

# The Way We've Always Done It: Intermediary Perceptions of Barriers to Technology Adoption in Rural Firms

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What barriers restrict rural firms' success in regards to technology adoption?

What strategies can be used to avoid or overcome these barriers?



## Study Participants



### Research Questions



Have you tried to start a business in a rural area only to find it didn't work? Have you tried to start a business in a rural area only to find it didn't work?



### Recruiting and Retaining Employees in Rural Areas



INFRASTRUCTURE ISOLATION  
WAGE INCENTIVES WORKPLACE CULTURE



### Other Human Capital Barriers

- Local Rural Workforce
  - Substance abuse
  - Workforce leadership and development
  - Vocational training
- "Wearing Many Hats"



### Resistance to Change

- Established businesses become comfortable in their habits
- Necessity can drive change
- Openness, acceptance of change



## Financial Capital



## Internet Access



- Infrastructure problem
- Resource for rural firms
- Web presence/ social media



## Recommendations for Firms & Next Steps

- Address human capital issues:
  - Pay higher than industry-standard wages, adopt a flexible and modern workplace culture, advocate for local vocational training, bring in consultants when possible
- Strive for an attitude of openness to change
- As much as possible, accept that technology adoption requires financial investment and risk
- Leverage the internet to make up for geographic isolation, advocate for broadband expansion
- Study should expand to include other states



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