work policy, that allows their employees to work from home either full-time or whenever it is most suitable for them.

Essentials of work from home culture:

- Include cloud solutions that people may access from any device.
- Everything must be documented and made available to all employees.
- Define jobs and duties precisely.
- Establish explicit performance measures that will be assessed on a regular basis.
- Participate in corporate activities and culture by involving remote employees.

2.9.1 Advantages of Work From Home

Working from home provides various advantages. Some of them are discussed below:

- 1. **Greater independence:** Working from home might give employees with professional autonomy and independence that one may not have in a traditional office. Furthermore, these sorts of professions need self-discipline and drive sufficient to manage time properly and fulfill professional obligations.
- 2. **No commuting to work:** Work-from-home positions allow employees to avoid commuting. They travel less if they work from home one or two days a week.
- 3. **Reduce expenditure:** This advantage has the potential to have a wide ranging impact. For example, by eliminating commuting, one may save money on gas and transportation. Telecommuting can also help save money on things like work clothes, lunches, and even childcare. Saving money on daycare may be especially beneficial for parents who work from home.
- 4. **Enhanced productivity:** Working solo in a peaceful atmosphere may allow employees to be more productive. Increased productivity is related to various other things, including the freedom to roam around the house and take breaks whenever. Being able to take a break from the work when needed might help required to stay motivated and minimize burnout.

- 5. **Improved technical skills:** Telecommuting frequently necessitates the use of technological tools such as online meeting, communication, and team collaboration platforms. Employees can learn technological abilities that would not normally utilize in a physical setting.
- 6. **Enhanced communication abilities:** Working from home necessitates regular contact between teams and management, which will most likely necessitate more emails, phone conversations, video conferences, and messaging platform discussions. Communication abilities will improve using communication tools on a regular basis.
- 7. **Increased work flexibility:** With most telecommuting jobs, there is a lot of freedom. Many work-from-home professions, for example, are unaffected by conventional business hours, making it is simpler to attend life events such as medical checkups. Work-from-home opportunities may be quite beneficial for parents who work irregular schedules to accommodate their family.
- **8. No office distractions:** When employees work from home, there are no workplace distractions. Office noise, such as coworkers conversing, office equipment running, or phones ringing, may be extremely distracting in the workplace. These distractions do not exist in a home office.
- 9. Collaborate across boundaries: Telecommuting can be advantageous for multidivisional corporations with offices all over the world. The capacity to communicate with people from other fields might open up new opportunities for business growth. This might be advantageous to an employee's career since they will be able to work with a wide range of industry specialists from whom they will be able to learn.
- 10. Reduction in work absences: Working from home provides flexibility and can help to decrease work absences. Working from home can minimize the number of days one needs to take off whether they are sick or have an essential appointment.

2.9.2 Disadvantages of Work From Home (WFH)

The disadvantages of work from home are explained as below:

1. **Increased isolation:** Working from home may get extremely isolating if employees spend the most of their time alone, working autonomously. To avoid loneliness and isolation as a remote worker, Planningtrips and activities with friends and family can be helpful. To enhance sociability, several remote organizations have frequent team gatherings.



- 2. **Home office costs:** Some distant locations need the use of specialized equipment, such as headphones, cameras, or software, in order to complete critical activities and projects. Employees should anticipate paying some initial fees to have their home office organized if they want to put up a desk, chair, and other furnishings.
- 3. **Overworking Risks:** Telecommuting also carries the risk of working more hours than necessary. This may undoubtedly result in burnout and increased work-related stress. One may avoid this by carefully establishing their timetable and assigning dedicated periods for work and personal responsibilities. For some people, having a defined workstation that they can leave when the workday is done is essential.
- 4. **Productivity Risks:** Working from home might enhance productivity, but it can also be a difficulty. With the ability to roam around and take breaks whenever one wants, it may be tough to keep focused on the activities he is working on. This can eventually lead to poorer productivity. Implementing productivity tools such as time trackers and task management apps is one method to fight this.
- 5. **At-home distractions:** Distractions such as television, dogs, or domestic tasks may all have an impact on how well employees execute their work. Too many distractions might reduce productivity and motivation. Employees may avoid this by keeping everything distracting in the house to a minimum. To filter out disturbances like traffic and neighborhood activities, using noise-canceling headphones and listen to peaceful music can be helpful.
- 6. **Workplace disconnect:** Telecommuting might occasionally cause a schism between employer and the your employees. Working from home implies they won't have rapid access to essential business procedures until someone in the organization informs them. When they have queries or concerns, they need to make sure to keep in touch with their actual workplace through frequent contact.
- 7. **Unbalanced work-life balance:** Working from home allows employees to combine their family life with the employment, but it may also be difficult to maintain a clear division between the professional and personal lives. Setting clear limits between work and personal time, and explaining these boundaries to everyone in the household may help to get a proper work-life balance.
- 8. **Reduction in face time:** There is less face time as a result of isolation and job separation. Working remotely means employees may not have the same possibilities to interact with coworkers and members of the organization unless they get out and about. To connect with coworkers, the employee may also incorporate more face-to-face interactions into online conferencing systems.

2.10 FUTURE TRENDS IN THE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Our world is changing. From shifting sectors and remote work to social upheaval and economic instability, it's time to plan for the future of the company and its most precious asset, its employees. They assisting in the rearchitect work, with human emphasis at the forefront, so one can flourish on, so one can thrive now and for years to come. The contemporary office has its own set of issues. It must enable rising teams who work remotely or across geographical borders, as well as a surge in younger, digitally native employees that have different working preferences than earlier generations. Another element that has disrupted conventional modes of communicating, working, and conducting business is the fast use of digital tools.

Check Your Progress B:

1.	How does work from home increase isolation?
2.	What is a physical office?
	THE PEOPLE'S
	UNIVERSITY
3.	Give examples of few costs involved in a physical office.
4.	What are home office costs?

2.11 LET US SUM UP

Office space basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs. When it comes to selecting an office space, nowadays business owners and entrepreneurs have a variety of alternatives. They can opt not just traditional office options, but also relatively recent ones, such as co-working spaces and virtual offices.

A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms without the requirement for physical office space. Virtual offices are not ideal for every business, but they are a wonderful alternative to explore for smaller firms, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and emerging brands that generally operate remotely but want access to occasional office space and outstanding traditional office advantages.

The most significant advantages of acquiring virtual office space include the following: Flexibility, costs less than hiring a traditional office space, Access to additional services, Established and professional appearance, No maintenance concern, An additional layer of privacy and security, Fixed address with low overhead costs and others. While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. These include the following: The use of the offices necessitates planning, there may be limited services available, access might be restricted, working in different places, less cohesion, lack of community spirit, risk of reputation and others.

A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times. The purpose is to provide employees and employers the perfect blend. It often indicates that employees have the option of working from either the office or virtually. It's "hybrid" in that it blends remote and typical in-office work. The exact ratio of days at the office against days away will vary, but a "hybrid office" is one that allows for a mix of where people work.

A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room. Team members join the same virtual area via their mobile, laptop, or desktop, and connect with microphones and video cameras, rather than being present in the same physical place. Some of the benefits of virtual meetings are: Time wastage gets minimized, agendas get tighter, cost-cutting measures, ease of declining, communication directness, ability to personalize and level and make less small conversation.

Work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office. Many businesses have a Work from home policy, also known as a remote work policy, that allows their employees to work from home either full-time or whenever it is most suitable for them.



Our world is changing. From shifting sectors and remote work to social upheaval and economic instability, it's time to plan for the future of the company and its most precious asset, its employees. Are assisting in the rearchitect work, with human emphasis at the forefront, so you can flourish on, so you can thrive now and for years to come.

2.12 KEYWORDS

Hybrid Office: A hybrid office is basically a system in which a company's managers and employees work with each other in a physical office at times and remotely at other times.

Office space: It basically refers to a building or a part of a building that can be used as an office. Offices come in different shapes, sizes and classes. One may choose the type of office that may suit the specific needs.

Physical Office: A physical office is a core work area for everyday duties in a business organization.

Virtual Meeting Space: A virtual meeting room is a type of video conference that resembles the use of a physical meeting room.

Virtual Office: A virtual office is basically a system that offers a business owner all of the benefits of business space including an office address and phone number, connectivity and administration services, and access to meeting rooms without the requirement for physical office space.

Work From Home: Work from home indicates that an employee is working from home, an apartment, or another place of residence rather than from the office.

2.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. How is virtual office different from physical office?
- 2. Explain the concept of virtual office.
- 3. While there are evident benefits to renting virtual office space, there are certain disadvantages that business owners should be aware of. List a few of them.
- 4. What is work from home culture?
- 5. What are the advantages of virtual offices?
- 6. Explain the concept of virtual meeting space. What are its various advantages?
- 7. What are the advantages and benefits of work from home?
- 8. Through some light on the future trends in the office environment.

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.

UNIT 3 OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Meaning of Etiquette
- 3.3 What is Office Etiquette?
- 3.4 Need and Importance of Office Etiquette
- 3.5 Do's and Don'ts of Office Etiquette
- 3.6 Case Study on Office Etiquette: Internet Surfing At Work
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Keywords
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.10 Terminal Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of office;
- explain the meaning of etiquette;
- understand what is meant by office etiquette and its need and importance;
- know the do's and don'ts about office etiquette; and
- develop a deeper understanding of office etiquette through a case study.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When employees work in an office or other professional setting, etiquette matters. The way in which they present themselves and interact with those around then whether their coworkers, supervisors, or direct reports speaks about them as a person and as a member of the team which can directly influence overall progress and career growth in the organisation. Etiquette is much required in any and all office environments. It often feels like we spend more time at work than home; most of us spend 8 or more hours a day in an office environment. This means that good office etiquette is extremely important. Adhering to office etiquette help coworkers feel comfortable around each other, and it leaves a good impression. All such companies which follow good work policy and mandates its employees about etiquette are bound to achieve success and growth. It helps transform the company culture and brings in development and values. In this unit, we will learn about office etiquette, its need and importance and further develop a deeper understanding of office etiquette through a case study.

3.2 MEANING OF ETIQUETTE

Etiquette is defined as the formal manners and rules that are followed in social or professional settings. One definition of the French word etiquette is "ticket" or "label attached to something for identification." In 16th-century Spain, the French word was borrowed (and altered to "etiqueta") to refer to the written protocols describing orders of precedence and behaviour demanded of those who appeared in court. Eventually, "etiqueta" came to be applied to the court ceremonies themselves as well as the documents which outlined the requirements for them. Interestingly, this then led to French speakers of the time attributing the second sense of "proper behaviour" to their "etiquette," and in the middle of the 18th century English speakers finally adopted both the word and the second meaning from the French.

It is important for an individual to behave in a sensible manner which is acceptable to people around him. The others must not feel embarrassed by behaviour. One should not behave irrationally or illogically in public. Etiquette in simpler words is defined as good behaviour. Human beings are social animals and it is really important for them to behave in an appropriate way. Etiquette refers to behaving in a socially responsible way.

3.3 WHAT IS OFFICE ETIQUETTE?

In every office, there are rules both written and unwritten that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour. Collectively, this code of customary behaviour is known as office etiquette. Office Etiquette refers to behaving in a sensible and appropriate manner in the office to leave a positive and everlasting impression. It is a code of conduct that governs the expectations of social behaviour in a workplace. This code is put in place to "respect and protect time, people, and processes." There is no universal agreement about standard work etiquette, which may vary from one environment to another. Work etiquette includes a wide range of aspects such as body language, good behaviour, appropriate use of technology, etc. Part of office etiquette is working well with others and communicating effectively.

An inadequate behaviour can challenge others in the workplace. Knowing the rules and etiquettes of working in the office can smoothen the stumbling blocks of daily interaction and management of work.

In simple terms, office etiquette is all about following a piece of advice which is never given by others but is expected to follow, for getting along with other people in an organizational context. So, to be professional, organized and quick to manage people office etiquettes are vital.

3.4 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Understanding why workplace etiquette matters can go a long way toward ensuring that the employees are doing their part to make the office a respectful and productive place. While it may seem like common sense to



know what is acceptable and unacceptable within an office and put it into practice, office etiquette goes beyond simply following office rules and procedures. Knowing how to treat others with courtesy can help keep the entire office running smoothly. Adhering to the basic rules of office etiquette is crucial to keeping work place a place where everyone feels considered as this can foster a sense of appreciation among coworkers, leading to better overall company culture.

A company culture that is rooted in understanding how to maintain respect through etiquette has numerous benefits. Respecting the way that others communicate, their personal space, and their personal beliefs can help foster a sense of harmony in the office. While one cannot change how others behave, he/she can just have control over their own workplace etiquette. Plus, the behaviour they demonstrate could set a good example for others to follow. It's basically the golden rule: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Whether an employee is starting a new job or he has been working at the same job for years, it's never too late to check for office etiquette. Having manners around the coworkers and supervisors can make the difference when it's time for promotions or special assignments.

Every office has rules both written and unwritten, that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour, and it is essential to learn what it is as soon as possible after you start working there. There are certain proper workplace etiquette rules that apply to almost every company, so start with those and add to them as you get a better feel for what is expected.

Maintaining a productive workplace is one of the main benefits of exercising proper office etiquette. If the supervisor has to constantly remind people to be respectful and maintain etiquette, it can have an impact on productivity. Not only do the supervisors have to stop their own work to correct behaviour but they may call meetings to address overall etiquette, which can take away from the time you and your coworkers are actively working. Maintaining etiquette with respect to people's workspaces is another factor that can impact productivity, as an office setting is typically filled with both common spaces and more enclosed, personal spaces such as cubicles or smaller, closed offices. Respecting the way that each of these spaces works can help ensure that people have the space to work productively. This also allows people the opportunity to have places to take breaks and not feel uncomfortable while doing so, and these breaks can lead to more productive work time.

Good etiquette is based on respect and professionalism. That means everyone respects each other's time and space while they focus on the company's goals. This is important because, without good etiquette, conflict can arise that harms the office's productivity. Imagine an office that is a free-for-all. If every employee were allowed to behave the way they saw fit, personalities would clash very quickly. It is bound to happen because everyone has different work styles and living habits. Therefore, guidelines are needed to keep everyone on the same page.

Some office etiquette may be posted in the employee handbook as certain codes of conduct However, many other etiquette norms are unspoken and enforced by a general understanding of all the employees. Violating them may result in serious reprimands from the supervisors and isolation from peers.

Check Your Progress A:

1.	Define the term Etiquette?
2.	"There is no universal agreement about standard work etiquette." Comment.
3.	What are office etiquette?
4.	"A company culture that is rooted in understanding how to maintain respect through etiquette has numerous benefits." Comment.

3.5 DO'S AND DON'TS OF OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Office etiquette is an important part of company culture. Observing and following office etiquette helps in creating a positive and efficient working culture. It also helps in earning a good reputation and further enhance the productivity and overall performance at work.

The various Do's of office etiquettes are following:

- **Reach office on time**: One must adhere to the guidelines and policies of the organisation. Discipline must be maintained at the workplace.
- Reply to colleague's messages in a timely manner: When receiving emails, voice messages, skype messages, texts and other forms of correspondence from colleagues, reply in a timely manner instead of keeping them waiting.
- Be mindful of the body language: Body language speaks volumes in working environments. Talking to colleagues with arms crossed and without making eye contact could be perceived as being rude.
- **Be a team player:** Working well with colleagues and being part of a team will help generate good will amongst the co-workers that is often reciprocated.
- When sick, stay at home: One may be tempted to come to work when he is feeling unwell but if there's a possibility your sickness is contagious, stay at home so that co-workers don't catch the bug.
- Show attentiveness in meetings: When attending meetings, demonstrate attentiveness and alertness by responding to questions and putting forward ideas rather than texting on the phone or playing with the pen!
- **Keep smiling:** A smile a day keeps bad moods at bay! Smiling throughout the day helps generate a pleasant and friendly working environment.
- **Praise fellow workers for good work:** Part of showing colleagues respect it showing appreciation and gratitude for good work. Give praise where it's deserved.
- Treat others fairly: An employee may be friendlier with certain coworkers than others, but all members of staff should be treated fairly to prevent favoritism casting a shadow on the office culture.
- Give fellow office workers space and privacy to work: Collaborating and conversing with co-workers is naturally required but respect each other's privacy and give colleagues their own space so they can get on with their job.
- Be mindful of smells, eat your lunch and snacks away from your desk: Nobody wants to work in a smelly environment. Refrain from creating an unnecessarily smelly workplace by eating away from the desk. Eat meals and snacks in the likes of the staff restaurant or in a café down the road.
- Take care of the pitch and tone at the workplace: Never shout on anyone or use foul words. It is unprofessional to lash out at others under pressure. Stay calm and think rationally.



- **Keep your workstation clean and tidy**: Throw unwanted paper in dustbin and keep files in their respective drawers. Put a label on top of each file to avoid unnecessary searching.
- **Keep office attire professional:** Even if a company has culture of wearing jeans and trainers to the office, show respect to clothing conduct by avoiding turning up to work in sandals and Bermuda shorts!
- Pay attention to personal hygiene: Paying attention to personal hygiene will ensure the employee not avoided being sat next to at work.
- Put hand phone in the silent or vibrating mode at the workplace: Loud ring tones are totally unprofessional and also disturb other people.
- **Keep personal belongings confined to a specific space:** Rather than having lipstick, wallet, coat, handbag, mobile phone and diary spread across the office, keep personal belongings in one specific space, so they don't get in the way of others.
- Help maintain the overall tidiness of the whole office: As well as keeping own desk neat and tidy, work together as a team to maintain the tidiness of the whole office, including break out areas, staff kitchens, bathrooms and canteens.
- Be mindful of office furniture: Slouching at the desk with the feet resting on a chair opposite will mean the employee is not presenting himself in the most professional of lights. Sit up straight and be mindful of office furniture.

The various don'ts of office etiquettes are following:

Avoid taking personal calls at your desk: Avoid taking personal calls in office time as it would be disturbing to your fellow colleagues.

Don't interrupt colleagues when they are speaking: Interrupting others is rude and shows a lack of social skills.

Don't be late to work: Being on time to work is a basic office etiquette requirement.

Avoid gossiping about others: Gossip can cripple the atmosphere and culture in an office and should be avoided at all costs.

Refrain from getting too personal with others at work: It might be nice to be friendly with colleagues but getting too personal and paly can show favoritism and an unprofessional tone.

Avoid cursing in the workplace: Using bad language at work is a definite office no-no.

Avoid overdoing the perfume or aftershave: That said, too much perfume or aftershave can create a sickly aroma in a confined office space. Don't infringe the favorite perfume on co-workers too much so that it is all they can smell all day!

Never adopt a casual attitude at work: The office pays you for hard work and not for loitering around.

Never ever drink alcohol and smoke while at work: Employees should not go to the office drinking alcohol and smoke only at the smoking zones.

Don't leave tissues lying around: It might sound obvious, but leaving used tissues lying around the office is like giving colleagues an open invitation to germs. Put tissues in the bin.

Avoid being the first one out the door at the end of the day: Rushing out the door as soon as soon as it turns six o'clock can paint a negative light to fellow workers. Staying a few minutes past company closing won't do any harm and will go a long way in showing diligence towards the job.

Seek Permission Avoid Policies- Don't open anyone else's notepads registers or files without his permission

Stay away from nasty politics at the workplace. Avoid playing blame games.

Never wear revealing clothes to work: Body piercing and tattoos are a strict no-no at the workplace. Females should avoid wearing heavy jewelry to work. Don't pass lewd comments to any of fellow workers

Never criticize or make fun of any of colleagues: Remember fighting leads to no solution. There are several other ways to express displeasure. Sit with colleagues, discuss issues face to face and decide on something which is mutually acceptable.

Never attend meetings or seminars without a notepad and pen: It is a little tough to remember each and everything discussed in the meeting. Jot down the important points for future reference. Wait for turn to speak.

No organisation likes to have a shabbily dressed employee: Shave daily and do not use strong perfumes.

While having lunch together, do not start till the others have received their food: Make sure spoon and fork do not make a clattering sound. Eat slowly to avoid burping in public.

Don't peep into other's cubicles and workstations: Knock before entering anyone's cabin. Respect each other's privacy.

Good office etiquette is important because it fosters a respectful environment in the workplace and improves communication between everybody in the office. If one remembers to stay conscious of a coworker's feelings and employ common courtesy, most of the things in this list should eventually come naturally. Avoid committing the usual mistakes, and if done, learn from them.

Check Your Progress B:

State whether the following statements are True or False

- 1. The rules of office etiquette are unique to every organisation. It is therefore important that you understand the rules in your environment in order to succeed.
- 2. You can establish a positive relationship by assuming that other people view the world in the same way that you do.
- 3. Office etiquette is not determined by cultural values but rather by good manners and common courtesies.
- 4. Losing your temper at work shows poor emotional intelligence.
- 5. There is no need to stand up for an introduction if you are already seated.
- 6. Sitting at an angle or facing away from a person during a group discussion, appears rude and indicates that you want to leave.
- 7. Gestures should be used at every opportunity to ensure that you message is clearly related to the person you are talking to.

3.6 CASE STUDY ON OFFICE ETIQUETTES INTERNET SURFING AT WORK

For 24 year old key accounts manager Sumit, the unspoken rules of internet use at his office caused him to be given a warning by his boss.

Sumit told us, "When I started working at the company I was given a large employee handbook. The HR assistant told me that there was nothing unusual in it, so I just signed the slip to say I had read it and thought no more about it."

The employee handbook contained a great deal of information about Sumit's job description, the fire safety rules and all manner of other details that were largely standard. However, as Sumit's previous employer was an online retailer, he had wrongly assumed that their internet usage policy was similar.

He continued, "To be honest, I didn't really give it much thought. I would often surf the net on my lunch break, or send my friends emails. Although I used the internet at my desk every day, it was mainly for work and I didn't use it excessively."

It was this assumption of what constituted 'excessive' that got Sumit into trouble as the internet usage policy as set out in the employee handbook stated that only certain approved sites could be accessed during work hours – not including any retail or email sites - including lunch time.

Sumit explained, "I had worked there for nearly six months when I was called into the HR manager's office for what they called an 'unofficial meeting'. They said that they had been tracking which websites I had been

using and saw that I often went onto a holiday booking site in work time. I explained that I had been looking to book my summer holiday and was seeing what the latest offers were, although I only did it in my lunch break. They said that this was not acceptable and showed me a list of the 'allowed websites'. When I said that I didn't realize and tried to apologies, they said that as I had signed the employee handbook document I should have known and that I would be given a formal warning!"

Sumit felt as though he was being made an example of as he was the most recent employee to join the company and, he found out later, there had been some problems with other people using the internet in work time already.

He concluded, "I felt very upset by the whole thing as, rather than just let me apologies and learn from the mistake, I felt they were watching me all the time and finding any reason to criticize my performance. Luckily, the HR manager found another job and left a few weeks later and her replacement was far easier to talk to, so my written warning was taken off my file after three months, although I still don't use the internet in work time – and I wait until I get home to book holidays!"

Questions:

- 1. Given the situation, what is wrong with Sumit habits?
- 2. Why was he given a warning by his boss?
- 3. Do you think Sumit's denial reasons can be acceptable?
- 4. What will be the solution to this problem for him?
- 5. According to you, how important it is to go through employee handbooks to know about office etiquette while joining a company and doing the job?

3.7 LET US SUM UP

When employees work in an office or other professional setting, etiquette matters. The way in which they present themselves and interact with those around them whether their coworkers, supervisors, or direct reports speaks about them as a person and as a member of the team which can directly influence overall progress and career growth in the organisation. Etiquette is much required in any and all office environments.

Etiquette is defined as the formal manners and rules that are followed in social or professional settings. One definition of the French word etiquette is "ticket" or "label attached to something for identification." In 16th-century Spain, the French word was borrowed (and altered to "etiqueta") to refer to the written protocols describing orders of precedence and behaviour demanded of those who appeared in court. Eventually, "etiqueta" came to be applied to the court ceremonies themselves as well as the documents which outlined the requirements for them.

In every office, there are rules both written and unwritten that serve as the guidelines for employee behaviour. Collectively, this code of customary behaviour is known as office etiquette. Office Etiquette refers to behaving in a sensible and appropriate manner in the office to leave a positive and everlasting impression. It is a code of conduct that governs the expectations of social behaviour in a workplace.

Understanding why workplace etiquette matters can go a long way toward ensuring that the employees are doing their part to make the office a respectful and productive place. While it may seem like common sense to know what is acceptable and unacceptable within an office and put it into practice, office etiquette goes beyond simply following office rules and procedures. Knowing how to treat others with courtesy can help keep the entire office running smoothly. Adhering to the basic rules of office etiquette is crucial to keeping the workplace a place where everyone feels considered, as this can foster a sense of appreciation among coworkers, leading to better overall company culture.

Office etiquette is an important part of company culture. Observing and following office etiquette help in creating a positive and efficient working culture. It also helps in earning a good reputation and further enhance the productivity and overall performance at work. The various Do's of office etiquette are reach office on time, reply to colleague's messages in a timely manner, be mindful of your body language, be a team player, when sick, stay at home, show attentiveness in meetings, put your handphone in the silent or vibrating mode at the workplace, keep your personal belongings confined to a specific space, help maintain the overall tidiness of the whole office, be mindful of office furniture etc. Whereas, the various Don'ts of office etiquettes are avoid taking personal calls at your desk, don't interrupt colleagues when they are speaking, don't be late to work, avoid gossiping about others, refrain from getting too personal with others at work, avoid cursing in the workplace, never attend meetings or seminars without a notepad and pen, while having lunch together, do not start till the others have received their food, don't peep into other's cubicles and workstations etc.

3.8 KEYWORDS

Behavior: Behaviour is the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Company: A company is a business organization that makes money by selling goods or services.

Co-worker: A co-worker is any person with whom one works, typically someone in a similar role or at a similar level within an organisation.

Employee: An employee is a person who is paid to work for an organisation.



Etiquette: Etiquettes are the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.

Manner: Manner is the usual way in which you behave toward other people, or the way you behave on a particular occasion

Office: An office is a room, set of rooms, or building used as a place for commercial, professional, or bureaucratic work.

Rules: Rules are the accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done, and tells you what you are allowed or are not allowed to do.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress B:

- 1. True
- 2. False
- 3. False
- 4. True
- 5. False
- 6. True
- 7. True

3.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. What is meant by office etiquette?
- 2. Why should you follow office etiquette?
- 3. List ten do's and don'ts for office etiquette.
- 4. Does every company require the same set of office etiquette to be followed? Explain it with suitable examples.
- 5. How do office environments change? Does this have any specific implication for office etiquette? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples.

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.