

OFFICE PRACTICE AND OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

FOR

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATORS

BY

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FOR

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INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a great honour and privileged to have been invited to serve as a Resource person for the 2019 National Workshop for Chief Registrars, Directors and Secretaries of Judicial Service Commissions/Committee. My most extreme gratitude and appreciation goes to the Administrator of the National Judicial Institute for finding me worthy and giving me this golden opportunity to present this paper.

The title of this paper is very important and apt for, the crop of officers of the Judiciary, it is meant for going by the theme of the workshop i.e ***Promoting Efficiency in Judicial Administration.***

This paper has four basic components that are by no means exhaustive which are stated below:

1. What is office Practice?
2. What is Judicial Communication?
3. What is Judicial Administration and
4. Who are Judicial Administrators?

I will start with the 3rd component as it connects all the other three components.

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Dictionary meaning of Administration is **“the process or activity of owning a business, organization, etc. It is also defined as “the management of public affairs; government”**. It is synonymous with **management, leadership, command, control, supervision, authority, directorate** etc.

A renowned Nigerian Scholar: Augustus Adebayo, defines Administration simply as **“the organization and direction of resources, towards the accomplishment of specified goals.”**

This presupposes that there must be a structured co-ordination through leadership and an aim to accomplish.

Going by Wex Legal Dictionary and Encyclopedia, “Judicial Administration consists of the practices, procedures and offices that deal with the management of the system of the Courts”.

Judicial Administrators are Court Leaders. Judicial Administration includes the entire management of the Court, starting from the Chief Justice of Nigeria at the Federal Level and the Chief Judge at the State level to the Chief Registrar down to the clerks of the Court. Courts are usually organized under the directives of the Chief Judge to the Chief Registrar who heads all the administrative departments of the Court and gives directives for efficient management of the Court system.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Judicial Administration as:

1. The dispensing of Justice according to Law especially through the functioning of a system of Courts.
2. The management of the internal affairs of a system of Courts.

Judicial Administration is also referred to by the Free Dictionary as Court Administration. It is concerned with the day-to-day and long- range activities of the Court System. It seeks to enhance the work of Judges and to provide services to lawyers and citizens.

In a nutshell, Court Administrators are the Managers of the Court system. They are the Engine room of the Judiciary that see to the efficient functioning of the Courts both at the Federal and State levels from the Head of Court down to the Clerk of the Court.

There are various departments in charge of administration in the Judiciary.

We have a department that deals with Litigation under which Court processes are filed, processed from beginning of the litigation process through execution of Judgments and all other post-judgement applications. Here, the Chief Registrar doubles as a Sheriff while the Deputy Chief Registrar/Director of Litigation doubles as Deputy Sheriff acting on behalf of the Chief Registrar.

There is also the Finance and Supplies Department headed by the Director of Finance and Supplies. The Directors of Finance and Supplies are in charge of preparing Annual Budgets for the Court, and seeing to the carrying out of all functions related to Finance, Accounts and Supplies for the Court. He acts on the directives of the Chief Registrar who is the Chief Accounting Officer of the Court.

We also have the Director of Administration and Personnel who is in charge of Administration and Personnel Matters.

We also have other directors like the Deputy Chief Registrars/Directors in charge of maintenance, Alternative Dispute Resolution (Multi-door Court House), Rent Matters.

We have the Probate Division and the Chief Registrar doubles as the Probate Registrar.

At the Court level there are Registrars of Courts taking charge of the administration of the Court and Court staff like, Court Clerks, Bailiffs, Messengers, Court Interpreters, Cleaners and even the Security Personnel of the Court.

Judicial Administration is concerned with the day-to-day and long-range administration of the Court system that seeks to enhance the work of Judges and to provide services to lawyers and citizens who use the judicial system thereby aiding in the quick dispensation of Justice.

OFFICE PRACTICE

An office is the centre of business activity. There are various kinds of offices but whatever the type, they share some common functions. These include:

- i) Initiating tasks by issuing instructions directives etc to appropriate Departments or personnel.
- ii) Maintaining all Documents in order and storing documents for easy access when required.

The County of Los Angeles, Department of Human Resources defines Office Practice thus:

“Office Practices are day-to-day clerical and administrative activities performed by office professionals to support work-related functions and organizational decision makers.”

As the word implies, Office Practices/Routines are those activities, duties and functions that are being practically carried out daily in an office.

These activities or duties carried out in an office range from organizing, managing, performing office tasks, operating office equipment etc in order to achieve departmental or organizational goals.

In the context of this paper, we are more concerned with Office Practice or Routine as it relates to the official functions of the targeted audience i.e Chief Registrars, Deputy Chief Registrars, Directors and Secretaries of Judicial Service Commissions/Committee.

For offices as busy as those of the Chief Registrars who are the Chief Administrative and Chief Accounting Officers of the Judiciary as well as those of the Directors and other judicial administrators, there is need for Office Practice Information guide which will help officers in this cadre to successfully and more efficiently perform their duties. Apart from knowing that Office Practice means, there is need to know how to:

- (i) Complete the complex, multi-step office assignments.
- (ii) Manage your time in the office.
- (iii) Use of electronic and paper filing systems.
- (iv) Be a ware of relevant office equipment, tools and resources.

(i) Completing Office Assignments

As a Judicial Administrator with variety of complex assignments, you should follow this 5 – step process to help you in successfully completing the complex variety of office Assignments. i.e.

- a) Understand the Assignment.
- b) Listen to the instructions
- c) Take notes on important information.
- d) Ask question if you need clarification.
- e) Summarize the details of the assignment.

(ii) Managing Office Time-

As a Judicial administrator, it is very likely that you will be responsible for completing several different assignments at the same time. Effectively managing your time will assist you greatly in successfully completing your assignments which will benefit you, your staff and your organization.

You can effectively manage your time by creating a structured Time Management Plan which can help you effectively organize and evaluate your work assignments to complete them on time. Your plan should both be structured and realistic to make the best use of your time, while being flexible enough to handle unexpected changes and interruptions. Finding this balance can be difficult; but once achieved, it can help increase your effectiveness, reduce job-related stress and improve job satisfaction.

A basic planning strategy includes evaluating your use of time, creating assignment summary lists, making daily “TO DO” lists and minimizing the impact of interruptions.

(iii) Managing Office Documents

Even though the participants here are the top Management Officers of the Judiciary and will necessarily have Secretaries, Personal Assistants

and Data Processing Officers, it is good to have some basic knowledge of document management which is the process of receiving and storing office records and information. It will assist to have basic knowledge of filing systems, strategies for managing paper and electronic documents, retention schedules of documents and their storage, and securing of electronic and paper documents.

Though it may not be within our schedules to do all these, but having basic knowledge will aid Judicial Administrators to ensure that the members of staff in charge of these duties, do the right thing.

Types of filing Systems

There are different kinds of filing systems. Certain filing systems may be more appropriate than other depending on the situation. For this reason, an office may use a combination of several different filing systems.

There are five main document filing systems: alphabetic, numeric, subject geographic, and chronological. Having a basic understanding of each system will help you effectively maintain a variety of documents. Listed below is a summary of these filing systems:

System	Characteristic	When to Use	Examples
Alphabetic	Arranged alphabetically from A to Z in this order: last name, first name, then middle name/initial	Use when organizing documents related to people.	Musa, Garba R. Coleman, Jil C. Jimenz, John Q. etc.
Numeric	Arranged according to code numbers (e.g., account, ID number, invoice number, etc.)	Use when organizing confidential documents or when names are not available.	1001, 1002, 1003, etc.
Subject	Arranged alphabetically according to subject or topic	Use when organizing documents that have the same or related category.	Accounting Dept., Human Resource Dept., Information Technology Dept., etc.

Geographic	Arranged alphabetically according to location	Use when organizing documents by districts, regions, an/or jurisdictions.	Kaduna, Kafanchan and Zaria High Court.
Chronological	Arranged according to date	Use when organizing documents in sequence or creating a timeline.	January, February, March, etc.

To illustrate the different filing systems, consider the following situation:

You have been assigned to organize the documents for a monthly workshop. To effectively manage the related documents, you create the following filing system:

- **Alphabetic:** You receive the names of individuals who will be attending the workshop. You create a file which contains a folder for each participant's registration information and arrange them alphabetically by the participant's name.
- **Numeric:** You must submit an inventory request form to order supplies for the workshops (e.g., markers, notepads, pens, etc.). this form contains a request number, and you create a file to organize the inventory request forms according to the request number.
- **Subject:** The monthly workshop covers a variety of topics (e.g., communication, time management, computer skills, etc.). you create a folder for each topic and label them accordingly.
- **Geographic:** Your department uses several different locations to conduct the workshops. You keep a separate folder containing relevant room information, directions, and contacts for each location.

- **Chronological:** you keep all the records for each monthly workshop in a file organized according to month. At the end of the year, the monthly files are archived in a file organized according to year.

General Guidelines and Standards for Alphabetical Filing

Alphabetical filing is the most common method for organizing documents. Its guidelines and standard are listed below:

Guidelines	Examples
1. For people, records should be filed alphabetically by last name, first name, then middle name/initial.	Muhammad, Ibrahim A Isma'il, Musa K. Ruth, Allison R.
2. When people share the same last name, then order by name then middle name/initial.	Mukhtar, Haroon Mukhtar, Muhammad A. Mukhtar, Umar L.
3. For organizations, records should be filed by the first word of the organization's name.	Haroon Flores Graphic Design Accountants- R- Us Amber Consulting
4. When organization names have the same first word, order by second word.	West Coast Shipping Company West Coast Software West, Porter, & Associates
5. Numbers are filed sequentially before alphabetic characters.	5- Star Electronics 12 Good Lawyers Anderson Building Supplies
6. Follow the principle to "nothing before something" (i.e., one – letter words are filed before words with two letters)	A to Z Bookkeeping Absolute Consulting Always – On – Time Accountants

Types of Documents

Documents can be either paper or electronic. Paper (i.e., hard-copy) documents may include any forms, records, receipts, or contracts kept in a file, folder, or binder. Electronic (i.e., soft – copy) documents may include computer files on a network, hard drive, external drive, or email. While paper and electronic documents can be identical in content, the storage management for each is quite different.

Managing Paper Documents

Despite advances in computer technology, paper documents still play an important role in the workplace. Office professionals frequently file, store, and retrieve paper documents. Effectively organizing these documents is critical to the success of an office. The following suggestions provide ways to help manage paper documents:

- Underline or write file labels on all documents (if possible).
- File documents daily to stay organized and avoid misplacing information.
- Use color coded file folders and labels to quickly identify and locate documents.

Managing Electronic Files

A majority of electronic files are stored on computers. Like paper documents, these files require careful organization and management. The following suggestions provide ways to help manage electronic files:

- Create electronic folders where you can store related documents.
- Be consistent in how you name files and folders. This will help you easily locate and identify files. For examples, when updating a document that results in several versions, you should number each versions, you should number each version in the filename (e.g., Office Practice Guide _ v1, Office Practice Guide v2, Office Practice Guide- v3, etc.).

- Periodically review your electronic documents to ensure your filing system is effective. Use judgment when making adjustments and discuss any major changes with your manager.

Retention Schedules

A retention schedule is an office policy that describes how long to keep documents on site, when to transfer them to an off – site storage facility, and when to destroy them. The more documents an office uses, the more important it is to have an effective retention schedule. If you are involved in creating a retention schedule, there are several issues to consider:

- How often are the documents used, referenced, or requested?
- Are there any legal guidelines to consider?
- What are the potential long – term benefits to keeping the documents (e.g., research)?
- How much space is available for storage?
- How much will it cost to cost to store the documents on – site versus off – site?
- Should documents that are no longer used be destroyed?

Considerations for Storing Office Documents

One important consideration is how often documents are accessed. For example, frequently used documents should be readily available, while seldom used documents can be store in less accessible locations (e.g., storage facilities). Policies and procedures regarding document storage should be included in the retention schedule.

The storage of essential office documents is another important consideration. Essential documents (e.g., contracts, personnel records, and financial records) are items necessary to maintain business operation and include documents that are difficult to replace. During

emergencies or disaster these documents would be critical to ensure the office is able to continue functioning.

The following are four examples of how essential documents are preserved:

- Duplication: copying important documents and storing them in both electronic and paper formats.
- Dispersal: storing duplicates at different office locations, if available.
- On – Site Storage: storing documents in an off – site storage facility.

A final important consideration is to store documents in a neat and orderly manner. The following suggestions provide strategies on how to neatly store documents:

- Remove unnecessary items (e.g., rubber bands).
- File the most recent documents in the front of the folder.
- Place documents facing up with the top of the page at the left edge of the folder.
- Replace worn folders with new ones.
- Allow 3 to 4 inches of working space in vertical files.

Helpful Tip:

Whenever possible, office documents should be scanned and stored on a computer. This can provide better security of the documents and helps you to be more organized. Check the office or department policy on document storage and scanning. Consult with your manager if you have any additional questions.

Maintaining Document Security

Maintaining the security of documents is an important part of protecting the information of an organization. Protecting confidential information is

an ethical, and sometimes legal, responsibility of the office professional. The following suggestions provide information on how to secure paper and electronic files:

Securing Paper Files

- Place files in locked drawers/rooms when they are not in use.
- Secure the office and file keys.
- Monitor who uses the files and for what reasons by creating a check – out log.
- Follow the office retention schedule.
- Avoid leaving confidential information on desks, in the printer/fax output tray, or in the copy machine.
- Use secured interoffice envelopes, if available.

Securing Electronic Files

- Protect computer passwords by changing them frequently and by not posting them in your workspace.
- Lock, log off, or shut down the computer before leaving your workspace.
- Be cautious when opening email messages from people you do not know. Never open an email attachment unless you are sure of its content and sender.
- Only download files from trusted and/or approved sources.
- Establish a schedule for backing up important documents.
- Store backup copies off – site.

Never provide confidential information in either electronic or paper format to unauthorized staff or customers. Consult with your manager if questions arise.

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Act of Minuting Files

- (i) A FILE: is an open folder which can only accommodate documents such as letters, receipt, credentials, memos, drafts, invoices etc.

There are different types of file in an organization popularly known as:-

- a. **Temporary/Inactive Files:-** this category of files are those files that are normally or usually open for correspondences due to emergency needs or demand for their operations and required urgent action before tracing the original main file.

However, such correspondences are later returned or transferred to their original main files as soon as action on the has been completed. Those files can be torn or destroyed at the end of such transactions. They are seen as inactive in nature.

- b. **Main or Active File:-** As the name implies, they are mainly opened originally in order to contain the documents that were set aside for such action as demanded.

The main files are properly taken good care of as they are kept in a place where they can be easily traced.

Most importantly all files are to be stored in a cool dry place or inside an iron cabinet that is antirust or prevented from any fire outbreak or theft/burglary.

- c. **Miscellaneous Files:-** some correspondences come in from different government or organization and do not have specific files that are opened for their transactions to be treated, therefore the need arises for the miscellaneous files but as soon as action on them have been concluded and those correspondences or documents have been removed and inserted by the schedule officers, then their use elapse and they are destroyed. Miscellaneous files, can accommodate different correspondences that comes in for different reasons and are all gathered in one file and action can also be taken on that same file irrespective of it's original setting or grounds of demanded action.

- d. **Pending Files:-** these are files that do not demand prompt action as they are always kept in view pending the time that such need might arise again for action on them etc.

In addition to the above, there are two basic kinds of files:-

- i. **Open Files:-** these kinds of files are barely open in nature to any transaction that can be carried out in them. They do not hold any confidential attached to them or restrictions in any way rather, confidentiality employees do have free access to them at any moment or time.

Most open files are duly kept at the Open Registry under lock and key for safe custody.

The custodian of such files always undusts them and keeps them neat and tidy and when the front pages are filled, a fresh volume is to be opened. Movement of them are by dispatch

- ii. **Secret/Confidential Files:-** These files are surely strictly confidential in nature. Being it confidential in nature they are being accorded priority attention by not allowing them to be exposed publicly. Even movement of such files from one office to another can be done under strict dispatch and endorsement in order to ensure their proper delivery.

They are meant for both senior and junior staff alike and are out-rightly used for treating issues of discipline, promotions, transfers of service, memo drafting and many other issues of confidential nature.

Some of them are marked “strictly confidential” or “Top Secret” or “Confidential” across them with red inscription on the face of the said file jacket.

- iii. **Subject File:-** they are files that are not for employee or staff but are meant for treating corporate issues that concern

governmental bodies, private organizations, circulars, contracts, stores etc.

Minuting Files:-

In filing papers such as applications in a file you need to take a good look at the top left side of it and punch it before putting in or inserting the tag at the left hand side into the hole that you punched and numbering it at the top right direction.

This occurs vice versa in the sense that whenever a document has been submitted to be filed, the administrator or scheduled officer need to observed properly before coding or numbering. Only red biros are advised to be used.

Furthermore, you have to know that if you discover any writing (typed or handwritten) at the upper layer of the paper filed and it was minuted to you for your comment or action, then before or after your minute or comment you ought to ensure that you use your red biro to mark on top of your minute an inscription or mark it as A and if you are the third to make a comment then mark 'B' and so on.

After all necessary actions have been concluded in a file either open or secret etc it has to be registered in the incoming Register before it is returned back to the dip or cabinet for custody in order to avoid getting missing or lost because leaving a file on top of a table ordinarily can tempt someone or a visitor to lay hand on it or carry it away to another office without your consent or knowledge thereby leaving you in total disarray.

We are now in a highly technologically driven society whereby very soon the use of files manually will be reduced where minuting correspondences in the Judiciary and other government organizations will soon be recorded or done with the aid of computer application and not handwritten.

There as thorough knowledge of Computer and its uses cannot be over emphasized.

Abbreviations:-

Below are different terminologies used by administrators when minuting files their subordinates for action. These includes:-

K.i.v	-	keep in view or pending
P.a	-	put away
f.y.i	-	for your information
abc	-	at back cover
tnap	-	take necessary action, please
f&r	-	file and return
ptn	-	please take note
pca	-	please convey approval
pt	-	please treat
t.a.u	-	treat as urgent
pls.	-	please circle
re-ok & bc	-	refer to overleaf and back cover
f f.y.d	-	forwarded for your further directives
f.f.y.a	-	forwarded for your action
t.a.d	-	treat as discussed
APER	-	annual performance and evaluation report
memo	-	memorandum

- pto - please turn over
- e.t.c - etcetera (and so on and so forth) (many more)

iii) Using Office Equipment, Tools, and Resources

Introduction

Underlying the ability to complete assignments, manage office time, and manage office documents is the ability to operate office equipment. Being proficient with photocopiers, fax machines, scanners, computers and other office equipment will directly impact your effectiveness on the job. This scheduling will provide an overview of commonly used office equipment and computer software.

Office Equipment

Listed below are descriptions of some frequently used office equipment:

- **Photocopiers** – make paper duplications of documents.
- **Fax Machines** – transmit a copy of a document from one location to another.
- **Scanners** – convert a paper document into an electronic file (e.g., pdf, jpg, .bmp, etc) which can make the document easier to access and also reduces paper volume.
- **Shredders** – destroy confidential documents by cutting them into very fine strips (strip- cut) or tiny paper chips (cross – cut). Cross – cut shredders are ideal for highly confidential documents because they cut the paper into small pieces that are difficult to put back together into the original form.

Computers

Computers are the most important equipment in today's office environment. They allow users to create, store, process, send, receive, and display electronic data. Office professionals use computers to perform many activities, such as:

- Writing letters, memos, and other documents
- Storing and analyzing data.
- Managing records, forms, and other documents.
- Creating reports, presentations, handouts, and pamphlets.
- Communicating (e.g., email) and researching (e.g., internet).

It is critical to stay current with technical advances in computer system and programs. Judicial Administration should frequently assess their computer skills and take the necessary steps to further develop their proficiency. Computers provide several tools that can help Judicial Administration. Listed below are descriptions of the most commonly used software and tools:

Word Processing Software

Word Processing Software (e.g., MS Word) is to write, edit, and format office documents. Understanding this type of software is critical because nearly all paper correspondence created using word processing software (including this information guide). Be sure that you are familiar with formatting functions (e.g., margins, page numbering, page breaks, etc.) so that you can quickly adapt to the layout and style used by any organization, department, and/or office.

Spreadsheet Software

Spreadsheet Software (e.g., MS Excel) is used to enter numerical or alphanumeric data, which can be organized or analyzed to obtain information. For example, spreadsheets are frequently used for monitoring budgets, tracking expenditures, and identifying trends tracking expenditures, and identifying trends.

Database Software

Office professionals use database software (e.g., MS Access) to store, sort, group, extract, manipulate, and filter data. This type of software is similar to a spreadsheet, but it allows you to use the information in more advanced ways. Consider using database software instead of spreadsheet software when

- There is a very large amount of data (e.g., thousands of entries)
- You need to link two different databases together.
- A unique report is needed to display data.

The Internet

Judicial Administrators can frequently conduct research using the internet. Finding useful information quickly on the internet is possible when you use the correct search tools and methods.

- Web Search Engines are websites designed to locate information on the internet. Using them is one of the most effective ways to find specific information. When you enter a keyword or phrase into a web search engine, it provides a list of websites relating to that keyword or phrase. Some frequently used web search engines are:
 - Google.com
 - Yahoo.com
 - Ask.com
 - MSN.com
- Online Encyclopedia/Reference Websites are other useful tools for conducting online research. Unlike web search engines, online encyclopedia websites are specifically designed to provide factual information on a wide variety of topics. The following are some of the commonly used encyclopedia/reference websites:
 - Wikipedia.org
 - Thesaurus.com
 - Webster.com

- Dictionary.com

When conducting an internet search, always use more than one source. This will help ensure the accuracy of your work as each site may provide different information on the same topic. If you discover a useful website or search engine, you can use the “bookmark” feature in your Internet browser to easily access it again.

Email

Office Professionals use email software (e.g., MS Outlook) to send, receive, and store email messages. It also offers functions for tracking work tasks and scheduling meetings and assignment due dates.

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. It is critical to establishing and maintaining quality working relationships in organizations. Good communication skills are very important and essential to one’s success as a Judicial Administrator.

Official communication also known as formal communications is the exchange of official information that flows along the different levels of organizational hierarchy and informs to the prescribed professional rules, policy standards, processes and reputations of the organization. It is usually offered in the official capacity of the Judicial Administrators. It is communication that starts

from the authority, accountability and responsibility of the job. It typically uses official communication channels used in the Court.

The three main types of Communication are Verbal, non-Verbal and Visual.

Official Communication can be classified into Internal and External Communication.

Internal Communication:-

This is Communication within the organization, any people working in the Organization between employer and employee etc.

External Communication:-

This is Communication with people outside the organization e.g. communication with Lawyers, Government & Government Agencies, other organizations and the public at large.

In every organization, information designation is the bedrock for every advancement to be attained. Official communication is also an essential component office practice.

The appropriate manner information dissemination is handed in the office with aid greatly in achieving the objectives of the organization.

The goal; of any communication is to make information accessible and understandable to everyone. Court audiences include the public, court users, the media, judicial branch stake holders funding sources as well as Judges, court employees and court Personnel.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

There are three basic Channels of Communication:-

- (a) Upward/Vertical – In this context, the information can be channeled upwardly from down to the top management level in such a manner that all correspondences filed at the Registry, be it Administrative or Court Registry shall be received at those registries mentioned above and forwarded to the top i.e. the Hon. Chief Judge's Office or Chief Registrar's Office for directives on the action to be taken on such files or correspondences.
- (b) Downward/Horizontal – this is the reverse of the upward/vertical whereby information can be channeled downwardly from top to down i.e Office of the Hon. Chief Judges or Chief Registrar's Office to the other offices that those correspondences are being directed to for action.
- (c) Diagonal – In some circumstances, some correspondences when they are brought to some specific offices that have authority to tackle or treat those documents, they stand the chance of treating those mails, correspondences or document within their offices without contacting or releasing same to their subordinates downward.

These offices are constitutionally empowered with the inherent power to execute, control and treat every kind of document mail correspondence that fall within their supreme jurisdiction without any undue influence, that is the Office of the Hon. Chief Judge and the Chief Registrar may be affected too.

Based on the foregoing, every staff or personnel is expected to perform his duties efficiently, effectively and promptly in order to facilitate the smooth running of the administration of the Judiciary.

e.g from the managerial level down to the subordinate level, a messenger or Bailiff who failed to perform his duties as at and when due in a day or within some hours can crumble by bringing it to a standstill or halt with

refusal to carry out his job timely. Consequently, so every staff is highly important in managing resources/activities in any organization.

Efficiency in organizations can only be assured if rational standard exemplified by detachment, impersonality and strict impartiality are observed. Judicial administrators are expected to execute their duties with affection and enthusiasm. I believe that strict adherence to this ideal bureaucracy will achieve “precision, speed, unambiguity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and material cost”. An Organization is seen more like a machine without passion or emotion operating according to calculable rules without regard for persons.

Efficient activities can only take place in a formal setting. Deviation (informal acts) from the rational or model will be viewed odd or peculiar in nature.

WORDS OF ADVICE

1. From the very first, you must learn to be precise and honest in your work. You must fully appreciate the problems to be solved. You must then collect and check all relevant facts, and set them out clearly and fairly. Don't take anything for granted; there is always more than one point of view, and it may be dangerous to accept somebody else's statement without verifying it for yourself. Don't be lazy and try to pass off a guess as an accurate figure or statement; it may not be questioned, but if it is you must be prepared to justify it. If you see a snag, or a difficulty, or a point which you don't understand, don't ignore it in the hope that nobody else will spot it; it is your job to straighten it out, or if you can't, at least to point it out to your Superior and let him deal with it. No matter what difficulties may face, must never be found wanting in this kind of honesty.
2. Moreover, you be accurate. You must learn the importance of using words in their exact meanings, so that they convey, to somebody you have never seen, exactly what you intend to convey, and not just something roughly approximating to it. If there is any ambiguity in your phrasing somebody is

sure to misunderstand; so say what you mean, simply and clearly. Keep your sentences short and to the point.

3. Deal with urgent things first; after that, deal with the others in their tune, and deal with them thoroughly. This sounds simple, but will find that it is very easy to seem busy to other people, and even to deceive yourself into thinking you are very busy, by taking also always the easiest things first. Resist this temptation so take things in their tune and think them outfully, whether they are straight forward or complicated, and don't dither over them.
4. Occasionally amongst the files of papers which the Messenger deposit in your in-tray will find something which doesn't seem to be your job. Find out at once whose business it is and send the paper on to the right quarter at once. Don't let the paper remain in you tray. Don't on the other hand send it on to another department till you are sure that department is the right one. If you make this your drill much delay will saved.
5. Use discretion in the inquiries you make, in this as in other things. Don't make them as an unnecessarily high level. If you want to know whether a department deals with a particular subject, it isn't usually necessary to ask the head of the department. Always, before you travel a more senior officer, think carefully whether you could get the information you want from some one who is junior and less busy.
6. See that you understand your job. It may seem unimportant and pointless to you at first; but even the most routine job in the machinery of the Judiciary has it own importance and can be done with some degree of pride, if it is approach in the proper way.
7. If you don't see the purpose of what you are doing, ask your Superior and go on asking until you fully understand the purpose. It may not be a very colourful or glamorous one, but it is there, if you look for it.
8. Don't be shy of suggesting ways and means of improving the organisation or your job, or of doing it more rapidly or with less effort. You come to it with a fresh mind and you may have some useful suggestion to make. But

think them over carefully first and quite sure that they are improvement and that you haven't through inexperience overlooked some obvious snag. Don't begin to criticise until you have learned the reason behind the existing method of doing things.

9. Finally, in case of this good advice should have made feel that an ordinary human being like yourself can never hope to be a successful administrator, remember that everyone makes a blunder at some time or other, and that even the worst of blunders doesn't always have such disastrous result as you may think at the time. But try not to make the same blunder twice.

CONCLUSION

Developing your understanding of office practices and knowing proper methods and channels of official communication is very essential for your success as a Judicial Administrator.

This paper defined Judicial Administration and Judicial Administrators. It provided the meaning of Office Practices and Official Communication in relation to Judicial Administrators. It presented a general definition of Office Practices and strategies for completing assignments, managing time, managing documents and using office equipment, tools, and resources in the context of an office setting. The paper also presented general meaning of Official Communication, the three main types of Communication, channels of Official Communication and what the goal of Official Communication is for Judicial Administrators.

In the discharge of their duties, Judicial Administrators should abide by the Code of Conduct for Court Employees of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in addition to Rules of Professional Conduct for the Lawyers amongst us.

I want to seize this opportunity to thank the Chief Judge of Kaduna State, Hon. Justice Muhammed Lawal Bello for sponsoring an unprecedented number of members of staff to attend both National Workshops and International Conferences, a feat never before achieved in the Kaduna State High Court of Justice.

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Thank you very much for listening.

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