

# The iam Introductory Award in Administrative Management Study Guide

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## iam Introductory Award in Administrative Management

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Introductory Award in Administrative Management.

This award is made by the Institute of Administrative Management, a 90 year old professional Institute dedicated to the promotion of the science of Administrative Management, with members across the globe, at all levels of management and in all commercial sectors including business, manufacturing, government, education and training.

This Study Guide provides indicators and a framework for your personal study. It enables you to reflect on, and to evaluate, the context within which organisational decisions must be made.

Upon completion of the Introductory Award programme, the student is entitled to progress to the Certificate in Administrative Management, join the Institute as a Student Member, benefit from all the privileges of membership, and progress to further study with the **iam**.

### iam Qualifications

#### Progression

Candidates who have completed the Introductory Award can proceed to the Certificate, followed by the Diploma, and then the Advanced Diploma in Administrative Management or alternatively may be accepted to proceed to the second year of a relevant university degree programme.

At this stage, candidates can proceed to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Strategic Administrative Management, awarded in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University Business School. This programme enables students to “top up” their **iam** professional programme to a full British university undergraduate degree.

### Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree in Strategic Administrative Management

It is necessary to complete one preparatory Unit, and the Advanced Diploma, before proceeding to this programme. It is specifically planned to provide a stimulating, rigorous and challenging academic experience, which is designed to complement prior learning with the **iam**. The course is also intended to provide a range of skills including knowledge and application of techniques of strategic management and administration. The course develops transferable skills and encourages students to adopt an independent and reflective approach to their learning.

#### Progression

On completion of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Strategic Administrative Management candidates can progress into senior management positions and may wish to further their studies by completing a Masters Degree programme

For further information about the Institute's qualifications, please visit the **iam's** website [www.instam.org](http://www.instam.org), or contact Customer Services on 0207 091 2600.

### **How the Certificate Study Guide works**

There are features of the Certificate Study Guide you need to be aware of before you begin and these are:

1. It is intended to be completed by you at your own pace, wherever and whenever you wish, subject to Accredited Centres' own requirements.
2. Whilst it is mostly self contained some additional reading may be needed. You will find a list of references/learning and recommended reading at the end of each unit.
3. Each Section indicates sources for further reading, and the internet is a rich information resource. Recommendations for further reading are included for those students who wish to develop their competence more widely.
4. Each of the units in the programme begins with an overview followed by a list of learning objectives. These describe the skills and knowledge that you should gain from working through the unit.
5. As you work through each unit you will find sections covering key areas of the unit. As you work through each section you will find activities to do, to underline your understanding of the subject matter.
6. At the end of each section there is a section summary followed by learning activities. The learning activities aim to reemphasise the main issues outlined in the key areas of the section and give you practice in using the skills or knowledge you have gained, or get you to think about the implications of the topics covered.
7. At the end of each completed unit you will find a list of learning resources.

You are now ready to commence your studies! The Chairman of the **iam's** Council, the Chief Examiner and all of the staff of the Institute wish you the very best of luck in your studies and hope that you will find the programme an interesting, fulfilling and career enhancing experience!

## **The Introductory Award in Administrative Management**

### **Foreword**

Effective administration and management are vital in all business sectors, from manufacturing and commercial enterprises, through to charities and the public sector. While administrators implement administrative processes reliably, effectively and in a timely manner, Administrative Managers not only manage those processes, but add-value to the key business operations of the organisation.

This study guide serves as a core text for the Introductory Award in Administrative Management. It covers the three compulsory units at the Introductory Award level of: Skills for Administrators, Individuals within the Organisation, and Organisational Skills.

## **Aim of The Introductory Award**

The aim of the Introductory Award is to introduce students to administration and the management of administration in the workplace. It also aims to provide students with the basis from which more advanced administrative skills and knowledge can be developed.

## **Unit One: Skills for Administrators**

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### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this Unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the supporting role of administration in the organisation and understand the environment in which the organisation operates.
- Employ a range of key administration skills.
- Understand the importance of number skills and work effectively with numbers.
- Present data in a range of different formats.
- Identify the importance of business communication and communicate effectively in the workplace.

## **Section One: Administration and The Organisational Environment**

### **Introduction**

The business environment is becoming increasingly dynamic for organisations, particularly with increased competition and changes driven by technology. The need therefore, for effective Administrative Managers to plan and organise scarce resources, becomes more and more crucial to the success of the business.

Similarly, as organisations strive to remain competitive within global markets, they are continually examining the best ways in which to manage and organise the structure of the work.

The purpose of this section is to identify the role of administration and administrative management in the organisation and to consider the nature of organisations and their environment.

This aim of this section is to:

- Identify the supporting role of administration in the organisation.
- Understand the environment in which the organisation operates.

### **Administration**

The purpose of administration is to provide a service to the organisation – supporting key business processes, liaising with suppliers, managing office facilities, maintaining customer relationships, managing diary systems, handling mail, organizing meetings and communicating using appropriate systems.

### **Management**

There are numerous definitions of management available, stemming from the classical theories of scientific management, through to the systems perspectives of management. However, for a general approach taken here, management is

concerned with planning, organising, staffing, controlling and decision making, in order to meet organisational goals. Managers therefore control human resources, equipment, materials, information and financial resources.

Brech (1957) raises awareness that management is dependent upon: the skilful handling of people, ensuring objectives are achieved by the most economical means, clearly defined areas of responsibility, sound judgment in decision making and a robust system of monitoring progress and controlling activities against plans.

### Management or Administration

In some texts the term management and administration are used synonymously. However, administration is that part of management responsible for the implementation and integration of the policies made by senior management and the carrying out of procedures. While an Executive Director of an organisation may assist in making policy when a member of the Board of Directors, in the executive capacity, the Director will be concerned with implementing decisions. Hence senior management make the policies, while administration implement those policies. Nonetheless, administrators will offer guidance and advice regarding decisions and may therefore indirectly influence policy.

However, the ratio of management to administration will alter depending on the level of management. At the senior management level (i.e. strategic), 90% of an individual's time is devoted to management activities, whereas at the operational level (involved with day-to-day business), only 10% of an individual's job can be classified as management.

### Hierarchy of Management: Administration

Management Level	Management Elements	Administration Elements
Strategic	90%	10%
Tactical (middle management)	50%	50%
Operational	10%	90%

***TASK – Consider your own job, or a job you are familiar with, and determine what percentage you would classify as management/administration?***

### Administrative Management

Administrative Management forms the bridge between management and administration.

It is defined as: "the effective and efficient development, implementation and management of the organisation's systems and resources to achieve goals and objectives" (<http://www.instam.org>).

Administrative Management is vital to an organisation's control, coordination and communication. The Administrative Manager is also charged with ensuring the right information is available to the right person, at the right time, in the right quantity to support effective decision making.

Moreover, Administrative Managers are responsible for the resources necessary to effectively undertake an organisation's administrative function (i.e. personnel, equipment, methods and environment). An Administrative Manager is expected to add-value to an organisation by seeking constant improvement to the processes of administration.

## Organisation

In a one-person business, everything will be carried out by the owner-manager (e.g. marketing, buying, operations etc). However, as the business expands, the owner-manager will be unable to carry out every function, and will have to employ others to undertake the various required roles.

Consequently, organisation is the process of dividing work into convenient tasks, of grouping those tasks together, delegating authority to identified posts and of appointing staff to be responsible for the work of the business. It is the rational coordination of the independent activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common purpose, through division of labour and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility. Authority is the right to give an instruction, whereas responsibility refers to the obligation to carry out a specific task.

Organising requires the identification of required resources and then grouping them according to availability and the current business situation. Once resources have been grouped, then authority can be delegated and the relationships across the organisation coordinated.

Organisation is therefore a structure or framework within which a business operates.

The framework can be set-up in a number of ways:

- Function (or specialisation) – e.g. marketing, operations etc.
- Product/service – Used by businesses with a diverse product range.
- Customer.
- Location.

### ***TASK – Can you think of any other factors that could affect the structure of an organisation?***

The structure of an organisation is a complex process, with other factors such as the size of organisation, the complexity of its products and the number of tiers of management required, all potentially affecting the framework.

### **The Organisation in its environment**

Most organisations exist in a fast-moving, dynamic environment which influences its actions and ultimately its success. It is therefore important that managers constantly scan the environment for critical factors that could affect the organisation, in particular, for any opportunities or threats arising.

Environmental factors can be classified into:

- **Political** – i.e. changes in government.
- **Economic** – e.g. changes in taxation, inflation rates, exchange rates etc.
- **Sociological** – e.g. changes in demographics, changes in tastes etc.
- **Technological** – e.g. development of new technology.
- **Environmental** – i.e. green issues.

- Legal – e.g. changes in employment legislation.
- These are known by the acronym **PESTEL**.

**TASK – Consider an organisation you are familiar with, and undertake a PESTEL analysis. What factors do you think will affect the organisation in the future?**

As well as the above PESTEL factors, organisations will be affected by competition (e.g. price reductions by a competitor). Moreover, markets are becoming increasingly global in orientation, resulting in global competition and the convergence of markets. In recent years, trends towards outsourcing of non-core activities, strategic alliances and supply-chain management have seen the development of organisational relationships and networks across markets.

### **Section Review**

This section identified the role of administration and administrative management in the organisation and considered the nature of organisations and their environment.

- Administration provides a service to the organisation by supporting key business processes.
- Management is concerned with planning, staffing, controlling and decision making.
- Administrative Management is defined as: the effective and efficient development, implementation and management of the organisation's systems and resources to achieve goals and objectives.
- Organisation is the process of dividing work into convenient tasks, of grouping those tasks together, delegating authority to identified posts and of appointing staff to be responsible for the work of the business.
- Environmental factors affecting an organisation can be summarised by the acronym PESTEL

For further information and support, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.bized.ac.uk>

<http://www.businessballs.com>

<http://www.wikipedia.org.uk>

<http://www.cfa.uk.com>

## **Section Two: Working with Numbers, Data and Information**

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Administrative Managers will be receiving communications containing numerical data (e.g. budget reports, sales performance data etc). In order to make effective decisions, it is important that Administrative Managers fully understand any quantitative data presented and how to handle it.

This aim of this section is to:

- Understand the importance of number skills and work effectively with numbers.
- Present data in a range of different formats.

## Working with Numbers – Fractions, Decimals and Percentages

It is sometimes necessary to compare one number against another (e.g. sales performance for this year compared to last year).

E.g. Compare number 2 against number 3. We can show this:

As a decimal = .67 (rounded to 2 decimal places)

As a fraction =  $\frac{2}{3}$

As a percentage = 67%

As a ratio = 2:3

These measures can be useful to compare the size of one part of a total with the total itself.

E.g. A motor vehicle components manufacturer had 100 of a certain part in stock at the start of the month. At the month end stock take, there were 80 parts remaining in stock. What percentage had been sold?

$100$  (original stock value) –  $80$  (remaining stock value) =  $20$  (items sold)

$\frac{20}{100} = 0.2$

If we multiply this by 100, we get  $0.2 \times 100 = 20\%$ .

As a fraction,  $\frac{20}{100} = \frac{1}{5}$ .

Businesses usually work with percentages (e.g. to measure the increase in sales).

E.g. A clothing manufacturer produces a coat at a cost of £20. The manufacturer wants to add 25% profit (known as mark-up) to obtain the selling price. What is the profit per coat and the selling price?

Profit = Selling Price – Cost Price.

$£20 \times \frac{25}{100} = £5$  profit per coat.

Selling price =  $£20 + £5 = £25$  per coat.

Mark-up is therefore the profit expressed as a percentage of the cost price:

=  $\frac{\text{Profit}}{\text{Selling Price}} \times 100$

The profit of £5 as a percentage of the selling price is:

$\frac{5}{25} \times 100 = 20\%$  (This is known as the Margin).

Margin is therefore the profit expressed as a percentage of the cost price:

=  $\frac{\text{Profit}}{\text{Cost Price}} \times 100$

***TASK – A car, originally purchased for £10,000, has now depreciated to a value of £3000. What percentage has it reduced in value from the original price?***

## Summarising Data – Working with Averages

People often refer to the “average” (e.g. average weekly sales, average monthly salaries etc). However, there are different ways to calculate an average:



## The Mean

This is the most widely used average. It is calculated by adding together a group of numbers and then dividing by how many numbers have been added together.

E.g. Sales (in £000's) for the first five months were:

<u>Month No's</u>	<u>Sales £000's</u>
1	120
2	140
3	165
4	190
5	140

To calculate the average (i.e. mean) monthly sales.

$$\text{The mean} = \frac{120 + 140 + 165 + 190 + 140}{5} = 151$$

**TASK – Can you identify any problems with the mean?**

## The Median

The median is the middle ranking value in a set of numbers.

E.g. By using the same monthly sales data as above, firstly the values have to be put into ascending order:

120    140    140    165    190

The median is therefore the 3<sup>rd</sup> value along = 140

## The Mode

The mode is the most frequently occurring value in a set of numbers.

E.g. By using the same monthly sales data as above,

120    140    140    165    190

The mode is 140, as it occurs twice in the list, whereas all other values only occur once.

Each method of calculating the average has its own merits and disadvantages. The mean was not one of the occurring values and can be influenced by extreme values. The mode gives an insight into frequency which might be a useful

measure (e.g. most frequently occurring customer complaint). However, all are relatively straightforward to calculate.

**TASK – Determine the mean, median and mode for the following set of monthly sales figures:**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Sales (£000's)</u>
January	25
February	32
March	41
April	47
May	49

June	51
July	46
Aug	41
September	38

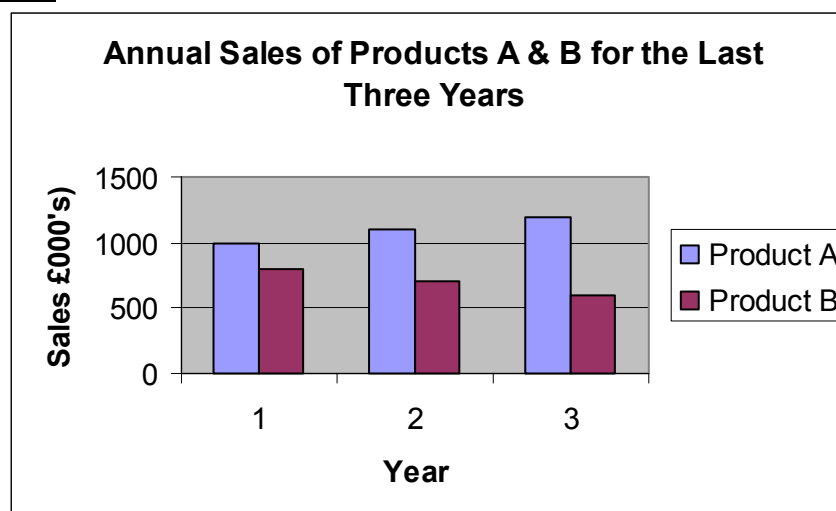
### Presenting Data – Working with Tables, Charts and Diagrams

A chart or diagram can often convey information that is more informative and understandable for a recipient. However, it is important to select that most appropriate method of visual representation and present it in a way that is clear, since management decisions will probably result from it.

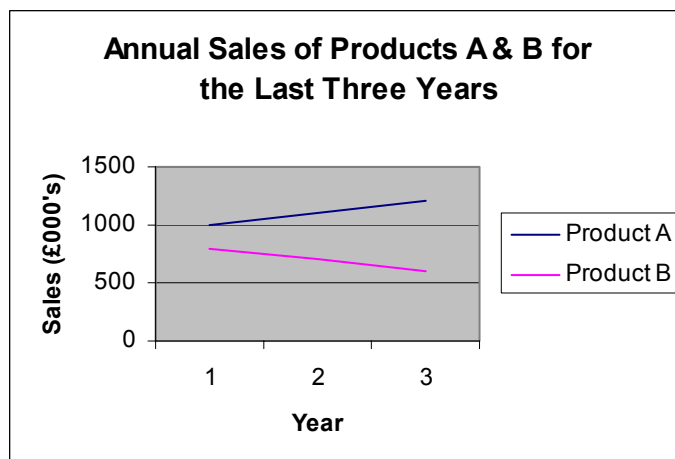
E.g. Consider the annual sales of products A and B for the last three years (in £000's).

Year	1	2	3
Product A	1000	1100	1200
Product B	<u>800</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>600</u>
Total Annual Sales	<u>1800</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>1800</u>

#### Bar Chart



## Line graph



The important aspects of the bar chart and the line graph are:

The chart is given a title.

The time scale (the independent variable) is clearly set out and labelled on the horizontal (X) axis.

The sales value (the dependent variable) is clearly set out and labelled on the vertical (Y) axis.

It is easy to distinguish between the products with the given key.

## Pie Charts

Sales of Product A (by Region)

<u>Sales (£000's)</u>	
UK	2000
Continental Europe	800
Rest of the World	200

To calculate the segments (slices) of the pie:

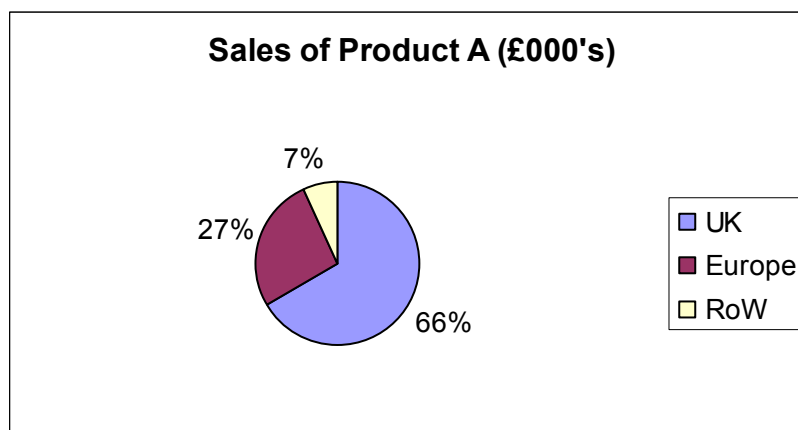
Total the values  $2000 + 800 + 200 = 3000$ .

Calculate each segment as a percentage of the total and multiply by  $360^\circ$

$$2000/3000 \times 360^\circ = 240^\circ$$

$$800/3000 \times 360^\circ = 96^\circ$$

$$200/3000 \times 360^\circ = 24^\circ$$



## **The Use of Technology**

The use of technology has not only speeded up calculations; it has dramatically enhanced Administrative Managers' ability to manipulate and present numerical data in a more meaningful manner. Spreadsheets, for example, facilitate a 'what-if' scenario capability which is useful, for example, in forecasting for future periods. Spreadsheets have also enhanced data presentation with graphical representations of data.

However, we are now largely dependent on calculators and computers for calculating figures and presenting data. Consequently, it can be argued that people's numerical abilities have diminished. It is easy to make an error when inputting data (e.g. press the wrong button on the calculator or alter a spreadsheet formula). It is therefore important to check whether an answer or a table of figures look reasonable.

## **The Internet**

The internet is a global network, connecting computers worldwide. The internet has provided organisations with countless possibilities for doing business at a local and global level, by allowing them to interact more effectively. The internet can be used to gather information and research, advertise and recruit staff, market products and services, transfer data, and facilitate transactions.

## **Section Review**

This section examined the importance of number skills and the ability of Administrative Managers to work effectively with numbers.

Numbers were shown in different formats – decimals, percentages and fractions. Three measures of the average were covered – mean, mode and median. Data was presented in a range of different formats – tables, charts, graphs and diagrams.

For further information and support, visit to the following websites:

<http://www.learnthenet.com>

<http://bbc.co.uk?skillswise/numbers/wholenumbers>

<http://www.vts.rdn.ac.uk/tutorial/numeracy>

## **Section Three: Business Communication**

Communication is a key role of Administrative Management, ensuring that instructions are given to staff and that staff are informed of organisational policies and activities. Communication also supports the decision making process, particularly information gathering and dissemination.

This aim of this section is to:

Identify the importance of business communication and to communicate effectively in the workplace.

### **Business Communication**

Communication is the interchange of ideas, facts, opinions and feelings between two or more people. A system of communication within an organisation links together individuals and functions to ensure that everyone understands their respective roles and what others do, and therefore can contribute collectively towards the corporate objectives.

## **Formal Communication**

The structure of an organisation establishes a network of communication channels since lines of authority and reporting responsibility both depend upon an effective communication route. Here management communicates plans and instructions downwards, while employees communicate comments and ideas upwards. This vertical chain of communication is supported by lateral communication flows across the organisation, which ensures coordination of activities of the various departments.

## **Informal Communication**

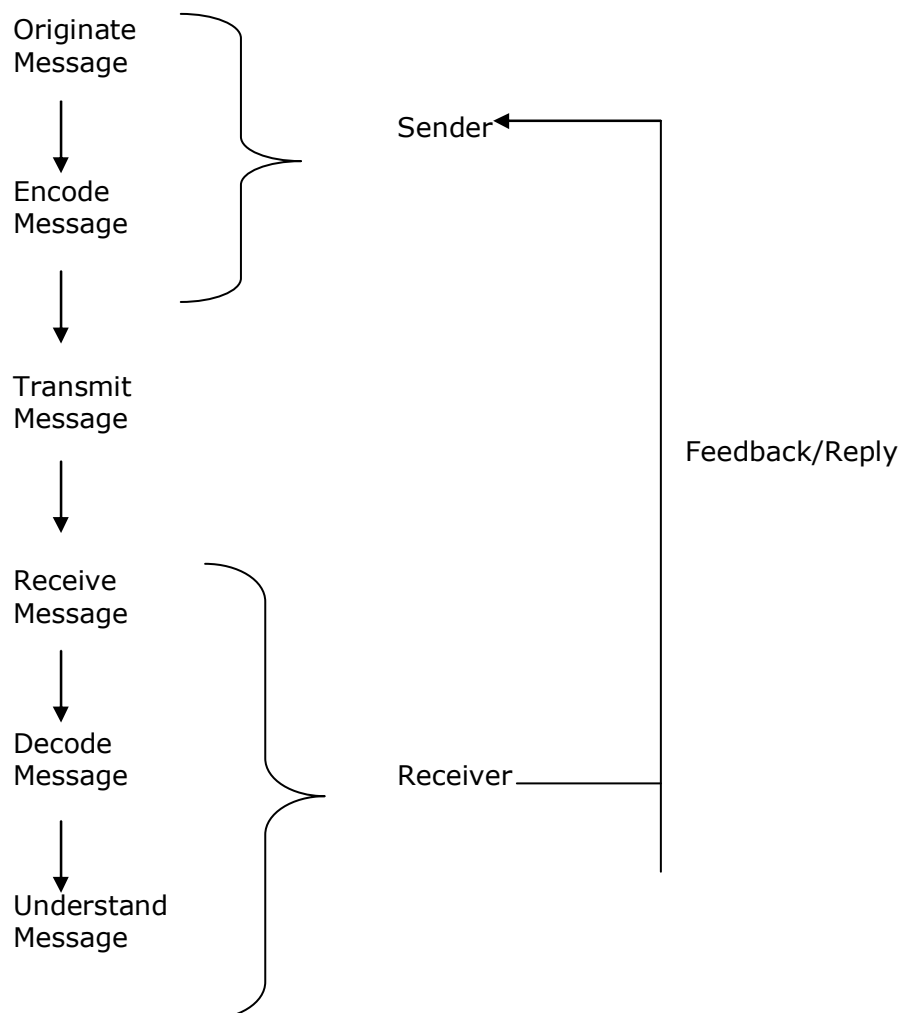
Operating alongside formal communication channels is the informal communication network, also referred to as the 'grapevine'. The grapevine is a collection of unofficial communication pathways established through interpersonal relationships, where information is exchanged casually and usually centres on rumour and gossip. The grapevine tends to flourish where there is a lack of formal information about a particular circumstance. Consequently, management can suppress the negative effects of the grapevine by formally issuing clear and comprehensive information.

## **The Communication Process**

In order to communicate effectively, individuals need to consider: what needs to be communicated, when it should be communicated (i.e. timing), to whom should the communication be directed and in what format should the communication be made.

The process of communication comprises four elements: The person sending the communication, the message to be communicated, the media or method by which the communication travels, and the person receiving the message. These four elements are detailed in the model of communication.

## The Model of Communication



***TASK – Consider a member of your team who works primarily from home. How could you ensure that individual is fully informed of what is happening in the organisation?***

## Types of Communication

### Written Communication

Written communication comprises mostly letters (particularly for external communication), memorandums and reports. Written communication should be less liable to misinterpretation and provides a permanent record for future reference. However, it is a slower method of communication and can still be subject to reader misinterpretation. Nonetheless, e-mails can overcome these issues since delivery is instantaneous and responses (to check understanding) can be received relatively quickly.

A report is a formal communication detailing findings of a particular matter following consideration or investigation.

## Typical Report Format

Title:  
For the Attention of:

Author:  
Date:

Terms of Reference  
Introduction  
Findings  
Conclusions  
Recommendations  
Appendices

When preparing a written communication, it is important to consider the target audience – the people reading it; because their understanding can be aided (or hindered) by the way the communication is written. Avoiding the use of jargon, technical language, slang and colloquialisms will help understanding. Similarly, use simple words and phrases and short and familiar words and give illustrations and examples. Furthermore, it is necessary to adopt an appropriate tone and style relevant to the nature and situation of the written communication (e.g. a letter responding to a customer complaint will need to be polite, helpful and clearly state what actions will be taken).

### Oral Communication

Oral communication is either: speaking face-to-face, or over the telephone. Oral communication lacks the permanence of written methods, but speed and immediate feedback are its advantages. Moreover, face-to-face conversations can be supported by non-verbal communication (i.e. body language, such as facial expressions, gestures and body posture) which helps to reinforce the message. Importantly, listening is a key to understanding, and having empathy with the person talking.

### ***TASK – Identify the skills needed by individuals when communicating face-to-face.***

TASK – Determine the best method to communicate the following:

- a) To notify staff of a social event.
- B) To respond to a customer's letter of complaint.
- c) To invite an individual for a job interview.
- d) To announce to staff a company re-organisation.
- e) To present a statistical report to senior management.

### Barriers to Communication

Despite the importance of effective communication for organisations, employees can suffer from barriers and breakdowns in communication. Typical barriers include:

- Lack of trust, fear, threat or emotion
- Status differences – between sender and receiver can lead to misinterpretation
- Use of jargon or technical language
- Overload of information
- Equipment failure
- Inappropriate channel of communication

- Lack of planning of message

***TASK – Consider why corporate communications fail to communicate effectively with employees***

**The Use of Technology in Business Communications**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has significantly affected organisational communication. E-mails are now a common means of communication in businesses and this has speeded up the communication process (e.g. minutes of meetings can be circulated more efficiently) and enhanced presentations (e.g. MS PowerPoint). Moreover, the use of the internet has facilitated improved interaction between organisations. However, communications problems can arise through information overload.

**Meetings**

A meeting is the coming together of two or more people for the purpose of face-to-face discussion. This process usually leads to the making of a decision or decisions. In organisations, it is common for informal meetings to arise suddenly in the course of working. However, formal meetings are usually held after individuals have been notified in advance, and have been given an agenda of the items to be discussed at the meeting.

Reasons for holding a meeting can include: to monitor progress, share views, discuss new ideas and possibly brainstorm, plan and make decisions, and to

disseminate findings. It is important that Administrative Managers only hold a meeting if something is going to happen as a result, and there is no better communication method to achieve this result.

***TASK – Consider why meetings can be ineffective.***

**Preparing for a Meeting**

Set the objectives of the meeting.

Select the participants.

Select an appropriate venue (consider size, location and meeting activities e.g. is there to be a presentation?)

Prepare the agenda – it is important that this is an objective based agenda. Indicate how long each item will take and who will be involved in each item.

Issue notice, proposed agenda and papers to participants in good time before the meeting.

**During the Meeting**

The Chair of a meeting needs to ensure that the meeting has been properly convened by notice and there is a quorum (i.e. the minimum number of people required to hold the meeting). The Chair has to allow people to adequately contribute to the discussion, but also progress the agenda in an effective manner to ensure all items are covered in the allocated time.

**After the Meeting**

The minutes (i.e. a summary record) of the meeting must be written up and circulated to all participants. The minutes need to relate to the objectives. The Chair should follow up progress after the meeting to ensure any action points are carried out.



## Section Review

This section identified the importance of business communication and determined the factors to communicate effectively in the workplace.

Communication can be classified as: formal, informal, written and oral.

The communication process comprises four elements.

Barriers to effective communication include: status differences, lack of trust, jargon, overload and equipment failure.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has significantly affected organisational communication.

A meeting is the coming together of two or more people for the purpose of face-to-face discussion.

For further information, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.bized.ac.uk>

<http://www.businessballs.com>

## Unit Two: Individuals within the Organisation

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### Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, students will be able to:

Identify individual differences in the workplace

Identify the role groups and teams play in achieving organisational tasks

Understand the importance of groups and teams

Work effectively within a team

Manage themselves and their personal development

### Section One – Working with Others

Administrative Managers are concerned with obtaining and using information and managing and working with people to achieve those aims. Consequently, factors that influence individuals at work, in particular performance and behaviour, will be of utmost importance. Administrative Managers need, therefore, to be aware of the aspects that influence individuals' behaviour and performance in order to get the best out of their staff.

This aim of this section is to:

Identify individual differences in the workplace

Identify the role groups and teams play in achieving organisational tasks

Understand the importance of groups and teams

Examine how to work effectively within a team

#### The Individual

For an individual, there are a number of factors that can influence work behaviour and performance:

- Perception – Every individual is different and will therefore interpret events or sensations through their own experiences and attitudes.

- Attitudes – An attitude is a state of mind and can be considered to be the inclination of an individual to interpret an idea, object, person, groups, event etc. in either a favourable or unfavourable way.
- Motivation – Motivation is concerned with the underlying reasons why people behave as they do. It is usually evidenced by an individual's willingness to increase effort in order to satisfy a need or objective. Classical theories of motivation (e.g. Maslow, Hertzberg) attempt to explain what motivates individuals at work and what actions managers can take to improve employees' motivation.
- Personality – This is the total of the various qualities (e.g. motivation, emotions, intelligence, social qualities) that are exhibited in an individual's behaviour.

For a manager, these factors are complex and difficult to anticipate. However, to be an effective Administrative Manager, it is important to recognise that different people want different things from work and therefore need to be treated as individuals.

***TASK- Consider the factors that motivate you at work.***

### **Managing Diversity in the Workplace**

As an organisation's workforce becomes more diverse (for example, in terms of race, sex, culture, religion, ethnicity etc), it is important that Administrative Managers create a culture in which all members of staff can flourish and develop. The introduction of relevant legislation has helped tackle the issue of unfair discrimination in the UK (refer to <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality>).

While individuals in organisations can work independently, for most of the time they will be working as part of a group.

### **Groups**

Schein defined a group as, "A number of people who interact with one another, are psychologically aware of one another, and perceive themselves as a group".

By bringing individuals with different skills or specialisms together, an organisation can potentially achieve greater performance than if individuals worked independently. Moreover, being part of a group satisfies an individual's need of belonging and provides support.

### **Formal and Informal Groups**

It is important to distinguish between formal and informal groups:

A Formal Group is one set up by management for a specific purpose, usually for a specific period of time (e.g. a quality improvement group). An Informal Group is formed by organisational members to satisfy their own needs for affiliation.

### **Group Behaviour**

One of the unique features of groups is the development of group norms. A group norm is a common attitude or belief among the members. Similarly, norms are standards of behaviour to which group members conform (e.g. working methods). Norms contribute to members' cohesion within a group and help to support cooperation and work unity. Consequently, group norms tend to influence an individual's behaviour and attitudes.

## Teams

A team is a group in which the contributions of individuals are deemed to be complementary. It is this focus on collaborative working that distinguishes a team

from a group. As a result, members of a team must relate to each other in order to achieve its stated objectives. Similarly, there is a more open and trusting relationship between individuals with the idea of developing a team spirit, helping to draw individuals together and form a shared commitment towards the objectives.

### ***TASK – Identify possible disadvantages of teams in the workplace.***

Tuckman and Jenson (1977) identified different stages through which most teams progress:

- Forming – Initially members attempt to identify acceptable behaviour, attitudes and modes of operation for the team.
- Storming – This is a period of conflict as members compete for selected roles.
- Norming – Establishes group norms (e.g. decision making, expected behaviour, roles etc).
- Performing – The team now operates effectively and efficiently. Each team member is aware of their role and contribution.
- Adjourning – this is the completion of the task and the break up of the team.

(Tuckman and Jenson, 1977, p. 419, refer to:  
<http://www.onepine.info/mgrp.htm>)

Belbin (1993) feels that the success of a group depends upon achieving a balance of skills and personality types among the individual members. A balanced team should comprise:

- Co-ordinator – good Chairperson, promotes good decision making.
- Shaper - gives direction to the process, committed to the task.
- Plant – creative, imaginative
- Monitor-Evaluator – considers all option, strategic in thinking
- Resource-Investigator – acts as a bridge between the team and the rest of the organisation.
- Implementer – a practical worker turning ideas into actions.
- Team Worker – concerned with interpersonal relationships in the team, diffusing conflict.
- Specialist – provides key skills and knowledge
- Completer Finisher – focuses on objectives and timescales.

(refer to: <http://www.belbin.com/belbin-team-roles.htm>)

***TASK – Consider a team you have been a member of. Can you identify Belbin’s roles within the team? Which of Belbin’s roles matches yourself?***

Given the rapid change in work environments, particularly regarding technological advancements, organisations are increasingly using project teams to solve

complex business issues (e.g. the development of a new IT system). The bringing together of individuals with diverse skills, and building them collectively into an effective team, is a key factor in the success of a project.

Team building can facilitate effective team working by removing obstacles to performance (e.g. conflict, low morale) and thereby increase individuals’ motivation and effectiveness. This can be supported by an open relationship between team members with trust and openness, cooperation and sound communication. However, the role of a leader is a key factor for team performance.

Adair feels that a team leader needs to address three aspects:

- The Task – ensure that the job is completed.
- The Group – ensure a high level of team spirit and morale and that the group performs effectively as a coherent whole.
- The Individual – awareness of individual needs within the team.

Successful team leadership is therefore dependent on achieving the three aspects. As an Administrative Manager it is important to understand and empathise with others – accept that people have different ways of viewing and reacting to their environment. Effective communication with the team helps support interaction.

***TASK – What difficulties do you think Administrative Managers could face in adopting Adair’s approach?***

**Conflict**

However, when people work together in teams, there is always the potential for conflict. This can arise from interpersonal issues, or from differences in possible courses of action. Yet, conflict within teams can be positive since it can stimulate discussion of an issue, increase the level of individual interest and involvement and perhaps release pent up emotions. Nonetheless, conflict can be negative since it can divert team members from dealing with important work issues and create tensions and feelings of dissatisfaction.

An Administrative Manager needs to avoid the harmful effects of conflict by prompt action. This can include clarifying goals and objectives, refocusing attention and developing interpersonal processes within the team - for example encouraging people to confront issues, or initiating appropriate human resource policies.

***TASK – A member of your team is showing distinct changes in behaviour. They have become unhelpful towards other team members and their attitude has become argumentative and confrontational. How could you deal with this situation?***

## Section Review

This section identified individual differences in the workplace and the role groups and teams play in achieving organisational tasks. The importance of groups and teams was examined, and also how to work effectively within a team.

- For an individual, there are a number of factors that can influence work behaviour and performance.
- A group is a number of people who interact with one another, are psychologically aware of one another, and perceive themselves as a group.
- A team is a group in which the contributions of individuals are deemed to be complementary.
- A team progresses through five different stages.
- The success of a group depends upon achieving a balance of skills and personality types among the individual members.
- Conflict in teams can arise from interpersonal issues, or from differences in possible courses of action.

For further information and support, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.bized.ac.uk>

<http://www.businessballs.com>

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality>

<http://www.belbin.com>

<http://www.managers.org.uk>

## Section Two: Managing Personal Development

Given the rapid environmental changes faced by organisations, particularly through technological developments, an Administrative Manager must be committed to a continuing process of personal development in order to keep up-to-date.

This aim of this section is to examine how Administrative Managers:

- Manage themselves and their personal development

### Career Planning

One of the key aspects of an individual's motivation at work is the matching of personal needs to the goals of the organisation. Here, individuals will have aims for their own career progression and for the development of their abilities and skills. These should be reconciled to the organisation's current and future requirements.

For an individual, the development of a career plan will help establish long term objectives and the formulation of a plan to achieve them. The career planning process comprises:

1. Personal Profile – strengths and weaknesses, expectations, attitudes.
2. Personal and Professional Goals – establish goals in the long term, but give some thought to shorter term achievements.
3. Environmental Analysis – Analyse factors that could affect career aspirations (e.g. labour market movements, organisational change etc).
4. Develop Career Alternatives.

5. Establish Career Objectives.
6. Develop Career Action Plan – this will include allowances for contingencies.
7. Implement Plan.
8. Monitor Progress against Plan.

***TASK – Undertake the above career planning process for yourself.***

### **Development and Self-Motivation**

In order for an individual to realise their full potential in the organisation, development activities will be important. Development supports the growth of an individual during their career, bringing together career goals and personal ambitions, while at the same time maximising job performance to meet organisational requirements.

However, development requires a certain degree of self-development and self-motivation towards learning activities. Some organisations insist on a learning contract formalising a commitment to development from both the company and the individual.

For an Administrative Manager, management development will be important in order to improve effectiveness and develop necessary skills. Development needs can be separated into:

- Knowledge – required to perform an Administrative Manager’s job in the organisation. This can be developed by undertaking **iam** qualifications.
- Planning, analytical and creative skills – These can be developed through simulation, case studies, projects or special assignments.
- Social skills – improving communication, motivation and management of staff and awareness of the needs of others can be developed through role-plays, team working, or outward bounds activities.

Sound management development requires time for an individual to study the techniques of being a good Administrative Manager and receiving support and

counseling about their achievements. Here, mentoring - where one person offers guidance and advice - can help support learning and development.

Individuals are now expected to engage in education and learning throughout their lives to maintain and progressively update skills and knowledge. For an Administrative Manager working in a dynamic organisational environment, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) becomes of paramount importance to contribute to organisational performance.

### **The Need for Continuing Professional Development of Administrative Managers**

The rate of change in market conditions and changing technology has resulted in a growing need for professionals to adapt by developing new skills (Kennie and Enemark, 1998). This is particularly evident for Administrative Managers, who are subject to technological changes affecting information management. Consequently, the rate of change coupled with the increasing need for Administrative Managers to possess a wider range of skills makes Continuing

Professional Development (CPD) essential to the survival of the individual in the workplace.

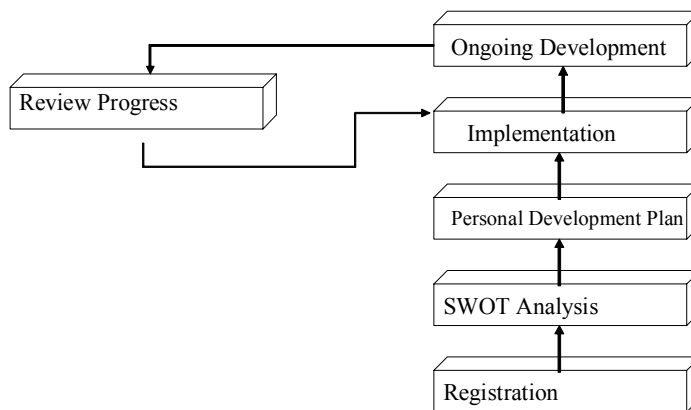
**What is CPD?**

The iam defines CPD as: "The process of constantly updating personal skills and knowledge" (<http://www.instam.org>). This definition infers the necessity of CPD to update professional skills and support best practice in the occupational discipline.

**The Role of the Professional Body**

The iam has already established a structured CPD scheme, which follows a straightforward process for members to record CPD activities. Upon registration with the Institute, a self-SWOT is conducted facilitating reflection upon performance in the current job plus any anticipated changes and consideration of long-term career aspirations. This leads onto the production of a personal development plan, whereby planned development activities can be identified with appropriate time-scales. Development activities can then be undertaken and then reflected upon or assessed in conjunction with the development plan. The benefit of maintaining a personal learning log at this stage is to be able to step back from the rigours of working life and learning endeavours and reflect upon practices and experiences.

**The IAM CPD Scheme**



**Implications for the Individual**

In an occupational area so directly affected by organisational and technological change, CPD becomes critical for an Administrative Manager. A record of CPD activities is therefore important for individuals to provide employers with evidence of maintaining administrative management skills, and can support assessment against higher standards when seeking promotion. While few employers are overtly specifying a CPD record in job advertisements, a structured logbook of development activities registered with a professional association must enhance employability prospects.

**TASK – Consider the benefits to an individual and to an organisation of CPD.**

The challenge to Administrative Managers is to raise their awareness of what constitutes CPD activities. While in-house training and college courses, or similar,



are obvious contributors to personal development, Administrative Managers will be actively involved in improvements projects, such as IT systems development or quality improvements teams, and these provide excellent opportunities for extending professional skills. Moreover, such activities can complement workplace development schemes, such as organisational appraisals. Here, the relationship between CPD and organisational performance will become apparent and this will be important to businesses to enable them to cope with external change more effectively.

It is therefore important that Administrative Managers use the Institute's framework to capture all activities that can contribute to their CPD portfolio. This will help formulate career development and, more importantly, ensure their long-term survival.

### **Work-Life Balance**

It is important for Administrative Managers to have a balance between the hours worked and life outside of work. The Work Foundation refers to work-life balance as: "about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work"

(visit <http://www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk/work/definition.htm>). By maintaining a work-life balance, individuals incur lower absenteeism from work and have increased productivity.

### **Section Review**

This section examined how Administrative Managers manage themselves and their personal development.

- The development of a career plan will help Administrative Managers establish long term objectives and the formulation of a plan to achieve them.
- The career planning process comprises eight stages.
- CPD is defined as the process of constantly updating personal skills and knowledge.
- It is important for Administrative Managers to have a balance between the hours worked and life outside of work.

For further information and support, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk>

<http://www.support4learning.org.uk>

## **Unit Three: Organisational Skills**

### **Learning Outcomes**

- On completion of this unit, students should be able to:
- Identify problems and act effectively when solving problems
- Understand the decision making process
- Use problem solving and decision making techniques
- Employ a range of support skills in the organisation



- Section One: Solving Problems and Decision Making

Administrative Managers are faced with decisions all of the time; in fact to be a manager is to make decisions. Some of these decisions will be made automatically, while others will require careful deliberation.

The aim of this section is to:

- Identify problems and act effectively when solving problems
- Understand the decision making process
- Use problem solving and decision making techniques

### **Problem Solving and Decision Making**

While problem solving and decision making are part of the same continuum, it is necessary to distinguish between them: A problem is something that is wrong (e.g. the manufacture of faulty components). A decision then attempts to resolve that problem. A decision is therefore the conscious act of exercising choice amongst a number of options.

Experienced Administrative Managers may make decisions based on experience or gut-feeling. Others could adopt a trial and error approach, while others will adhere to established procedures. A programmed decision is applied to structured or routine problems. Non-programmed decisions are used for unstructured, unique, poorly defined situations.

#### ***TASK – Think of examples of programmed and non-programmed decisions.***

It is felt that managers should act rationally when making decisions. However, complete rationality in a decision is not easy, since it is difficult to recognise all alternatives, and there will probably be uncertainties in the situation. Moreover, emotions can cloud judgement. As a result, most managers usually select a course of action that is satisfactory under the circumstances.

#### ***TASK – How can an Administrative Manager make best use of their experience when making decisions?***

Decisions will also depend on level within the organisational structure. Senior management will be concerned with long-term, unstructured, strategic decisions (e.g. new operating plant) while at an operational level, managers will be more concerned with day-to-day decisions (e.g. re-allocation of workers to tasks). Operational decisions will be highly structured, with well developed routines and procedures.

### **The Decision Making Process**

1. Recognise the need for action (i.e. a problem arises requiring a decision).
2. Define the problem. This an important stage since symptoms might be mistaken for the problem itself, yet there could be a more important underlying problem.
3. Analyse the problem. This stage is concerned with questions of who must make the decision, who needs to be consulted and who must be informed.
4. Define the objectives.

5. Develop alternative solutions. There is rarely one 'right' answer to a management problem. Nonetheless, all possible courses of action need to be considered, and their likely consequences.
6. Check the consequences and decide on the best solution. Here, the people affected by the alternative decisions need to be consulted. Consideration needs to be made for timing and priorities, and effect on future decisions.
7. Convert the decision into action. Communicate the decision to those who need to know, and check their understanding.
8. Check the results of the decision. This is to ascertain whether the problem has been solved, or whether further action is required.

***TASK – Apply the above framework to a decision you have been, or are faced with.***

### **Barriers to Effective Decision Making**

- Lack of authority.
- Lack of ability on the part of the decision maker.
- Confusion.
- Fear of the consequences.
- Preferred option not available.

### **Group Decision Making**

Decision making within an organisation can be carried out by a group (known as a committee). These are usually formed formally, with a specific task (e.g. project steering group, or health and safety committee). The advantages of using a group to make decisions are that more ideas can be generated, the group interaction can lead to improved communication and motivation, and greater representation from around the organisation can be achieved.

However, groups are notorious for being less effective, mainly due to the time and cost involved. They can also abuse their power if not controlled. Consequently, the organisation needs to establish rules and procedures for the working of groups. Furthermore, the role of the Chairperson in managing the group is also important, especially to ensure objectives are reached within allotted timescales.

### **Decision Making Tools and Techniques**

There are several tools and techniques available to Administrative Managers to support the decision making process:

#### **Cost Benefit Analysis**

Any decision should be made on the basis of the costs and benefits to the organisation associated with each option or course of action. Here monetary values are assigned to the costs and benefits of each alternative to allow comparison to take place.

#### **Discounted Cash Flow**

This is a method of appraising investments based on the notion that the value of a specific sum of money depends on precisely when it is received. This is used to

calculate the value of money in the future to determine the most profitable investment now, from several possible alternatives.

### **Simulation**

This consists of setting up a model and applying various inputs and assessing the results achieved. This will give Administrative Managers a guide for decision making purposes, rather than use trial and error. In most instances, a mathematical model reproducing the problem can be set up on a computer and inputs varied to examine the corresponding outputs.

***TASK – Think of a work example that would benefit from using simulation.***

### **Network Analysis**

This is used for planning and controlling complex projects by using a network diagram to show the relationships of activities, activity times and the sequence of activities.

### **Expected Value**

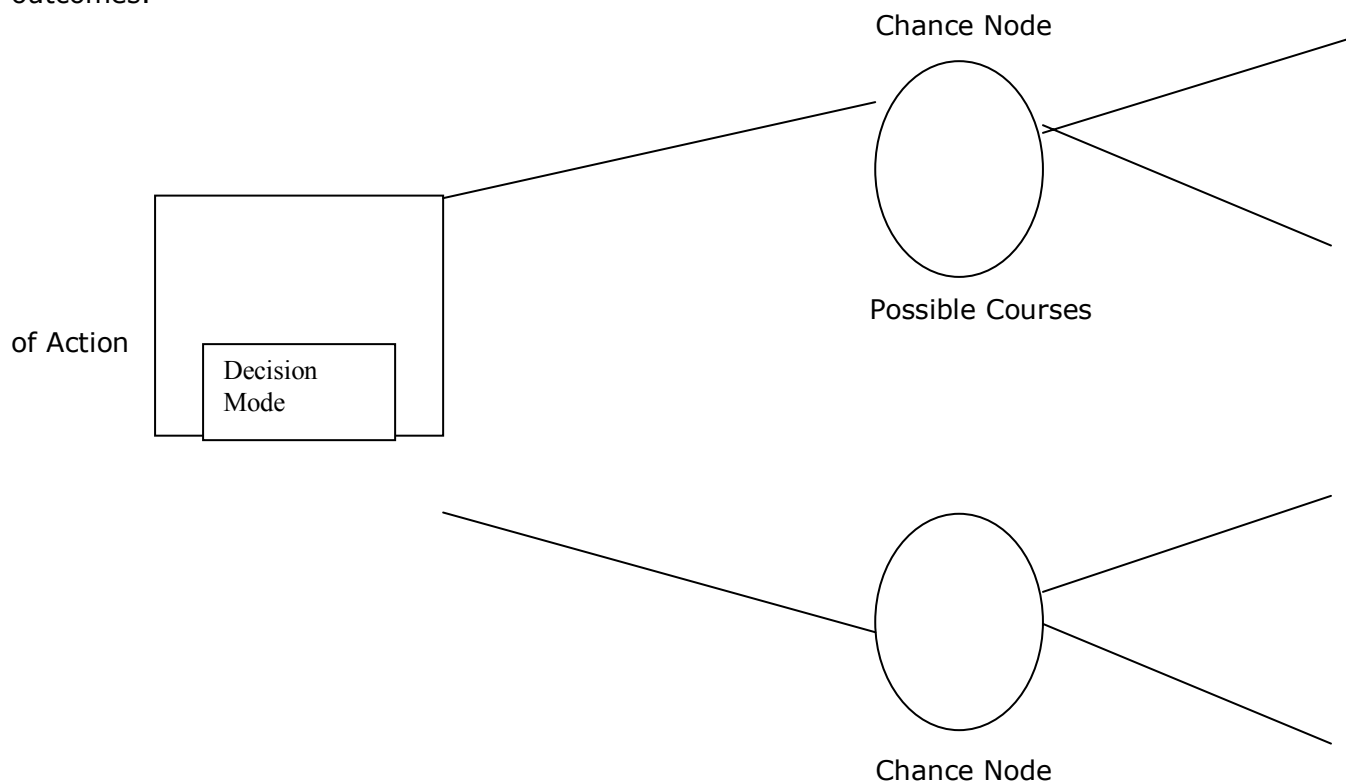
By attaching a probability factor (the likelihood of something occurring) to an outcome and a corresponding likely monetary value (e.g. profit), an expected value can then be calculated. Expected value is, therefore, the total of the probability or likelihood of each outcome multiplied by the value of each outcome.

E.g. There is an 80% (i.e. 0.8) chance of the organisation making £200,000 profit on a particular project. The expected value is  $£200000 \times 0.8 = 160000$ . This can then be compared to the expected values of other projects.

The benefit of expected value is that it takes account numerically of all the variables attached to a particular decision.

## Decision Trees

Most decisions do not involve single events, but are interrelated, each having a knock-on effect to another. Decision trees are diagrams which represent decision problems, and show the sequence of interrelated decisions and expected outcomes.



***TASK – Draw a decision tree for a decision you have been, or are faced with.***

### Section Review

This section identified problems faced by Administrative Managers and examined the decision making process.

- A problem is something that is wrong (e.g. the manufacture of faulty components). A decision then attempts to resolve that problem.
- The decision making process comprises eight stages.
- There are several tools and techniques available to Administrative Managers to support the decision making process: cost-benefit analysis, simulation, discounted cash flow, investment appraisal, decision trees and expected value.

For further information and support, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.managers.org.uk>

<http://www.mindtools.com>

<http://www.bized.ac.uk>

## Section Two: Support Skills

Administrative Managers have a pivotal role in ensuring the right information is available to the right person, at the right time. Consequently, they are constantly under pressure to meet deadlines, organise workloads and decide on priorities.

Without applying appropriate skills to support these activities, an Administrative Manager can soon become overwhelmed by the workload.

The aim of this section is to enable an Administrative Manager to:

- Employ a range of support skills in the organisation

### **Time Management**

Since time is a precious resource, Administrative Managers should learn to plan and organise their time effectively. However, time is easily squandered with non-productive and wasted time a key issue for most.

Typical Time Wasters:

- Interruptions from colleagues.
- Prolonged, unnecessary or habitual meetings.
- Lack of work priorities.
- Dealing with unnecessary memos, e-mails and paperwork.
- Inability to say "no".
- Lack of self-discipline.
- Travelling between jobs or sites.
- Working in a disorganised way.

However, a person's attributes or ability can influence the effect of time-wasters. For example, a person who is assertive and can say no to further work, or someone who is tidy and organised, will be able to manage their time more effectively.

### ***TASK – Identify actions to improve your own time management.***

#### **Improving the Use of Time**

- Plan – analyse the tasks and establish priorities.
- Set clear goals – target setting helps focus on work objectives.
- Manage tasks effectively – overcome procrastination.
- Delegate tasks to staff.
- Negotiate with colleagues regarding deadlines/priorities.
- Develop supporting skills (e.g. reading skills)
- Re-consider the open door policy and set time aside to not be disturbed.
- Examine location of facilities (e.g. distant photocopier).
- The Administrative Manager should also be aware of creative approaches to time management (e.g. flexible working practices, home-working).

#### **Assertiveness**

Assertiveness can contribute to Administrative Managers' better use of time by enabling them to deal more effectively with interruptions.

Assertiveness is the capacity of an individual to express ideas, opinions or feelings more openly without violating the rights of others. It implies communicating one's own thoughts and wishes in a clear, direct but non-threatening manner.

Assertiveness means taking responsibility for one's own actions and includes the right to say "no". Assertive behaviour is therefore based on rights and responsibilities (e.g. the right of individuals to consider their own needs). Being assertive can therefore raise self-esteem and confidence and help diffuse difficult situations.

***TASK – What actions could you take as an Administrative Manager, to help a non-assertive team member to gain more self-confidence?***

### **Elements of Assertiveness**

- Use of clear and simple language.
- A clear and steady tone of voice – not shouting or threatening.
- Positive body language – head held up, arms open, no fidgeting.
- Avoid aggressive behaviour.

Confidence is an important contributor to assertiveness, since people can accept challenges, and deal with life more realistically when feeling more positive. Assertive behaviour will help individuals cope with stress.

### **Stress Management**

Many factors contribute to an individual's stress at work. These can include:

- The job – too much work, working to deadlines, fear of making mistakes, working conditions etc. There is a tendency for individuals to work long hours and take on too much work.
- Role ambiguity - inadequate information about the role or scope of responsibility.
- Role conflict – conflict arising from conflicting job demands or loyalties
- Relationships - this can arise from relationships with colleagues, line manager or subordinates.
- Organisation structure – poor communications, no sense of collegiality.
- Poor career prospects.

***TASK – Consider how both organisations and individuals themselves can reduce workplace stress.***

It is important that individuals manage stress effectively; otherwise adverse physical and psychological reactions can occur (e.g. stress, ill-health, job dissatisfaction, apathy and absenteeism) (<http://www.hse.gov.uk>). Actions can include time management techniques, assertiveness training, allowing time to relax during the working day, taking allotted breaks, resolving any job issues (e.g. clarify role and responsibilities), and reviewing career plan.

### **Other Support Strategies**

Reading of documents and articles is important to an Administrative Manager in order to keep informed and up-to-date with current events. However, given the large volume of communications handled, it is vital to develop effective reading skills. Here, the process of initially scanning the contents should reveal elements of importance in the main document. These elements can then be scanned, rather than fully read, picking up key words and phrases. Similarly, keeping records of key information and notes from meetings in a structured format should aid future reference.

***TASK – Can you think of any other coping strategies?***

### **Section Review**

This section examined a range of support skills available to Administrative Managers.

- Time is easily squandered at work, with non-productive and wasted time a key issue for most Administrative Managers.
- Assertiveness is the capacity of an individual to express ideas, opinions or feelings more openly without violating the rights of others.
- It is important that individuals manage stress effectively; otherwise adverse physical and psychological reactions can occur.

For further information and support, visit the following websites:

<http://www.instam.org>

<http://www.managers.org.uk>

<http://www.isma.org.uk>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

## **Conclusion**

Now you have completed reading this study manual, you will be familiar with much of the language that is used to describe and analyse organisations, and how they relate to administration and administrative management.

The tasks identified in the text, should enable you to apply your knowledge and to reflect on how things are done in organisations. You can also reflect on what they mean to you personally, and how you could contribute to supporting an organisation's goals. These reflections can be recorded in your learning log, together with learning you have achieved, adding your own thoughts and feelings in a constructively critical way.