

A Website Development Project for Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. in Kingsburg, CA

A Senior Project

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By

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to design and develop a website for Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. in Kingsburg, CA. The website will include five pages as well as a hyperlink to the local weather channel page. This website will be used by the company to increase communication with their current clients and provide information to potential clients and/or customers who want to learn more about the company. This project is a guide to how this website was created and what exactly went into the design and implementation of designing a website and working with your family company. By following the steps of this project, an individual should be able to see how to make a simple website for a family company.

Acknowledgements

Without the support and encouragement from my parents, David and Michelle Stone, I would not be where I am today and this project would not have been possible. I would like to thank you both for always encouraging me to do my best and for giving me the space to spread my wings and embrace my creative side. I cannot ever thank you enough for everything you have done for me and I am forever grateful to have had two great examples to guide me throughout my life.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Online media presence is a crucial step for modern companies to communicate with consumers. In the agriculture industry, consumers are expressing a desire to know more about where the food they eat comes from. This increased demand is a major step towards pushing the agriculture industry as a whole into being able to effectively provide consumers with the product information that they desire. Even a simple webpage about the history of a company will give consumers a way to connect with the person that produced the food they will eat. Today, less than 2% of the United States population is involved in production agriculture, compared to around 38% in the early 1950's. This decrease of producers has led to a major disconnect between consumers and the farmers and ranchers that produce the nations food supply.

With todays' consumer being so far removed from the actual production aspect of agriculture, consumers demand to know where food comes from only continues to grow. Consumers express concern for developing sustainable agricultural practices to protect the environment and concerns for the welfare of animals. An online media source can provides consumers with an outlet by which they can obtain this information without having to put in much effort. The modern, technological age of today has created a consumer that wants a lot of information in a short amount of time that can be easily accessed. If a company can provide consumers with information such as the history of the company, how they produce the food, and other basic pieces of information, they will have satisfied consumers and a higher public perception. The

agriculture industry has been criticized for covering up production processes and for having a very closed connection with consumers. While anyone could find a farmer in the Midwest and ask for a tour and probably get one and a home cooked meal, this image is not portrayed industry wide. The term 'factory farming' has shed a negative light on the production agriculture industry, so by increasing the transparency between the producer and the consumer, it will impact public perception of the companies involved and potentially the industry as a whole.

Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. is a family owned, produce sales and marketing company located in Kingsburg, CA. Valhalla markets a variety of produce for growers both locally and internationally, and many of the growers are family and family friends. Valhalla prides itself on providing the best service for their consumers, both growers and retail consumers. As a small company in a growing market, Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. has acknowledged the need for an online presence.

Online media has been proven to increase positive consumer feelings about a company. A company can increase their presence for consumers by having an online media source. Without online access consumers may not have a way to contact a company. It is important that consumers have that transparency because it will increase their trust in agriculture, which is another issue that agriculture is facing.

Statement of the Problem

Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. do not have a company webpage. They want a web page to create an outlet for further communication with consumers and clients.

Valhalla feels that by creating a web page, they will be able to better communicate with consumers, their clients and other produce companies they do business with. Valhalla has a desire to have an online presence as they have recognized that consumers have a desire to know more about where their food comes from and how their food is grown, harvested, packaged and delivered.

Importance of the Project

It is important that Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. have a website to make more information regarding the company readily available for anyone who wants to know more about the company.

Historically, agriculture tends to be slower to adapt new technologies like social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. This slower adoption of technology pushes agricultural companies to a less significant presence in the eyes of the consumers. Unfortunately, this has resulted in consumers feeling like agriculture is untrustworthy. Companies within the agriculture industry need to recognize that they need to increase their transparency to better connect with their consumers.

An online media presence, such as a website, will make Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. a more transparent company. It will provide necessary information about the company history; location, production and customer relations that will help consumers connect with the company on a more personal level. By doing this, the company can make consumers feel as though they really know who they are buying their produce from. For example, Lay's potato chip bags have a QR code that can be

scanned. This code takes the consumer to a web page with information about the farmer that grew the potatoes that made the chips in their bag of snacks. This creates a positive feeling when the consumer can read the story about the 'good ole farmer' from Idaho that grew their chips. It's a way for Lay's to connect with consumers and the overall consumer reaction to this new idea has been very positive overall.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to work with the owner of Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. and develop a website that meets the desires of the company, while also meeting the needs of consumers. The website will be a very simple layout with the company background information, information about company employees, products they market, services they provide and weather information.

Objectives of the Project

The objective of this project is to design and implement an interactive website that the company can use and update. It is also designed so consumers can utilize the site to learn more about Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. The objective of the sales team is to represent their growers and obtain the best market price for their product.

Important Terms and Definitions

- Blue Book: an official listing used in various industries

- For the purpose of this project, Blue Book will refer to the Blue Book used in produce
- Body tag: used to define the content of a webpage with features like size, font, color, bold, etc. and is defined through CSS style
- Button: a graphical user interface for web page interaction
- CSS Style: defines how an HTML element is defined
- Head tag: used to define the title of a segment of a webpage with features like size, font, color, bold, etc. and is defined through CSS style
- HTML: stands for hyper-text markup language
- HTML Code: a universal language read by a server to display images or content via a server, computer screen, or internet web page
- HTML Element: an individual component of a web page and the attributes can be specified through CSS Styling
- Inline Style: has the highest priority, which means that it will override a **style** defined inside the <head> tag, or in an external **style** sheet, or in a browser
- Link: something that serves to connect one thing to another
- Rollover button: originates from the visual process of "rolling the mouse cursor over the button" causing the button to react (usually visually, by replacing the button's source image with another image), and sometimes resulting in a change in the web page itself
- Sidebar: a user interface element that displays a list of choices
- Template: anything that serves as a pattern or model

- Valhalla: means '*Heaven of the Vikings*' in Swedish
- Viewing Platforms: the various tools that webpages can be accessed from
 - For the purpose of this project, this could be Smartphones, Tablets, Laptops, Desktops, etc.

Summary

Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. needs a website to move the company into this next generation of technology. Without an online presence, consumers do not have much access to information about this particular company. Many smaller, family owned companies lack an online presence, which can be a potential risk for miscommunication. As a small company, their effect on agriculture may not be that of the PepsiCo's of the world, but that is not to say their value is any less important.

As stated previously, agricultural companies tend to accept and adopt newer technologies much slower. This may be because the average age of a U.S. farmer is 57 years old, but the importance of the adaptation of technology cannot be denied. This website will be a way for Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. to further their communication with consumers as well as peers and partners that they have within the agriculture industry.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Online media presence is a vital form of communication for businesses. Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. is a growing produce marketing business in the Central Valley of California. They have a need to provide consumers and clients with access to information regarding the production of their produce. Consumers want to know where their food comes from and who produces it. It is crucial that businesses stay relevant by communicating with consumers through a medium that they access regularly and can use easily. To do this, designers must understand the elements of design, design principles and how they affect the viewer and impact the overall user experience. It is also important to consider the various platforms that online media can be viewed in, such as tablets, phones and laptops.

Importance of an Online Presence

According to Flanagin (2000), there are three factors that contribute to a company or businesses decision to implement a website; organizational features, perceived benefits and social pressures. Organizational features explain an organizations willingness to adapt innovations. According to Baldrige & Burnham as cited in Flanagin, 2000, "Larger organizations have been found consistently to adopt innovations earlier than smaller ones". However, even as a small company, Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. recognizes the importance and the value of developing a place

for users to access information about the company online. This project will allow Valhalla to take advantage of this social niche many of their clients and consumers utilize on a daily basis.

According to Nohria & Eccles as cited in Flanagin's research (2000), companies are becoming increasingly connected to one another due to the constant evolution of technology. In a technological world, even small businesses will begin to recognize the need to rise up to compete in a global market. This is just one benefit of adapting and applying new modernizations to a business.

If a consumer wants to know more about a company or a product, generally the first response is to search the Internet. This is the way society had adapted to the changes and advancements in technology. Social pressures to conform and adapt to what viewers, consumers, and web users want have high influences on a businesses response to whether or not it chooses to implement a new idea. According to Flanagin, adapting new modern technologies is generally something that is conducted with little to no prior planning. It is a result of the recognized immediate need, and an almost immediate response back to addressing that need.

Design Elements

An effective website will incorporate elements of design to evoke better viewer understanding. According to Bartel (1994) and Bradley (2013), the elements of design are as follows:

- ❖ Point: an element that has position but no extension

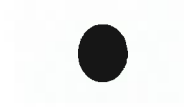


Figure 1: Example of a point. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Line: an element characterized by length and direction



Figure 2: Example of a line. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Shape: a two-dimensional closed line with no form or thickness and is defined by its perimeter



Figure 3: Example of shape. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Color: the eyes response to different wavelengths of lights as defined by hue (color or shade), saturation (color intensity) and value (lightness or darkness)



Figure 4: Example of color and the various ways color can be altered. (Bradley, 2013)

- ❖ Texture: the visual interpretation of the surface quality of an object in a design



Figure 5: Example of texture on a design element (Bradley, 2013)

- ❖ Size: variable proportions of objects in a layout

Large small

Figure 6: Example of size (Bradley, 2013)

Principles of Design:

In order to create an effective website, understanding the principles of design is essential to understanding how users will view and interact with the web page.

According to Bartel (1994), the principles of design are as follows:

- ❖ Center of interest: the area that first catches the viewers attention and is considerably more important than the other elements of a work



Figure 7: Example of how to create interest through contrast so attention is given to a specific area of the layout. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Balance: the feeling of visual equality of a design. The organization of the elements can be symmetrical, asymmetrical or unbalanced design.

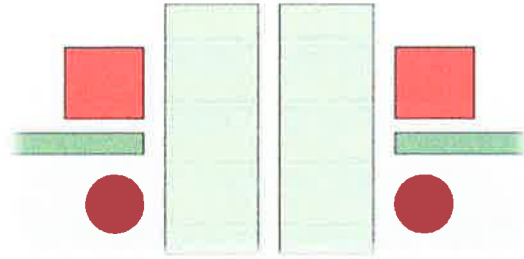


Figure 8-1: Example of symmetrical balance. (Bradley, 2013).

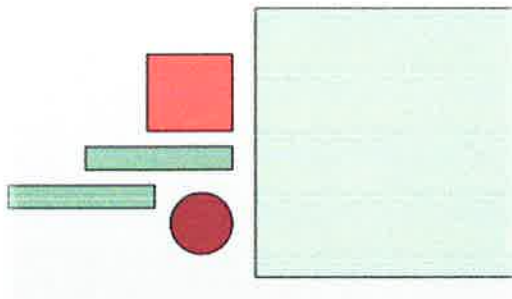


Figure 8-2: Example of asymmetrical balance. (Bradley, 2013).

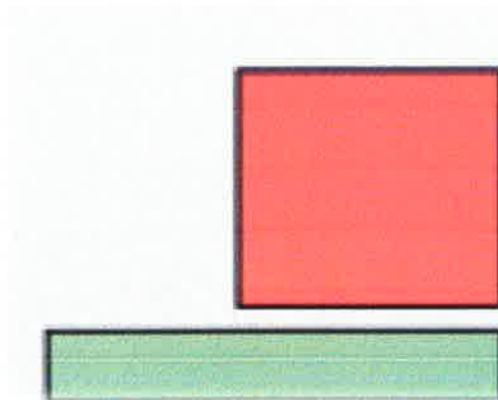


Figure 8-3: Example of unbalanced unity. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Harmony: bringing together similar aspects of a composition (i.e.; similar fonts, following a pattern for headings and subheadings, style for lists, etc.)



Figure 9: Example of harmony through the use of fonts, colors and theme. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Contrast: creating visual changes to help bring out other objects in a design and can also be used to create emphasis



Figure 10: Example of how contrast can create an image and emphasize certain elements. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Directional Movement: the visual flow through a composition by the placement of design elements to direct the viewer attention through the format

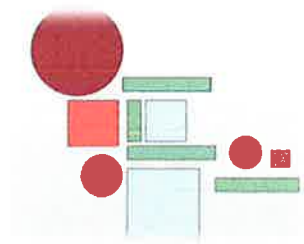


Figure 11: Example of movement; pay attention to how your eye travels along the pattern. (Bradley, 2013).

- ❖ Rhythm: movement of a design element creating a predictable feel within the design as a whole entity

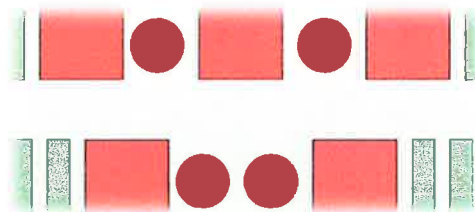


Figure 12: Example of rhythm established through the predictability of the shapes. (Bradley, 2013).

Developing a Website:

The design of a website can enhance or detract from the overall user experience. By creating a user-friendly design, it not only makes it easier to navigate, but it creates a positive experience for the user (Bradley, 2013, *Layout and Publication Design*).

By making a user-friendly online source for informational access, users have a positive experience with a company or business, which ultimately enhances their overall opinion of said company. According to Bradley's presentation, *Layout and Publication Design*, to create an effective design, "organize the elements of design in a layout using

structure methods and principles of design, to provide effective and efficient communication”. By following the design principles and including the design elements discussed in this chapter, an effective design can be achieved.

Summary:

A crucial part of website design is the process of understanding the various components of design, design elements and design principles. By combining the effects of these aspects of design, it's possible to understand how to effectively manage a layout to create an efficient design. As a small, family owned company, Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. will not only be able to broaden the horizons of the company, but reach a new demographic of consumers; web users.

Chapter Three

Methods and Materials

A Step-By-Step Guide to the Valhalla Website Creation:

Designing a website is a complex process. Design has many aspects that need attention, such as layout structure, color, font size, font name, page content, and other features of the design that contribute to the overall functionality of the webpage. As a novice designer, I chose to use Adobe Dreamweaver software for the creation of the website for Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. due to the user-friendly interface of the software. With Dreamweaver, creators can design on the web page itself, or through writing html code.

After speaking with the owner of the company, we decided to go with a simple layout that has a sidebar navigation menu. This sidebar is accessible at each page so users can easily navigate between web pages while interacting with the website. We selected six pages;

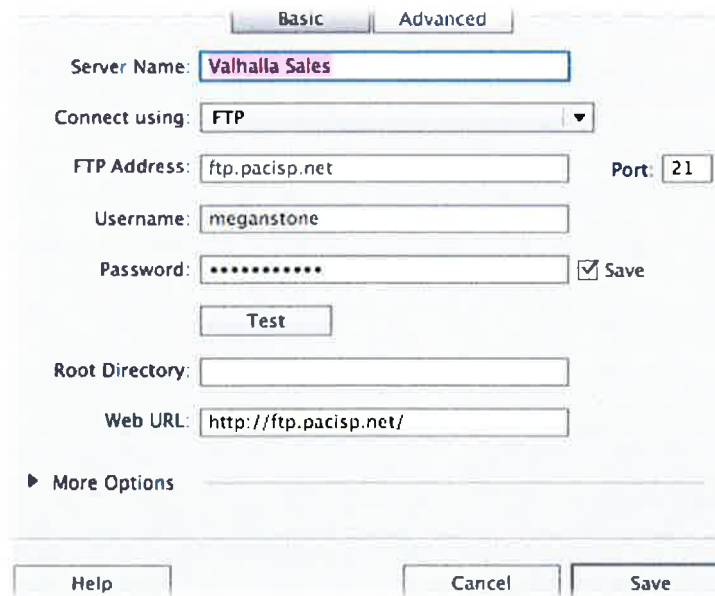
- Home
 - The home page will contain basic information about the company. The top of the page will have a picture featuring a nectarine orchard as well as the company motto.
- About
 - The purpose of this page is to enhance the information provided on the home page. This will go more in depth into the company history, how

the company began, how it has grown to where it is and what inspired the owner, David Stone (hereafter referred to as David), to begin this company. This page will also feature the company employees and information about each employee.

- Products
 - As stated in previous chapters, consumers have a desire to know where their food comes from and how it is produced. This page will feature each product that Valhalla markets and sells. It will also include photos of these products so consumers can see the quality of the produce and identify what they may want to look for in the future.
- Services
 - The purpose of this page is to provide potential clients, current customers and consumers with a brief overview of the various services offered through Valhalla Sales and Marketing.
- Contact Us
 - In produce, it's easy to contact a company because they're in the Blue Book. Consumers don't always have access to this information, and Valhalla wants consumers to know that there is transparency in the agriculture industry. This information is available for consumers to have access to the company and contact them if need be.
- Weather
 - This page links to the current weather in Kingsburg, CA.

Step One – Set Up:

To begin, I had to set up the website on the company server. I contacted the company that manages the server for Valhalla to obtain the necessary information to access the server. This is important because the files for each web page must be saved on the server so they appear on the live site.



The image shows a screenshot of an FTP client configuration window. At the top, there are two tabs: "Basic" and "Advanced". The "Basic" tab is selected. The form contains the following fields and controls:

- Server Name:** A text box containing "Valhalla Sales".
- Connect using:** A dropdown menu set to "FTP".
- FTP Address:** A text box containing "ftp.pacisp.net".
- Port:** A text box containing "21".
- Username:** A text box containing "meganstone".
- Password:** A text box filled with asterisks "*****". To its right is a checked checkbox labeled "Save".
- Test:** A button located below the password field.
- Root Directory:** An empty text box.
- Web URL:** A text box containing "http://ftp.pacisp.net/".
- More Options:** A section header with a right-pointing triangle icon.
- Buttons:** At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Help", "Cancel", and "Save".

Figure 13: View of how to enter the server information.

Each web page needs to be saved and established with a link. For example, the home page is linked as "index.html". By making the link name short and simple, it is easy to remember and prevents confusion as you move along with the design process. For the home page file, it should be saved with the same name "index.html". Since each page is being saved on the established site, on all consecutive pages, anytime an area of the page has been linked to "index.html", it will bring the user back to the home page. This link establishment is used to get buttons to link to another page of the website.

Next, I had to create the buttons, as well as the rollover buttons. I did this in Adobe Photoshop by establishing the size of the button, identifying the colors in accordance with the official company colors, and using the company font used in their logo.



Figure 14-1: The image for the home page button.



Figure 14-2: The image for the home page button when the mouse rolls over the image.

These images are linked to “index.html” so when users click on them, it takes them to the home page of the website.

Step Two – Formatting:

I had to set up a template page. The purpose of creating the template page is to create the layout design and insure that the design flows through the entire website. This is more efficient than creating six separate pages.

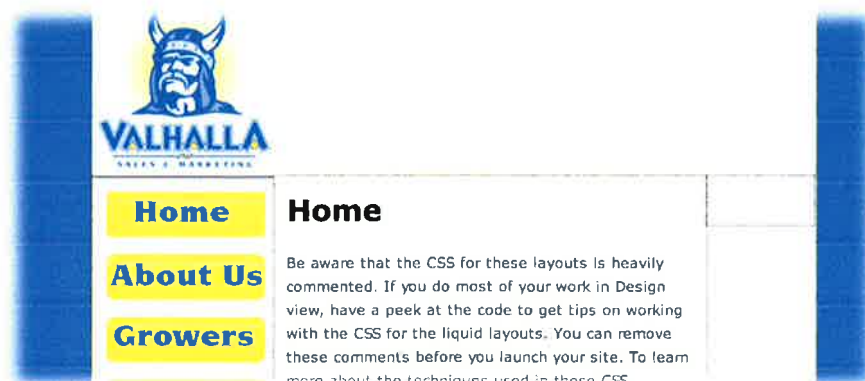


Figure 15: Template page used to create the base layout for each consecutive web page.

Step Three – Layout Design for Each Page:

The home page, “Our Story”, is where the company wanted to share the story of how Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. began and why the company was inspired to become what it is. This page is simple and briefly tells viewers when the company was established.

The “About Us” page can tell users about the employees of the company. This page was created with an invisible table. This means viewers cannot see that information is organized in a table, but the content is presented in an organized fashion. This page contains the names and positions of the three employees of Valhalla as well as their photo and a brief bio about each employee.

The “Products” page also contains an invisible table. The content lets potential clients as well as customers see what types of products the company works with. It also has photos of some of the quality products from various growers that Valhalla represents.

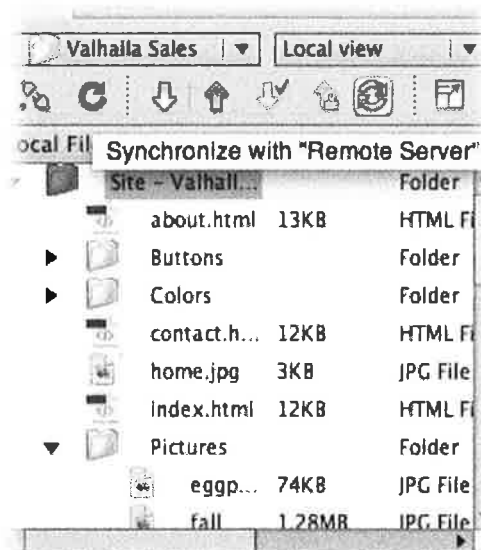
The “Services” page was created for clients to access information about what Valhalla can do for them. The content is aligned with what the company feels are important services they provide for the growers they represent.

The “Contact” page contains the company’s contact information such as phone, fax, email and address for clients or customers to contact them.

The “Weather” page is actually a link to the current weather in Kingsburg, CA, where Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. headquarters are.

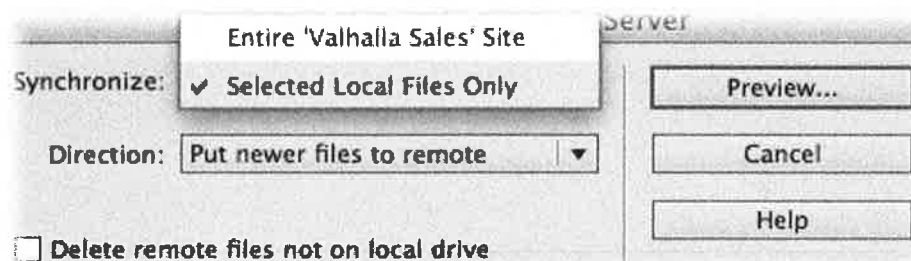
Step Four – Syncing Site to Server

Once all of the pages have been designed and saved to the root directory, you are ready to turn on the website. First, you should test your connection to the server to ensure that everything is on and working properly. If this test fails, re-enter your server username and password. If there are still issues, you may need to contact the manager of the server to establish and troubleshoot this issue. If everything is connected and working, you need to first sync the site to the server.



Partial screenshot of the right sidebar in Dreamweaver. The blue and purple arrows indicate the sync option.

Once you click sync, another option will pop up. On this, you need to select “Entire Site” and then click the preview button.



Screenshot of the sync options.

After clicking 'preview', the program will review the saved files stored on your computer and compare them to the files that are saved on the server. If the files are different, it will let you know how many files will be synchronized. You will click 'OK'.

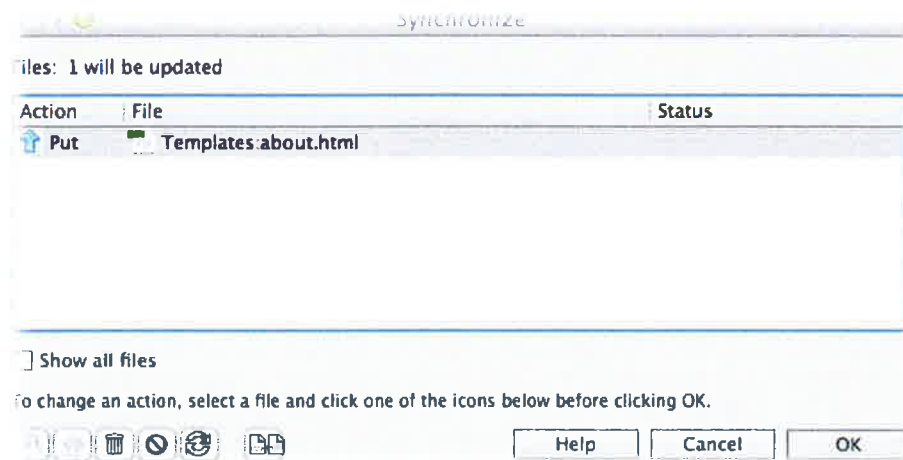


Figure 18: Partial screenshot of the synchronize option pop-up window.

Once you click 'OK', the program will synchronize all of the newer files and save them to the server you identified when you first set up the website. Once the synchronization process has finished, all that is left to do is to connect the site to the server.

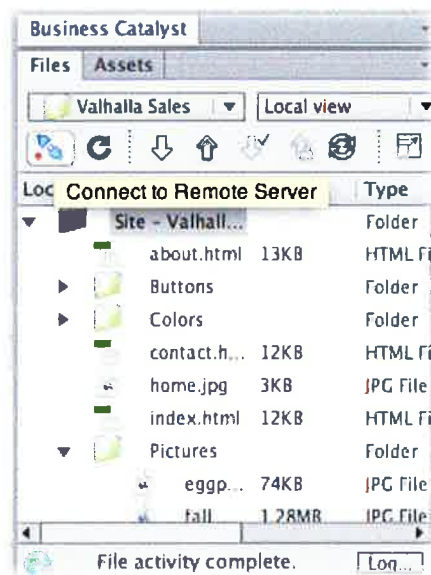


Figure 19: Partial screenshot of the right sidebar. The image of the plugs is the symbol for connecting the website. Click and the site will be on.

After you synchronize all of your files to the server, test out the website by entering the URL you established when setting up the server into the search bar of your web browser. For example, I would enter www.valhallasales.com.

Once you have verified that the site is working and functioning properly, your website is ready. For protection, you should be sure to have a couple back up folders on a flash drive or on a back up hard drive.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

This project will be included via screen-shots in this page, and can be viewed online at www.valhallasales.com. The website has very basic user interactions and is mainly used for providing users with information about the company. That being said, viewing the website online is the best way to understand and fully view this project; screenshots cannot be as interactive.

Page One: Our Story

On this page, users will be able to view information about the company. The purpose of this page is to give a brief background to how Valhalla began. It also has information that Valhalla wanted their visitors to know, such as their purpose as a company in the marketplace.



Figure 20: The home page can be reached at www.valhallasales.com/index.html.

Page Two: About Us

The purpose of this page is to allow users to virtually meet the employees. With photos and short biographies about the employees, it allows users to feel more connected with the company. Personal touches like this page add that feel of transparency that agricultural companies need to strive for.



Our Story

About Us

Products

Services

Contact

Weather

The Valhalla Team

David Stone
CEO



At the start of his produce career, David had a desire to be the voice for independent growers. It was this desire that was the initial inspiration for Valhalla.

Michelle Litone
Office
Manager/Sales



Michelle has worked with Valhalla for 13 years. She enjoys working with great people from all over the world.

Joanne Hames-Gamez
Grower Accounts



Joanne has been managing grower accounts for 10 years. She enjoys working with a great team of people and working for the growers.

Figure 21: The About Us Page. This page can be reached at www.valhallasales.com/aboutus.html.

Page Three – Products:

The purpose of the products page is to showcase the range and versatility of Valhalla's sales expertise. Over the years, the company has showcased their ability to work with a variety of products and be able to successfully market them. The owner of Valhalla says, "Selling is easy when you've got good growers." This statement rings true in the successful marketing techniques Valhalla uses. The wide range of produce they sell is a testament to that success.



Figure 22: The products page can be reached at www.valhallasales.com/products.

Page Four – Services:

As a sales and marketing company, Valhalla markets the products and provides a variety of services to their growers such as transport, selection, storage and market placement. The purpose of this page is to provide a generalized list to current and potential clients about the variety of services and marketing tools that Valhalla can provide for them. As a company, Valhalla can streamline the process for independent growers. Instead of growers stressing about organizing all the aspects of getting their product to a retail market, they go to Valhalla where products can be sold and shipped.



Figure 23: The services page can be reached at www.valhallasales.com/services.

Page Five – Contact:

This simple page is designed to provide contact information to visitors. The e-mail on this page links to Valhalla's main e-mail address. Consumers who have questions for the company and clients who want to connect with Valhalla can use this page as a resource.



Figure 24: The services page can be reached at www.valhallasales.com/contact.

Page 6 – Weather:

This page is simply a hyperlink to the local weather so clients and customers worldwide can take a peak at the weather in the central valley of California.

The Weather Channel

San Francisco, CA 69°
Milpitas, CA 75°
Kahului, HI 78°

FORECASTS MAPS VIDEO PHOTOS NEWS TV

Sign In Alerts Photos Desktop App

Kingsburg, CA (93631) Weather

Local Pollen Alert

Expect dry conditions over the next six hours.
Hourly Forecast

Yesterday
Today
Hourly
Tomorrow
Weekend
5 Day
10 Day
Monthly
Video Forecast
Map

Forecasts
Home & Garden
Fishing
Pollen
Travel

Camera Found. Pictures Inside, WOW
His Dad Makes Him Do THIS
7000 Year Old Mummy Found by...

There's a Reason She's Not Afraid
Man vs Shark!

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Forecast for Today

Right Now	Today	Tonight
72°F	90°	58°
Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear
0 in	0%	0%

Seasonal Forecasts

HIGH LOCAL

Tomorrow's Grass
Locality for California as of May 17, 2018

Figure 25: The weather page that is reached through the link on the weather button.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. is a small, family owned and operated grower/shipper operation. The purpose of this project was to provide them with an online media source for consumers and clients to access information about the company. From personal experience, I like to know where my food is coming from and how it was produced. One of the goals of the company was to create some transparency with consumers. Having this website has opened the door for that transparency, but it has also proven to be an outlet for further communications with clients and consumers.

Recommendations:

As far as the website, I would have used a fluid grid layout as opposed to the locked grid layout. The difference between the two is that with a fluid grid layout, the items on the page such as tables, pictures and text are all encoded as taking up a percentage of the page. This means that when you re-size your viewing window or are utilizing a really small or really large screen, the way the site appears on the page will change. Locked grid layout means that once the window in which you are viewing the site becomes too small, it will start cutting off some of the page content and the user would have to scroll left to right to view the entire contents of the page. By using the

fluid grid layout, it would make it easier as a designer to keep uniformity of the design on a variety of viewing platforms, as the size would be more easily adjusted.

Another recommendation I would make is that, as a designer working closely with the company, I would have two design options for layout and content prior to planning with the company. As a designer, you have sufficient knowledge about what looks best on a page. The designer should make decisions such as colors, fonts, tables, and layout. To make sure that the company feels involved in the design process step by step, selecting two options that you as a designer feel are equally effective with the message you want to convey will give the company the option to choose what they like best, but still give you control and liberties as a designer.

As a small company, Valhalla has the opportunity to have a large impact on the community around them. I would have liked to be able to fully develop a media campaign for the company. As a family company, it would be useful for the company to have an outreach program to continue communications and relations with their clients and consumers. A company newsletter would be useful for updating clients on domestic markets, company achievements and other related information. As the next step for Valhalla, I would recommend that the company move forward with a more prominent online presence.

One of the big things that we talked about as being an important reason for establishing the website in the first place was consumer and client outreach. With a media outreach program, the company we could have developed the website,

newsletters and social media accounts for the company. Transparency is what consumers want to see and this would have been an excellent opportunity.

As of this moment, the website for Valhalla Sales and Marketing Inc. is currently live online and functioning. The owner of Valhalla, David Stone, has viewed the website and is pleased with the results. He hopes to continue to develop the website in the future, and connect the website to other online media sources as the company steps into this new facet in the marketplace.

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