

How a Growing Garden Consolidated Operations, Automated Membership, and **Scaled Confidently** with Veevart

70%

Membership Growth

2x

Annual Visitation

1 Platform

Replacing Multiple Systems

About Sonoma Botanical Garden

Growth didn't start as a strategy for Sonoma Botanical Garden.

It showed up in the day-to-day.

More visitors on the trails.

More programs filling up.

More community demand than the existing systems were built to handle.

What began as a nature-focused nonprofit centered on connecting people with plants, through one of North America's most important collections of temperate-climate Asian species and California natives, was quickly becoming something larger.

Workshops expanded. School partnerships increased. Events grew more frequent. The Garden was no longer just a destination. It was becoming a hub for education, community, and environmental engagement.

From the outside, this looked like momentum. Inside, it meant the organization was operating at a level its systems hadn't been designed for.

The Challenge: When Growth Outran the System

When Julianne joined as Membership and Visitor Experience Manager, the Garden wasn't struggling to grow. It was struggling to keep up with its own growth.

Programs were expanding. Membership was increasing. Daily operations were becoming more complex. But the systems underneath hadn't evolved with it. Instead, they were layered.

Membership, events, and operations all lived in different systems. Data didn't sync, and reporting required manual work just to produce a partial view.

Which meant the real cost of growth wasn't just complexity. It was time. Staff were spending hours on manual data entry because systems didn't communicate. Events and registrations weren't connected to the website in a way that could scale. Leadership didn't have a clear, real-time view of financial performance, relying instead on external reporting.

And with a lean team, there was no capacity to fix the infrastructure while keeping operations running.

Growth didn't break the system all at once. It exposed that the system was never built for it.

"The system we were using when I first started would have never been able to handle the growth we have been experiencing."



Julianne

Membership and Visitor Experience Manager

The Solution: Replacing Fragmentation With a System

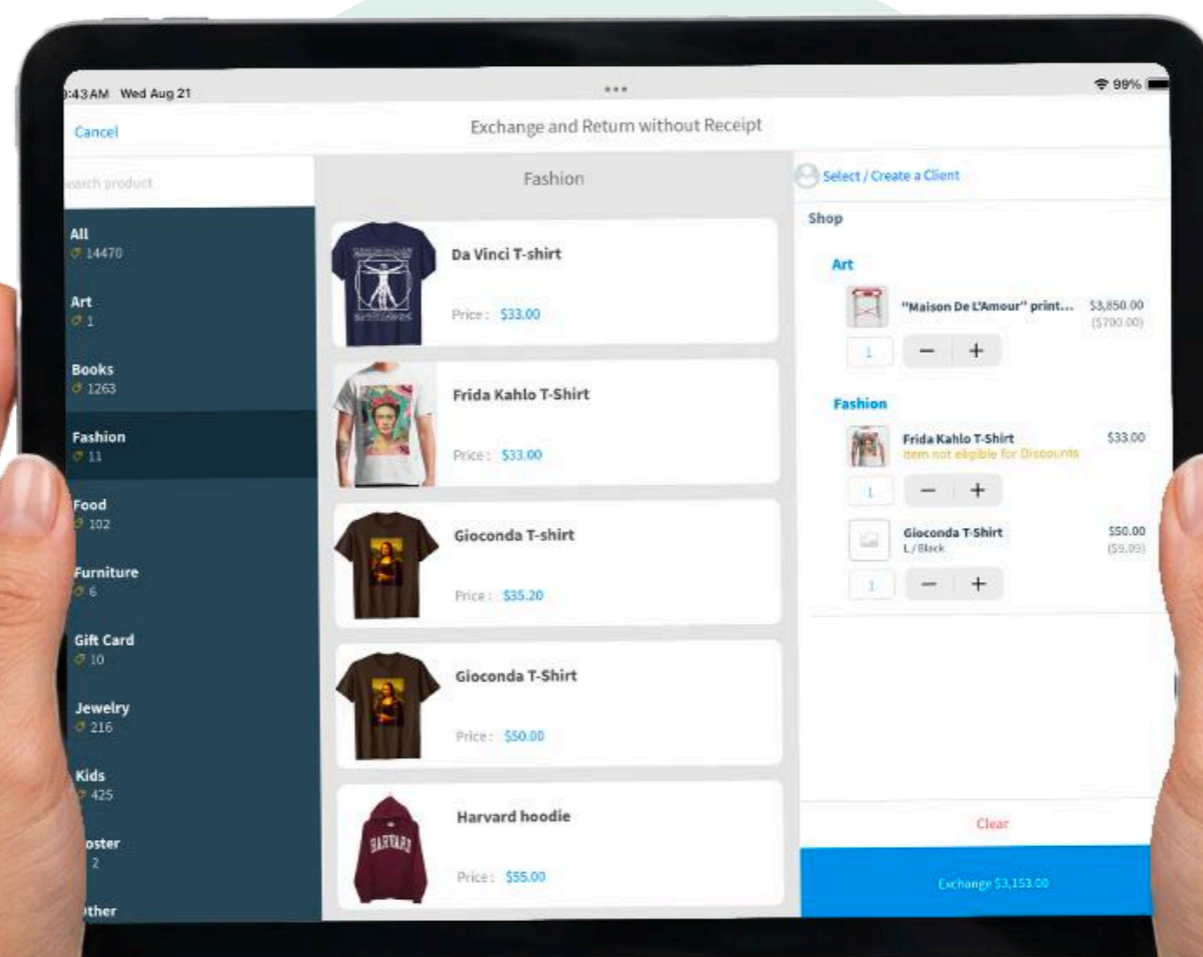
At a certain point, incremental fixes stopped making sense. The issue wasn't that any single tool was failing. It was that the system as a whole didn't exist.

Leadership made a structural decision: instead of adding or upgrading individual tools, they would consolidate operations into a single platform that could support how the Garden actually worked.

They selected Veeva as that system, not as another layer but as the foundation. Instead of separate platforms for membership, events, retail, and reporting, the Garden moved to a unified environment where these functions were connected by default.

Membership and donations were no longer processed in isolation; they were part of the same system as visitor activity. Retail and point-of-sale data flowed into the same operational layer. Programs, events, and rentals were managed alongside a public-facing calendar that reflected real-time availability. Financial reporting no longer depended on stitching together data across tools.

What used to require coordination across systems became part of a single workflow. The shift wasn't just consolidation. It was alignment.





The Results: What Changed Once the System Was Aligned

The improvements that followed were not isolated wins. They were the direct result of removing fragmentation across the organization.

Membership growth became easier to drive, not harder to manage

Membership increased by nearly 70% after Veevart became the Garden's core system. This wasn't just a marketing outcome. It came from making membership easier to access and easier to manage.

Automated processing removed manual bottlenecks. Shareable join and renewal links reduced friction for new and returning members. QR codes made it possible to convert visitors in the moment, not later.

Growth didn't create more work. The system absorbed it.

Increased visitation came from removing friction

Annual visitation approximately doubled.

The change was not just increased demand; it was reduced friction.

With a website connected directly to event calendars and program registration, visitors could find, decide, and register without needing to call or email. What previously required staff intervention became self-service.


As a result:

- more visitors completed the journey
- fewer inquiries slowed the team down

Automation gave time back to the team

Before, manual data entry consumed a significant portion of staff time.

After implementation, much of that work was automated. This didn't just improve efficiency. It changed how the team spent its time. Instead of maintaining systems, they could focus on projects that actually moved the organization forward.



Financial visibility moved in-house

Previously, financial data lived largely with an external accounting team.

That meant leadership didn't have direct, real-time access to performance. With Veevart, reporting became accessible internally.

Revenue and growth data could be generated quickly and shared directly in quarterly board meetings, without delays or manual consolidation.

This shifted financial reporting from:

× reactive and delayed

↓ to

✓ accessible and decision-ready

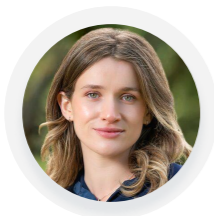
Retail performance became measurable

Retail operations also changed.

Cost tracking and margin calculations, which previously required manual effort, became automated and easier to manage.

This gave the team clearer visibility into profitability and better control over expenses.

"We have done a 180 since onboarding Veevart. It has been helpful every step along the way!"



Julianne

Membership and Visitor Experience Manager

Leadership and Team *Collaboration*

Before the shift, coordination across teams was not just difficult; it was dependent on systems that did not align.

Different departments operated in different tools. Information had to be passed manually. Simple questions required multiple handoffs. That made planning slower and problem-solving harder than it needed to be.

With operations consolidated into a single system, that friction dropped.

Teams across membership, operations, and retail now work from the same data, in the same environment. Instead of translating between systems, they share a common view of what's happening across the organization.

This changed how decisions get made. Planning no longer depends on stitching together information from different sources. Teams can move faster because they're working from the same foundation.

The impact shows up most clearly when new staff join. Previously, onboarding meant learning multiple disconnected tools and workflows. Now, new hires are brought into a single system that reflects how the organization actually operates.

Instead of training people on systems, the team can focus on getting them productive.



Support That Made the *Difference*

For most museums, the biggest hesitation isn't choosing a new system. It's what happens after.

- Implementation risk.
- Unresponsive support.
- Systems that never fully deliver on what was promised.

That concern was real for Sonoma Botanical Garden. They had seen how other platforms handled support and expected similar challenges. That is not what happened.

From the start, the Garden worked closely with a dedicated support manager who stayed engaged beyond onboarding. Questions, whether small operational issues or larger system needs, were addressed quickly and directly.



"We were apprehensive about support after seeing how some other products handle it. That concern was proven completely wrong. Robert has been incredibly responsive to questions big and small."



Julianne
Membership and Visitor Experience
Manager

What made the difference wasn't just responsiveness. It was continuity.

The team wasn't navigating a ticketing queue or starting from scratch each time. They had consistent support from someone who understood their system, their workflows, and their goals.

That reduced the risk of the transition and made it easier to rely on the system as the organization continued to grow.

What Julianne Would Tell Other Botanical Garden and Museum Leaders

When asked what she would say to other museum leaders facing similar challenges, Julianne didn't frame it as a product recommendation. She framed it as a reality check.

Most organizations don't realize how much their systems are holding them back until growth starts exposing the gaps. By then, teams are already stretched. Reporting is harder than it should be. And decisions are being made without a clear, complete picture of what's actually happening across the organization.

The instinct is to work around it. Add another tool. Patch the process. Push a little harder. But that doesn't fix the problem. It just delays it. What made the difference for Sonoma Botanical Garden wasn't just choosing a new platform. It was recognizing that fragmented systems do not scale and that continuing to operate that way carries its own risk.

For organizations with limited staff and increasing demands, the question isn't whether change is necessary. It is whether it happens early, when it can be controlled, or later, when the system is already under strain.