PROPOSAL

to

Rural Telephone, Inc.
PO Box 339
2418 Vine Street
Hays, KS 67601

Submitted by

Western Technology Consulting Group

Title:     Survey of Economic Impact – Best Practices for Measuring Costs and Benefits of Business Operation and Administration

Period of Performance:   February 22, 2005 – May 6, 2005

Date Submitted:               February 15, 2005

Principal Investigators:    Robert Cummins
Robert Jay
Bryan Metz
Shaun Rodriguez
This is a proposal to provide survey services to Rural Telephone, Inc. for the purpose of conducting a community survey of consumer attitudes and needs. The survey will be used to yield results concerning the growing demand created by new markets available in wireless communication and the best ways to meet those demands in customer service. This survey of customer service will reveal the needs of new customers in western Kansas as well as recommendations on how to meet those needs. It will reveal costs and benefits for administration of the future customer support center that will be implemented in western Kansas in the coming months.

The Western Technology Consulting Group is uniquely qualified to execute the scope of this proposal due to our unique combination of experience and our deep roots to this community and educational institutions that lay inside it.

**EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY**

The Western Technology Consulting Group has a combined ten years of experience in dealing with business plans and proposals as well as over five years of experience working with customer support centers.

The Western Technology Consulting Group has a combined thirteen years training in the telecommunications industry or working professionally in this industry.

**STUDY OBJECTIVES**

With the new cellular communications network being placed in western Kansas, wireless markets are being expanded. As these markets change, new opportunities arise and new market demand is created. Thousands of people living in western Kansas instantly become potential customers each with unique wants and needs.

In order to construct a method of management principles applicable to customer service operations, WTCG will determine the most cost effective ways to meet the demands of the community through primary and secondary research, surveys, and focus groups. Surveys and focus groups will be targeted towards the FHSU Students and the local community and rural call centers.

The combined research will show cellular customer needs and desires, as well as the needs of the service. This study will show cost benefit analysis of each employee and every hour billed. This study will show past trends of other customer support centers and the differences between the methods that have been employed as alternatives to our recommendations and the cost benefits of both.
In addition the study will:

• Determine the most cost effective ways to satisfy the community in terms of quality and service.
• Answer questions about the needs of the community in terms of customer usage, times that customers use their service the most, and what they use their service for.
• Determine the general attitudes of the community as relates to customer support centers.
• Outline the differences between call centers in rural and urban markets.

With this baseline data Rural Telephone, Inc. will be able to develop a marketing initiative that will be able to:

1. Implement a customer support center to handle incoming calls from new and existing customers of their wireless service.
2. Justify the implementation of said support center with data and provide proper support to the community for the new services.

PROJECT PROCEDURES

After an extensive literature review, Western Technology consulting will design and pretest survey instruments that will achieve the stated objectives. The group proposes to develop two separate surveys and a focus group with the intent of providing accurate statistical data to Rural Telephone Company in development of a management scheme for a future customer call center.

The first survey will provide Western Technology a statistical point of view in order to accurately depict consumer needs and wants. The survey will be governed through a group administered questionnaire. A set of samples will be collected to respond to a structured sequence of questions concerned with the customer experience within a customer call center.

The second survey will supply Western Technology information regarding already established rural customer call centers. The objective of this survey is to acquire a standardization of rural call center operation. The survey will be governed through surveying rural call centers via e-mail. The survey will be directed to various rural call centers.

The focus group will offer Western Technology a more detailed and personal way of recognizing consumer’s needs for developing a firm management system. Western Technology will collect a group of diverse samples to represent the generalization of the Fort Hays State University community.

After the conducted research, Western Technology will generate a detailed report on the results of the concepts discussed above. The report will distinguish any trends that were significant in result of our research. A presentation of our research will be displayed through a PowerPoint presentation to Rural Telephone Inc.’s Board of Directors.
PROJECT WORK PLAN

Task 1: Literature Research

Western Technology will conduct research of several different survey formats appropriate to Rural Telephone, Inc., and applicable to the projected surveys, which exhibit our proposed study objectives.

Time line: One Week

Task 2: Survey Design and Pre-Test

Based on the survey objectives and previous studies, Western Technology will design three draft surveys and submit them to Rural Telephone, Inc., and its representatives for comments. The three surveys will comprise of one Group Administered Questionnaire, one Call Center Questionnaire, and one Focus Group based on the Fort Hays State University community. Based on the comments, WTCG will revise the surveys and submit a final draft to Rural Telephone, Inc., for approval. Upon approval by Rural Telephone, Inc., WTCG will conduct a series of pre-tests of all designed surveys.

WTCG will conduct one test per survey. The first test will consist of Group Administered Questionnaire on a local group of the FHSU community. The second test will consist of a Call Center Questionnaire on a local call center. The final test will consist of a Focus Group based on a local group of the FHSU community. These three test surveys will be conducted to check the validity of the survey items.

After the pre-test, WTCG will move into the survey production phase, which will consist of generating all the essential elements necessary to meeting survey objectives and facilitating each survey.

Time line: Two Weeks

Task 3: Sampling Procedures

Each survey will utilize a separate set of sampling procedures. Prior to conducting sampling for the Group Administered survey and the Focus Group survey, Western Technology will need to obtain formal permission from the necessary personnel within the colleges and administrators from Fort Hays State University.

The Group Administered Questionnaire will utilize a survey booklet as a means of study for several different students from various colleges within the Fort Hays State University community (approximately 120 students). The Call Center Questionnaire will be sent out through email from the compiled list of call centers obtained from earlier research (approximately 80 individuals). The Focus Group will conduct at least three sessions in a
town hall type forum, focusing on a limited number of questions considered central to the theme of the survey (approximately 45 students). All surveys will be conducted in an overlapping manner of each other; this is to ensure no confusion with the set timeline.

**SURVEY 1 – Group Administered Questionnaire**

*Task 1:*

The Group Administered Questionnaire survey will include a survey booklet and numerous pencils, in order to facilitate this analysis. With the objective of adding diversity to the study of the student body, the survey will consist of at least three of the five colleges within Fort Hays State University academia. WTCG will conduct at least two surveys per college. The survey will be conducted, with permission of the college, at the beginning of the selected classes’ periods. The selected participants will be briefed of preliminary objectives of the survey, followed up by the administering of the study.

**Time line: Two weeks**

**SURVEY 2 – Call Center Questionnaire**

*Task 1:*

The second survey will include a sequence of questions compiled and developed in an electronic format. The survey will be distributed through e-mail to 10 various rural call centers. The survey will be directed to managers, trainers, and other representatives. The participants will be given two weeks to respond to the questionnaire through e-mail. WTCG will evaluate the number of responses and compare them to our expected results. WTCG will determine if our responses will prove to be effective to our research. If necessary, WTCG will conduct phone interviews with intended participants in order to satisfy survey requirements.

**Time line: Three weeks**

**SURVEY 3 – Focus Group**

*Task 1:*

The Focus Group survey will be conducted on the FHSU campus. At this time WTCG will invite FHSU students to participate in this group where 5 pre-selected questions will be discussed one at a time. This will allow the conductor to begin discussions on a given question and accept feedback in the form of discussion from the group. These sessions will be recorded in order to ease the process of measuring results as well as to create a multi-media presentation allowing our client to measure the attitudes first hand of their new customers.

**Time line: One Month**
Task 7: Data Analysis and Draft Report

After cleaning and validating the data, the principal investigators will analyze the data and write a draft report. Included in the report will be the findings as they relate to study’s major objectives. In addition, any significant multi-variate relationships observed in the analysis process, or which the literature suggests should exist, will be reported. A draft report will be delivered to Rural Telephone, Inc., for review and comment. The principal investigators will then revise the report based on the comments provided.

Time line: Two Weeks

Task 8: Final Report

Western Technology will deliver a disk copy and video (if applicable) hard copy of the report to Rural Telephone, Inc. The report will include associated Gantt Charts by means of an appendix within the hard copy to give a distinct visual perspective of the various ranges of frequencies for each question in the administered surveys.

Task 9: Survey Presentations and Posting the Survey on the Web

After the final draft has been delivered, the principal investigators will be available for at least two PowerPoint presentations to groups selected by Rural Telephone. In addition, the Western Technology will post the survey report on the WTCG web page with hot-links to Rural Telephone, Inc.’s web page.

PERSONNEL

Western Technology Consulting Group is comprised four group members.

Robert Jay is Director of the Western Technology Consulting Group. Mr. Jay is also the Director of Operations.

Shaun Rodriguez is the Director of Research and Development at Western Technology Consulting Group. Mr. Rodriguez will be the focal administrator for presentation of the surveys.

Robert Cummins is the Director for Survey Research and will direct the survey activities.

Bryan Metz is the Assistant Director for Survey Research and Marketing Consultant.
**RURAL TELEPHONE PROJECT**

It will take the combined effort of all associates in the implementation of this research to successfully clean and validate data needed to develop effective survey presentations.

The projected timeline is relevant to the dates set forth by this proposal. If the project commences before or after the proposed dates, the project timeline will remain intact, but the relative start and finish dates are subject to change to ensure congruency with the projects proposed and set timeline.

**EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES**

During administration of focus group sessions, our group will be using audio and video equipment with the intention of recording these sessions and formatting them into a presentation aid that will demonstrate visually for the client the attitudes of their client base. This will involve using two professional quality video cameras as well as wireless microphones for the group to use. Sound mixing equipment and video editing software will be used to clean up the content for presentation.
## Budget for Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget for WTCG by Expenses</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salaries for WTCG Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Cummins (for Survey development and analysis)</td>
<td>$450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Cummins (for Survey Three)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Jay (for Survey development and analysis)</td>
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<td>Robert Jay (for Survey Two)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bryan Metz (for Survey development and analysis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bryan Metz (for Survey One)</td>
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<td>Bryan Metz (for administration )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaun Rodriguez (for Survey development and analysis)</td>
<td>$300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaun Rodriguez (for Final Recommendation)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total for Salaries and Benefits</strong></td>
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| Survey Expenses (including pretest surveys) |       |
| Literature Research | $900 |
| Survey One | $2,400 |
| Survey Two | $2,100 |
| Survey Three | $3,600 |
| **Sub-total for Survey Expenses** | **$9,000** |

| Presentation Fees |       |
| Equipment Cost | $300 |
| Development(multi-media presentation of Survey Three) | $500 |
| **Sub-total for Presentation Fees** | **$800** |

| Post Survey Tasks |       |
| Data analysis and compiling | **$1,600** |
| Final Recommendation | $350 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$18,100** |