

Research Proposal
created by
Southeastern Marketing Research Firm
for
Management of Airlie Gardens

Team
Members

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1. Management Problem

A. Problem Statement

Given that New Hanover County wants to stop its current \$1.4 million subsidy of Airlie Gardens in the next 5 years, Airlie Garden's Management must identify possible new sources of revenue, or possible new strategies to increase the revenue coming from current sources. While generating this revenue, costs need to be allocated at an optimal level as well. Airlie Gardens has the potential to differentiate itself in many ways and go in many different directions, so understanding the key target markets will be very important as well as establishing a clear vision as to which direction the gardens should head to in the future.

B. Background

I. Historical Background

a. Nature of Airlie Gardens and product(s)/service(s) offered

Purchased by New Hanover County in 1999, Airlie Gardens has been dealt the task "...to help preserve and restore the once magnificent estate gardens - which had suffered greatly from successive hurricanes."¹ Airlie provides the community of Wilmington and the surrounding areas with a breathtaking spot to get married and hold receptions but also with a chance to learn about local history, tidal ecosystems, natural beauty and local plant life. For those interested in learning more about Airlie and the plant life, group tours are offered including golf cart guided tours for those impaired.

Airlie Gardens hosts many different events, some of which are annual concerts, art festivals and the well-known Oyster Roast. Airlie Gardens provides six different levels of membership to its customers. The first level starts at \$25 and is known as

Holly, the second is \$50 and known as Gardenia, the third is \$100 and known as Dogwood, the fourth is \$250 and known as Rose, the fifth is \$500 and known as Magnolia and the highest level is \$1000 and is known as Azalea.² Another popular event held by Airlie Gardens is the annual Showcase Garden contest which brings in local nurseries, landscape companies, plant societies, and garden clubs to design their own section in the gardens.³

b. Sales and profit history

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year Airlie Gardens spent \$444,089.14 on their expenses. The top three areas where they invested the most money included 82.99% spent on fundraising activities, 5.60% spent on professional services, and finally 2.24% spent on contracted labor. Airlie Gardens' revenue for the last fiscal year totaled \$606,855, which is well above the total amount used for expenses. The top three revenue-generating sources included fond-raising grants, which earned 67.47%, next was 18.64% earned through Azalea Festival contributions, and third 12.26% received from memberships.⁴

c. Description of current market efforts

Currently Airlie Gardens is promoting through print advertising, advertisements on billboards, the Internet (their own individual website, links with search engines as well as links from other portals and vendors) and on radio and TV. It is currently in the process of possibly putting together a Holiday Light show. If this event is proven to be a success this year it will soon become an annual tradition, hopefully bringing in a steady stream of revenue. Airlie is also focused on promoting their "Friends of Airlie" membership program, giving customers six different levels to choose from. Airlie

long deal

Gardens holds annual concert series bringing in 13 concerts, 8667 attendees, and 72 volunteers last year alone. They also arrange the Airlie Arts Festival which last year, brought in 97 artist, 11 Plein Air artist and 113 volunteers.

Finally the Oyster Roast, which has been a coastal Carolina tradition for many years, is also hosted at Airlie and there is a lot of promotion involved in this event (and it is also a great promotion for Airlie itself). Last year the Oyster Roast brought in 667 attendees, 62 volunteers, and over \$31,000 raised for environmental education programs.⁵ Airlie is planning to open their new Garden Services Center in April. In addition to offering environmental programs, this building will finally provide "real" bathrooms to their customers.

II. Consumer Analysis

a. Identified market segments

Airlie Gardens can serve many market segments because of its educational value and entertainment value as well as its natural, historical, traditional and sentimental value. The general consensus among top managers of Airlie Gardens is that their target market is the "elitist class". Incomes of \$100,000 or more is the main concentration of this segment. In the general area of Wilmington, this market segment represents 9.6 percent of the household population of 98,696.⁶ Within this particular segment, household income of \$200,000 or more represents 1.9 percent of the total household population.⁶ These figures are based on the 2000 census and have possibly increased in recent years due to a high number of upper class retirees that choose to move to this area. Since Airlie Gardens also has an educational value for children, the target market can be

not really

good detail

very broad since families with children can be from any income level. However, that segment is significantly less of a market than the so-called elitists.

b. What needs does Airlie Gardens serve

As well as serving many segments, it also serves many customers needs. Customers can visit Airlie Gardens as students for educational values. The gardens are open to host elementary and junior high classes to learn about water quality and plants as well as the soil. Airlie can also be educationally beneficial to the general public. They have many events planned this year such as plant identification, learning about dragonflies and also monarch butterflies.

Airlie Gardens can also serve entertainment needs. Visitors of Airlie, not only can get entertained at the many various events or daily tours or self guided walk through, but at the same time Airlie is filling many other needs. Some of these are the need to enjoy the outdoors and get some fresh air, to spend quiet time with family, and to have a fun day that can include the whole family, without spending an extensive amount of money.

Finally, a last important customer need that can be fulfilled at Airlie Gardens is based on a beautiful, natural setting for a wedding and/or reception. The needs filled and advantages of Airlie Gardens compared to other competitors will be discussed further in Section III. Whether it is an educational visit, a visit for entertainment, or a wedding event, Airlie Gardens can satisfy many people's needs and desires to help create exceptional family memories.

c. Features most important to customers

As of the 2003/2004 figures from Airlie Gardens' annual report⁷ suggest entertainment seems to be the most attractive component. Thirteen jazz Concerts brought 8,667 attendees to Airlie Gardens, which is around 667 per concert. Only 6000 people visited the garden, outside of any events so this suggests Jazz Nights really are a popular event at Airlie Gardens. In the upcoming season a Jazz concert series will take place every first and third Friday of the month. Airlie Gardens also offers folk and pop concerts. The Oyster Roast as mentioned above is a Southern heritage event, reminding people of former elitist socials held at the gardens and this welcomed 667 people last year. Tickets were sold at \$60 and the event became the biggest fundraiser in 2004, with ca. \$30,000 of revenues⁸. The 2nd Annual Arts Festival brought only \$ 2,000 revenues, because it rained on Saturday and Sunday, which are the main visitor days. Admission fee is \$ 5 and Airlie Gardens generated 20% of the sold artwork.

As shown, entertainment seems to be the most important feature that Airlie Gardens has to offer for the general public. Parking has been a challenge in the past for these events. There are 226 spaces free of charge available at Airlie Gardens.⁸ For events that host around 600 people this is not sufficient. As a result of this, currently Airlie Gardens offers visitors the option to park cars at the Mayfaire Townsquare shopping center and take a Trolley back to the gardens. There is no additional charge for this.

The largest event is the social lunch during the Azalea Festival. The garden is rented out to the city and accommodates around 3,000 people and another group of people for the ribbon cutting in the spring garden. Last year Airlie gardens generated revenues worth \$113,071 from the festivities.⁹

Airlie Garden offers great educational value as well. The 8th grade water quality program reached 1,000 students in 2004. Another 1,000 children could have been welcomed during the summer enrichment program. Airlie Gardens started to offer another program for 3rd grade pupils, based on plant and soil education. As one can see the curriculum based school program for 8th grades developed really successfully. The decision to offer more educational programs and building the garden service center seems to strengthen Airlie's educational character. A \$ 10,000 donation from Lowes Food helps to create the base to stuff the educational center with a saltwater aquarium and other helpful features. As of Mrs. Rehder, no fee is charged for the educational program. Every 2nd Saturday of the month three guided tours are offered, which are included in the garden admission.¹⁰ The themes are horticulture, history and ecology. To reach more people golf cart tours are offered free of charge. Airlie Gardens offers a public educational program, which is included in the admission fee as well. Together with the Rain Garden, Spring garden and the last undeveloped tract of Bradley creek this attracts more people seeking educational features.

Offering a nice environment and the Mt. Lebanon Chapel, Airlie Gardens provides the perfect setting to hold weddings and/or receptions within the garden. The price is \$1,500 each or \$ 2250 for both. Airlie Gardens charges \$200 if wedding parties want to have taken their portraits in the garden. In 2003/2004 23 weddings had been held at Airlie Gardens. For 2005, already \$34,000 for weddings has been contracted.¹¹

General attendance at the gardens consisted of 6000 people which means around 667 visitors per month (Airlie Gardens was open for nine months). Attracted by the unique ambiance, old oak trees, azaleas, camellias and other flowers, visitors can enjoy

the inspirational atmosphere at Airlie Gardens. The gardens offer nine gardeners and landscaper the opportunity to design a 1,000 square foot piece to interpret a specific theme. The current theme is "rooms for outdoor living". This showcase is a competition and the annual awards are announced at the Oyster Roast. All plants and supplies are donated by the participants.¹² The Minnie Evans Sculpture Garden is another attraction within Airlie Gardens. The bottle house is an especially unique attraction. Admission had been \$8 for visitors and \$5 for county residents. Children under 12 enter by paying a reduced admission fee of \$3. Starting 2005, general admission is \$5 and every 2nd Saturday of the month students of UNCW can enter for free.¹³

For the friends of Airlie Garden, which is a group of about 2,000 members¹⁴, the preservation of the historical heritage of the gardens as well as the path of offering more entertainment and openness seem to be major concerns. Relatively new residents of Wilmington may support entertainment while it may be found out that established Wilmingtonians support the path to keep Airlie Gardens' historical heritage and elitist appearance. Airlie Gardens, as a natural beauty, representing grandeur and elegance, might give members the feeling of elitism and exclusivity. Contributing the major part of Airlie Gardens revenues, \$74,400 (around 12%) they constitute one of the most important targets to focus on in attempting to increase Airlie Gardens' revenues.

Some immediate issues and concerns are based on the vision that management has for Airlie Gardens. Is Airlie Gardens set out to become a garden with higher traffic of the general public as well as events and corporate receptions? Or does management want to see the garden rather as a place of calmness and peace and exclusivity for a rather narrow circle? Another immediate challenge seen in the research was the new membership

structure, which offers lower benefits. For example, tickets for the jazz concerts are free for members who paid at least \$ 150. Most of Airlie Gardens memberships (80%) are \$50 and below.

Besides membership, sponsorship is essential for Airlie Gardens. Some corporate sponsors are already engaged, as Wachovia is sponsoring the Jazz Concerts and Lowes is giving an initial contribution for the educational center. Attracting more sponsors will be a challenge for Airlie Gardens as there are many non-profit organizations in Wilmington, competing for donations and sponsorships.

d. The typical "buying" process

To determine who is coming to Airlie Garden, one has to see the structure of visitors. Are these mainly out of town visitors, families, groups? How did they decide to visit Airlie Gardens? How do people become members of Airlie Garden?

The Jazz concerts seem to attract a lot of people and music in the ambiance of an old southern garden seems to be quite appealing. The celebration of the Oyster Roast as an old elitist heritage attracts many people, as well. Garden lovers come to see the blooming of Azaleas and Camellias. The gardens as a place for the whole family, a place of peace and natural beauty attracts visitors. The opportunity to drive through the garden and the offered golf cart tours attract a lot of people who can not stroll around so well. Airlie Gardens' 8th grade educational program is a great attraction as well. The fact that it is free of charge makes it very appealing for schools to schedule a field trip to Airlie Gardens.

To clarify the typical buying process 3 scenarios of the most important visitor groups shall help: Friends of Airlie Gardens, Jazz lovers and out-of-town visitors.

Friends of Airlie Gardens

How do I become a member of Airlie Garden? As a garden and outdoor lover, July O'Hara hears from her neighbor at the Landfall Clubhouse about the beautiful garden, off of Wrightsville Avenue. As a new resident she has not heard about the historical southern heritage before, as there is not a lot of advertising or signs visible in the area. In spring, the first azaleas are already blooming, July O'Hara and her husband, a retired CEO from New Jersey, visit the gardens and learn at the gate that memberships start already with a contribution of \$25 per person. Having the opportunity to bring the grandchildren along for free and getting reduced admission to the concerts, Mr. and Mrs. O'Hara sign up for a \$50 family membership. Impressed by the garden and concerned about the lack of awareness in the community they start to talk and promote membership possibilities and the beautiful scenery at Airlie Garden among friends, neighbors at the Landfall community.

Group of friends, looking for Friday night entertainment

Friday afternoon, almost weekend, but still no plans, Sandy checks the StarNews for entertainment hints that are different than the normal downtown bar scene: "Airlie gardens, Jazz nights for only \$8". This sounds really interesting and the possibility to bring own wine, beer and food along seems to be a great plan for the evening: Enjoying good music in a beautiful environment, together with friends having a picnic under an 450 year old oak tree, "Yes this will be the plan for the evening!".

Graduation Weekend: Family and friends visit Wilmington

The Finals are almost over, now Joshua needs to plan a sightseeing schedule for his siblings. They definitely have to spend a day at the beach but they need to see some of

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Wilmington's historical Southern heritage as well. Going online, to check the local visitor website, <http://www.cape-fear.nc.us/> Joshua's attention is drawn by Airlie Gardens: Seeing the beautiful scenery, blooming azaleas and camellias providing the perfect background for enjoying a typical southern garden, established in the 19th century by the Jones family, for only \$5 admission. "Yes, this appears to be perfect, furthermore as there are golf carts available for his grandparents and that Airlie Gardens is situated halfway to the beach.

111. Competitor Analysis

a. Identifying the Competition

Airlie Gardens has multiple competitors depending on the situation. To help understand some competitive advantages that Airlie Gardens possess, we will revisit the above mentioned three scenarios, or situations in more detail in respect to the competition that could be involved. Again, the three situations are centered around people who are: A - desiring to hold a wedding ceremony and reception B - trying to find a family-friendly place to spend an afternoon in Wilmington with out of town guests and C - a group of friends trying to find a place to go out to for an occasional Friday party night on the town.

In situation A, the four major competitors we will look at are the beach (specifically the Blockade Runner hotel), the Wilmingtonian located in downtown, Wilmington and finally Poplar Grove and Orton Plantations.

In situation B, the competitors for a family fun Saturday afternoon in Wilmington is the USS North Carolina which is the Battleship on the Cape Fear River, Poplar Grove Plantation and the last competitor is Wrightsville Beach.

In situation C, the competition for the Wachovia Bank Concert Series (one Friday night of Jazz) would be The Rusty Nail at Beatty's Tavern in Downtown, Wilmington Concerts on the Coast in Ocean Isle Beach and finally Club Tropics at Carolina Beach.

The information in the following sections are taken from the websites of the respective locations.^{15,23}

b. Competitive Advantages/Disadvantages

For situation A, Airlie Gardens strongest advantages are its location (right in Wilmington, easily accessible for out of town wedding guests) and the natural beauty of the gardens. Another advantage of Airlie Gardens is the church, which is located very close, which would be a great place to hold the actual marriage ceremony, which is important to many people. The biggest disadvantage of hosting a wedding at Airlie would be that there is no permanent structure to go inside to in case the weather is not cooperating, or an inside reception is desired. Weather is a concern for many brides, especially in Wilmington April through October, which is when most outdoor weddings take place. Without a permanent structure, there is a need to rent tents, tables, chairs, and other party supplies from an outside vendor, because there are no set wedding packages or deals available that combine vendors and the gardens. Orton Plantation has the same disadvantage of no indoor reception area except they do have a small chapel for ceremonies only (125 people) and Poplar Grove does have a building available for rent, that can include tables, chairs setup and cleanup.

The Blockade Runner at the beach does have an advantage of being able to have the natural beauty outside but still being able to have an inside reception as well. Having the option to stroll in or outside is a strong advantage. This is an advantage that the

Wilmingtonian has as well, with its inside reception halls and outside gardens. The plantations do have natural beauty including gardens and water areas however the gardens at Airlie appear to be the most beautiful and consists of the most acres (more picture taking opportunities). The Wilmingtonian is a strong competitor for those wedding couples and families who want a traditional southern wedding. Airlie Gardens, and the two plantations all have a historical, traditional atmosphere while the beach is not such a strong competitor in this area.

The locations are all easily accessible and close to the city, except the plantations. Poplar Grove Plantation has a slight disadvantage because it may be difficult to find for out of town guests. Orton Plantation is located outside of Wilmington in Winnabow, so travel from Wilmington will be necessary, which many people try to avoid (especially after an evening reception).

Please See Appendix 1 for more Advantages and Disadvantages in Situation A

For Situation B, when giving out of town guests a tour of Wilmington, people want to find something that is family-friendly and a symbol of Wilmington or Southeastern North Carolina, and the beach, Poplar Grove Plantation, the Battleship and Airlie all satisfy these needs. For the people that really enjoy history, Poplar Grove and the Battleship have a strong advantage because of the publications and focus they have on the history of the location. Airlie has the advantage because the history of the gardens can be felt and the serene location brings people back to another time, the beach really doesn't have a sense of history any longer.

The only concern with wanting to enjoy nature and be outside is the chance for bad weather to strike. The beach and the gardens have the biggest disadvantage when it

comes to being adaptable to the elements while it is still possible to enjoy the Battleship, and Poplar Grove.

All of the attractions have advantages of being close to other fun attractions, so people can do multiple things in a close area, and all have places close by where they can eat at as well. Airlie Gardens and Orton Plantation does have picnic tables and picnic areas available and Poplar Grove does have a restaurant. For the other attractions, people would have to go off location to get their meal. For example, the Battleship visitors could go downtown and the beach visitors could go to one of the beach restaurants. If guests did not want to bring their own food and eat on location, Airlie is also close to many restaurants and is right in the city and close to the new Mayfair as well, so there are plenty of options of places to eat at.

How much time the attraction will take is different for all the locations. This could be an advantage or disadvantage. It really depends on the goal of the visitor. If this is just an afternoon stop in, or if there are many other places they want to visit, then being able to "jump" in and out is important. We will judge the locations according to how adaptable they are to time flexibility. In other words, how possible it is for people to stay only as long as they want. At Airlie Gardens, Poplar Grove, and the beach, people can stay as long as they want and the operating hours for all the locations is normal business hours, so there is no strong advantage in this category. Except of course the beach has no operating hours, and the Battleship is open until 8 in the summer times.

The Battleship is hard to go on and off of, it takes about 2 hours to tour the ship, and people can not easily jump in and out of there like they can the other locations. Poplar Grove has much more to do than the other outside locations. For example, there is 20

acres of oaks and many other flowers, there are farm animals, a weaver, a basket maker, a tour at different times throughout the day, a little shop and restaurant. For basically the same price, people can do a lot more things, but again, it really depends on the guests and what their goal is.

There is no strong advantage when looking at the prices to these locations either, they are all relatively the same. Please see Appendix 2 for the prices at these locations.

For Situation C, Jazz Night has the advantage of being a special night that is not every Friday, so that may be a reason why people decide to choose this event over the others. However, if it was every Friday night, maybe more people would know about it because it would be consistent and if for some reason somebody couldn't go one week, they could skip to the next. All the bars are open every Friday night, so people don't have to guess when they are open or not.

Jazz nights are an outside event exclusively, which is unique but once again a disadvantage if there is bad weather. It is \$8 a person, kids under \$12 are free, and Friends of Airlie only pay \$4. This is an advantage, for less than \$10 people can go enjoy the fresh air, gardens, good music, and they can bring their own lawn chairs, food and beverages, much like Concert on the Coast. Club Tropics is a competitor because half of this facility is outside, so people who do not want to be stuck inside find this a strong competitor.

Jazz Night seems like a much more stress-free, relaxing Friday night compared to a bar situation. A disadvantage is that kids are allowed, which some Friday night crowds do not like, but this could be an advantage for some as well. The parking is off site, and then people take the Trolley to the gardens, which is not an advantage, and the hours of

the concert are 6 to 8pm only and 2 hours sometimes does not seem like a long enough time. At 8pm many of the Friday night crowds probably go somewhere else, possibly to one of the other locations mentioned, so people who find out the concert is only until 8 may not go, and instead just save money and go directly to their final destination. There are food and beverages available at Jazz Nights, which is an advantage.

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IV. Macro-environmental Trends

a. Macro-Trends and Airlie Garden's response to them

1. South Eastern North Carolina has an outstanding reputation for community support of local music. Airlie Gardens has really caught onto the fact that Wilmington and the community love music and has had quite a following for its music series concert. Last year Airlie scheduled thirteen events with increasing success for each. Of those concerts there was an average attendance of 667 people, assuming twenty percent were children, there was an average of 532 in attendance, grossing \$4262.00 per concert.²⁴

2. In our ever-fragile coastal communities continuing education about our waters and wonderful regional plant life is a growing necessity for our local community and new residents of Wilmington. With the wide range of classes available for various interests from water quality to insect identification, Airlie Gardens is able to accommodate everyone's needs for better understanding about our area and its natural resources and the importance of protecting them. This classroom setting is in accordance with the science curriculum of the state of North Carolina. With the opening of the new environmental education facility these programs will better suit the needs of arriving students. The scale and outstanding beauty of Airlie Gardens provides a better learning environment than that of other surrounding gardens.

3. Yet another social trend of our area is the overwhelming enjoyment of viewing Christmas lights but there is only one neighborhood in Wilmington that historically takes responsibility for this task. The Bellingrath Gardens in Mobile Alabama recognizes this market segment as a source of income during the offseason.

4. With the Internet become a vital part of our existence, Airlie Gardens has done a great job seizing a presence on the Internet. The Garden's website is clearly an advantage for them. The website is very professional, easily navigable and could be a crucial component of success in Airlie Garden's future.

V Benchmark - Bellingrath Gardens²⁵

Mission statement:

"By God's help I am going to try and make the world better and brighter by my being here"

Description:

Open year round, Bellingrath Gardens offers the perfect attraction for tourists, looking for a southern charming environment and it is perfect for garden lovers. To ensure visits in fall and winter as well, keeping a steady demand, three major events take place from October to December.

Hours of Operation:

Daily at 8 A.M. - 5 P.M.

Admission:

Adults \$7.50 Children \$ 4.50 Guided Garden Tour Adults \$9 Children \$5.25

Annual Events:

Mum Festival Nov. 13

A lot of activities for children, entertainment by dulcimers, doggers, barbershop chorus, artisans, displaying and selling their wares (basketry, pottery, needle arts, sugar cane syrup making and bee keeping), traditional fall food favorites such as pumpkin fudge, roasted corn and biscuits and honey will be sold and served. A pumpkin cooking contest will be held.

Mum Season Nov. 7-21

Chrysanthemum Extravaganza, an outdoor display of colorful Chrysanthemums

Scarecrow Contest Oct 30 - Nov 15

9th Annual Magic Christmas Enlightening Nov. 26-Dec. 31

Holiday light display running from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Choirs, choruses playing and Santa Claus, available for picture taking on December, 23rd

2. Overview of Primary Research

A. Research Objectives

- Identify the most important current sources of revenues at Airlie Gardens
- Identify possible new events and sources to generate revenues
- Investigate interest from the target markets on these new events
- Assess the general awareness level, knowledge, and patronage of target markets, the general public and Friends of Airlie toward Airlie Gardens and its events
- Assess visitor satisfaction (daily visits or events)
- Assess member satisfaction

- Examine the general perception of Airlie Gardens now and in the vision for the future
- Investigate the needs and motives for using the Gardens
- Generate insights and ideas from the public and Friends of Airlie

B. Information to be supplied as a result of the research

- Provide list of current events that are most important for Airlie to continue
- Provide possible new events for Airlie to hold
- Provide a general summary of the interest level on these new events
- Provide a summary statement of the general awareness knowledge and use of the Gardens currently
- Provide a general understanding of the current level of satisfaction from visitors in the general public
- Provide a general understanding of the current level of satisfaction from Friends of Airlie members
- Provide a summary statement of the general perception of the gardens and the future of the gardens in the community
- Provide data on the needs and motives people have for using Airlie Gardens
- Provide general insights and ideas on how to generate more revenue and grow Airlie Gardens as a business

C. General research approach taken and why

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Orphan

Our general research approach will be based on exploratory research. We have little information at this point, which is sometimes referred to as the "fiizzy front end" so it is important for us to use exploratory research to better understand the problems at hand. We will use secondary data to start, utilizing trade publications and statistics available to us such as through the US Census Bureau as well as a benchmark for comparative analysis. We will then generate a survey to gain an understanding of customer satisfaction and competition, and we will do statistical analysis on the survey to find any pertinent associations or trends.

3. Methodology

A. Specification of information sources

- Secondary data such as the Airlie Gardens Annual Report and the Airlie Gardens website to gather information about the most important sources of revenues
- Airlie garden field trip, July Rehder and visit of A. Corbett and J. Lanier in class to get information about general problems and vision that they have in mind for Airlie Gardens
- To identify new sources of revenues we have to get insights about needs and perceptions of Friends of Airlie Gardens, visitors of Airlie Gardens and the general public (residents and visitors of Wilmington) by conducting research in secondary data. Demographics statistics and benchmarking with other gardens such as Bellingrath will be important
- Also we can conduct an experience survey and focus groups with employees, volunteers, Friends of Airlie Gardens to discover their needs

and ideas and to be find out how to target the essential markets more precisely

- We can conduct experience surveys among residents of Wilmington to learn about their perception and awareness level of Airlie Gardens

B. Specification of Data Collection

- To collect data from Airlie Garden visitors, we should use written formats. We can distribute them at Airlie Gardens entrance and ask for accomplishment after the visit. We can recollect them at the exit
- The written format would be appropriate as well to collect information from volunteers and employees of Airlie Gardens
- To evaluate awareness level among visitors of Airlie Garden we can either distribute written formats at the visitor center or ask major hotels to ask their guests to accomplish the surveys
- Telephone interviews would be more appropriate in order to gather information from residents of Wilmington and from Friends of Airlie Garden

C. Overview of sampling plan

For our sampling, we will include 100 participants on our surveys and 8 to 10 in our focus groups. Friends of Airlie and the general public will both be included. The general public will be random people, so we do not discriminate deliberately against any particular demographic or market segment. As stated previously, some surveying can be done through phone surveys, while others can be done right on property as guests leave

the gardens. More extensive details of the sampling plan will be covered in further correspondence.

4. Limitations of the Proposed Research

- There is almost no past data available for Airlie Gardens and the data that does exist has some contrary numbers
- The data collection occurs in March or April which is a time when awareness among Wilmington's residents about Airlie Garden is high due to the Azalea festival, which can cause biased results
- There can be a possible inadequate sample size because the research is being done in a low tourist season and there are only a few visitors in Wilmington. Sample sizes can cause swayed results.

5. Estimation of time requirements

The time needed to accomplish the proposal was two days per individual for the management problem. For the overview of primary research, methodology and limitations we needed approximately four hours each and another hour to agree about the approach we wanted to use.

End Notes

- ¹ Airlie Gardens. 2003-2004 Annual Report. Pg1
- ² Airlie Gardens. Become a Member
<http://www.airliegardens.org/pages/become_member.html>
- ³ Airlie Gardens. Showcase Garden.
<http://www.airliegardens.org/pages/virtual_tour/showcase_garden.html>
- ⁴ Airlie Gardens. 2003-2004 Annual Report. Pg6
- ⁵ Rehder, July. Airlie Gardens Field Trip. February 18, 2005
- ⁶ "Fact Sheet: Wilmington North Carolina". US Census Bureau.
<<http://factfinder.census.gov/> >
- ⁷ Rehder, July. Airlie Gardens Field Trip. February 18, 2005
- ⁸ Rehder, July. Airlie Gardens Field Trip. February 18, 2005
- ⁹ Airlie Gardens. 2003-2004 Annual Report. Pg6
- ¹⁰ Rehder, July. Airlie Gardens Field Trip. February 18, 2005
- ¹¹ "Airlie Gardens - Wedding", <<http://www.airliegardens.org/pages/weddings.html>>
- ¹² Williams, Jason. Phone Call. February 15, 2005.
- ¹³ "Airlie Gardens Education - Tours".
<<http://www.airlieeducation.org/pages/tours.html>>
- ¹⁴ Airlie Gardens. Become a Member
<<http://www.airliegardens.org/pages/becomemember.html>>
- ¹⁵ "Airlie Gardens", <<http://www.airliegardens.org/index.jsp>>
- ¹⁶ "The Wilmingtonian" <<http://www.thewilmingtonian.com/>>
- ¹⁷ "Blockade-Runner Beach Resort"

<<http://www.coasthost-nc.com/companyad.asp?id=38>>

18 "Poplar Grove Plantation" <<http://www.poplargrove.com>>

19 "Orton Plantation Gardens" <<http://www.ortongardens.com/>>

20 "Battleship North Carolina" <<http://www.battleshipnc.com/index.html>>

21 "The Rusty Nail at Beatty's Tavern" <<http://musiccorner.com/rustynail/>>

22 "South Brunswick Island: Concerts on the Coast"

<<http://www.insiders.com/wilmington/main-nightlife6.htm>>

23 "Carolina Beach: Club Tropics" <<http://www.insiders.com/wilmington/main-nightlife4.htm> >

24 Airlie Gardens mailer advertisement

25 "Bellingrath Gardens & Home". 19 February 2005. <<http://www.bellingrath.org>>

Appendix 1

The following chart summarizes many of the dis/advantages of these sites:

	Airlie Gardens	The Wilmingtonian	Blockade Runner/Beach	Poplar Grove Plantation	Orton Gardens
Price	/; ic	(4- &0<!)	#1500 + food	\$550	/; -F
Capacity	300	300	150	200	150
Natural Beauty	✓+++	✓+	^ + +	✓	✓+
Location	✓	✓	\\ /	←.	—
Facilities	fw.LVI/	Reception Hall + gardens ✓	✓	✓	—
Packages	None	Catering cost extra	✓	—	—
Other					

Appendix 2

	Airlie	Poplar	Battleship	Beach
Adults	#5 visitors #5 In party	#8	#9	
Seniors	—	#7	#8	—
Children	#3 under 12	iff «yj G-IS~	#4 age 6-11	--
Other	*5 "A-i + 5	—	Accept visitors MC	parking only