

Physical Aspects of Files

When typing index tabs and labels, use the briefest possible designations. Abbreviate whenever possible, omitting punctuation marks whenever possible. Index tabs should be legible only at normal reading distance. Guide labels should be legible at two or three feet. File drawer labels should be legible at six to ten feet.

All of the labels and tabs should be uniform and present an air of efficiency. There is a temptation to put things together rather hurriedly in the early stages of a business. Some files will have neatly typed labels, while some created in a hurry will be penciled or written in ink. Some files will not be labeled because "anyone can see at a glance what they are." Soon a rather ragged looking file drawer begins to show results. Misfiles and lost files become a little too routine and disharmony is created needlessly.

Do not always buy the least expensive equipment or file folders. Lightweight file folders have a tendency to curl under and slide under other files, becoming lost for all practical purposes. File guides come loose and are lost, or snag fingers and documents if they are metal rimmed. Not an important point, but just the source of more disharmony.

It is highly recommended that a good filing equipment vendor be selected and consulted. He can advise you a great deal on proper filing systems and equipment. Almost any experienced vendor is required to become knowledgeable about filing systems in order to attract your goodwill. It is a little trite to remind you that his time is also valuable. There is something a little dishonest about milking a vendor of his information and then buying from your "in-law" to save a few dollars.

Working with the same supplier can assure you of standard filing equipment over the years rather than the weird assortments you see in some offices that indicate that the cheapest available equipment was purchased each year with no regard to continuity.

One of the poorest investments you can make is to buy cheap file cabinets. They are fine sitting in a showroom, but once they are weighted with records, things start to happen. If your firm grows with resultant moves to larger quarters, the file cabinets deteriorate quickly. The appearance they present in your office is very important. Once again, it is good to deal with one supplier to maintain a uniform appearance throughout your offices, especially in regard to color and file cabinet height. Not all four-drawer file cabinets are the same height.

Serious thought and consultation with vendors should occur to consider the feasibility of five-drawer file cabinets or open-shelf