

Madison Park Greetings Intranet

Irvin MacQuarrie

Problem Statement

Madison Park Greetings, a local greeting card company, does not currently have an intranet. I have been asked by them to explore the design and implementation of a company intranet. Would like to develop an Intranet to streamline processes within the company

About MPG

Madison Park Greetings is a greeting card company based out of Seattle that designs, manufactures, and distributes high-end gift and stationary products. The products are sold by Sales Agents to over 6,000 retailers throughout the country. They have unique partnerships with such industry giants as Roger la Borde, Running Rhino, KOCO New York, iPop, and Linnea Design.



The company is a dynamic company that is continually changing and expanding. The Seattle office is made up of over 70 art, warehouse, and office employees. Artists are contracted outside of the company to design the artwork for the greeting cards and other products.

Figure 1 – Sample greeting card

Needs Assessment

As part of my needs assessment, I met informally with both Brian Jacobsen, the President of MPG, and Stevie Chambers -- the web Developer of MPG. This was done to get an idea of what both management and the IT department wanted from an Intranet and what their expectations are for what an Intranet would look like. Following my interviews, I sent a survey to eight executives and department heads of which I received two responses. These methods of collection allowed me to get a perspective from multiple points within the company.

- Have Centralized Announcements & Events
- Easily Accessible Company information / documents
- Be able to maintain Shipping and Inventory Information
- Many additional features such as personal web areas, sales monitoring, and external artist upload

Affinity Diagram

After my needs assessment, I proceeded to organize information based on commonalities. I was able to classify information into broad categories such as relating to communication needs or being in the same department. I decided to use an affinity diagram to group the needs and features into different categories. From these classifications, it is rather easy to create new categories or to move things from one category to another if the need arises.

The diagram was broken down into six general categories:

- Communication
- Shipments/Inventory
- Departments
- Employee Personal Pages
- General Company Information
- Technical

Design Process

Site Map

A site map was created to provide a layout of what the Intranet might look like based on the feedback that I received. It was largely based off of the affinity diagram with a few changes that were made in situations where it seemed warranted. For example, the *Word from Art Department* was moved from the *Communication* section to the *Art Department* section. The *Company Directory* was placed by itself allowing employees easy access from each page. All of the technical requirements were removed since they will not be appearing as pages.

The Site Map was created with the current website in mind. The map is constructed so that the categories will fit within the menu as it exists on the website. This will make implementation of an Intranet easier since it can rely on the existing structure of the website. The top-level site map presented below demonstrates the menu structure for the website.

- Company Information**
 - [Company Overview](#)
 - [Company Policies](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)
 - [Word from President](#)
 - [FAQ](#)
- Departments**
 - [Sales](#)
 - [Art Department](#)
 - [Accounting](#)
 - [Customer Service](#)
- Employees**
 - [Personal Web Space](#)
 - [Employee Documents](#)
 - [Communication](#)
- Company Directory**

Figure 2 – Top-level Site Map

Prototypes

The President of MPG had mentioned that he would like the look and feel of the Intranet to remain consistent with that of the company website. By doing this, it will save the web developer significant time in implementation, the employees will already be familiar with the structure and navigation, and it will preserve the artistic image of MPG.

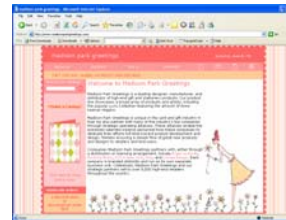


Figure 3 – MPG Website

Having this in mind, I made an effort to recreate the style of the website from the scratch since I did not have any of the existing code or style sheets. The produced pages do not match the website exactly, but it is easy to see how the sections match those of the website.

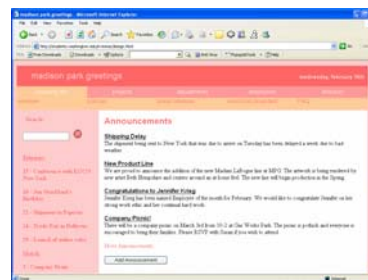


Figure 4 – Home Page Prototype

The menu sections, taken from the Site Map, are the same on every page and emulate the functionality of the website. The bottom menu changes depending on which section of the top menu is highlighted. Each page is composed of two main areas of space that data can be placed into – the main area of the page and the column on the left side.

Evaluation

I met with Brian Jacobsen to show him the sitemap and prototypes that I created. He really liked how the design mirrored the website in terms of color scheme and style. However, he surprised me by mentioning that the company was working on a new website design. This site changes the color scheme to green and white. However, the menu structure is very similar and can still utilize my design work.

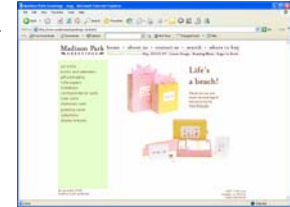


Figure 5 – New Website Design

Brian really liked the designs and he thought that the directory structure looked good. As he was looking through the designs, he mentioned a few additional features that he would really like to have.

- Product Release Cycle Timeline
- Sneak Peak of artwork being developed by artists
- Meeting minutes
- Weekly report on each Sales Manager
- Link to online catalog

I created a revised site map to take into account these additional features and the new website design. Any additional needs or features can be included on the sitemap.

- Company Information**
 - [Company Overview](#)
 - [Company Policies](#)
 - [Press Releases](#)
 - [Word from President](#)
 - [FAQ](#)
- Departments**
 - [Executive](#)
 - [Sales & Marketing](#)
 - [Company Catalog](#)
 - [Sales Projections](#)
 - [Sales Totals](#)
 - [Weekly Sales Manager report](#)
 - [Meeting Minutes](#)
 - [Art Department](#)
 - [Word from Art Department](#)
 - [Card Designs](#)
 - [External Artist Upload](#)
 - [Sneak Peak of artwork](#)
 - [Meeting Minutes](#)
 - [Finance & Systems](#)
 - [Meeting Minutes](#)
 - [Customer Service](#)
 - [Meeting Minutes](#)
 - [Production & Shipping](#)
 - [Product Release Cycle](#)
 - [Timeline](#)
 - [Meeting Minutes](#)
- Employees**
 - [Personal Web Space](#)
 - [Calendar](#)
 - [Paycheck History](#)
 - [Employee Documents](#)
 - [Employee Manual](#)
 - [Timesheets](#)
 - [Vacation Requests](#)
 - [Out of Office Notices](#)
 - [Communication](#)
 - [Discussion Board](#)
 - [Virtual Suggestions](#)
 - [Company Blog](#)
- Company Directory**

Figure 6 – Revised Site Map

Implementation

An intranet of this size and functionality is extremely difficult to implement at once if only one person is responsible. It is recommended that the Intranet be implemented in stages with the later stages building on the earlier ones. Begin first by creating the home page to give employees an idea of the look and feel. This will also have a central area for announcements, emails, and dates which was one of the biggest needs.

After that, it is recommended to proceed with the easier pages (e.g. *Word from the President*) and then moving onto the more difficult ones (e.g. automated shipping). It is also recommended to automate as much as possible and to empower employees as it will make maintenance easier on the IT department. This also gets the employees involved and gives them confidence in it.