Introduction

This Needs Assessment Report and Recommendations is provided to the ████████████████████████████ as a critical step towards increasing productivity and improving processes and workflow. The recommendations provided are the culmination of several reliable methodologies performed by consultants Pamela Mims and Allison Gibson, including:

(1) one-on-one in-person interviews with staff;
(2) direct observation and visual inspection;
(3) examination and research of materials, files and documents; and
(4) comparison of processes and procedures utilized by the ████ ████████████ to standards used in law offices across the country.

The needs assessment examines the root causes of deficiencies related to people and behaviors, processes, technology, and information, and provides recommendations and guidelines for implementation based upon the consultants' expertise in law office systemization and industry standards. These recommendations can serve as a roadmap for both immediate and long-term process improvement.

Summary of Findings

People

This area is the one in which most improvement is needed to move the needle on productivity.

Individuals on the ████████████ staff bring experience, intelligence, competence and other strengths valuable to the mission, however, the group is operating as a dysfunctional team and their productivity is hampered. Among the challenges are long-standing substantive and interpersonal conflicts which have impaired the staff's ability to collaborate and communicate optimally; as well as a bureaucratic court system, which utilizes older methods for communicating court dates and assigning cases.

The staff appear to be experiencing lowered morale or are at least dispirited about the work environment and the physical office space. This impacts productivity in several ways for different individuals on staff. For some, this could be lax adherence to scheduled work hours; while for others, it may manifest as complacency.

TEAM BUILDING & COMMUNICATION

- Staff does not perform optimally as a team.
- The office is rife with miscommunications; staff frequently avoid communicating altogether

Recommendation

Team Building

Our interviews with individual staff members revealed a highly charged, almost political environment with long-standing disagreements, where both substantive and emotional conflicts are the norm. While most were initially careful with their answers, staff eventually revealed fear of reprisals for speaking openly about the work environment where processes and accomplishment of routine work tasks are hampered by interpersonal conflict and disagreements about office procedures. Staff expressed dissatisfaction and resentments, as well as complacent acceptance of unsatisfactory 'norms.'

Although the staff is working at a productivity deficient when it comes to teamwork, we found most to be receptive to change and a desire to work in an environment without animosity, and where they feel safe, valued, and challenged and are working successfully towards a common goal.

As such, we strongly recommend a continuous team building plan be implemented immediately. Such a plan should be integrated with regular work activities and planning sessions, as well as take place outside of work hours at scheduled intervals.

While the staff could benefit from all aspects of team building, we recommend the following best practices (followed by specific actions) as top priority, keeping in mind that teamwork and team building are both a science and art. *Additional resources have been provided in the Appendix – Tab #5.*

1. Be Aware of How You Work & Be Willing to Course-Correct