

Appendix A

VANDUSEN GIFT SHOP STUDY

Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

The VanDusen Garden opened its gates in 1975. The concept was to build and operate a beautiful garden and provide a service to the community through giving information on gardening, a library and offering a place where gifts relating to gardening might be obtained by visitors.

A well-run gift shop enhances the image and the revenue of any public garden. It can be argued that the gift shop is an extension of the garden -- an amplification of a positive experience where visitors might be encouraged to take something home that might reinforce a pleasurable experience.

Revenue from the shop has not kept pace with the increase in visitor attendance. Between 1990 and 1993, attendance revenue increased from \$199,390 to \$262,952 (+ 31%). During the same period, gift shop revenue increased from \$192,539 to \$202,821 (+ 5%). In 1994, the year of the expanded garden show, the admission revenue rose to \$363,697 (+ 38%) and gift shop revenue to \$243,732 (+20%).

GIFT SHOP BACKGROUND

Since the opening of VanDusen Gardens in 1975, the size of the shop has remained at 880 square feet. Various small improvements have been made to the layout of the shop but no detailed assessment or study has been done towards improving management, design, merchandising, operations or promotion.

Presently the Gift Shop is managed by the Head Cashier who has a dual function for the collection of admissions for the Garden through her staff as well as all of the activities required to stock, maintain and provide customer service to the shop patrons. Apart from visitors to the Garden, the expansion of the client base for the Gift Shop has not been actively pursued.

A number of preliminary reviews of the shop have been prepared. In conjunction with the Strategic Plan for VanDusen, staff and volunteers listed a number of areas for improvement.

A merchandising and retail design study was undertaken in 1983 through a large western Canadian retailer. Several suggestions for physical and merchandise improvements were made. Little action has been taken.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE STUDY

Management Review and Analysis:

The management structure and staff resources needs to be reviewed in the areas of flexibility, responsibility and accountability. Sales and customer service techniques are to be developed to stimulate pro-active sales methods. The role of the volunteer and their interaction with staff needs to be assessed.

The Physical Location: 2

This needs to be examined in relation to:

- The entrance and exit to the garden; first impressions and decor;
- The restaurant;
- Short-term improvement, considering future facilities plan,
- Potential for the sale of plants;
- Ability of staff to appropriately assist customers and ring in purchases.

Merchandising:

Needs to be considered in the following categories:

- Mix of garden-related and tourist-directed merchandise;
- Display quality and quantity;
- Product pricing, sales improvement strategies;
- Inventory levels and control;
- Ordering practices;
- Product sale analysis methods.

Marketing and Advertising:

The target markets identified in the Strategic Plan and the User Needs Survey will assist in combination with a merchandising strategy to attract additional clients to the shop.

Assessment of existing approaches and the development of new approaches to maximizing public awareness of the Gift Shop and its merchandise are required.

Discussion with Stakeholders:

The study will, at an early stage, involve discussions with interested groups and individuals:

- Garden staff;
- VBGA officials, membership and volunteers;
- Visitors to the garden, both local and out-of-town.
- Park Board staff.

One workshop is to be included in the study to facilitate a freeflow of ideas from the above constituency.

Review of Other Similar Operations:

1. Local

- Bloedel Conservatory
- Aquarium Gift Shop
- Science World
- Sun Yat Sen Garden
- UBC Garden Shop

2. Other B.C. Facilities

- Butchart Gardens
- Minter Gardens

3. Other appropriate retail facilities including garden 'boutiques'.

OUTCOME OF STUDY 3

The outcome of the study is to be a detailed plan to improve the facility, its management and its merchandise. The plan must include recommendations to better serve the garden visitor and enhance income for the Park Board and VanDusen Gardens. It must cover both short and longterm directions for the Gift Shop with specific action steps and associated costs for implementation in 1996 and 1997.

CONSULTANT WILL PROVIDE

- All expertise to meet the terms of reference;
- A description of the methodology to be used in undertaking the study;
- A schedule of tasks and a time-line indicating progress toward completion;
- Details of the consultant's staff allocated to the tasks proposed;

- Information on previous relevant studies that the Consultant has been involved with and the name of one contact person for each of their last 2 studies.
- 10 copies of a preliminary report for review;
- 3 reproducible copies of the final report.

PARK BOARD AND THE VBGA TO PROVIDE

- Project contact person to liaise with the Consultant;
- Access to all previous studies done on the Gift shop;
- Access to information on the operation of the Gift Shop;

- Access to appropriate staff and volunteers who are or have been involved in its operation.
- Arrangement of meetings.

STUDY TIMEFRAME

- Project initiation by February 5, 1996;
- Project completion by March 29, 1996.

STUDY BUDGET

\$16,500 upset limit plus taxes.

PROPOSAL

The Consultant is to submit a proposal (3 copies) to undertake this Study to Roy Forster, Curator, VanDusen Garden by January 16, 1996. 4

November 29, 1995
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