



UBC Farm E-Business Plan

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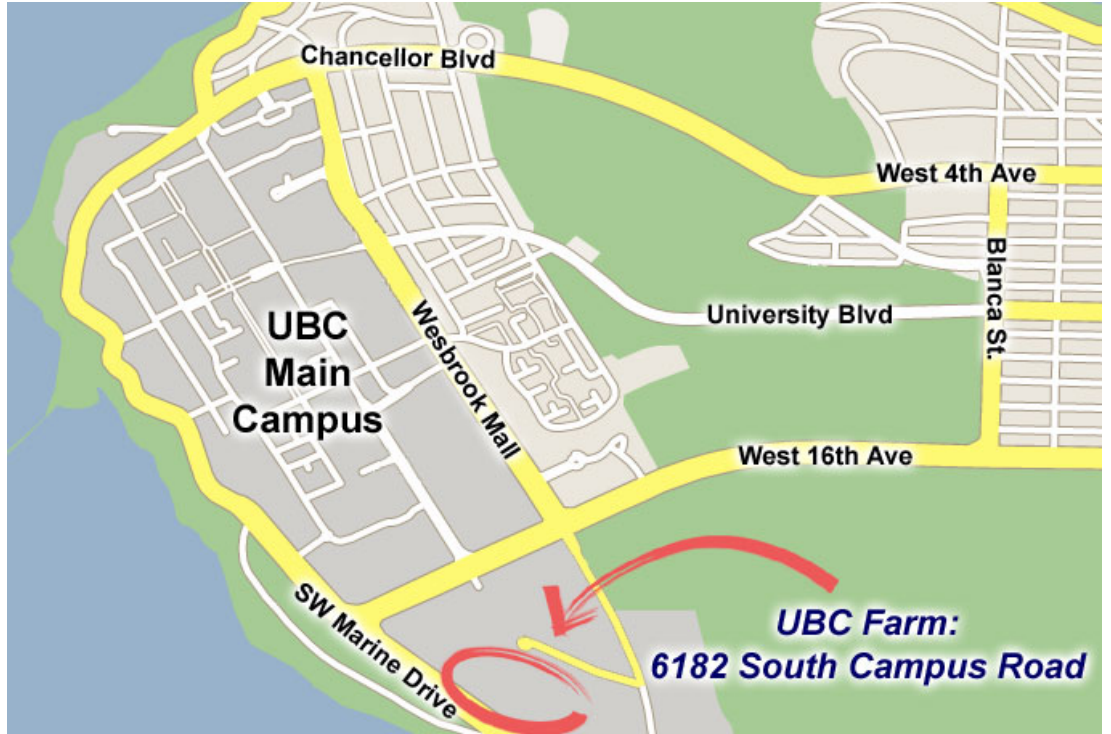
Growing an
Online Presence

Overview

1. Internal & external analysis
 - The firm
 - The industry
2. E-business plan
 - Benefits
 - Approach
3. Implementation
 - Marketing strategy
 - Resourcing
 - Challenges and constraints



UBC Farm



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Current Farm Strategy

- Not-for-profit
 - Have goals but no strategy
- Focus on ‘products’
 - Education
 - Research
 - Organic Produce



Vision - Farm

- Centre of instruction, learning and research
- Integrate principles of organic production and sustainability
- Add to the quality of life of the local community



Current Operations

- Organic Farm
 - Three acres in production with two large green houses
 - Weekly summer market
 - Production is only in the summer season no winter vegetables
- Education
 - Educational exchange programs
 - Summer internships
 - Grade school tours
- Research
 - Research projects for various faculties at UBC



The Industry

Product	Suppliers	Buyers	Potential Entrants	Substitutes
Organic Produce	Costs relative to total are low	Willing to pay a premium	Intensity of Rivalry – Low Barriers to Entry – High •High initial investment and low yield, certification complicated	Non-organic foods
Education	Educators required to run programs in low supply	International: many countries are interested in organic farming Schools: Only location in close proximity	•Internationally there are other options (Santa Cruz) •Locally this is the only such location •Facilities, educators in low supply – high initial investment	At home or in school programs without a site visit
Research	Must be students available and interested in completing projects	As organic farming grows in popularity (i.e. market grows) demand for relevant research will increase	Intensity of Rivalry – Low •Very few competitors in North America at present Barriers to Entry – High •Must have available location for research	Other institutions' research



UBC Farm – Competitive Advantage

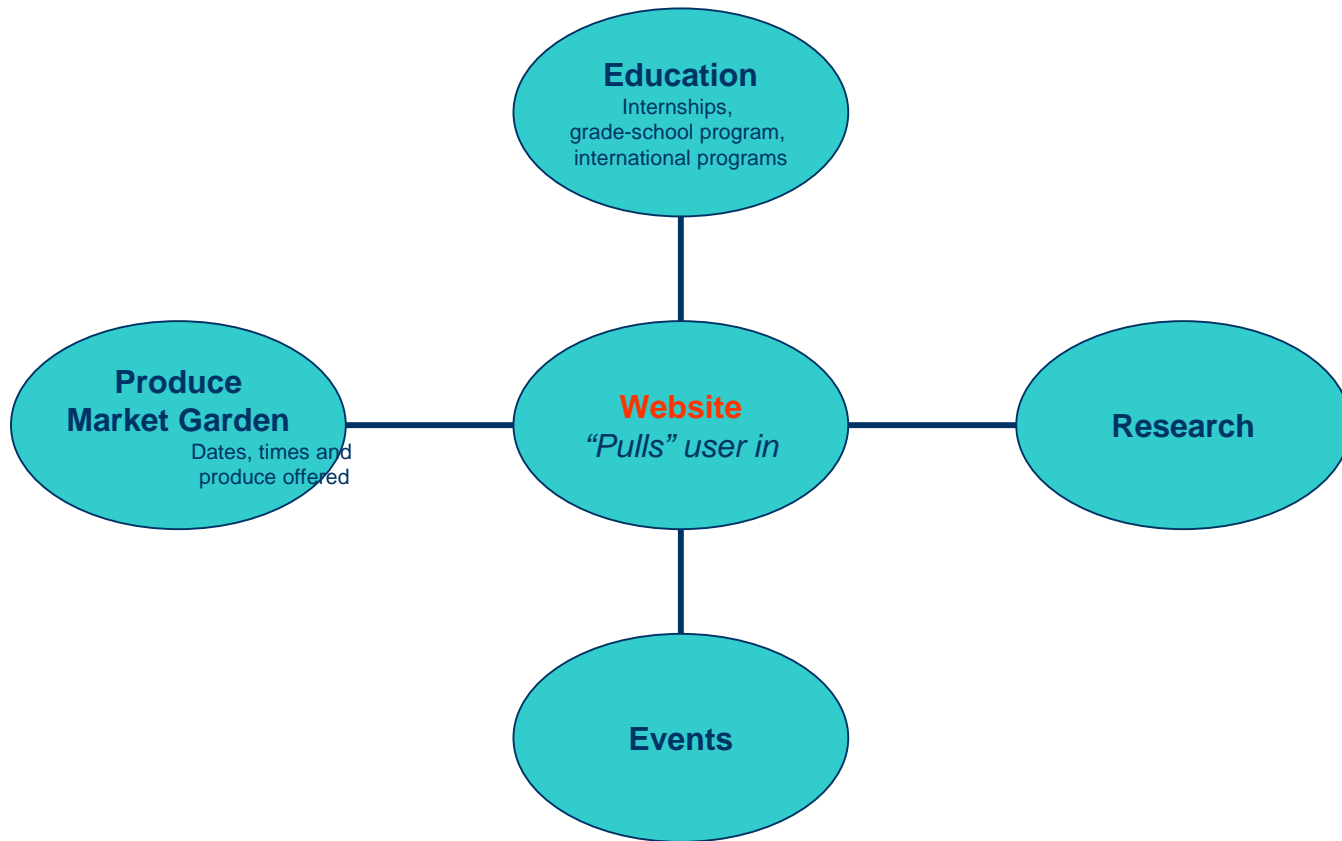
- Location
 - only existing urban organic farm in Vancouver proper
 - soil type and regional latitude allow for specialized research
 - proximity to UBC and grade schools
 - availability of housing for international exchanges
- UBC brand name
 - closely linked with that of the UBC farm
- Barriers to Entry
 - location and UBC brand name
- Inimitable competitive advantage



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E-Business Plan - current



E-Business Plan – why change?

- **Raise awareness, generate interest**
 - UBC has a farm? I can go there to purchase locally grown organic food?
 - Support existing operations with online mechanisms (operational efficiencies)
- **Educate**
 - What is organic farming and why is it important?
- **Generate Revenue**
 - Sale of research, market garden, advertising links (2nd stage), new sources of revenue
- **Increase prestige**
 - Utilize web to highlight UBC's research excellence
- **Build a stronger “community”**
 - Web-facilitated information sharing with learning institutions worldwide



E-Business Plan – Market Garden

Rationale / Benefits:

- Marketing tool to promote the farm
- Community building
- Generate revenue



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E-Business Plan – Education

Rationale / Benefits:

- Public and student education
- Enhance a project's profile and students' participation
- Community building
- Generate revenue



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E-Business Plan – Research

Rationale / Benefits:

- Networking
- External and Internal Community Building
- Generate Revenue



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Implementation – Marketing Strategy

Current Situation

- Marketing plan does not exist
- Email bulletin used to provide updates regarding organic produce
- Funds are extremely limited

Website can be cost-effective way to achieve Farm objectives



Implementation – Marketing Strategy

Product	Target Market	Marketing Program	Goal
Organic Produce	Organic produce consumers, Previous farm visitors, Adjacent communities, UBC residents	Flyers handed out at Farmers' Market, Newsletter, Links to "share this page" Web address on menus	Build community Raise awareness of organic products Generate revenue Drive visits/repeat visits to farmers' market
Education	University associates, Gov't agriculture officers, interested public	Partner with UBC Administration and International Dept for email promotion, Community news	Raise awareness Generate revenue
Research	University associates Business interests	Partner with faculty administration for email promotion	Increase hits from search results related to organic farming research Raise profile of university as research centre



Implementation - Resources

Resource	Details
People	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One time cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Web designer and developer for initial application setup 2. Weekly cost – high season; monthly cost – low season <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing coordinator in charge of updating the website - Webmaster in charge of web analytics and proper site work
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep utilizing UBC Faculty of Land & Food's servers ● Hire Student - internship opportunity / portfolio building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$17/hr - Thus – 8 to 12 week internship = \$4,760 to \$7,140
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apache/MySQL/PHP Server ● Open Source Content Management System



Big Picture Challenges & Constraints

- Challenges

- UBC Farm occupies prime location
- Value of land as real estate far outweighs any land yield dollar for dollar

- Constraints

- Moratorium expires in 2012
- UBC bureaucracy: Decision making process is slow
- Lack of resources
- Farm staff has minimal business orientation
- Must ensure e-business strategy is aligned with core values of UBC Farm



Technical Challenges

- Website relies on hosting and server support from other UBC departments
- Website maintenance follows oral tradition - very manual
- Content Management System (CMS) has high initial learning curve
- With increased online capabilities, traffic, links, more maintenance time will be needed



Intellectual Property Challenges

- Process must be created to systemize the posting of proprietary information and obtain necessary clearances
- UBC Farm must assume responsibility for making documents web compatible (design, file conversions, etc.)
- Will require additional man hours



Organizational Challenges

- Limited resources
- Highly dependent on support from Department of Land and Food Systems
- Highly bureaucratic university system inhibits change
- Zero redundancy - continuation of present farm initiatives would suffer if anything happened to current staff



Project Evaluation

- Difficult to quantify “intangibles”
 - Goodwill generated through partnerships
 - Increased prestige of UBC programs and research
 - Community which values sustainability
 - Social interactions centered on land and agriculture



Project Evaluation - continued

- Our definition of success:
 - Economically self-sustaining
 - Farm indispensable to local community
 - Fosters strong values of sustainability
 - UBC's academic programs positioned as world-class
 - UBC leader in agro-ecological research



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Thank You – Questions?





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Farm News and Events

Winter Hibernation

It's been a great season, much thanks to everyone for all your support.

Though we are still keeping busy cleaning up and preparing for the next season, most of the field activity is complete for the year, and we will resume regular hours in March 2006. The public are still welcome to visit the site if the gates are open, but staff may not be available for assistance.

Markets will start up again in late May or early June of 2006. Join the list below, or keep checking this site for updates.

You can get weekly UBC Farm market produce updates if you [subscribe to our email bulletin](#).

The winter provides an opportunity to improve and re-organize our programming. To this end, when we re-open in 2006 we will do so with a new name: **The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm**. The land itself can still be called the farm. The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems is a name that more accurately represents the inter-disciplinary and wide-ranging nature of the teaching, research, and community programming that takes place at the site.

Research Symposium Proceedings

Proceedings from the farm's 2005 Research Symposium are now available [here](#).

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