

## **BSC helps EC Merrill simplify a complex process**

by Charles Greenley - Wednesday, January 26, 2011

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In a world where businesses often waste money on complex advertising campaigns, Jay Merrill, owner of EC Merrill, a plumbing and heating company in the Oshkosh and Fond du Lac area, is going the opposite direction.

“What I’m trying to do is establish our name recognition in the marketplace based on past advertising patterns,” Merrill said. “We’re basically targeting a specific market and seeing if we have the result people selling advertising have said we would.”

So Merrill asked the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Business Success Center (BSC) to help him simplify the results, and Colleen Merrill, head of the BSC’s Survey Success Center (SSC), enlisted several trained UW Oshkosh student interns to conduct a survey to do accomplish just that.

“They are benchmarking to see how familiar the community is with their service, what kind of branding they have or do customers even know they’re around at all?” Colleen said. “It’s a great way for people doing advertising and marketing. If they don’t do benchmarking they won’t even know if advertising helps.”

Now that SSC’s benchmarking survey is done, Merrill is going to do something different than spend 10 percent of his budget on radio spots and another 20 percent on yellow pages ads, a strategy he has used in the past.

“I’m going to do only the radio program and find out what happens, and see if the dollars spent are worth it,” said Merrill.

After this initial collaboration, Merrill looks forward to working with SSC in the future.

“To follow up with a similar survey in a about a year’s time, find out what a year of advertising in a given medium does, and find out whether the dollars spent are doing what they tell me they should,” said Merrill.

EC Merrill is a smaller company, with somewhere between three to 10 contractors doing all of the work. Merrill was pleased that SSC kept costs down and did not go overboard with its survey.

“If someone wants market research done we can do as little or as much as they want us to do,” Colleen said. “We can just collect data or we can go all the way to project management—the development of the questionnaire, analysis and final reporting. No projects are too little or too big.”

*The Business Success Center, formerly the Center for Community Partnerships, was founded in 1998 to give the public greater access to faculty, staff and students from UWO as well as community-based*

*experts, offering customized training, applied research, survey services, business consulting and student internship programs to local businesses.*

*Students interested in internships can contact Chad Kopitzke at (920) 424-2041 or [kopitzkc@uwosh.edu](mailto:kopitzkc@uwosh.edu).  
Businesses and organizations can contact Doug Jarmusz at (920) 424-3266 or [jarmuszd@uwosh.edu](mailto:jarmuszd@uwosh.edu).*