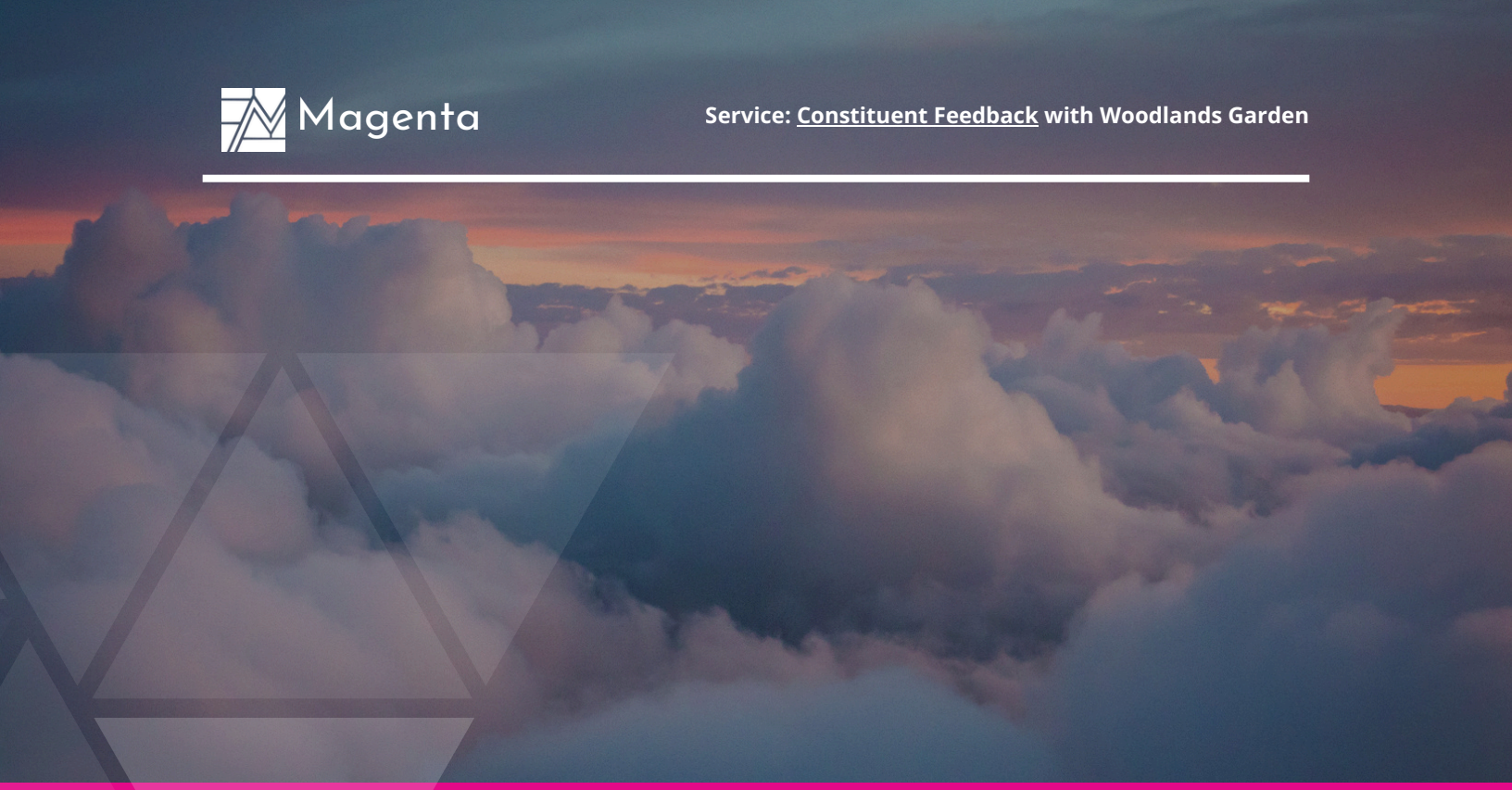


Magenta

Service: Constituent Feedback with Woodlands Garden

Case Study

From Assumption to Evidence: Leveraging Volunteer Input to Strengthen Campaign Strategy

As organizations weigh decisions about a path forward, Magenta often asks, “What do your members/volunteers/residents/participants think?” to which many answer, “We don’t know!”

Whether you’re launching a multimillion-dollar campaign or fundraising for a one-time project, **targeted constituent feedback turns assumptions into informed strategy.** The right questions reveal what people value, what they need, and what will move them to participate. Equally important, asking for input invites your constituents to feel heard and included in the decision-making.

For Woodlands Garden, Magenta helped gather feedback from the people closest to the project: the organization’s volunteers. By going behind the scenes and asking the right questions, Woodlands Garden planted the seeds for even more abundant long-term growth.

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Point of Departure

An eight-acre, predominantly wooded garden located in Decatur, Georgia, Woodlands Garden provides free public green space, environmental education, and hands-on horticultural opportunities, all focused on plants native to Georgia's Piedmont region.

Woodlands partnered with Magenta to conduct a **Feasibility Study** and create a **Case for Support** for the organization's Volunteer Engagement and Access Project, a one-time initiative to construct a dedicated working area and supply shed for its growing base of horticultural volunteers. The initiative represented the final phase of a long-term capital plan: after years of expanding accessibility, visitation, and programming, the Garden needed a purpose-built operational hub to sustain its growth and support the continued stewardship of its native landscape.

Early on, Woodlands and Magenta identified two primary sources of fundraising revenue: grants from institutional donors, and individual giving from Woodlands' deeply committed community of volunteers and supporters. Though the project was designed largely for volunteers, the broad volunteer base had varying levels of familiarity with the need for new construction. That raised an important question: **what messaging would help individual donors recognize this project as urgent and worthy of support?** Firsthand volunteer input would also create a much stronger case for outside grant funding by demonstrating how the project would directly enhance the volunteer experience.

Rather than build the campaign and its messaging on assumptions, Magenta helped Woodlands gather constituent feedback to understand what components of the project were most meaningful and what kind of outreach would inspire volunteer support.



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Flight Plan

Magenta incorporated a volunteer focus group into the feasibility study to gather firsthand feedback before the campaign launched. The session would help Woodlands:

- **Better understand the volunteer experience.**
- **Communicate the outcomes donors could expect from supporting the initiative.**
- **Test which outreach approaches were most likely to motivate giving.**

Together, Magenta and Woodlands identified a group of regular volunteers, including board representation. Because many donors in Woodlands' broad-based giving category were past or present volunteers, the group served as a representative audience for testing solicitation strategy and potential donor benefits.

Magenta coordinated the session's logistics, prepared discussion questions that collected both short-form (aggregable) and long-form responses, and facilitated the workshop. We strategically designed questions to capture the emotional reasons volunteers support Woodlands as well as the practical tactics most likely to inspire giving. As an outside facilitator, our involvement also created a neutral setting for input while providing Woodlands staff members with a structured way to listen to and document feedback.



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Liftoff

The focus group produced both narrative insight and strategic direction. The volunteers described with specificity the reasons they love Woodlands, surfacing recurring themes that could be leveraged in other outreach, such as nature, learning and accomplishment, and community and belonging. They emphasized their faith in Woodlands staff to identify the right investments to grow the organization's mission, and steward projects responsibly for successful completion.

The session also validated the need for the Volunteer Workspace, with volunteers emphasizing their desire for a shaded area to work or rest during the hot summer months, more space for tools, and more purposeful organization of supplies.

Magenta translated findings from the focus group into the feasibility study and funding messaging, and summarized them in a report that Woodlands could later reference to inform future initiatives.

Testimonial from a focus group participant:

"Thank you so much for your dedication and hard work for the fundraising for the Garden Volunteer Engagement and Access Project! In our meeting you explained the project so thoroughly and reiterated so greatly that this beneficial project is for us, the volunteers. You definitely created tons of enthusiasm among Beth, Don, Pat, Holly and me. As soon as you present the info, as you did to us, to the other volunteers I know, they will definitely be on board for the project. Knowledge among WG volunteers certainly creates enthusiasm and support!

Thank you for forming the group discussion, asking for our ideas and listening to us and seeing value in our comments. The fundraising project is definitely in excellent hands with the two of you leading it. I will be sending my donation to WG asap!

And thanks for the intriguing and delicious lunch. What a nice touch.

See you in the garden!"

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Point of Arrival

Volunteer feedback helped pinpoint why the Volunteer Workspace project mattered to the Woodlands community, added credibility to the case for support, and paved the way for Woodlands to engage individual donors more effectively.

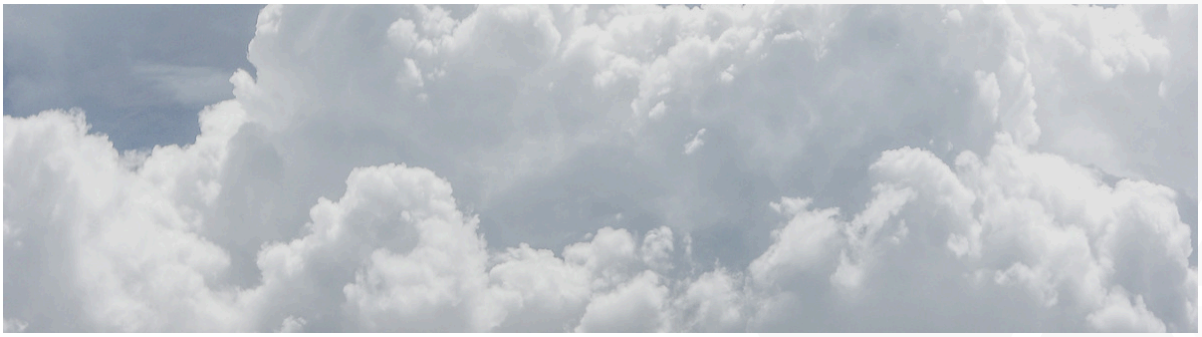
Through the focus group, Woodlands discovered that volunteers were less motivated by perks and more inspired by seeing progress in action and feeling part of the organization's momentum. This feedback helped Woodlands avoid overbuilding a campaign around perks that were unlikely to drive giving, shifting the strategy toward targeted outreach and on-site tours. With Magenta's support, Woodlands held an Earth Day open house, during which they hosted a series of intimate tours to provide details about the Volunteer Workspace construction. **The effort yielded $24,500 in individual donations!**

While experimentation does play a useful role in marketing and fundraising, organizations can make more informed decisions when they understand what is most likely to resonate with their audiences before investing significant resources.

By gathering constituent feedback as part of the feasibility study, Woodlands moved from assumption to evidence. **The result was a more personal, compelling case for support as well as a more lucrative outreach strategy.**

When it comes to plotting your most successful trajectory, we encourage our clients: don't assume; ask!

Book a discovery call with Magenta.



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