

## **OFFICE PRACTICE (DES1103)**

**LECTURE :** 11

**TOPIC :** Managing Time and Keeping Diaries

**AIM :** To understand managing time and how to keep diaries in the office

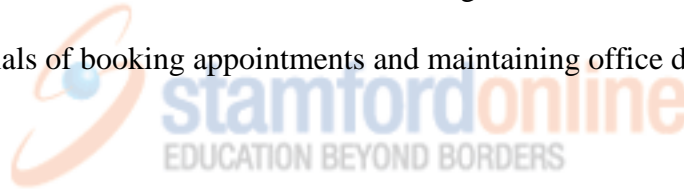
### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

After completing this chapter you should be able to understand:

1. How to manage time
2. How important a diary is and other planning aids for the office

### **TOPIC OUTLINE:**

- 11.1 Outline the daily routine of a secretary
- 11.2 Indicate typical 'Thieves of Time'
- 11.3 Suggest measures to ensure effective time management – for both employer and secretary
- 11.4 List the essentials of booking appointments and maintaining office diaries



### **NOTES:**

#### **11.1 OUTLINE THE DAILY ROUTINE OF A SECRETARY**

Helen Harding defines that

The Diary is the focal point and linchpin of the day-to-day organisation of the office as well as the basis for all-forward planning.

The secretary will normally be expected to keep two diaries – your executive's and your own.

Any entries which affect yours should be entered in both diaries.

The Diary is used as a reminder of

- Work deadlines
- Appointments and meetings
- Files to be followed up
- Staff absences – holidays, etc.
- Social engagements

## **11.2 INDICATE TYPICAL ‘THIEVES OF TIME’**

One thing that will enable a secretary to manage her time more effectively is her ability to pinpoint typical things, which will eat into time.

- Performing unnecessary work
- Failing to complete a task
- Failing to plan and budget your time – slow reading
- Inability to make decisions
- Failure to consult printed instructions, e.g. staff handbooks, instruction manuals
- Inability to listen attentively to instructions
- Frittering away time on personal activities, e.g. reading papers and magazines, making personal phone calls
- An untidy desk
- Making unnecessary drafts of routine correspondence

## **11.3 SUGGEST MEASURES TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT – FOR BOTH EMPLOYER AND SECRETARY**

There are twenty hints for better management of time for both employer and secretary.

- Set yourself targets
- Set aside some time every day for planning
- Keep checklist
- Make a ‘things to do today’ list
- Note the priority items and attend to them first
- Keep frequently consulted materials at hand e.g. telephone numbers
- Keep wall charts and visual control boards up-to-date
- File every day
- Discard unwanted paper – do not hoard
- Keep drawers tidy and label containers
- Put things away when you have finished with them
- Set aside regular times each day for certain tasks – develop a routine
- Group tasks together, e.g. try to do all photocopying together
- See every task through – do not leave thing half done
- Break up a large task into manageable units
- Be systematic and tidy – do not crumble under pressure
- If you are busy, learn to say ‘no’ pleasantly but assertively
- Improve your reading speed and accuracy
- Be confident – avoid checking and rechecking
- Take your time – do not panic – stop to think
- Remember that correcting errors is time-consuming

## **Suggest strategies to overcome time-sharing problems**

Strategies to overcome time-sharing problem are as follows:

- Treat executives as individuals and try to establish a working rapport with each
- Develop an interest in the activities of each executive
- Develop your own secretarial role and skills where necessary
- Modify your style to fit in with each executive
- Establish an informal relationship with each executive so that you may iron out any problems and plan in an atmosphere of Cupertino
- Be sure to treat each executive's work as confidential
- Show no favouritism
- Do not play one executive off against another
- Ignore their own superior/subordinates relationships, resulting in conflicting loyalties
- Take care in co-ordinating the diaries
- Try to be one jump/step ahead at all times

## **11.4 LIST THE ESSENTIAL OF BOOKING APPOINTMENTS AND MAINTAINING OFFICE DIARIES**

The essential of booking appointments and maintaining office diaries are as follows:

The secretary should

- Be systematic
  - at the beginning of the day – refer to the diary and take the necessary action on all entries, e.g. prepare the papers and files for appointments, meetings and correspondence.
  - during the course of the day – keep in mind and prepare for the various activities, making amendments, additions and deletions to the diary as required.
  - at the end of the day – ensure that all items have been dealt with or, if necessary, transfer to a future date.
- Write entries clearly and concisely with a pen, including essential details of appointments, time and place.
- Enter provisional appointments in pencil, and use a pen when they are confirmed.

- Enter the appointments for each day in the correct time sequence.
- When booking appointments, give consideration to the appointment picture for the whole day and perhaps even the remainder of the week.
- Do not book appointments too close together – allow breathing space and time for routine work.
- Where outside appointments are made, allow travelling time and be sure that the precise location is noted
- Always make allowance for the unexpected
- Don't book your boss so tightly that you leave no time for yourself. You must allow time to take instructions, receive dictation and plan ahead.
- Try to allow times at convenient points during the day to co-ordinate diaries. Where more than one operated, add any extra entries and get confirmation on any tentative arrangements you may have made.

### **Identify the latest advances in electronic diaries**

- Technology enables organisations to operate an electronic diary management service via computer
- All executives' diary details are keyed into the system by secretaries and are recalled to the VDU (visual display unit) for updating and co-ordination purposes.
- This system will respond to any variable required, e.g. dates, times, names, types of meetings or venue.
- The secretary can get the computer to do all the necessary checking and comparing for her and come up with a selection of possible dates and times
- When a time is selected, a message can then be sent to the other parties via electronic mail, asking them to confirm or state an alternative.
- Some electronic workstations have reminder systems built into the software whereby appointments will be signalled automatically on screen or there will be a warning signal to remind the secretary to check the diary or appointment schedule held in the system.

- The electronic diary is dependent on the quality of information fed into the diary management system by the secretary
- Continuous monitoring and updating is essential if the system is to work effectively.

**The advantages and disadvantage of electronic diaries**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Paperwork is reduced</li> <li>➤ Saves time in checking all diaries manually</li> <li>➤ Up-to-date information always available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Telephone call may be more effective initially</li> <li>➤ Senior management diaries may not be accessible</li> <li>➤ No use if people do not check diaries regularly</li> <li>➤ Breakdowns possible in electronic equipment</li> </ul>

**Other planning aids**

**Plastic year planners**

Large plastic calendars provided with spaces for every day of the year can be used for planning appointments, meetings and other business activities. By this means it is possible to see at a glance a year's activities and to plan engagements methodically on one single sheet. Self-adhesive coloured signals can be used to highlight significant dates.



## **REFERENCES:**

1. Helen Harding, Office Organisation and Secretarial Procedures
2. Helen Harding, Secretarial Procedures-Theory and Application (10<sup>th</sup> Edition)
3. John Harrison, Secretarial Duties (10<sup>th</sup> Edition)

## **TUTORIAL QUESTIONS – WEEK 11**

1. What are the typical thieves of time that steal the secretary's time away and how does she overcome this problem?
2. What are the advantages of an electronic diary and a normal manual diary?

