

and more work is being done by personal contacts, by meetings and conferences, or by telephone; and the value of these more informal methods of conducting business is perhaps not yet fully appreciated. Yet the fact remains that, for every important action, a record is still required in order that a response may be made to future parliamentary or other public inquiries, and as a guarantee of consistency of action. We can never do away with formal methods entirely. Moreover, contact by telephone can be overdone. Personal or telephone conversations, if over-indulged in, are great consumers of time. Paper work, in its proper place, has the advantage of exactitude and precision, and sometimes, speed. Try to keep the telephone and paper work in their proper relation. You must, in determining the method to be used, reconcile speed with economy and accuracy.

The Value of Method

‘Despatch is the soul of business’ wrote Lord Chesterfield, ‘and nothing contributes more to Despatch, than Method.’ As there is so much paper work in the Service, you will find it necessary to adopt deliberate methods of keeping your papers in order and on the move. Unless you take pains to adopt these methods, your papers will be misplaced more often than not, while your table or desk will always be in a mess. Besides making your office life seem more pleasant because it is better ordered, the habit of keeping your desk tidy and your papers in order pays dividends. Our minds seem to grow clearer and better ordered in proportion as we cultivate methodical habits in our daily actions. Moreover, a spell of more or less mechanical work in sorting out papers rests and refreshes the mind.

Among the files and papers that find their way to you, you may occasionally find something apparently not meant for you. Before passing it on make quite sure, first, that it is not a matter of concern to you, and second that you are passing it on to the right officer. If the papers have been going the rounds for some time, draw this specially—but not officially—to the attention of the officers concerned, so that they may deal with them quickly, or at least send interim acknowledgments. In making sure who deals with particular matters, you will have added to your store of knowledge of the office. Here are a few hints on method and the maintenance of the flow of work:—

- (1) **Dictating letters** is one important way of keeping your files moving. Help the typist by giving her the file and thus avoiding confusion and misplacement of file copies, etc.
- (2) **Always quote file numbers** in your correspondence and refer to previous letters. This will help on the flow of work in other offices. Make it your business to visit the Registry or Records Section and find out just how it works.
- (3) **Minute your files clearly.**—Help the records clerk by indicating on the file cover or action sheet the next action to be taken, e.g., ‘file’, ‘K.I.V.’, etc.