

To: English 402 Students
From: Katie Wheeler
Date: March 31, 2011
Subject: **Proposal for Repurposing Knowledge about Fair Trade Coffee into Formats Accessible by Consumers**

Introduction & Background:

Fair Trade USA is a non-profit organization that promotes, supports, and facilitates Fair Trade practices. Fair Trade companies meet certain standards, such as a guaranteed wage for workers and good working conditions. Fair Trade USA connects these companies with U.S. importers who pay fair market prices for the products. The organization also works to educate farmers on the worth of their products and to give them the tools to avoid exploitation and to function in the free market. Fair Trade USA's first product of focus was coffee, and today many companies, including Dunkin Donuts Inc., D&M Coffee Company Inc., Starbucks Coffee Company and many more offer Fair Trade coffee. Over 50% of Americans drink coffee every day. The popularity of this product and the fact that many companies offer a Fair Trade option make it a perfect opportunity to educate its consumers about Fair Trade. Although much success has been made with this product, many farmers who produce other merchandise are still being exploited.

Proposed Project:

The focus of this repurposing project will be the creation of visually pleasing posters reading "Today's Fair Trade Roast Is:" and featuring facts about Fair Trade products. This could include the improvements made to farmers' lives once they are educated by Fair Trade USA or perhaps statistics about the number of people suffering due to the low prices still being paid for their non-Fair Trade products. These posters would be displayed in cafes that sell Fair Trade coffee. Further, the lids of coffee cups will feature similar facts, but will be focused on the contribution made by the consumer, such as "This cup of coffee helped feed a family." Below this, resources where the consumer can learn more about Fair Trade will be given, such as the Fair Trade USA website address.

Objectives:

The goal of this project is to educate coffee drinkers about their product and the ability they have to improve the lives of farmers by buying Fair Trade products. This, in turn, will serve as encouragement to learn more about other merchandise for which there exists a Fair Trade option. Finally, the ultimate goal is to live in a world where all workers are paid fairly for their goods and treated ethically in the work place.

Methods & Expected Results:

The completion of this project will entail regular meetings between team members, most of which can occur during class time. The team may also need to visit a few coffee shops. There, they will assess the space that these places has to display a poster, how much text can fit on a coffee lid, and the unique design style of each café. The finished product is expected to be a set of posters and coffee lids that include a variety of facts about Fair Trade. Their creative visual appeal and unifying theme are expected to serve as motivation for coffee drinkers to read them, and hopefully, become more conscientious consumers.

Qualifications:

I have completed previous research on Fair Trade USA as the Vice-President of a non-profit RSO here at Washington State University and will be able to guide my team members in selecting the Fair Trade information we display. I also know and can implement basic design principles, but will need group members who can bring creativity to the design. I will also need members who will be in class to meet regularly. Most importantly, I will need a team with hearts for change and for helping those less fortunate.

Conclusion:

Many people suffer when products are undervalued and workers are not treated fairly. By encouraging consumers to buy Fair Trade, we give ethical companies an economic advantage that, over time, can eliminate the power of those who exploit farmers. This project will help in achieving that goal and I look forward to assembling a motivated team that will contribute to its realization.