How Two Gardens Revamped Their Membership Programs

APGA: June 21, 2017
Introductions

Andrea Nickrent
- Director, Development Operations – Missouri Botanical Garden
- Andrea.Nickrent@mobot.org

Nicole Krom
- Membership & Outreach Manager – Longwood Gardens
- Nkrom@longwoodgardens.org
Longwood Gardens is the living legacy of Pierre S. du Pont, inspiring people through excellence in garden design, horticulture, education, and the arts.
# Membership History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Started in 2007, original goal was 50,000 HHs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim for 50/50 attendance split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No development department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Membership Growth

- **2007**: Membership and GA price increase, higher levels established, 40,706 households
- **2008**:
  - Frequent Visitor Pass transitioned to Membership Program, 16,000 households
  - Prices remain with same benefits and significant growth
- **2009**:
  - Expanded program with more benefits added, 25,000 households
  - Significant growth as a result of Light exhibit
- **2010**:
  - Membership and GA price increase, higher levels established, 40,706 households
  - GA price increase
- **2011**:
  - 47,492
- **2012**:
  - 50,000
- **2013**:
  - 51,775
- **2014**:
  - 59,278
- **2015**:
  - 65,000

**Member Growth**

- **16,000 households**
- **20,000 households**
- **25,000 households**
- **33,747**
- **40,706**
- **47,492**
- **49,181**
- **51,775**
- **59,278**
- **65,000**
Benefits include:

10% discount at the GardenShop, the Terrace, Continuing Education courses, and additional admission tickets
Up to 15% discount on Performing Arts tickets
Presale access
Members-only hours
Two complimentary tickets
Complimentary scooter, strollers, and wheelchair rentals
Exclusive communications
Free performances and tours
Discounts to select Brandywine Valley attractions and regional garden centers
Why Change A Successful Program?

Rapid growth and sustainability

*Managing 65,000+ Members*

Value versus price

*FY14 price increase for GA, not Membership*

Complicated program to manage and communicate

*13 levels to choose from*

Lack of differentiation between levels

*Every level essentially gets the same benefits beyond access*

Benefits too robust with our limited capacities

*Benefits created when we had 25,000 households*

Perception

*Value decision versus one of support*
Our Membership Evolution
Employing Thought Leadership and Internal Expertise to Evolve our Membership Program

- **August 2014:** Internal Analysis and Communications, RFP Release
- **July 2015:** Data Mining, Interpretation of Member Habits, Behaviors: Connecting the Dots
- **September 2015:** Secondary Data Gathering, Workshop and Testing: Affirming Our Direction
- **February-June 2016:** Program Development, Forecasting, Positioning, Messaging
- **June-August 2016:** Communications of New Levels
- **August 2016 and Beyond:** Launch of the new program, Continue Reinforcement of Messaging, Member Response Tracking, Reporting
Points of Data Collected

- Benchmark
- Guest Surveys
- Member Surveys
- Member Behavior & Demographic Study
- Employee Focus Groups
- On-site Intercept Survey
- Guest Focus Groups
- Modeling Survey
Quantitative Member Results

- 6.4% attend ticketed performances, representing 53% of total sales
- 3.3% take CE classes, representing 66% of total attendees
- 60.1% use the Café, representing 45% of total sales
- Members make up 36.7% of total sales for the GardenShop
- Members buy additional tickets representing $348,216 in revenue (18,193 tickets)
Qualitative Member Feedback

- They **love** the Gardens
- **Value** is the driver
- Levels based on the number of people included
- Beyond free admission, **Christmas** and **GardenShop** are the most important aspects of their Membership
- **Low participation** in certain benefits
- **Visitation** was the reason for Membership
**Modeling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Package A</th>
<th>Package B</th>
<th>Package C</th>
<th>Package D</th>
<th>Package E</th>
<th>Package F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic-1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Premier-1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Basic-2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Premier-2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Basic-3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Premier-3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual cost</strong></td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$110</td>
<td>$115</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of cardholders</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Up to 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Up to 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Up to 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free admissions each visit including cardholder (adults/children 5-18)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admission to special events (Christmas free to members)</strong></td>
<td>$10 per ticket</td>
<td>1 free each visit</td>
<td>$10 per ticket</td>
<td>2 free each visit</td>
<td>$10 per ticket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discounts on classes and Performing Arts tickets</strong></td>
<td>Up to 15%</td>
<td>Up to 15%</td>
<td>Up to 15%</td>
<td>Up to 15%</td>
<td>Up to 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-sale and priority reservations</strong></td>
<td>Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events</td>
<td>Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events</td>
<td>Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events</td>
<td>Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events</td>
<td>Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Premier benefits</strong></td>
<td>Longwood Chimes magazine (printed), Premier-only hours</td>
<td>Longwood Chimes magazine (printed), Premier-only hours</td>
<td>Longwood Chimes magazine (printed), Premier-only hours</td>
<td>Longwood Chimes magazine (printed), Premier-only hours</td>
<td>Longwood Chimes magazine (printed), Premier-only hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Modeling Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projected choice</th>
<th>Membership Choice by Any Children in Visiting Group</th>
<th>Overall Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Only children &lt;5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current/Premier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Plus</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Plus</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Purchase</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic/Premier 1-2-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic-1</td>
<td>22 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier-1</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic-2</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier-2</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic-5</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier-5</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Purchase</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Premier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual</td>
<td>55 %</td>
<td>46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual &amp; children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual &amp; children</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier &amp; children</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Purchase</td>
<td>3 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Evolution of Membership Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Level</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Transitioned Level</th>
<th>Transitioned Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>Gardens1</td>
<td>$85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>Gardens2</td>
<td>$135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual</td>
<td>$95</td>
<td>Gardens5</td>
<td>$185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Plus</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>Gardens5</td>
<td>$185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>Gardens5</td>
<td>$185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Plus</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>Gardens Preferred</td>
<td>$295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Arbor</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Gardens Preferred</td>
<td>$295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes Tower</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Gardens Premium</td>
<td>$550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FY2017 Households

Goal: 62,000-64,000

YTD: 60,558

Spring Acquisition Goal: 3,150
FY2017 Financials

Goal: $9,000,000
YTD through: $6,359,000 ($4,621,018 last year)

Spring Acquisition Goal: $400,000
Sales Analysis

Average Sale: 43% increase
August 2016-May 2017: $142.45
August 2015-May 2016: $99.24

Membership Sold: 6% decrease
August 2016-May 2017: 51,522
August 2015-May 2016: 54,674

Current 12 Month Retention Rate: 66.09%
Communicating Change

Talk about it, talk about it, talk about it... then repeat
Garden program change

Last rate increase was 2009
- Needed to take a holistic look at benefits

First membership overhaul in decades

Substantial revenue lift needed
- Lost 11% to inflation since last rate increase

Increased revenue needs (42% increase over 2012)
Who needs to change and why?

Existing audience
◦ Current members

Internal audience
◦ Staff
◦ Volunteers

We need the revenue!

“What if we don’t change at all ... and something magical just happens?”

www.shutterstock.com · 128236091
Who knows what?

What does your audience think about you?
What do you think about your audience?
What do you think your audience thinks about you?

Find out...
Do your homework and don’t be scared

Survey all groups
- Big donors
- Small donors
- Those closest to you (boards, volunteers, staff)
- Those not-so-close to you (lapsed donors)

Be willing to step back from your assumptions

Don’t let a vocal minority dictate change
- Make data-driven decisions
Donors first

Remember to keep your donors’ interests in mind
◦ This is about them and how they can help
◦ Keep communication donor-centric
Timing

Give yourself enough time
- Change doesn’t happen overnight – at least not well

Make a rollout plan
- Internal audiences
- External audiences
Garden’s transition timeframe

Survey: Summer 2014
  ◦ Informed communication strategies
  ◦ Started new pricing discussion

Comparative benefits analysis: Summer 2015

Debate and decision making: Fall 2015

Board of Trustees approval: Fall 2015

Internal training: January 2016

Implementation: March 1, 2016
Eat. Sleep. Talk. Repeat.

PR 101: She who speaks first, controls the message

Consider the order of change notification
- VIPs first (Board and leadership volunteers)
- Forward-facing staff
- Volunteers
- Anyone who might get questioned

Prepare knowledge!
- FAQs
- Talking points
Communication plan: Fall 2015

Volunteer leadership groups
- January 11: Members’ Board
- January 12: Young Friends Council
- February 9: Corporate Council

Volunteer trainings
- Docents, Visitor Engagement Station volunteers: February
- MSD volunteers, YFC Membership Committee: March

Staff
- Training with all front of house: late January
- News in Bloom (staff e-newsletter): late January

Mailing to all members: February 1
Feature in Spring Bulletin: February 22
Member e-news: February, March, April
Renewals: Ongoing
Does everyone know their lines?

Constituent rollout: February 1

Program start date: March 1
Be flexible

Grandfather in appropriate groups when necessary

Make people feel special

Decide who is the decision maker on special circumstances for consistency

◦ Have a point person/people for difficult discussions
◦ Empower those people to make it right
Be prepared for the unexpected

GOOD THINGS!

- People renewed at the higher levels prior to the start date
- Others sent us the difference
What happened?

Membership numbers in 2016 (non-exhibit year)
- Over 44,000 membership households (4% decline in volume)
- $3.3M in revenue (10% growth in revenue)

73% retention rate

Currently on pace to surpass our $3.3M revenue goal for 2017
You can do it!

• Be thoughtful about why
• Do your homework
• Educate your internal audience
• Deep breath
• Educate your external audience
• Go!
change
people
need
values
things
see
better
organisation
behaviour
way
organisation
behaviour
way