A Picture Worth a Thousand Words

United States
J. Wayne Zimmer

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Symbol utilization in communication dates from the beginning of the cave man. The application of Internet technology with symbols (pictograms*) in health care communications services can be empowering and life-enriching to a growing seniors and/or disabled population with compromised verbal skills. Project Hope Inc. (501c3) in combination with business partners* proposes to combine symbols and technology in a "disruptive" innovative application that will provide a "challenge for change" empowering the consumer of healthcare services in an economic, efficient, effective and environmentally-friendly mode of communication. This application makes internal healthcare facility communication easier and administratively more manageable while providing revolutionary access for the customer from the world within and without. This is the challenge - to disrupt the traditional delivery from healthcare to "helpcare" that involves the individual consumer in a radically personal manner. The embodiment of all change is through communication. Growing consumer frustration with limited involvement in their personal healthcare decision making process reduces pride and self-respect at the altar of "clinically appropriate and medically necessary". The integrated use of symbols - Pictogram Ideogram Communication (www.pictoworld.com) - with internet technology can significantly decrease workplace injury and litigation through the appropriate and flexible electronic "up-to-the-minute" signage and messaging. We contend that this technology application is sorely needed. As proposed it is efficient and cost-effective. The simplicity of operation belies the technologically sophisticated symbol and media usage for a growing verbally-challenged population. This innovation and interface between the service deliverer and the service receiver challenges traditional communication now in place with consumer empowering input as a main focus.

About You

Location

Project Street Address
Project City
Project Province/State
Project Postal/Zip Code
Project Country

Your idea

Focus of activity
Technology

Year the initiative began (yyyy)
2007

Positioning of your initiative on the mosaic diagram

Which of these barriers is the primary focus of your work?
Patients not empowered

Which of the principles is the primary focus of your work?
Center consumers in business model

If you believe some other barrier or principle should be included in the mosaic, please describe it and how it would affect the positioning of your initiative in the mosaic:
The focus has been on health care, not "help care". Traditional emphasis has been on eliminating pain and suffering by medication and surgery. Our approach is to focus more on consumer participation and enhance psychological and traditional familial support in addition to medical and surgical treatment.

Innovation

Define the innovation

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Context for Disruption:

Since 1980 this symbol system has been used world-wide for individuals with verbal limitations. "Needed symbol refinement with the addition of internet communication creates the potential for an "at home environment", reducing frustration levels for consumer and provider and fostering a more personalized, empowering relationship between the professional and the recipient. "The challenge is to create culturally adaptive software/hardware maximizing consumer participation through technology by scanning personal and environmental photographs in a symbol storage bank. International symbol acceptance exists on all continents. A pictoview communication platform can facilitate safe practice methodologies for healthcare workers. Screen-displayed schedules, events, reminders and alerts combined with media/video access to and from the consumer allows participation in a highly individualized format. Virtual family, world and administrative connection innovatively creates a new dimension for personal communication. Flexibility and customization is at the consumer's disposal. Pictogram symbols used in over 40 countries and 25+ different languages provide a basis for expansion and impact. Symbols are easy to visualize and comprehend as we shift from stickies and pin-up notes. Mistakes, both dangerous and costly, are minimized or eliminated with high quality visual display. This provides specific information to be directed to and responded to by the consumer instantly. Administrative healthcare communication is simplified for workers and consumers where appropriate and provides for innovative virtual family visits. This added personal involvement feature provides expanded virtual contact and interaction that stimulates the "help" healthcare component. Language barriers are overcome with clear, concise symbols. Rooms equipped with bedside or wall panels contain customizable request/answer pictograms providing multi-options as replacement of the one-button system.

Delivery Model

Proposed access to target population is through traditional facilities serving the target population, i.e., hospitals, managed health care facilities, nursing homes. Market penetration has been limited to the disabled population in family, school and residential facilities. Pictoview (visual communication systems, VCS) is installed as a modular design on a per room cost. It allows for small and large facility accommodation installed locally. Utilization of present symbols is incorporated with program flexibility for individualized accommodation. VCS can readily accommodate or run parallel to existing facility software in a non-interference mode.

Key Operational Partnerships

Presently partnerships exist on an individual base nominally supported by family and some health care professionals. With the development of economical internet and video technologies, our proposal will target as partners computer software and hardware suppliers to health care facilities, REIT-managed health care facilities, e.g., Ventas Inc., MedAssets and others. Present project partners are PICTOCOM International, POBox 2094, Rosetown, SK Canada; J-PIC-GODAI EMBODY Co, Ltd., 6902 Kamitoba unohana, Minami-ku, Kyoto-City 60108141, Japan; SIT-Umea, Nygatan 18-10, s-903-27, Umea, Sweden

Impact

Financial Model

As a 501 (c3) charitable organization, income is by contributions and solicitation. Additional funding will be sought from new partners, organizations

Year 1 and 2 - start-up funding - 0% earned income
Years 3,4,5 - 20, 30, 40% earned income

What is your annual operating budget?

$300,000.

What are your current sources of revenue? (please list any sources that are foundation grants)

Current sources of revenue are private donations from individuals, churches, community organizations; federal government.

Effectiveness

The symbol project exists on every continent in the world. More than 40 countries are presently using it with tens of thousands of non-verbal communicators. In Sweden every non-verbal child from age 2 up has been using the system since 1983 and a similar situation exists in Japan. The symbols have been translated into 25 languages including Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, etc. Schools, service deliverers, governments (provincially, nationally, and internationally) have incorporated the symbols in classroom curriculum, rehabilitation centres, etc.

Which element of the program proved itself most effective?

The simplicity and comprehensiveness of the symbols contributed to the ease of operation and individual input.

Number of clients in the last year?

10,000 consumers worldwide for Pictogram and Pictoview

What is the potential demand?

www.pictoworld.com

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What is the potential demand?
Unlimited for nonverbal and limited verbal communication, young to old. It is this last category that offers tremendous potential for usage given the increasing aging population in institutional care.

**Scaling up Strategy**

The priority for the next three years is to move more aggressively into seniors health care facilities and the integration of personalized videoconferencing/symbol system.

**Stage of the initiative:**

1

**Expansion plan:**

Development of software for consumer use within healthcare facilities affecting direct patient need and desire; application of symbols to administration and healthcare usage

**Origin of the Initiative**

In 1980 a school psychologist, Subhas Maharaj, working in a institutional setting for severely developmentally disabled persons, recognized the frustration and lack of empowerment his consumers lived with daily. To enhance their communication, control and life skills, he developed a set of symbols that were recognizable internationally. These symbols have been translated into some 25 languages with thousands of persons with differing abilities using them as their major mode of communication. Project Hope, a faith-based mentoring program in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, dealing with low income, marginalized and disabled persons, recognized a need and a means to empower disadvantaged persons with limited communication skills for fuller participation in society, both within and outside the managed healthcare system. Using symbols & internet technology increases personal involvement.

**Sustainability**

**What are your two main challenges to finance the growth of your initiative**

The main challenge in financing this initiative is in finding risk capital for an interventionist approach to traditional communication methods between consumers and professional health care using adaptive technologies.

Another main challenge is finding like-minded investors that are prepared to “push the envelope” in a nonconventional and disruptive manner.

Project Hope would need an additional $600,000 to establish a pilot operation for Beta testing over a two year period. Additional resources would be required for marketing and promotion. [maximize empowerment of marginalized individuals in control of their healthcare delivery as consumers, as customers, not just patients.

**How did you hear about this contest and what is your main incentive to participate?**

Through Robert Woods Johnson Foundation. Incentive to participate was the opportunity to obtain funding to implement this innovative empowering technology application and to maximize the story.

**Do you have an annual financial statement?**

Yes. Present new audit to be completed within 3 months. Past available.

**Do you currently have an annual financial statement that tracks profit/loss?**

Yes

**Please describe the amount (and/or type) of funding you need to implement your initiative, at year 1 and at year 5.**

$600,000 year 1 and year 2 $400,000. Year five $300,000 composed of revenue generated and private investment.

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