MEMORANDUM

TO: Penny

FROM: Hope Alwine, Kelly Beckham, Hannah Hemphill, Morgan Hayes, and Kimberly Seeger

DATE: April 17, 2017

SUBJECT: Recommendations for better working relationships and environment

We understand that you are experiencing difficulties at work and are concerned about your relationship with your boss and your co-workers. It seems that you are having a hard time communicating with others and accomplishing your work because of all the new technology, demands of helping and training co-workers, and the lack of time you have to focus solely on your work. We realize that you are stressed and could use some friendly advice including tips on getting organized, taking care of your work and personal needs, and improving communication with others in order to create a fluid and harmonious work environment. Also, remember that you are in a field of constant change and you’ll never know everything there is to know -- learning is a major part of the library and information studies field, so seeking improvement of oneself and the library itself is always going to be part of your job.

**Improving Communication**

Gordon points out that there is increased performance, satisfaction, and end result when groups have strong interpersonal relations. This creates group cohesion, and the more the members connect and work together the better they perform (Gordon, 1999, p. 153). When individuals come together to create something new, such as a new idea or concept, it requires good communication, collaboration and sometimes negotiation.

* Group cohesion and team building
  + Get to know your co-workers and how they learn best. Team building exercises will help you work together and become accustomed to others. Developing good working relationships benefits the work environment as a whole.
  + Use the Strengthfinder 2.0 program to find your strengths and strategies that will help you change the way you look at yourself and others (Rath, 2007).
  + Informal gatherings with your co-workers are a relationship building opportunity. Try organizing a monthly breakfast, a holiday party, or attend a community event together.
* Collaboration concerns
  + Talk to Sheldon about scheduling, responsibilities, training, and helping with technology. Let him know that you want to be more involved with selecting the technology for the company, instead of just telling people how it works!
  + Use Doodle polls and Google calendar to help with scheduling of training sessions and to set up appointments with coworkers.
  + Be sure to listen to your coworkers and register their feedback, use it in a constructive manner on how to proceed in the future.

**Organization and Time Management**

*Organization* - You will start your day in a positive way if you organize and prioritize things. It is very satisfying seeing items crossed off a “To Do List”, and you can move up the ones that you didn’t accomplish. This will give you a clear idea of the tasks you have accomplished.

* First things first, organizing your desk can greatly improve productivity and help maintain focus on a single task (Cochran, 1992, p. 21).
* Another way to help keep yourself on track when completing a task is to utilize the Pomodoro technique, as designed by Francesco Cirillo, which instructs you to focus on one task for a certain amount of time (for example, 45 minutes) and then take a short break before completing another (Cirillo, 2011).
* Learn to prioritize your tasks, using methods like the A, B, C Priority Ranking (Alan Lakein; from Cochran, 1992). For example, A is very urgent and important, B is important but not as urgent, etc. *Remember* that just because something is urgent does not make it important, while many important tasks are not considered urgent. Post John Cleese’s “Is it Urgent? Sign on your door (Hersberger, Time Management Lecture, 2017).

*If these techniques do not appeal to you, there are many other methods of organization and task management – explore which technique works best for you*.

*Time Management* - Structuring your day also includes designating (and sometimes limiting) the amount of time spent on each task.

* Ask, *“What is the best use of my time right now?” (Alan Lakein)* Prioritize and delegate some responsibilities! Utilize your resources such as student workers to help delegate some of the menial tasks so it can free up some of your time.
* Establish boundaries. You need time to get your work done. “All librarians need some time each day for quiet, concentrated work, *scheduled like any other appointment*.” (Cochran, 1992, p. 25) You need to “schedule” time for yourself and for helping others. “In addition to reserving time for others in meetings and other commitments, an effective work and appointment schedule will include time reserved for commitments to yourself. A good time manager schedules the work she wants to accomplish each day as a commitment to herself” (Cochran, 1992, p. 24).
  + Let people know you need to not be interrupted and give them a time to come back later so you can have some quiet, productive time. We suggest a sign, “Please, do not disturb until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_” or have them schedule an appointment with you.

**Individual Behavior**

It is important to grow as a person for both yourself and to nurture lasting relationships with other people. Organizational behavior is an interesting area of study pertaining to how an individual, group, and organization work together in order to create a finely tuned machine, producing quality products with efficiency. By exploring individual and group behaviors, it will put things into perspective for yourself as well as grant insights into other’s behavior.

* Impression Management
  + Understand how you are perceived by others. “A high degree of self-awareness contributes to establishing and maintaining good relationships with others (Bolton 2009).
  + Managing how we are perceived is very important. “Nonverbal signals can also deliver unintended messages.” (Gordon 7, p. 191) Rolling your eyes and muttering during meetings, can unintentionally give the message that you are annoyed and don’t want to be there.
* Personal Needs:
  + Take time for breakfast. It is the most important meal of the day! Make sure that you eat a healthy meal that will get you ready for the day. Make time for lunch - Keep lunch time for eating, not for training sessions. Maybe go for a walk outside or talk to a friend. We understand the training sessions are important, but you can make time for that during the work day.
* Professional Development:
  + Professional development through professional organizations or programs offered by the University are a great way to obtain experience, learn valuable new information, and create a great network of colleagues for guidance and advice. Attend workshops and webinars. It is important to be constantly learning how to better our management and teaching abilities.

Suggested Readings/References:

Bolton, R., & Bolton, D. G. (2009). *People Styles at Work...and beyond: Making bad relationships good and good relationships better* (2nd ed.). New York: American Management Association.

Cirillo, F. (2011). What is the Pomodoro Technique? Retrieved from https://cirillocompany.de/pages/pomodoro-technique

Cochran, W. J. (1992). *Time management handbook for librarians* (Greenwood Library Management collection). New York: Greenwood Press.

Gordon, J. R. (1999). *Organizational behavior: A diagnostic approach* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rath, T. (2007). *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.

We are here to help you and will be glad to discuss these recommendations with you further upon your request.

All the best,

Hope, Kelly, Hannah, Morgan, and Kimberly