

Managing Visitor Flow with Timed Entry at Sarah P. Duke Gardens

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The Challenge

[Sarah P. Duke Gardens](#) is a 55-acre oasis on the campus of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Known for its specialized gardens and five miles of walking paths, it welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

But with such popularity comes a challenge: **how to manage crowding and preserve the tranquil experience visitors expect—especially during peak bloom seasons when paths can feel packed.**

Historically, the Gardens operated on an open-access model. While free admission supports accessibility, it also made it difficult to control traffic flow. Parking bottlenecks and densely packed paths had become recurring pain points. Leadership recognized that improving capacity management was essential for maintaining a safe, enjoyable guest experience.



The Solution

To address these challenges, the Gardens leadership partnered with the Duke University Box Office and leveraged **AudienceView Unlimited** to design a **timed entry ticketing system**.

This solution allowed visitors to reserve an entry time online while still enjoying flexibility during their visit. By implementing timed entry, the Gardens could:

- **Balance visitor volume throughout the day**
- **Provide clear arrival instructions**
- **Gather valuable attendance data for planning and reporting**

Jessica Reveal, Associate Director of Ticketing and Guest Services at Duke, led the initiative:

“We’re often presented with challenges related to event logistics—from ticketing to house management—and take great pride in solving them. Timed entry was new for us, but AudienceView gave us the flexibility to create a system that worked beautifully for the Gardens.”

Reveal and her team configured hundreds of timed events in AudienceView Unlimited, created customized reports, and tested extensively before launch. The result was a streamlined reservation system that worked across desktop and mobile, giving visitors an easy way to plan their visit.

The Results

The timed entry strategy was an overwhelming success. In the first phase of implementation, the system processed **over 5,600 reservations**, ensuring that Sarah P. Duke Gardens maintained its reputation as a peaceful and welcoming destination.

Visitors appreciated the convenience and clarity of the new process, while the Gardens team gained **valuable data on attendance patterns** to inform future operations and marketing strategies.

“The grounds are truly stunning and offer a much-needed break from the daily grind. I’m proud to have played a role in shaping an experience that feels organized and welcoming,” said Reveal.

Key Takeaway

Timed entry ticketing is more than a temporary fix—it’s a strategic solution for managing high-traffic venues without sacrificing the visitor experience. By leveraging **AudienceView Unlimited**, Duke University successfully combined accessibility, efficiency, and operational control at one of its most treasured spaces.