



 Wyevale garden centres

Making a retail loyalty scheme
a blossoming
success



The problem

How does a gardening chain achieve success in an increasingly saturated marketplace?

The gardening retail sector is becoming ever more competitive: DIY chains are expanding their range of gardening products, aiming at younger, budget conscious gardeners. Meanwhile, supermarkets have been diversifying – stocking gardening products to boost average spend and improve margins. With the share of garden products retailed by actual garden centres dropping down to 32%, they face a huge challenge.

The private equity company who own Wyevale Garden Centres had a strategy to put the power back in their hands: combining an aggressive acquisition approach with the creation of a new national brand to unite various garden centre businesses and combat the competition.





Wyevale garden centres
In a nutshell

We knew that for this rapid acquisition approach to succeed it was essential to build relationships with the marketplace. We needed to drive preference with the customer groups that had shopped at these centres prior to their absorption into the WGC family, and we needed to attract and win back those who were shopping elsewhere.

The Wyevale Garden Centres (WGC) loyalty scheme was not being fully utilised to unlock value or insight – having previously been treated as an utterly functional discount programme. There was low awareness of the benefits, no anticipation and no engagement – all of which was of course exacerbated by the fact that a number of previously-existing individual schemes had now been absorbed into one.

Our plan was to use the loyalty scheme as a strategic platform: to carry out extensive research to understand our audience and re-launch the scheme, bringing it in line with the new Wyevale Garden Centres brand and connect with the marketplace. The aim of this would be to increase average spend, repeat purchases and loyalty – with a target ROI of 100%. This was to provide the framework for longer-term growth: increasing customer satisfaction and the volume of high frequency shoppers.

We did all this and more, making WGC into a market leader and giving a ROI of 209%.



Our approach had to be based on a fundamental truth of British culture:

Gardening is a number one leisure activity. But when this is looked at in more depth, everyone approaches this activity differently. Key to our work was how we could understand each individual's relationship with their little patch of Britain.

To fuel our obsession with learning more about our customers, we split our approach into three activities:

- Segmentation
- Commercial research
- Branded research piece

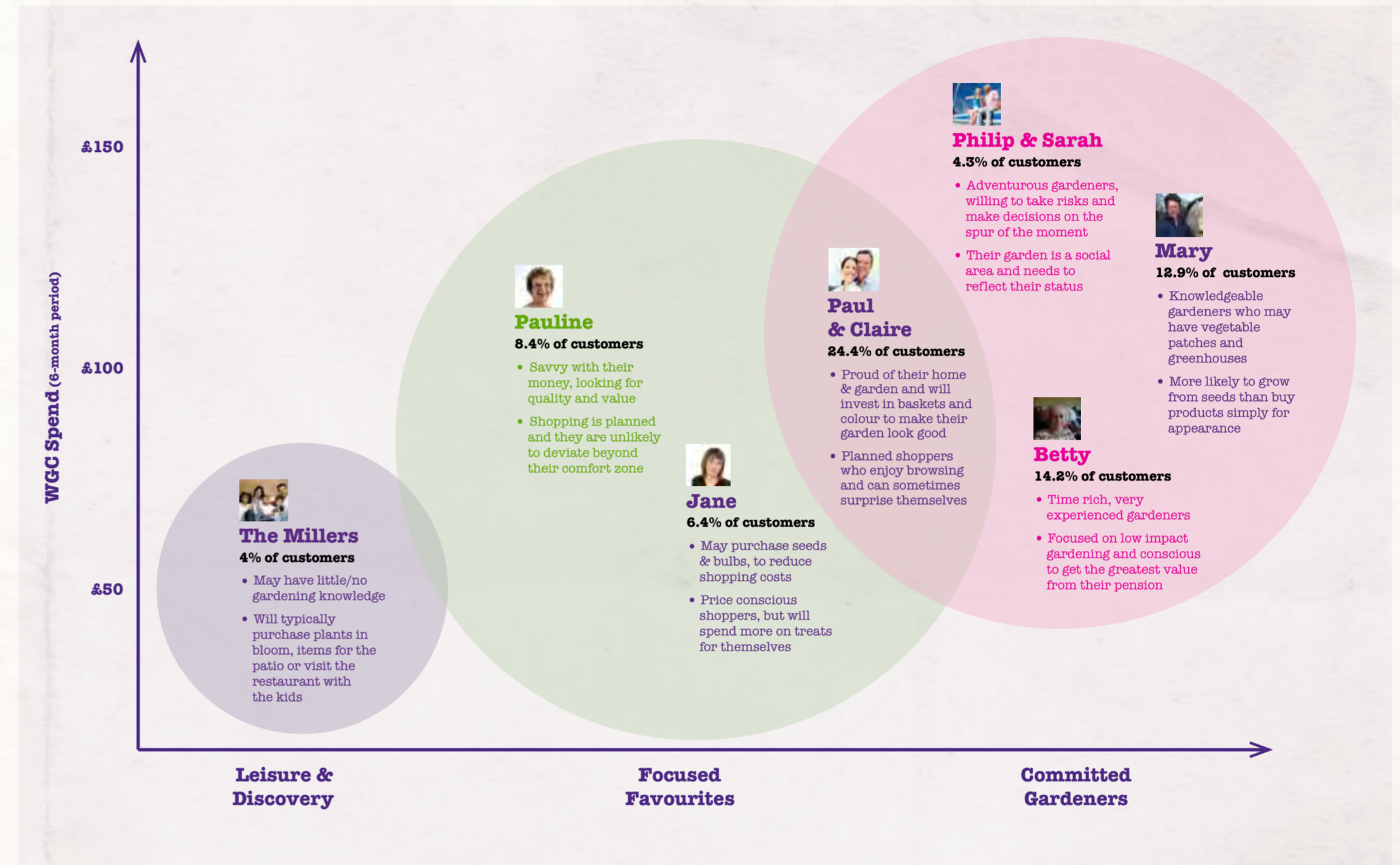


Our approach: Segmentation

We dug down into the data on existing members of the scheme, looking at three indicators: value, shopping behaviours and demographics. Through analysis of all **three million members** and tens of millions of transactions, using Acorn as a tool, we identified seven socio-demographic groups.

Information was appended to each group to build an understanding of common attitudes and behaviours – ultimately looking at the insights that framed their relationship with their garden. By combining these, we were able to bring each of the seven groups to life with a ‘Pen Portrait’, visually representing their characteristics.

Next, we mapped these with our customer shopping behaviours. We recognised that there were a range of shopper types, from experts to novices. From this we established three attitudinal segments:



Leisure & Discovery gardeners

Members who are starting out their gardening journey

Focused Favourites

Members with habitual shopping behaviours, indicating clear gardening passion points

Committed Gardeners

Members who typically shop more frequently and spend more; they include experienced gardeners and also wealthy members who are more willing to take risks and experiment with their gardens

Our approach: Segmentation

Pen Portrait Examples

Name: Betty **Education:** None
Age: 70 **Career Level:** Retired
Relationship Status: Widowed **Own/Rent:** Owner

Outlook:
"It's more important to do your duty than to live for enjoyment"
"I always use money off coupons"
"It's worth paying extra for quality goods"
"There's little I can do to change my life"
"I can't be intimidated"
"I am prepared to pay for products that make my life easier"
Price not the most important factor
spiritual
Computers confuse me
Do not like new products
"I am happy with my standard of living"
"I am very good at managing money"
"I like to pay for everything in cash"
"I value shops with helpful staff"

House & Family:
Small car < 1 ltr
"I like spend a lot of my free time at home"
Have grandchildren
Own home
"I prepare meals from scratch"
"It is important to be well insured"
Lived there 20+ years
I know a lot about DIY

My Garden:
Visits garden shows / exhibitions
Knowledgeable gardener
"I'm likely to convince others about gardening products"
"My garden is a source of pride"
Bought in the last 12 months:
Bulbs/seeds (49%)
Bedding plants (51%)
Other plants / trees (63%)
Fertiliser (50%)
Compost (52%)
Garden regularly
Likely to visit garden centre restaurants
"I get a good deal of pleasure from my garden"
Likely to talk about gardens
Watch gardening shows on TV

At Leisure:
Charity/community involvement
Discover own country
Coffee shops once a week
Coach tour holidays
Crosswords/Sudoku/Puzzles
Bowls
Bird watching
Go to plays
Local coffee shop
Department store coffee shop
Parks and gardens
Classical music
Visit restaurants during the day
eden project
MOS The co-operative

Media:
Newspapers: High quality news
The Telegraph
Daily Mail
Daily Express
Sun
High any local weekly paid
Magazines: Average / high magazine readership
National Geographic
The Observer
The Guardian
The Independent
The Sun
The Daily Mail
The Daily Express
The Sun
Radiotimes
TV & Radio: Low/ave TV consumption
Average/High radio listening
BBC
ITV
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Our approach: Commercial research

Though data rich, WGC was unable to utilise said data to build a clear understanding of shopping behaviours and had little understanding of what drove success and how marketing performed.

To form a key basis of our work, qualitative research was commissioned, leading to these key findings:

Gardening club scheme well liked but dry

Members' relationships with the scheme were primarily functional
– given the warmth of the category, this was clearly a missed opportunity

A lack of understanding of the scheme mechanics

Only 16% knew exactly how the scheme worked; in particular, there was a lack of knowledge of how the points worked

The scheme didn't drive incremental purchases

81% used points rewards just to get money off things they usually buy

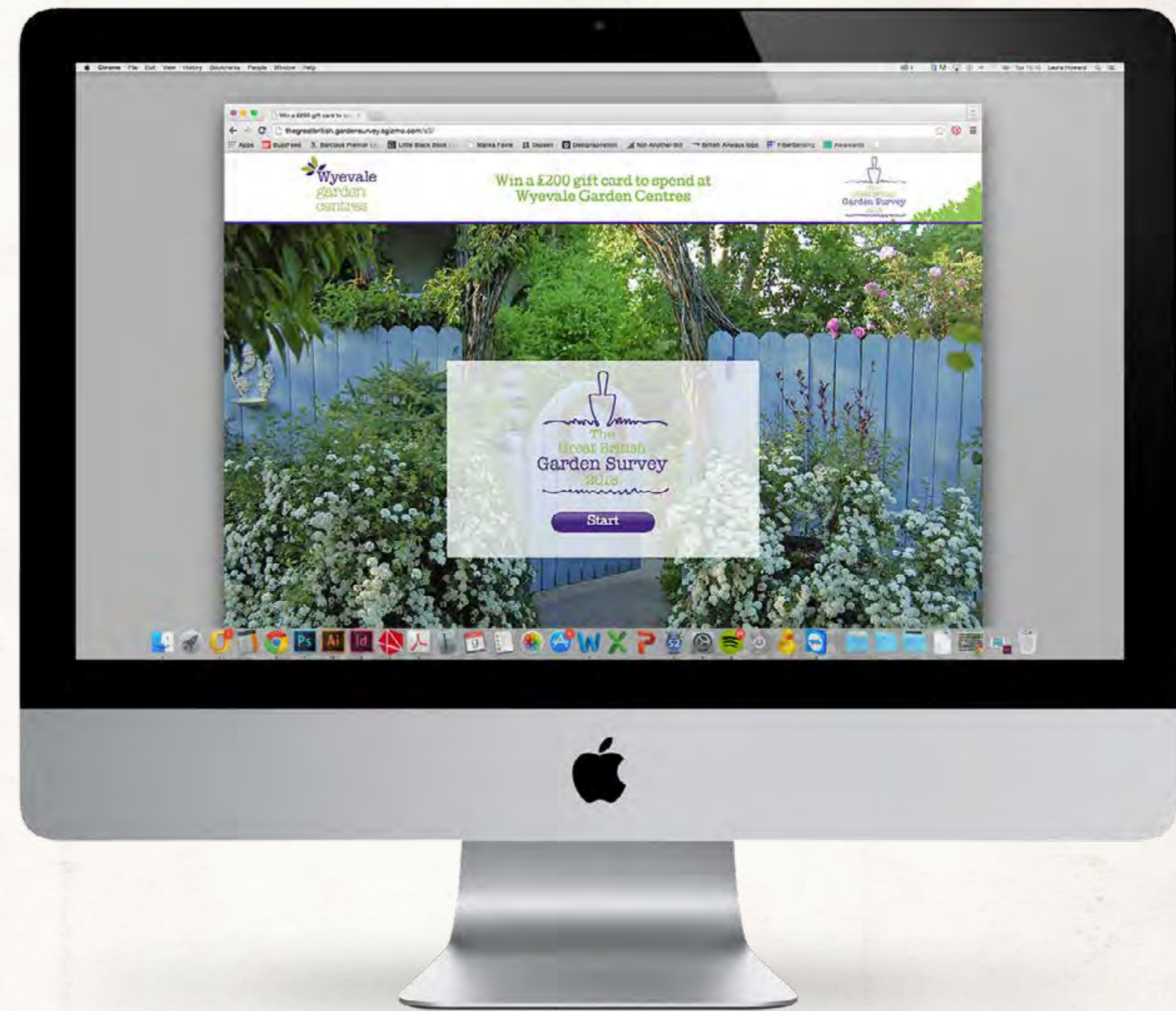


Our approach: Branded research

Our next step was to take our pen portraits and dig deeper; to really understand how our individuals related to their gardens.

To allow us to develop this crucial understanding of our audience, we developed a unique branded research tool: The Great British Garden Survey. The largest study on gardening ever conducted, we attracted over 80,000 customer responses, with them committing 20 minutes each to complete it, equating to over 16,000 hours of research time collected.

The survey deeply enriched what we knew about members, allowing us to understand their relationships with their gardens, but also enabled us to identify the projects each person had planned for their garden in the next year. All of this would be channeled into improving the targeting, content and effectiveness of communications. Plus, we gained the invaluable content resource of 40,000 member generated tips that we could seed throughout.



Re-energising the loyalty scheme

Armed with this knowledge on the different relationships people have with their gardens and coupling it with the key insight that members want to be inspired, we developed a new proposition for WGC's loyalty scheme. This was to move the loyalty scheme from a utilitarian offering to one that focuses on the joy a garden can bring you.

Overall, this would be about recognising these individual relationships and empowering people to get more from their gardens.

We relaunched The Garden Club scheme, under the newly created Wyevale Garden Centres brand. At the heart of this were rich benefits – rewarding members each and every time they shop. Our approach encapsulated the aim of bringing the joy of gardening back to the UK.

Using all of the insight gained from our three-pronged research approach, we then constructed a communications programme that differentiated between our consumers. This ensured every customer received a unique and compelling experience, from initial sign-up, through to becoming loyal customers, maximising lifetime value and creating brand advocates.



The customer journey

Welcome

We began by restarting the relationship with all of our customers. Following the rebranding of the scheme as 'The Garden Club', we reissued all members with a new card, welcoming them all to the new programme.

We then re-engineered the welcome pack and process. We introduced a series of DM and email communications for all new joiners, creatively illustrating the club's considerable benefits. As part of this, we developed a 'language of benefits': rewards, savings and exclusives. These were simple signposts that we could use throughout our creative to easily highlight key aspects to our customers, engaging them and giving them the crucial knowledge of the scheme that had previously been lacking.

It was vital for us to ensure members knew about the scheme and felt compelled to shop again. Incentives were provided in the form of rewards vouchers to encourage usage of their membership. The communications members received varied depending on repeat shopping behaviour and were localised to highlight the features of their particular centre, ensuring engagement.



Rewards



Savings



Exclusives



Wyevale garden centres

The customer journey

Welcome Programme Creative



Wyevale garden centres

The customer journey

Grow

Our monthly DM campaign was designed to drive sales. We moved from a single offer DM approach for all customers to a solution with tailored promotions aligned to specific segments based on their propensity to purchase.

Just one month after the scheme was re-launched our DM exceeded our incremental sales target by 295%, giving a staggering ROI of 597% – record results for Wyevale Garden Centres.

And it didn't stop there: a rigorous test and learn approach was adopted to continue to drive ever-increasing incremental sales and marketing ROI. Our Leisure and Discovery segment saw an uplift of 7.2% when we tested a segment specific creative versus the standard creative – just one of the many tests that have allowed us to finesse our communications.

Extensive voucher testing was also adopted to optimise reward elasticity based on spend thresholds and status of relationship. This has helped to increase sales and profitability of the programme.

The complementary email programme has enhanced this further, allowing continuous engagement with an ever increasing volume of members, breaking the one million mark of marketable email addresses by late 2015. This included regular personalised sales driving emails, highlighting the latest offers and events happening at the local centre.



Results

209% ROI

Throughout the mailings in 2015, we generated over £9 million in incremental sales – exceeding the target for these mailings by over £3.7 million (209% ROI).

71% increase in net sales

Since launch in June 2015 we've seen a 71% increase in net sales from members who have been through the welcome programme.

50% increase in repeat visitor rate

Over 32,000 new customers were taken through the welcome programme, with email open rates of over 38% and a 50% increase in repeat visitor rate.

7.2% uplift from segment specific creative

When DM segmentation was used in our mailings earlier this year, our Leisure and Discovery segments saw an uplift of 7.2% from the segment specific creative versus standard creative. From this we have begun to look at deeper segmentation, making content more relevant to the member and in turn increasing profit.

£22 per customer of additional sales

Over £22 per customer of additional sales has been generated per year through email for each of the 980k customers within our eCRM programme.

+5 points increase in NPS score

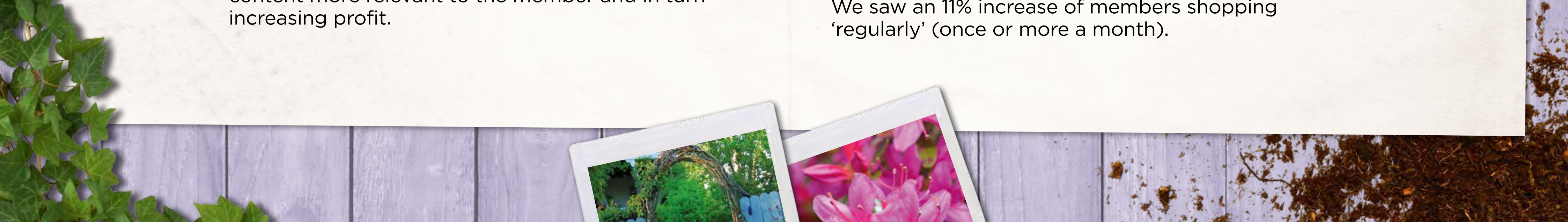
WGC's most recent NPS score was October 2015 of +35: +5 points higher than in April 2015 (when tracking commenced) – this is a significant shift, given consumers' seasonal gardening trends and garden centre product offerings in autumn.

91% of customers will choose WGC

By October 2015, 91% of customers said that they will probably or definitely choose Wyevale Garden Centres next time.

11% increase in 'regular' shopping

We saw an 11% increase of members shopping 'regularly' (once or more a month).



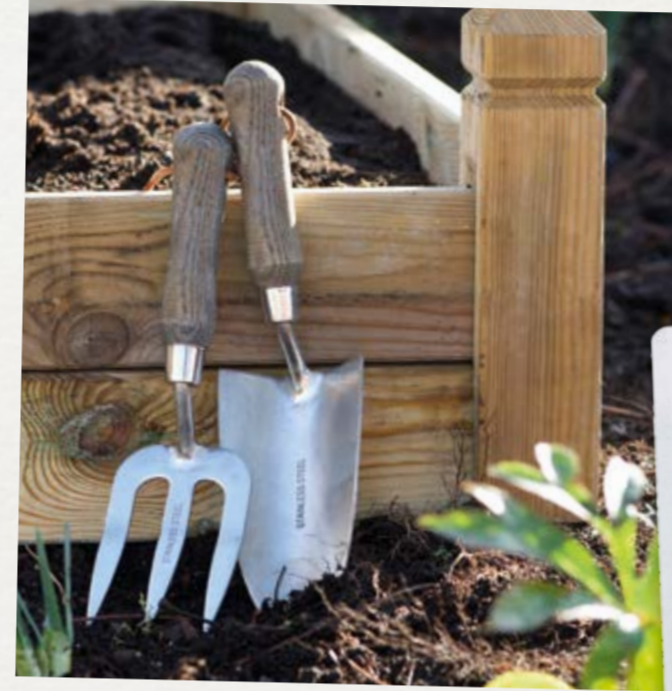
Wyevale garden centres
Summary

We took a neglected loyalty scheme and used it to unlock value and insight, developing an improved customer relationship that boosted ROI to 207%.

Analysis of the customer base and the development of key audience cohorts allowed us to create targeted, relevant communications, with segment specific creative leading to an uplift of 7.2%.

Through the UK's largest garden survey, we were able to build on our knowledge, develop an invaluable content resource and to provide vital insight on our customer base that could be flowed into all areas of the business.

Our three stage customer journey has ensured that our members shop more and have improved loyalty to this national brand, helping to make it a market leader.



Growing
together