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

UBC Farm: 6182 South Campus Road

UBC at the University of British Columbia

Tomatoes, apples, carrots
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Suppliers</th>
<th>Buyers</th>
<th>Potential Entrants</th>
<th>Substitutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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 it 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

- **Imitable competitive advantage**
E-Business Plan - current

- Produce Market Garden
  - Dates, times and produce offered

- Education
  - Internships, grade-school program, international programs

- Website
  - “Pulls” user in

- Research

- Events
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
E-Business Plan – Education

Rationale / Benefits:

- Public and student education
- Enhance a project’s profile and students’ participation
- Community building
- Generate revenue
E-Business Plan – Research

Rationale / Benefits:

- Networking
- External and Internal Community Building
- Generate Revenue
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| **People** | 1. One time cost  
- Web designer and developer for initial application setup  
2. Weekly cost – high season; monthly cost – low season  
- Marketing coordinator in charge of updating the website  
- Webmaster in charge of web analytics and proper site work |
| **Funding** |  
- Keep utilizing UBC Faculty of Land & Food’s servers  
- Hire Student - internship opportunity / portfolio building  
  - $17/hr  
  - Thus – 8 to 12 week internship = $4,760 to $7,140 |
| **Equipment** |  
- 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
Thank You – Questions?
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 2005. 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.