

How Two Gardens Revamped Their Membership Programs



**CHANGE
AHEAD**

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Introductions

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Longwood Gardens is the living legacy of Pierre S. du Pont, inspiring people through excellence in garden design, horticulture, education, and the arts.





Horticulture



Education



The Arts



Membership History

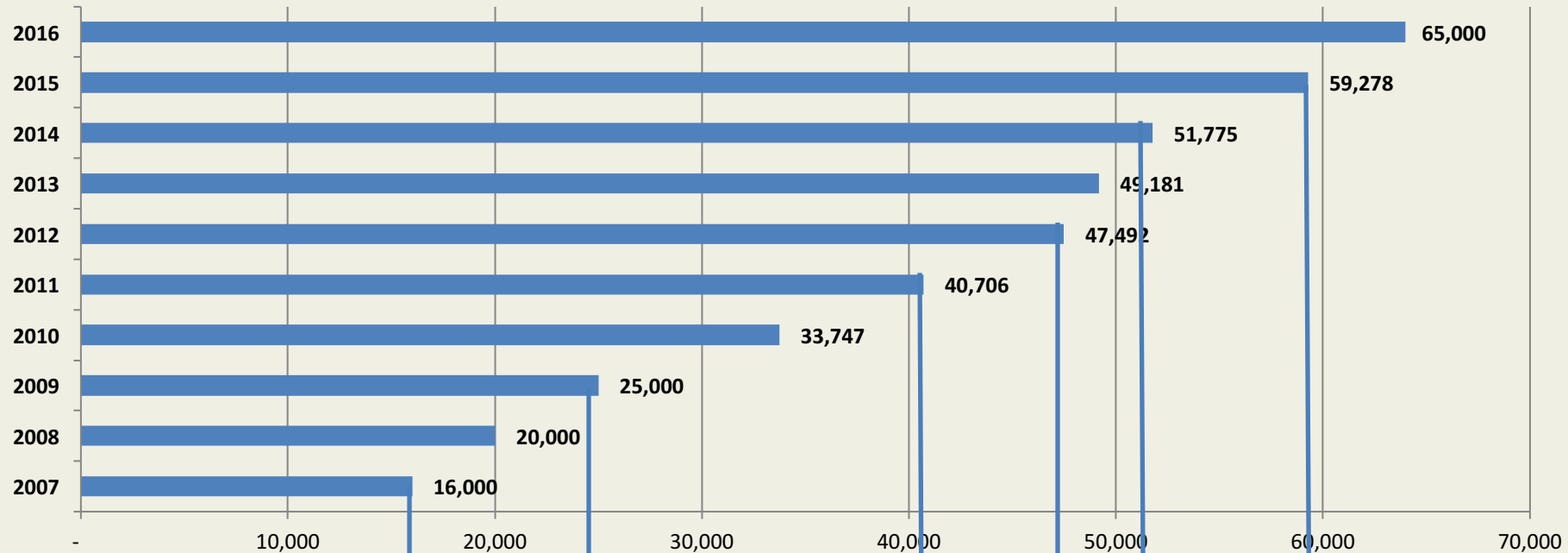
Started in 2007, original goal was 50,000 HHs

Aim for 50/50 attendance split

No development department



Membership Growth



Frequent Visitor Pass transitioned to Membership Program, 16,000 households

Expanded program with more benefits added, 25,000 households

Membership and GA price increase, higher levels established, 40,706 households

Significant growth as a result of Light exhibit

GA price increase

Prices remain with same benefits and significant growth



Former Membership Program

| Membership Level | Current Price | Percentage | Total | Named Cardholders | Guests Per Day |
|------------------|---------------|------------|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| Student | \$30 | 3.88% | 2,433 | 1 | - |
| Individual | \$65 | 14.76% | 9,263 | 1 | - |
| Individual Plus | \$105 | 12.11% | 7,603 | 1 | 1 |
| Dual | \$95 | 36.55% | 22,944 | 2 | - |
| Family | \$120 | 19.14% | 12,014 | 2 and Children | - |
| Garden Plus | \$150 | 12.23% | 7,678 | 2 and Children | 1 |
| Rose Arbor | \$250 | 0.88% | 554 | 2 and Children | 2 |
| Chimes Tower | \$500 | 0.46% | 286 | 2 and Children | 4 |

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

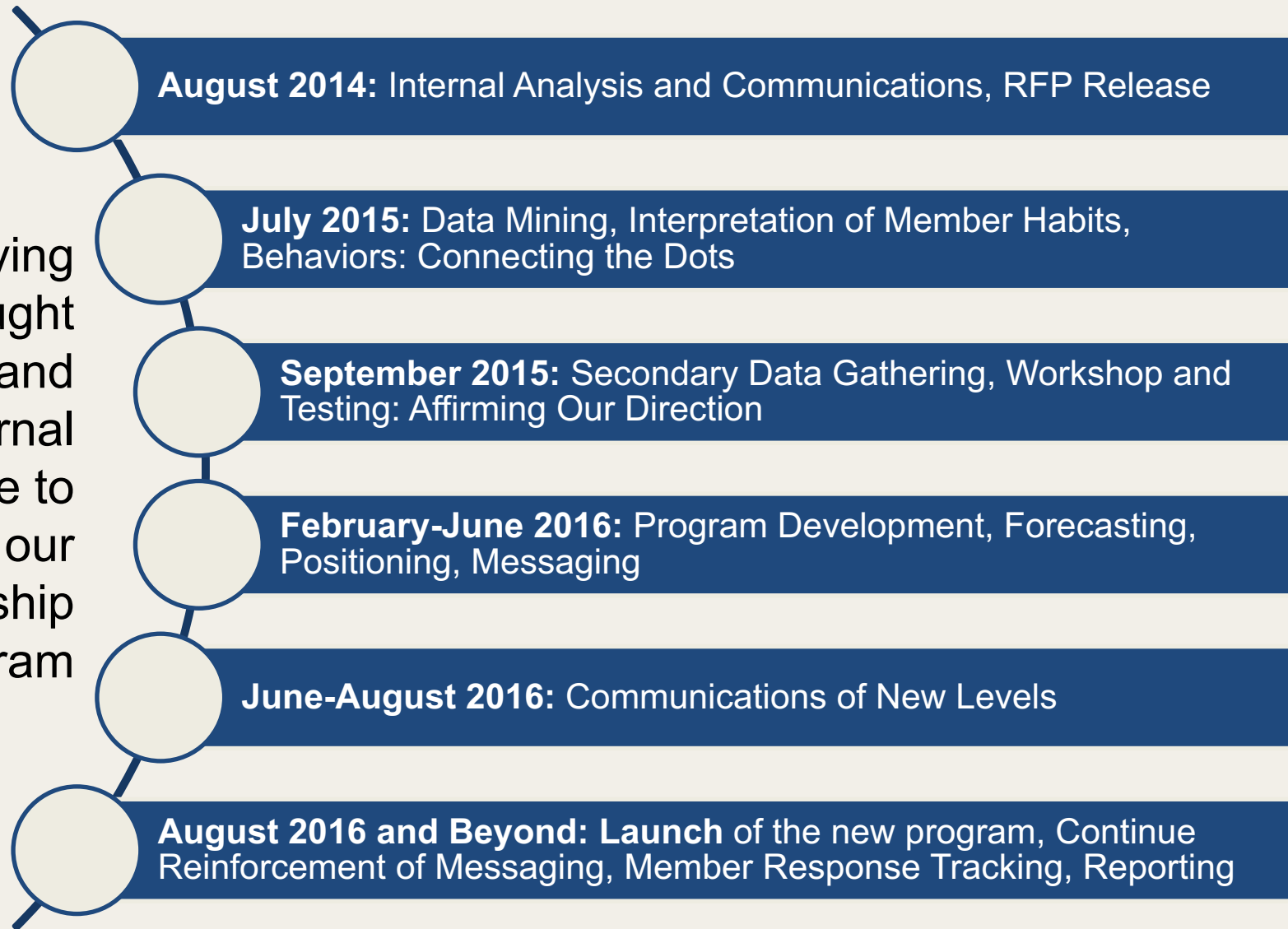
Value decision versus one of support



Our Membership Evolution



Employing
Thought
Leadership and
Internal
Expertise to
Evolve our
Membership
Program



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

All members enjoy:

2 free guest tickets per year (blackout dates apply)

Free reservations for *A Longwood Christmas*

10% discount for GardenShop, 1906 and Café, scooters (when available) and general admission tickets

20% discount on Member Appreciation Days

Members-only hours, free performances and tours

Free stroller and wheelchair rentals when available

Ages 0-4 always free

| | Package A Basic-1 | Package B Premier-1 | Package C Basic-2 | Package D Premier-2 | Package E Basic-5 | Package F Premier-5 |
|--|----------------------|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| Annual cost | \$75 | \$110 | \$115 | \$160 | \$165 | \$220 |
| Number of cardholders | 1 | 1 | Up to 2 | Up to 2 | Up to 2 | Up to 3 |
| Free admissions each visit including cardholder (adults/children 5-18) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Admission to special events (<i>Christmas</i> free to members) | \$10 per ticket | 1 free each visit | \$10 per ticket | 2 free each visit | \$10 per ticket | 5 free each visit |
| Discounts on classes and <i>Performing Arts</i> tickets | | Up to 15% | | Up to 15% | | Up to 15% |
| Pre-sale and priority reservations | | Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events | | Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events | | Performances, classes, lectures, tours, dining events, special events |
| Other Premier benefits | | <i>Longwood Chimes</i> magazine (printed), Premier-only hours | | <i>Longwood Chimes</i> magazine (printed), Premier-only hours | | <i>Longwood Chimes</i> magazine (printed), Premier-only hours |



Modeling Results

| Projected choice | Membership Choice by Any Children in Visiting Group | | | Overall Distribution |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | None | Only children <5 | Children 5-18 in Group | |
| Current/Premier | | | | |
| Individual | 21 % | 16 % | 9 % | 17 % |
| Dual | 50 | 39 | 15 | 38 |
| Individual Plus | 13 | 15 | 5 | 11 |
| Family | 6 | 18 | 50 | 20 |
| Garden Plus | 5 | 8 | 17 | 9 |
| Premier | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Not Purchase | 2 % | 3 % | 2 % | 2 % |
| | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| Basic/Premier 1-2-5 | | | | |
| Basic-1 | 22 % | 20 % | 10 % | 19 % |
| Premier-1 | 17 | 16 | 7 | 14 |
| Basic-2 | 40 | 38 | 25 | 35 |
| Premier-2 | 11 | 9 | 26 | 16 |
| Basic-5 | 3 | 6 | 19 | 8 |
| Premier-5 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Not Purchase | 4 % | 8 % | 7 % | 6 % |
| | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| Children & Premier | | | | |
| Individual | 25 % | 12 % | 8 % | 19 % |
| Dual | 55 | 46 | 15 | 43 |
| Individual & children | 5 | 9 | 10 | 7 |
| Dual & children | 4 | 23 | 51 | 19 |
| Premier | 5 | 5 | 8 | 6 |
| Premier & children | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Not Purchase | 3 % | 3 % | 3 % | 3 % |
| | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % |



Evolution of Membership Levels

| Current Level | Current Price | Transitioned Level | Transitioned Price |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student | \$30 | Gardens1 | \$85 |
| Individual | \$65 | | |
| Dual | \$95 | Gardens2 | \$135 |
| Individual Plus | \$105 | | |
| Family | \$120 | Gardens5 | \$185 |
| Garden Plus | \$150 | | |
| Rose Arbor | \$250 | Gardens Preferred | \$295 |
| Chimes Tower | \$500 | Gardens Premium | \$550 |

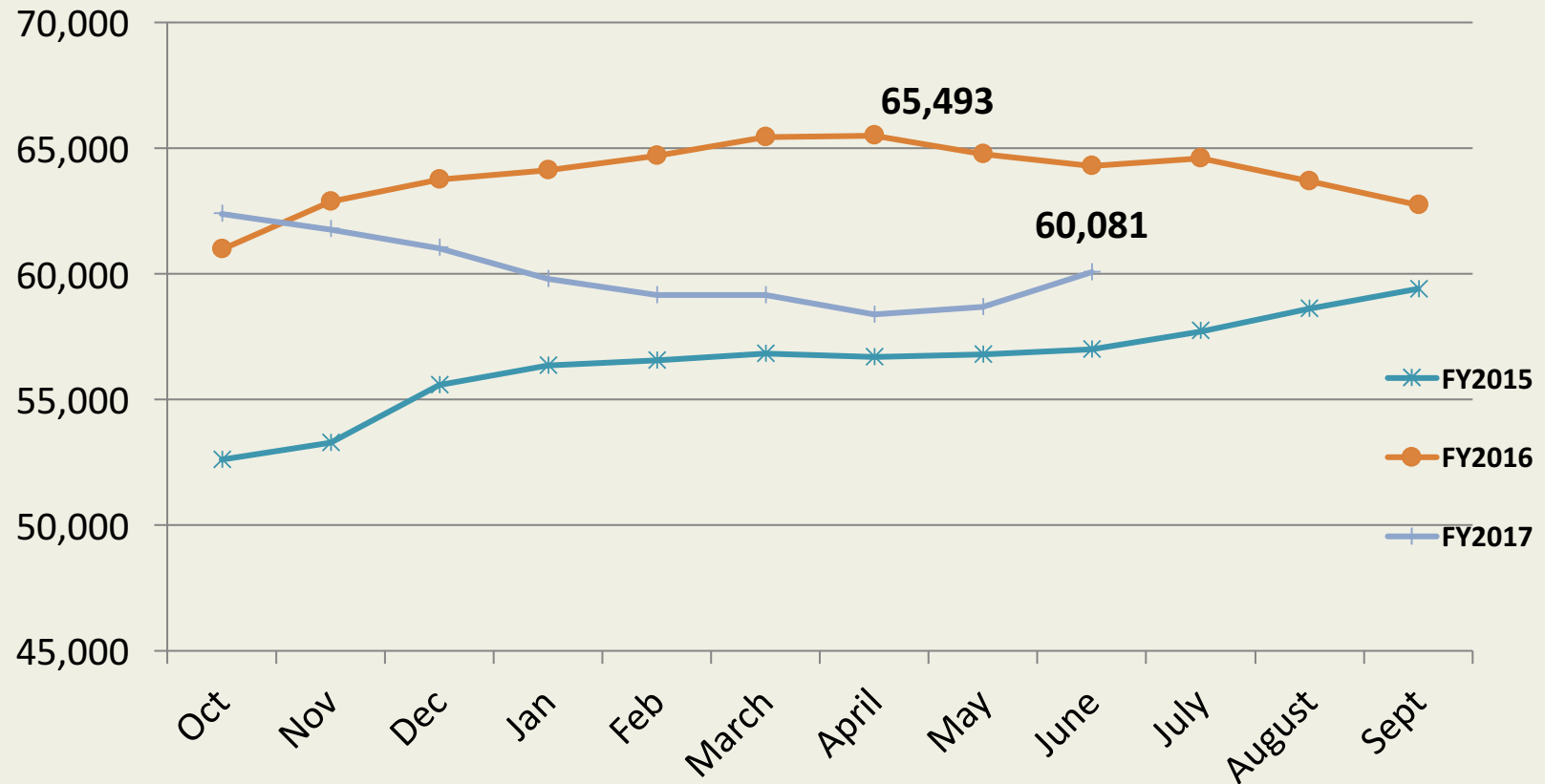


FY2017 Households

Goal: 62,000-64,000

YTD: 60,558

Spring Acquisition Goal: 3,150



captured at the beginning of each month

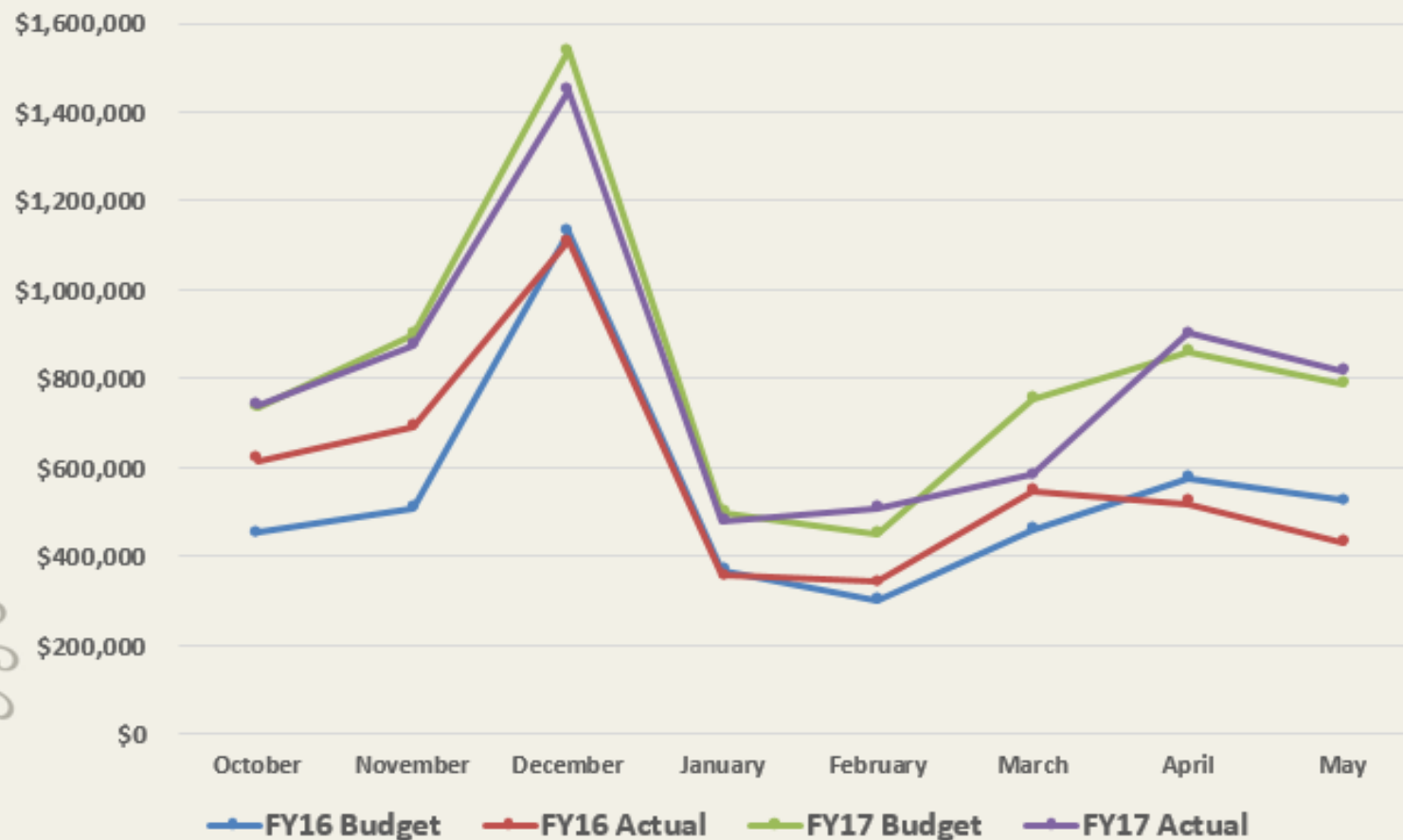


FY2017 Financials

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

A yellow circular sticker with a white border, tilted slightly to the right. The text on the sticker is in bold, black, sans-serif font. The top line reads "CHANGE IS GOOD." and the bottom line reads "You go first!".

**CHANGE
IS GOOD.**
You go
first!

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

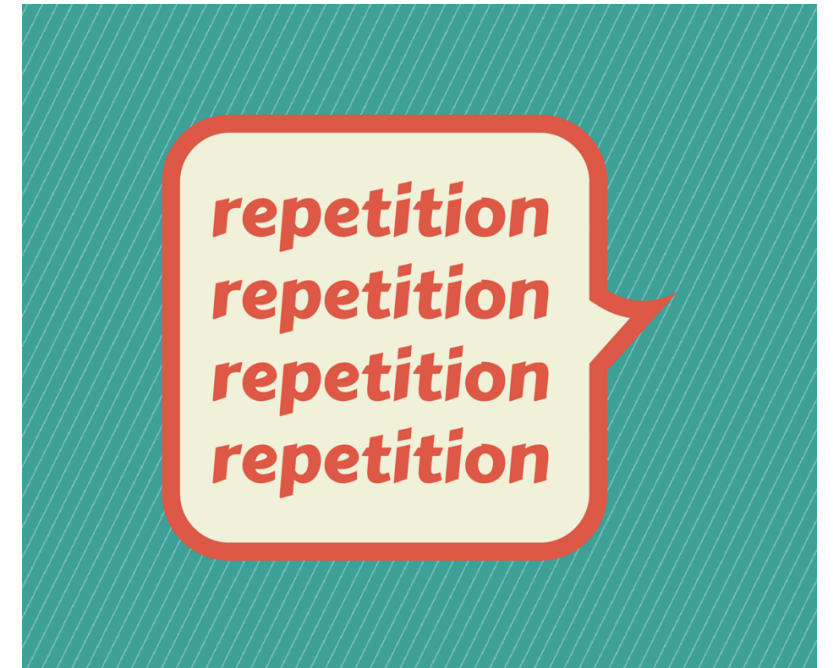
- Training with all front of house: late January
- News in Bloom (staff e-newsletter): late January

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!



