

## CO-OPERATION AND CENTRALISATION OF CORRESPONDENCE FILING

We publish the following interesting article on the subject of "Correspondence Filing" from the pen of Mr. R. L. Goch, in a recent issue of "The Secretary":

Centralisation of functions is the dominant element in successful modern business development.

The concentration of work under competent and specialist controllers is an essential to efficient organization, and the establishment of a Central Filing Department is an application of this principle which will facilitate the production of any article of correspondence with more expedition than is attainable with departmental filing arrangements.

The principle of co-ordination may be applied in the world of commerce with equal success to that which attended its adoption in the military control of the European War, when the whole of the Allied armies were subjected to a unified command under General Foch, effecting marked economies by preventing the duplication of duties and directing energies to gain the utmost utility.

Endeavour should be made to disallow the filing of important correspondence by individuals in pigeon-holes, desks, and other personal apparatus, as the outcome of such laxity is to render necessary the searches for paper which have not been definitely located.

The numerical vertical system of filing is generally found to give the utmost satisfaction, and more especially when used in conjunction with a Master Index, providing information regarding all persons having relationship with the business concerned, and containing reference to all correspondence and documents, however filed or kept.

Under this method the papers are filed in folders, a separate folder being allotted to each correspondent or subject, and being arranged in vertical position between numeric guides contained in specially constructed cabinets suitable for the purpose.

The reference to these numbered folders is provided by the Master Index the functions and operations of which are hereafter explained.

Cards are prepared for each customer, supplier, or other persons having business dealings with the firm concerned. Information is recorded on those cards to indicate the financial status, correspondence reference, ledger folio, instructions to be followed with reference to orders and rendering of accounts and any other information of use under the circumstances in each case. These cards are deposited between alphabetical and sectional guides in a specially constructed card table with open top, holding a movable glass slab which may be used as a writing surface and moved to any po-

sition on the table, providing easy access to any tray of cards.

Each mail on receipt is passed over the index, and all necessary information is transferred to each letter, thus making it possible to grasp immediately all important facts in connection with the relative correspondent and/or his records. To prevent the labourious transference of these particulars in cases where correspondence is frequently received from a particular individual, small printed labels bearing the relative particulars may be affixed. Small supplies of these are placed ready for use in the pockets attached to the index cards.

When attended to, correspondence together with copies of replies is filed in the vertical folders allotted to the correspondent. Since the correspondent's reference has been transferred to the inward letter, it will not be necessary again to inspect the index.

In cases where voluminous correspondence is received from a particular correspondent, inset folders may be utilised to classify correspondence under subjects and sections of subjects.

The possibility of having perfect cross reference is one of the advantages of this system of filing, and constitutes one of its great time-saving features. The cross reference makes it possible to locate instantly any individual letter, whether filed under the correspondent's name or under the subject to which it refers.

If responsibility for the operation of this system of filing is placed in efficient hands, the production of correspondence required will be a matter of the greatest ease, and will be of the greatest assistance to the busy manager who may desire to inspect immediately any letter dealing with any subject and written by any person, without moving from his desk. A Central Filing Department in telephonic communication with the responsible heads of departments will be a means towards this end.

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