

SouthernTM

◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆

MAGAZINE

February & March 2015

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**The Alamo and San Antonio
Welcomes You to the ICCFA Annual
Convention and Exposition**

Special: Memorialization & Aftercare

ICCFA Pre Convention Preview & Agenda

Why Do We Memorialize Disasters?

by Daniel J. DeNoon

How a 1974 Lincoln Continental Can Be A

Memorializing Factor Even in North Korea

Memorializing A Death Well Planned

by Kathleen Havens

What Does Success Look Like? Assessing Your

Preneed Performance by Kelly Kohut

R&S Markers Brings Innovation to Temporary

Markers - Company Profile

National Museum Funeral History' 21st

Annual Golf Charity

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February & March 2015

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notes from the editor

by John Yopp

Welcome to our special ICCFA Pre Convention issue. ICCFA has a great educational program and full exhibit hall for all attendees to enjoy during the Expo slated for April 8-11, 2015 in “festive” San Antonio, Texas. Please review the agenda pages and plan to see the number of great speakers and workshops that ICCFA has worked so diligently hard to arrange, and enjoy the spring weather and history that San Antonio has to offer.

The second segment of this issue is our annual “Memorialization & Aftercare.” No matter if it is a State funeral or a direct cremation, every death has some type of “Memorialization” connected to it. We have several articles that have different perspectives of how “Memorialization” can or has been utilized in all type of funerals. Quite interesting how North Korea would even utilize a 1974 Lincoln Continental during the death and State funeral for Kim Jong-il in 2011. Also, below we had asked the question: “Why Do We Memorialize Disasters” to which several spot on answers were given.

Why Do We Memorialize Disasters?

“So that we can attempt to feel good about loss” The Funeral Source

“It is a way to make sense of the capricious nature of disasters. The element of chance and the degree of scale are harder to accept than illness, old age or sudden, single accidents” Hatty Stafford Charles

“We memorialize disasters for the same reason that we memorialize individuals, to remember who they were, and that we think it was important that they were here to begin with. It’s just that when we have a major loss of life all at once, 9-11, or over time, such as WWII, the loss is broader, affecting more than just one family. I’m certain there is a memorial to the folks that were killed in the chemical explosion in Texas a few years ago. I’ve been to, and was moved by, the memorial at the site of the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing.”

“One of the very important factors of remembering is the sense of community that comes with it. Whether we are considering the local loss or the national loss, remembering through annual events causes us all to stop and reflect. In our ridiculously rapid lives today, an event that causes us to stop, take a breath, and feel closer to each other collectively is a good thing. With the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina coming in August, I’m sure there will be events of memorialization. I will be in attendance.” Doug Gober, President/CEO of Gober Strategic Capital, New Orleans, Louisiana



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BREAKING BOUNDARIES

BRINGING OUR PROFESSION TOGETHER

2015 ICCFA ANNUAL CONVENTION & EXPOSITION

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS • APRIL 8-11, 2015

Agenda

Wednesday, April 8

- 10 - 11am JFDA: Discovering Your Elijah Moment
- 3 - 7pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 7 pm Spurs/Rockets game

Thursday, April 9

- 9:15am - Noon Annual Meeting of Members
- 10 - 11am KEYNOTE: Cindy Gallop
How to Reinvent, Restructure & Redesign Your Business in Order to Own the Future
- 11am - Noon KEYNOTE: Tim Sanders
Relationship Power!: How to Win Business & Influence People
- 12:15pm Tim Sanders book signing
- 12 - 5pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 5 - 6pm NEW! First Timers Reception
- 6 - 7pm Educational Foundation Reception

Friday, April 10

- 7:30 - 8:45am Prayer Breakfast
- 9 - 9:15am PLPA Pet Loss Memorial Service
- 9:15 - 9:30am KIP Awards Presentation
- 9:30 - 10:30am KEYNOTE: Steve Rizzo
Get Your Shift Together: How to Enjoy the Process
- 10:30am- 1:30pm Exhibit Hall Open
- 2 - 2:50pm Cremation Hotline Calls: What People are Asking
Effective Communication — Influencing the Unwilling, Unconcerned and Unmotivated at Work
Five Changes You Need to Make to Remain Viable
Seven Habits of Highly Sustainable Cemeteries
Treehuggers, Babyboomers, and ... Republicans? Who Wants a Green Funeral and Why
- 3 - 3:50pm The Funeral Experience of the Future, Today!
- PLPA COLLEGE
Hiring: How to Do It Well
High Tech, High Touch Service
Challenges with the Autopsy Case: Best Practices
Nuts and Bolts of Sustainable Cemetery Management
- 4 - 4:50pm The Ultimate Cremation Sales Toolkit in Just 50 Minutes

- PLPA COLLEGE
Building the Vet & Crematory Relationship
Adding a Cremation Garden to Your Cemetery
From Scratch—Building a Successful Funeral Business from the Ground Up
Making Green by Going Green
Women in Leadership: Learn the Letting Go Formula

Saturday, April 11

- 8:30 - 10am Government & Legal Panel
- 9 - 9:50am Programming and Fundraising for Historic Cemeteries
Guerrilla Branding - Online Strategies for Funeral Homes
Treating Remains with Conditions Caused by Medical Science and Drug Intervention
- PLPA COLLEGE
Cremation Safety for Pet Loss Professionals
- 10 - 10:50am Lessons Learned From the First Ebola Death in the U.S.
Making Your Money Work For You!: A Financial Panel
From the Past into the Future: Transform Your Bottom Line & Enhance Your Families Satisfaction Through Today's Technology
Inbound Marketing: The Future of Funeral Home Marketing
- PLPA College
Five Legal Issues Affecting Every Pet Business
Succession Planning For F a.m.ily Businesses
- 11 - 11:50am More Than a Job: Creating Career Paths to Optimize Recruiting and Employee Retention
The New Facebook: How the Social Media Game Has Changed
Marketing Cemeteries through Genealogy
Create a T.R.U.E. Team
- 11am - 12:50pm PLPA College: Business Planning Workshop
- 11am - 1pm Before and Beyond the Funeral: Creating a Continuum of Care from Hospice to Funeral Service
- Noon - 12:50pm Understanding Family Grief
What is the Right Time to Buy or Sell?
The Business of Embalming
101 Ways to Increase Your Bottom Line
- 1 - 2:30pm State Association Luncheon
- 6 - 7pm Closing Reception
- 7 - 7:45pm Celebration of Remembrance Service
- 7:45 - 11pm Black Tie & Boots Closing Banquet

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

BRINGING OUR PROFESSION TOGETHER

ICCFA ANNUAL CONVENTION & EXPO • SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS • APRIL 8-11, 2015

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**REDESIGN & REINVENT
YOUR BUSINESS TO OWN
YOUR FUTURE**

**Cindy
Gallop**



Cindy Gallop is a true "marketing maven." Her 30 years of experience in brand-building, marketing and entrepreneurialism began when she joined the London-based advertising agency of Bartle Bogle Hegarty. In her 35 years with the agency, she ran large global accounts such as Coca-Cola, Ray-Ban, Polaroid, Unilever and Levi's.

In 2005, Gallop left the ad agency world to be a consultant for specific businesses and industries, while also operating at the cutting edge of digital advertising and the Internet as a tech entrepreneur.

With her razor-sharp British wit, analytical mind, wide-ranging business experience, future-forward approach to technology and unique charismatic presence, she will address the themes of leadership and inventing the future of your business and our industry. See IfWeRanTheWorld.com for an example of how she's using technology to change the world.



**LEARN TO LOVE THE
PROCESS AT WORK AND
IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE**

**Steve
Rizzo**



Acquiring a healthy state of mind is essential in order to produce quality sales, quality customer service, teamwork and communication. Steve Rizzo will show you how to overcome the everyday pressures that can stifle productivity and creativity in the workplace, while enjoying the process.

Rizzo got his start as a stand-up comic where he toured with Dennis Miller, Rosie O'Donnell and Drew Carey as his opening acts. In this program, he'll demonstrate ways you can eliminate boundaries and inhibitions you have placed on yourself to achieve the greatness and happiness you desire, both personally and professionally. He'll also discuss how you can motivate individuals in your organization to improve performance at all levels—sales, customer service, productivity and creativity. This highly-energetic and entertaining program will unlock the secrets to the power of permanent change and a lasting positive attitude.



**RELATIONSHIP POWER:
HOW TO WIN BUSINESS
& INFLUENCE PEOPLE**

**Tim
Sanders**



"Your customers do business with your people, not your products or processes." Sometimes we forget that, but Tim Sanders, strategic consultant and former Chief Solutions Officer & Leadership Coach for Yahoo!, reminds us that our relationships with employees, partners and customers are our most valuable assets. So treat people as if they are #1.

He says that there is an art and a science to being a relationship master at work and will reveal how you can boost your sales by 40 percent, drive your employees' productivity by 25 percent and cut turnover in half. Sanders will reveal winning ways to create and maintain real connections inside and outside your company. This program will include key takeaways such as:

- How relationships are bonded or broken in business
- How to be an effective mentor by following the "knowledge gap lifecycle"
- How to repair a damaged relationship or a mismanaged expectation
- Five email etiquette rules that will protect relationships and prevent burnout in your troops, based on the largest study to date on email habits at work
- A weekly plan to leverage networking to drive business results. Follow it and you'll double your network strength in less than one year.

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For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com

EXPO HOURS

Wednesday, April 8

3 to 7 p.m.

Grand Opening Reception (open bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres)

Thursday, April 9

Noon to 5 p.m.

Lunch followed by the IMSA Happy Hour (open bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres)

Friday, April 10

10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Lunch at the Expo



12 hours of exhibiting with **FREE** food and drinks throughout



The fastest growing industry convention? There's an app for that.

If you haven't downloaded the ICCFA App from the Google Play or the Apple App stores, **DO SO NOW.**

A guide for the ICCFA Annual Convention & Expo will be available in early March. You'll find session descriptions, speaker bios, a map of the expo, a list of all pre-registrants to facilitate networking before the event, the ability to create your personal schedule for the week and much, much more!

Also, join us for a webinar in March that will show you how to make the most of this invaluable tool.

NON-MEMBERS

Register at the non-member rate and receive one **FREE** year of ICCFA membership (a \$595-1,700 value!).

A TEXAS-SIZED CONVENTION

- 525+ booth exhibit hall
- Free food & drinks in the Expo hall
- 30+ educational sessions on topics that most affect your business
- Earn up to 15.5 CE hours
- Lowest registration fee of any industry convention
- Night Out to the Spurs vs. Rockets basketball game **NEW!**
- 5th Annual Pet Loss Professionals Alliance (PLPA) College
- Jewish Funeral Directors of America breakout session
- Green Burial Council sessions
- International Memorialization Supply Association meetings
- Networking luncheons, receptions and dinners
- ICCFA Educational Foundation Reception honoring David Wharmby, CCE, with the Lasting Impact Award
- ICCFA Hall of Fame Induction of Fred Miller, CCE, CSE
- 2014 Keeping It Personal (KIP) Awards presentation
- ICCFA Annual Meeting of Members
- State Association Leadership Luncheon
- Celebration of Remembrance memorial service **NEW!**

30+ BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The New Facebook: How the Social Media Game Has Changed, Zachary Garbow:

In the last few years, many funeral homes and cemeteries have recognized the impact of social media marketing for reaching their community. However, Facebook continues to change their news feed algorithm in ways that dramatically affect a business page's ability to reach its fans and community. Zack Garbow will share the secrets of how funeral industry professionals can succeed within the changing environment. Through real-world examples, funeral and cemetery professionals will learn a detailed blueprint for effective Facebook marketing. By the end of this session, attendees will have actionable knowledge to deploy an effective digital marketing strategy on Facebook to grow their customers and increase their marketing reach.



Effective Communication—Influencing the Unwilling, Unconcerned & Unmotivated at Work, Shannon Leahy:

Are you looking to re-engage good staff that have learned bad habits? Come learn from storyteller Shannon Leahy how to express your message in narrative and avoid dividing people into camps of Us vs. Them, Right and Wrong, or Their Job, Not My Job. During this session, you will learn how to master simple, easy-to-understand, real-world techniques that "show, don't tell" your message.



Five Changes You Need to Make to Remain Viable,

Daniel Isard: The profit margin of the funeral business has gone down more than 50 percent over the last 30 years and cemetery sales are declining due to non-burial alternatives. In order for funeral and cemetery businesses to remain viable, changes have to be made from the ground up. Dan Isard shares his experiences of working with more than 2,000 funeral homes and 800 cemeteries throughout North America to highlight the five



matters that the profession must change to remain viable in the future.

Seven Habits of Highly Sustainable Cemeteries,

Gino Merendino: Since its foundation, Toyota Motor Company has made it their corporate policy to contribute toward sustainable development. Gino Merendino will share Toyota's Seven Guiding Principles to demonstrate how you can conserve resources and be kind to the earth, all while making your establishment a first-class, sustainable cemetery. As a bonus, cemeticians will learn how to streamline processes, reduce expenses, increase productivity and create a "feel good experience" for visitors, workers and even the cemetery accountants!



The Funeral Experience of the Future ... Today!, Brad

Rex: Join Brad Rex as he presents his thoughts on the future of the funeral experience and how it is being implemented today. Rex will discuss:



- The unmet needs of funeral families and guests
- A holistic approach to meeting those needs before, during and after a funeral
- Mass personalization that captures and shares the life purpose of the loved one
- Cutting-edge technology integrated with personal touch to create a high "wow factor"
- The tangible customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and financial benefits gained from a superior experience

Overcoming Challenges With Autopsy Cases, Shun

Newbern, MS, CFSP: Shun Newbern will share best practices for embalming autopsy cases that arrive to you with challenges such as head trauma, tissue procurement, and bodies combined with emaciation and edema. He will demonstrate proven techniques that are practical, reduce stress and result in successful preservation every time.



The open system of an autopsy case provides the most potential risk for infectious exposure, so best practices in controlling exposure will also be addressed.

Making Your Money Work for You!: A Financial Panel: Join this illustrious group of industry money managers and financial planning advisers to learn how your money can do more than just lie a bank vault collecting around 2% interest per year. Learn how—through wise investments and proper management—you can make your money work for you, and not the other way around.

- Gary Freytag, CGFE (moderator), President & CEO, Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio
- Jay Brammer, President, Gibraltar Remembrance Services, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Pat Severo, Senior Vice President, Financial Consultant, RBC Wealth Management, Beverly Hills, California
- Len Haussler, CFA, CPA, President, Opus Capital Management, Cincinnati, Ohio



From Scratch—Building a Successful Funeral Business From the Ground Up, Doug

Gober: If you were starting over, beginning with a blank sheet of paper, a big pile of money and no preconceptions, what kind of business would you design to serve 21st century funeral customers? How would it compare to your business today? This presentation analyzes all the elements that go into a new funeral business, including facilities, staffing, products and services, plus the capital required to put it all in place. Doug Gober will take a look at what we can learn from that funeral home or cemetery of tomorrow, and how we can put it to work in our businesses today.



Government & Legal Panel, Moderated by Irwin W.

Shipper, CCE: Join moderator



For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com

Irwin Shipper, CCE, ICCFA Government & Legal Affairs Committee chairman, and his panel of legal and regulatory specialists for this session. Panelists will provide the latest updates on changing regulations and recommend strategies to make compliance work for you.

Programming and Fundraising for Historic Cemeteries, Paul Williams:



Need a new fundraising idea for your cemetery? Learn from Paul Williams about the diverse programming and fundraising activities that have been implemented at Historic Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC, that have resulted in extensive community outreach, an increase of thousands of visitors, international news mentions and, of course, a large increase of unrestricted funding—circumstances that all historic cemeteries wish they had. Williams will highlight several fundraisers that can be easily replicated, including dog walking membership programs, hiring goats, movie nights, 5K races, book clubs, respectful Halloween events, concerts, lectures, tours and more.

Guerrilla Branding: Online Strategies for Funeral Homes, Eric Spellmann:



You know you need to market your business, but when you don't have the financial resources to effectively utilize traditional marketing methods, what do you do? Eric Spellmann will explain numerous proven and successful strategies you can use to extend the reach of your branding. By utilizing little-known online tools, you can cheaply (and often freely) reach tens of thousands of potential customers. Learn how and when to use online guerrilla marketing strategies and how to measure the effectiveness of these campaigns.

Treating Remains with Conditions Caused by Medical Science and Drug Intervention, Karl D. Wenzel, CFSP, MBIE:



There is no such thing as an "easy case" in the preparation room anymore. Due to drug interventions and advanced medical procedures, the job of an embalmer is far more challenging these days. Karl

Wenzel will discuss common problems and how to address them to ensure success in the preparation room. Edema cases, emaciation, cancers and jaundice are all too frequent and hamper our progress in pleasing a family's desire to see their loved one. Learn the skills and techniques used to hurdle these obstacles.

Lessons Learned From the First Ebola Death in the U.S., David Patterson, CFSP, and W. Scott Smith:



Join David Patterson of Global Mortuary Affairs and Scott Smith of Heritage Crematory as they share their experiences in handling the case of the first person to succumb to Ebola in the United States in recent history. Beyond hearing the details of the removal and eventual cremation of the body, you'll learn practical lessons and tips for planning how to handle communicable disease cases in your own business.

Succession Planning For Family Businesses, Alan Creedy & Bill McQueen, CFSP:



Never has succession planning been more urgent than today. According to national estimates, in excess of 66 percent of small business owners are either quickly approaching or beyond retirement age. This presents both opportunities and pitfalls. Failure to plan is planning to fail. Creedy and McQueen cover the financial, legal and emotional issues that surround this "once-in-a-lifetime" event by discussing actual scenarios and applying their knowledge and experience to discuss real and practical solutions.

From the Past Into the Future: Transform Your Bottom Line & Enhance Customer Satisfaction Through Technology Today, Bob Sheridan:



In today's changing world, the one thing that remains constant in the funeral industry is our commitment to helping families honor the lives of those they love. To focus on serving families, it is essential to have a healthy business. Bob Sheridan will outline

consumer and industry trends and give insight into how technology can respond to these changes in a way that optimizes service to families and creates value for funeral homes. He will share some of the different systems utilized by our and other industries, and review the pros and cons of each in an effort to help you transform your business to address customer needs in this ever-changing, technology-driven world.

Inbound Marketing: The Future of Funeral Home Marketing, John Callaghan:



Have you found that your marketing just isn't working like it used to? You may be stuck in the "outbound marketing" rut, pushing your message in front of people and hoping that they will call you when a death happens. Come learn about "inbound marketing," a new marketing paradigm being used by doctors, lawyers, financial planners and dozens of other professional industries. You will be shown specific examples of how leading funeral homes are already adopting this strategy in order to differentiate themselves from discount service providers.

More Than a Job: Creating Career Paths to Optimize Recruiting and Employee Retention, Mark Jorgensen and Chris Butler, CFSP:



Want to learn the secret to hiring and retaining top performers? Mark Jorgensen and Chris Butler team up to share the benefits of changing your hiring approach from offering a job with a fixed salary and benefits to offering a clearly delineated career path that outlines expectations for future goals, earnings and promotions.

Create a T.R.U.E. Team,



West Foulger: In the funeral and cemetery industry we often have two teams—at-need and preneed. To build a long-term, successful preneed program it is imperative to have only one team. As preneed consultants, our future depends on caring funeral directors carrying out the wishes of our families in a dignified and professional

manner so that we can work with surviving family members. As funeral directors, our future depends on preneed consultants who caringly, ethically and professionally secure future business for our funeral homes. Working together creates long-lasting and consistent growth for the firms we represent. West Foulger will share ideas and concepts that have bridged the divide to create a T.R.U.E. team (trust, respect, understand and enjoy).

Understanding Family Grief, Coral Popowitz, MSW, CT, and Andy McNeil:

You can be a comfort to grieving families far beyond the funeral service itself. Coral Popowitz and Andy McNeil will present a developmental model of the grieving family that will lead to a greater understanding of



how individual family members grieve differently, what responses to expect and suggested ways to help. You will gain valuable insight into the needs of grieving family members from birth to grandparenthood and be better equipped to bring hope and healing to the families you serve.

When is the Right Time to Buy or Sell?, Tony Kumming and Dwight Glover:

Have you been struggling with the idea of selling your business, but just don't know if the time is right? Tony Kumming and Dwight Glover will help ease your mind by sharing how to properly prepare your business for a sale and how to avoid mistakes that can lower your business value. Discover what to



expect during the sales process, what buyers look for, and what to expect after the sale has occurred. Learn from the case studies of a transaction attorney, a representative from a company that buys businesses, an owner who has sold his business, and a representative from a succession planning company.

The Business of Embalming, Jeffrey Chancellor, CFSP:

The complexity of embalming has increased while the time to perform the procedure has decreased. Is it possible to save time to make time? Jeffrey Chancellor will demonstrate how to re-arrange your usual order and timing of processes and cross-apply products to improve results and make the embalming room a profit center by using methods that add little time to the embalming process with items already on hand.



CREMATION TRACK

Cremation Hotline Calls: What People Are Asking, Poul Lemasters, Esq.:

While the ICGFA Cremation Hotline was developed as a resource tool for members, many consumers have found the number and have called as well. Wouldn't it be nice to know what consumers really think about cremation? What if you could hear consumer questions and concerns—plus the answers? Join Poul Lemasters as he shares actual calls (and their answers) from the ICGFA Cremation Hotline. The hotline has been answering calls, any time, any day and completely free of charge through a partnership between ICGFA and Answering Service for Directors (ASD) since January 1, 2014.



experience levels align the service experience with what today's cremation consumers really want. In this session, they'll give you the tools you need to overcome the underlying challenges in serving cremation families. Learn how to:

- Help families plan memorable life celebration events
- Handle cremation phone inquiries the correct way
- Transform cremation packages from good to great
- Align your sales strategy with the latest sales trends
- Establish effective marketing plans to grab the attention of your community
- Easily and quickly educate consumers about cremation merchandise



Adding a Cremation Garden to Your Cemetery, Brian Nilges:

Brian Nilges will explore all of the elements of adding a cremation garden to your cemetery: the research, planning, design, construction and marketing of a cremation garden, including the techniques and results he learned through the development of a cremation garden at Olathe Memorial Cemetery in Olathe, Kansas. Come learn how to enhance your cemetery by creating a park-like setting that will increase your bottom line by offering families a more inviting atmosphere.



The Ultimate Cremation Sales Toolkit in Just 50 Minutes, Lacy Robinson, CFSP, and Steve Jones:

Lacy Robinson and Steve Jones from Aurora Gasket Company offer a consultative approach to helping funeral home owners, managers and professionals of all

Don't miss this information-packed session that will leave you inspired to create experiences that family and friends will want to remember instead of trying to forget.

SESSION RECORDINGS

Will be available for sale. Pick up an order form at the ICGFA registration desk.

For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com

A curriculum developed especially for pet loss professionals. Attendance is a requirement for earning your Certified Pet Loss Professional (GPLP) designation. This program is also great for those interested in entering the pet loss arena and setting up their business **the right way!**

PLPA Reception, Wednesday, April 8, 2 to 3 p.m.: Join pet loss professionals from around the world as they meet to kick off a week full of festivities during the PLPA College. Also, PLPA co-founders Coleen Ellis, GPLP, and Bill Remkus, GPLP, will be honored with the inaugural Pet Loss Pioneer Awards. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served. Admission is included with every full registration.

Hiring: How to Do It Well, Mark Jorgensen: Hiring and keeping great employees in the pet loss profession can be difficult. Mark Jorgensen will give real-world models and organizational tips for setting up proven human resource, compliance and recordkeeping systems. You'll also learn insider recruiter techniques on how to identify, attract and retain top talent who can help ensure your company's continued success. Be confident in your hiring process—from creating a job description to training your new hire.



Building the Vet & Crematory Operator Relationship, Dr. Brian Melius, DMV: Veterinarian Brian Melius will share his thoughts on what a valuable relationship between a pet crematory and a vet looks like from the veterinarian's perspective. Learn how to



emphasize your value to a clinic, what materials to bring and what to do when you get in front of the decision maker.

Five Legal Issues Affecting Every Pet Business, Poul Lemasters, Esq.: As with all business owners, successful pet death care professionals have to run sound businesses with high standards and best practices. While you may have the pet part of the equation down pat, it's the human side of things that can often trip up a business. Poul Lemasters will take a look into five issues and potential areas of liability that affect all businesses:

1. Insurance
2. Hiring
3. Firing
4. Employee manuals
5. Customer issues



This risk management overview of the day-to-day operations of any pet loss business will address potential liabilities and—most importantly—reveal how to reduce and handle them before they become a legal problem.

Business Planning Workshop, Sherif A. Ebrahim: Ready to start your own pet loss business, but not sure how to go about it? Sherif Ebrahim will review the fundamentals of what everyone needs to know and do when starting



a business. Topics to include:

- Develop an elevator pitch
- Set general business goals
- Evaluate methods to reach your goals
- Decide on appropriate metrics to measure achievement of goals
- Determine resources needed to achieve your goals

This workshop will help you determine how to find assistance in free and paid programs for financing, accounting and legal advice, and more.

Cremation Safety for Pet Loss Professionals, Kevin Woronchak, GPLP: Pet cremations are a different kind of animal (pun intended) than human cremations. Learn the intricacies of proper pet crematory operation, including meeting OSHA requirements and PLPA standards.



PLPA COLLEGE COURSES

Along with the sessions listed as being a part of the PLPA College, any session with a  next to it is approved and may count towards earning or renewing your GPLP certification.



A SESSION BY THE JEWISH FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF AMERICA

Discovering Your Elijah Moment, Rabbi Daniel Cohen: Mentor, guide, cheerleader and motivator, Rabbi Daniel



Cohen possesses a unique blend of authenticity, wisdom and spiritual insight for contemporary society.

Join him as he shares his philosophy of "Discovering Your Elijah Moment," which will lead you to an increased awareness of your role as an agent for transformational change and will reveal the benefits of seeing Elijah in others.

Through this session of self-discovery, you will learn one of the most effective principles for reverse-engineering your life so you can lead the life for which you want to be remembered.

- The origin of selected Jewish funeral traditions
- Jewish traditions before, during and after a funeral
- How Jewish funeral traditions differ from Christian funeral traditions
- Three Hebrew prayers related to death and funerals



GREEN BURIAL TRACK

IN CONCERT WITH THE GREEN BURIAL COUNCIL

The following sessions are presented in partnership with the Green Burial Council. The group will also have an exhibit booth in the exposition hall.

Treehuggers, Babyboomers and Republicans? Who Wants a Green Funeral and Why,

Lee Webster: Think you know who wants a green burial? Prepare to be surprised. Come learn about who is getting behind the movement, what they are really looking for and how you can prepare to meet the need for green burial options in your community. Information compiled by the Green Burial Council, together with first-hand reports from ceterierians around the country, will give you some important data to use when developing your new green marketing plan.



Nuts and Bolts of Sustainable Cemetery Management,

Matt Alcide: What's the process for establishing a natural cemetery, reclaiming an old one, or getting your municipal cemetery to open hybrid space? What goes into the management, care and maintenance of green burials of any kind? And who says that every cemetery or burial ground can't go green? With close to 100 green burial grounds of all types now open in North America, we finally have enough data to begin formulating blueprints to help you shortcut the obstacles and move right into operation successfully. Veteran green burial owners and managers have joined forces to share insights and practical information that will put you in the know and ready to act. Already gone green? Come share!



Making Green by Going Green: A Practical Guide to Increasing Revenue,

John Eric Rolfstad: Let's face it—one of the scariest things about this newfangled green burial business is what it might do to YOUR business. Green Burial Council providers, along with prominent professionals in related fields, have been polled for the express purpose of finding out what they have learned about protecting, supplementing and replacing revenue centers, even as cremation threatens to overtake burial as the preferred disposition option in the United States. Come hear what industry experts say about how green burial products and services might be your answer to staying in business.



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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Learn the Letting Go Formula, Gate Collins:

Juggling technology, deadlines, responsibilities, finances, household chores and family commitments can keep anyone in a state of "what's next?" and constantly focused on the next task. For many women in the death care profession, their day job isn't just a day job, and the unhealthy effects are showing up in leaders saying they have become control freaks, overwhelmed with the taskmaster in their head and unable to turn the switch off. Naming, claiming and releasing what isn't working is where this session will start, finishing with a powerful plan that will ensure that you are more relaxed, more confident and more connected to yourself and others.



Plan to continue the discussion with Collins and other like-minded professionals at an informal get-together after the session that may serve as the starting point for your own accountability plan.



HOSPICE PANEL

Before and Beyond the Funeral: Creating a Continuum of Care from Hospice to Funeral Service:

Learn from professionals with experience in both the funeral service and hospice professions how to build solid relationships in order to provide the best possible experience for those we mutually serve. Hear solid examples of partnerships that are working in communities around the country and how to position your business as an attractive, qualified partner to your local hospice provider. Let's create a continuum of care together! The session will be moderated by Glenda Stansbury, CFSP, InSight Books. Panelists will include:

- Kim Medici Shelquist, Homesteaders Life Company
- Lauren Blevins, CCFE, Williams Funeral Home & Crematory
- Norene Mostkoff, HGI Care Services, Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa
- Jodi Clock, GPLP, Clock Funeral Home/Clock Timeless Pets
- Lacy Robinson, CFSP, Aurora Casket Company
- Greg Grabowski, Seasons Hospice Foundation
- Candace Green, Service Corporation International

ALSO: Receive a sneak peek of the forthcoming Hospice-Funeral Care Toolkit being created by ICCFA and the National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization that will be distributed FREE to members of both groups.



For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

PLPA Reception & Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, April 8, 2 to 3 p.m.

Join pet loss professionals from around the world as they meet to kick off a week full of festivities during the PLPA College. Also, PLPA co-founders Coleen Ellis, GPLP, and Bill Remkus, GPLP, will be honored with the inaugural Pet Loss Pioneer Awards. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served. Admission is included with every full registration.



San Antonio Spurs vs. Houston Rockets

Wednesday, April 8, 7 to 10:30 p.m.

See the NBA champion San Antonio Spurs take on in-state rivals the Houston Rockets. Tickets are \$60 each. Bus transportation to and from the convention center and the AT&T Center will be provided thanks to a generous sponsorship by Hepburn Superior US Chemical. Buses will leave the convention center at 7 p.m. The game begins at 7:30 p.m. Buses will return to the host hotel after the game.



ICGFA Annual Meeting of Members

Thursday, April 9, 8 to 8:45 a.m.

Vote for representatives to the Board of Directors and hear reports from the association's officers.

First Timers' Reception

Thursday, April 9, 5 to 6 p.m.

Will this be your first time attending the ICGFA Annual Convention & Exposition? Come meet other members who are also new to the convention, as well as ICGFA volunteers and leadership at this special reception dedicated to welcoming you. Admission is included with every full registration.



ICGFA Educational Foundation Reception

Thursday, April 9, 6 to 7 p.m.

Join us for a reception to honor donors, scholarship recipients and bestow the ICGFA Educational Foundation Lasting Impact Award to **David Wharmby, CCE**. Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased on your registration form. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served. All proceeds will benefit the Educational Foundation, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charity that supports the association's educational programs.



ICGFA Prayer Breakfast: "Are People Born Good? That's Not What My Bible Says."

Friday, April 10, 7:30 to 8:45 a.m.

How do we praise God when times are tough? Join Paul Elvig and Alan Creedy for this year's Prayer Breakfast to discuss ways to have a humble and grateful heart—always. This event is



complimentary courtesy of sponsors, and is open to the first 60 people to request a ticket.

KIP Awards Presentation

Friday, April 10, 9:15 to 9:30 a.m.

Winners of 2014 KIP (Keeping It Personal) Awards will be honored during a ceremony on the general session stage. The KIP Awards recognize the best in personalization and were created by ICGFA's Personalization Committee to recognize outstanding examples of personalization of services or products in the death care profession.



State Association Leadership Luncheon

Saturday, April 11, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Elected leaders, staff and "rising stars" from state and regional associations are invited to gather at this roundtable luncheon to network and discuss issues affecting their members. A ticket is required and can be purchased on the registration form.

Closing Reception

Saturday, April 11, 6 to 7 p.m.

Join us for an open bar and western-themed entertainment before the Closing Banquet.

ICGFA Celebration of Remembrance

Saturday, April 11, 7 to 7:45 p.m.

Join us as we honor ICGFA members, their family, friends and loved ones who have died in the past year.

Black Tie & Boots Closing Banquet and Awards Ceremony

Saturday, April 11, 7:45 to 11 p.m.

Come enjoy dinner and entertainment as we close the 2015 ICGFA Annual Convention. Black tie (optional) is requested for men; cocktail attire for women; cowboy boots for everyone. The ICGFA presidential transfer from I. Frederick Lappin, CCE, to Darin Drabing will take place during this event, as well as the Hall of Fame award ceremony.



This year, **Frederick W. Miller, CCE, CSE**, Memorial Business Systems, will be inducted into the ICGFA Hall of Fame.

Tickets are included with full attendee and spouse/guest registrations. All others may purchase a ticket on the registration form.

REGISTRATION

- First-time attendees: \$399
- One-day passes available
- Single expo session passes available
- Non-members: Register at the non-member rate and receive one FREE year of ICGFA membership!



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Why Do We Memorialize Disasters?

The good and bad in trauma memorials and anniversaries.

By Daniel J. DeNoon

Does it do any good to memorialize disasters such as 9/11? Do monuments to grief and endless anniversary remembrances re-traumatize us or strengthen our resilience? For good or ill, memorializing is a part of human nature.

“It is a very human, universal desire to remember the dead,” Remmler tells WebMD. “Very often, the only way to remember is to create some kind of space. Altars, for example, or those roadside places where people put up crosses or icons or flowers. It is a way to say we respect and will not forget the dead.”

Is this a good thing for people who’ve been traumatized?

The answer is different for different people, say Remmler and Charles Marmar, MD, professor and chair of psychiatry at New York University’s Langone Medical Center.

“There is not a one-size-fits-all solution for trauma and loss,” Marmar tells WebMD. “For people who have relatively mastered a traumatic loss or stress reaction, a memorial serves a healthy, healing role. It helps them integrate and remember their experience. So memorializing honors those who are lost and helps the survivors who can manage grief well continue the process.”

Some people, however, are not quite as far along in their coping. They may suffer posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Or they may have become stuck in the grieving process.

“For those highly symptomatic, who have trouble

coping, who have continuing grief, who still have startle reactions and flashbacks, the anniversaries tend to be quite painful and memorializing tends to be difficult,” Marmar says. “At these times they tend to have surges in symptoms and need support.”

Alan Manevitz, MD, a psychiatrist at New York’s Lenox Hill Hospital, has a unique perspective on the issue. As a first responder who helped carry bodies from the collapsing World Trade Center, he experienced the trauma firsthand. And in his practice he’s helped family members and other rescuers cope with their grief and anxiety.

“Americans as a whole have a mixed feeling about wanting to remember things. Sometimes people want to have a few minutes of memory on 9/11 and can’t wait for 9/12 to come about,” Manevitz tells WebMD. “Still for most people it reflects not just the terrible event but how we handled it with courage and resolve and resilience and that we were unified at that moment in time, that we persevered, and moved forward.”

The families of people who died on 9/11 and rescue workers who were on the scene that day have told Manevitz that they welcome memorializing the event. They do not want that day forgotten.

“Remembering bad things that have happened is more helpful than forgetting,” Manevitz says. “When you feel like you are forgotten, that actually causes more harm than not. Still, the fact is that some people’s traumatic memories come up at this time when they see the images replayed.”

Physical Memorials to Disasters

Anniversary remembrances are one thing. Permanent memorials are another.

“It is built into our DNA to create these memorials. After all, we build graves for our dead,” Marmar says. But he’s quick to add that the type of memorial is important.

In the case of the 9/11 memorial, he says, part of the monument will be a sacred place in which the remains of many of the dead -- now stored at NYU -- will be permanently laid to rest.

Another part of the memorial will be a museum. This part is intended for future generations, Remmler says.

“My work on the Holocaust shows that once a memorial is created, it moves from having an emotional impact to having more of an educational impact,” she says. “Part of the memorialization is not just to go through mourning and remembering. Those not present at the event, or born afterward, can learn from the event. It becomes meaningful for them, too.”

Not all memorials are huge public monuments. Drive along any highway and you’re likely to see crosses or floral arrangements commemorating private tragedies.

Manevitz says these small monuments can help people recover from such losses.

“In personal tragedy, your sense of safety is shattered,” he says. “You feel powerless and unlinked from everyone else. And out of that you feel helpless, or angry, or want to run away and hide. Personal markers are a way of empowering that moment.”

Although there’s little research in the area, Marmar notes that the maintenance of personal memorials can go too far.

“For some, it is a sign of healing; for others it is a sign of arrested grief,” he warns.

How can you tell the difference?

“In general, a sign of healthy grief is you can confront the reminders without being overwhelmed, and you can set them aside without feeling guilty. It is a flexible grief,” Marmar says. “As a survivor, I can think about

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it without being overwhelmed. I focus on the present without being constantly reminded of the trauma. And I have enough sense of security to know the next disaster isn't lurking around the corner."

About the author:

Daniel J. DeNoon is senior medical writer for WebMD, researching and reporting daily news stories and health features. Before joining WebMD in 1999, he was senior editor for CW Henderson publications and a freelance medical writer, editor, and communications consultant.

He is the recipient of several professional awards. These include a commendation from the Centers for Disease Control for his work during the 2001-2 bioterror attacks and three Sigma Delta Chi awards from the Society for Professional Journalists. Mr. DeNoon earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and religion from Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.



Iconic photo of Iwo Jima which is the most "Memorable" and "Memorializing" image of World War II

U.S. Marines of the 28th Regiment, 5th Division, raise the American flag atop Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima, on Feb. 23, 1945. Strategically located only 660 miles from Tokyo, the Pacific island became the site of one of the bloodiest, most famous battles of World War II against Japan. (AP Photo/Joe Rosenthal)

On February 23, 1945 Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal captured perhaps the most memorable image of World War II when he photographed a group

of U.S. Marines and a Navy corpsman raising an American flag at the battle of Iwo Jima in the Pacific.

The photo inspired Americans back home, and revived the spirits of a war-weary nation who had no way of knowing they would emerge victorious within a matter of months.

The moment captured in the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" went on to have a new life when Felix de Weldon used it as the basis for his sculpture at Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.



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How a 1974 Lincoln Continental Can Be a “Memorializing” Factor Even in a Problematic Country as North Korea

Kim Jong-il hated the United States. But an American carried him to the grave. The coffin of Mr. Kim, the cultish North Korean leader, sat atop the roof of a polished masterpiece of American automotive grandeur: a mid-1970s armored black Lincoln Continental, which wended through the snowy streets of Pyongyang on Wednesday in a rigorously choreographed funeral. Mr. Kim’s gigantic, smiling portrait was balanced atop a second Lincoln limousine. A third, slightly smaller Lincoln brought up the rear, its roof bearing an immense wreath. The aging but impeccably maintained cars gave the footage on North Korean state television the quality of a cold war Hollywood film.

“The Lincoln Continental in the old Asia was considered to be a solid, robust, powerful car,” said Kongdan Oh, a senior researcher at the Institute for Defense Analyses who has written on daily life in North Korea, where her parents were born. “They are a time capsule. North Koreans are living still the 1970s life.”

She said the cars were probably chosen because they were previously used in the funeral of Kim Il-sung, who was Kim Jong-il’s father and the founding president of North Korea and who died in 1994. “Whatever they did in the past, they are very comfortable repeating that, especially this Kim family dynasty,” she said of the North Korean leadership. “They probably didn’t even think twice about using this car. For them, it’s a very natural choice.” Almost as soon as the funeral

procession began, aficionados filled an online forum of the Professional Car Society with giddy speculation over the cars’ make, model and modifications. The cars that led the procession were probably from either 1975 or 1976, according to Gregg D. Merksamer, who observed on the forum that “the full, rear fender skirts and the five heavy vertical bars separating the grille into six sections” were marks of those years that disappeared from later models.

Mr. Merksamer, who has written extensively about hearses, ambulances and other so-called professional cars, said that the inside of the limousine carrying Kim Jong-il’s body would not have been outfitted for a coffin, which may explain why the body was placed on a bed of white flowers on the roof. But he wrote on the forum that it was “definitely armored, as confirmed from the secondary chrome frame surrounding the slightly-open right front window.” Some car experts also drew attention to similarities between the car that transported Kim Jong-il’s body and the Lincoln limo used as a hearse in the 1994 funeral of his father.

But Mr. Merksamer said in an e-mail that the car carrying the huge portrait of Kim Jong-il bore a greater resemblance to his father’s Lincoln. (Official footage of that vehicle, posted by a Romanian news Web site, circulated on several car blogs.) “The finned-style wheel covers and oval opera windows in the D-pillars” — the car’s rear-most vertical supports — “actually

correlate to the sister car that carried Kim Jong-il's oversized portrait," Mr. Merksamer said in the e-mail. He said that car appeared armored as well. It was not clear how the cars were obtained by North Korea, which is subject to economic sanctions by the United States and other world powers, and analysts said that they might have been bought decades ago. Behind the three vintage American cars were dozens of modern luxury Mercedes-Benz sedans and a larger number of more modest Volkswagen Passats from the 1990s, probably built in or acquired from China, the North's largest trading partner.

The Ford Motor Company, which owns the Lincoln brand, did not return e-mails seeking comment on the prominent role the classic Lincolns played in the procession or on whether any uptick in sales could be expected. Ms. Oh, the North Korea analyst, cautioned against reading too much into North Korea's use in the state funeral of a car manufactured by its sworn enemy. "Because American cars were the prototype of the car industry, I don't think they're showing a friendly gesture or any signaling," she said. "Even in the Maoist period in China, the Lincoln Continental was used."

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R & S Markers Brings Innovation to Temporary Markers

Sam Schwab, with over 45 years supplying the funeral industry and together with Rick LaPorte, a salesman by profession, decided to bring innovation to temporary markers.

The birth of R&S Markers embodies all the characteristics of a true start-up and family operation. From the first prototype designs, major convention show in Las Vegas and direct marketing advertisement, the R&S Marker product has found itself on the grounds of golf courses and funeral homes across the country.

Sam and now son-in-law, Rick, met in 2005 at Stephanie's on Newbury Street, in the heart-of-the great city of Boston, MA. Upon meeting, Sam and Rick quickly realized a mutual passion for the game of golf. Over the years that followed, they also realized a shared passion for entrepreneurialism.

Sam reflected on his time in the funeral industry and one day brainstormed that golf courses could benefit from a customizable, temporary marker for golf course signage. Together they crafted the concept and design of the product, and then attended a major golf convention show in Las Vegas.

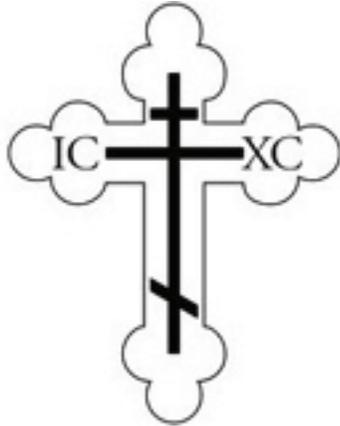
After receiving overwhelming reception for the product, they quickly realized there was a real need. In fact, R&S Markers was nominated as top ten "coolest products" of the show in 2012. Chris Gray of Superintendent Magazine writes, "Instead of paying high prices for pre-made signs that many of our crew members like to chop into as many smaller pieces as possible with rotary mowers, you should make your own in your office on your laser printer — for a fraction of the cost."

After proven success servicing golf courses, Sam and Rick were eager to introduce the concept to other industries. Sam pondered on his time in the funeral industry and always thought there was a need for a more practical temporary grave marker. The R&S Marker shows no rust, mildew or mold and presents a clean compliment to the grave side. They agreed that funeral directors should have a product that allows them to easily create and customize any message and provide a lasting memory for the families.

Today, Sam has assumed the operations and finance role, while his son-in-law Rick handles the strategy and marketing responsibility. They are ecstatic about the reception from the funeral industry and look forward to servicing funeral homes across the country. They are gracious for the continued loyalty and partnership thus far, from the funeral home community and encourage others to view their temporary grave markers.

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A Death Well Planned

By Kathleen Havens

My browser history is always interesting and I always wonder what people would think if they saw it. It's gotten even more interesting now that I've been researching the topics of pre-planning and personalization of one's own funeral. While we all can agree the internet has amazing research potential, I found a much better resource for my needs, right here in my hometown of Houston, Texas. A trip to the National Museum of Funeral History sparked an amazing array of thoughts and ideas on both of my research topics and fueled even more ideas for future use.

Explore Pre-Planning Options at the National Museum of Funeral History

The thought that pre-planning your funeral is not a new idea occurred to me while perusing the History of Embalming exhibit at the Museum, where a full set of ancient Egyptian embalming tools can be found. The ancient Egyptians invested a great deal of time and money in the planning of their own funerals. Procuring a proper burial container, purchasing funerary items and constructing a suitable tomb were chief among their concerns.

The reason for all of the attention given to death, while still alive, was to guarantee a successful journey to the afterlife. Death, you see, was not viewed as the final stage of life by the Egyptians, but simply as a state of being while waiting to be revived. While our reasons for taking time to plan for our final sendoff are likely much different, the Egyptians can still be seen as excellent role models for their dedication to the process. After all, when it comes down to it, we all want to be remembered.

Genevieve Keeney, president of the National Museum of Funeral History, reminds me we make plans for almost everything. From birthing plans and wedding plans to plans for our children's graduation parties and beyond, we exhaustively plan for almost everything in our culture, yet most of us are still unwilling to plan for our own death. While the carefully planned wedding may not happen, without a doubt, every last one of us will die. You need a plan!

Taking the burden of making arrangements and decisions off the shoulders of grieving loved ones is a great kindness in which many have invested. However, the newer trend gaining traction is the personalization of funerals to reflect the passions and personalities of the individual.

"If boots and hats and roping and riding are your style," Keeney said, "your last hoorah can reflect that." With rodeo season in full swing, including the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Museum is showcasing a special exhibit, *The Last Tip of My Hat*, through March 31, 2015.

This exhibit illustrates a level of personalization every good cowboy and cowgirl will appreciate. A custom made pine coffin, donated by Cowboy's Last Ride Casket Company in Early, Texas, is set against the backdrop of a final sunset bringing to mind the Old West when a simple pine box was used for burials. Visitors can also view the memorial folder from Roy Rogers' funeral, as well as pay tribute to other fallen Hollywood cowboys and cowgirls in the Museum's *Thanks for the Memories* exhibit.

Educating the public on how any funeral can be customized to reflect the personality of the departed and all that was important to them in life is a large part of the mission of the Museum. "Your final sendoff can be whatever you want it to be and can leave your loved ones with a life celebration that speaks to who you were," Keeney said. In keeping with this mission, the Museum features several other outstanding examples of the level of personalization possible. For instance, visitors can ponder the *A Life Well Lived: Fantasy Coffins* exhibit, which features uniquely crafted coffins in a variety of shapes and animals, all built to reflect particular aspects of the decedent's personality or job or what they hope to achieve in the afterlife. Like the Egyptians, to the people of Ghana, death is not an end, but instead a transition to the spiritual realm of ancestors who have gone before. How about being buried in a Mercedes-shaped coffin or canoe or a tiger or chicken or bull or perhaps a lobster?

Personal Personalization Story

Speaking of lobsters, I'm proud to say my family is also on the cutting edge of this new trend and it all started in Maine. The story goes like this:

While traveling down a lonely stretch of highway in Maine, my parents, along with my aunt and uncle, noticed an antique store and decided to stop in and have a look around. At some point, one of them spied a model of a Viking long boat that is proudly flying the Swedish flag. Now, my mom and her sister are, and I quote, "100% Swedish and excited about all things Swedish," so after some talk, they decided to chip in and buy the Viking long ship. Since then, it has become the centerpiece around which their plan for the final disposition of their and their husbands' ashes has coalesced.

I can't remember exactly who was present, other than my brother Tom, when the sisters, after enjoying several Manhattans expertly crafted by my father, unveiled the plans they had concocted for their sturdy little Viking vessel. To the best of my memory, the plan is for my aunt and uncle to be the keepers of the ship, which sits in the hallway of their home in Maine as it awaits its final ashy cargo. As each of them dies,

they will be cremated and then placed on the deck of the boat to await their shipmates. When all four have died, the manifest is complete. The boat is then to be taken to the cove near the house to be set adrift, at which time tiny flaming arrows are to be shot at the ship setting it ablaze and releasing all of their souls to Valhalla. Huzzah! Upon hearing the plan and giving it consideration, my brother Tom volunteered to pack a picnic lunch and shoot the flaming arrows at their intrepid ship as we eat sandwiches on the shore.

Endless Options

While a Viking burial is not for everybody, there are a seemingly endless supply of options out there for both the disposition of your remains and the manner in which you want your final sendoff to be conducted. The Museum is a wonderfully neutral place to explore various ideas and options. How about a casket made entirely of glass or a casket large enough for three? These and more are included in the Coffins and Caskets of the Past exhibit, along with my personal favorite, a casket decorated with money. The disposition of cremains also appears to be a corner of the market that is really in full bloom. Check out the following options, many of which can be explored at the Museum.

- Nothing is better than having the last word. Have your ashes made into vinyl records with your farewell message recorded.
- Go out with a bang! Have your ashes embedded into a fireworks display for your final farewell.
- Ashes can be incorporated to any number of craft objects such as keychains, worry stones and glass sculptures. Might these make for nice attendee gifts at your funeral?
- Commission a master piece to be created by an artist who will mix your cremains with paints to make a lasting impression.
- Environmentalists may like the idea of becoming part of an artificial reef where ashes are mixed with other compounds to produce the finished product that is then home to fishy friends. Talk about sleeping with the fishes!
- Last, but certainly not least, you can take the trip of a lifetime when you have a portion of your cremains blasted into space. Celestis, a Houston-area company featured in the Museum's Thanks for the Memories exhibit, sends ashes to space and back, to orbit the Earth, to the Moon or even into deep space!

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Telling My Final Story

During my first semester away at college, my Ethics professor gave the class an assignment to write our own obituary. At seventeen, I was completely taken aback by the task and spent hours staring blankly at a blank page, unable to fathom my own mortality. In the end, it was probably one of the most meaningful assignments I have ever been given. Being made to consider what I wanted others to remember about me after I die caused a lot of thoughtful reflection as to how I was living my life and how my choices had bearing on my legacy. Taking the time to plan your own funeral and the story you want to tell seems to be a similar exercise in self-reflection that might bare an invisible gift of reflection on a life well lived.

I'm now embarking on making preparations for my own funeral. It's actually quite fun and not nearly the macabre exercise that many would imagine it to be. I'm very excited after talking to the fine folks at Cowboy's Last Ride Casket Company, I discovered not only could they build for me the toe-pincher coffin I've always wanted, but I can buy it on installment for fifty bucks a month! I plan on putting my order in soon.

I'm going to use it as a coffee table until the time comes to use it in earnest. I think it will make a fine conversation piece.



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ASD – Answering Service for Directors Expands Customer Solutions Department

Media, PA—Funeral directors need support and assistance from their vendors as they are often juggling multiple tasks at once. Recognizing the importance of responsive and proactive customer service, ASD – Answering Service for Directors, the only funeral home exclusive answering service, recently established a dedicated Customer Solutions department.

While Supervisors are available to help directors 24/7, ASD’s new Proactive Customer Service (PCS) team was created to provide funeral directors with a dedicated Account Specialist. Expanded customer service capabilities allow ASD to offer more guidance and assistance to clients. With more than one quarter of all funeral homes in the nation trusting ASD with their sensitive calls, the Customer Solutions department ensures every client receives the individual attention they need.

The PCS team in ASD’s Customer Solutions department consists of experienced employees who have worked at ASD for four years or longer. When a funeral home signs on to take advantage of ASD’s free trial offer, they are immediately assigned a dedicated PCS rep. The Customer Solutions department will follow up regularly to ensure clients understand the different features and tools ASD offers.

“Proactive Customer Service provides our clients with peace of mind knowing that someone is monitoring their account activity on a continual basis. This also ensures the funeral home is using ASD as efficiently as possible,” says Susan Daleandro, who heads up ASD’s Customer Solutions Department. “As we learn more about the funeral home’s needs, we can recommend specific ASD features and provide tutorials to help our clients explore everything available to them.”

Understanding that every funeral home is different, ASD’s PCS reps will work around the funeral home’s schedule by tracking how and when the staff prefers to communicate. From scheduling a conference call with all of the funeral home employees to sending detailed instructions via email, ASD’s Customer Solutions department can accommodate the specific requests of all clients. “Since we are only working with the funeral profession, we’ve been able to build out custom

communication solutions for all of our clients. This is very different than what you would find at any other answering service,” says ASD Vice President, Kevin Czachor.

About ASD

Answering Service for Directors has created a new class of answering service for the funeral profession. Family owned and operated since 1972, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an extensive, 6-month training program focusing on compassionate care. The company’s custom-built communication systems and sophisticated mobile tools were designed solely to meet the needs of funeral homes. With patented solutions, ASD’s smartphone app, ASD Mobile for iPhone or Android, was recognized as the winner of the 2012 NFDA Innovation Award after revolutionizing communications for thousands of funeral homes nationwide. By offering funeral directors unmatched protection for their calls, ASD has redefined the role of an answering service for funeral homes. For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

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National Museum of Funeral History's 21st Annual Golf Tournament

HOUSTON, TEXAS – January 28, 2015 – The National Museum of Funeral History (NMFH) in Houston will welcome supporters to the NMFH 21st Annual Golf Tournament on Monday, May 18, 2015 at the Kingwood Country Club, in Kingwood, Texas. Business executives and funeral industry professionals from across the country will come together on the greens to raise funds to support the museum and its mission to enlighten visitors of one of man's oldest cultural rituals and celebrate the rich history of funeral service.

The tournament kicks off with breakfast in Kingwood Country Club's clubhouse followed by the Golf Classic's shotgun start, after which players will compete in a five-person golf scramble. On-course contests with tee-prizes and professional long drive fundraising entertainment will be located throughout the course. Additionally, vendors including Callaway, Nike and Maui Jim will be on-site for the tournament and players will each receive a voucher that can be used towards product purchases and special savings on the day of the event. Following the 18-holes, players retreat to the clubhouse for a silent auction, dinner and awards ceremony.

In 2014, more than 110 sponsors and 415 players supported the annual fundraiser, and the organization expects continued success in 2015. To register online for the NMFH Golf Tournament, please visit www.nmfh.org, or for more information, please call 281-876-3063.

DETAILS

- WHAT:** National Museum of Funeral History (NMFH) 21st Annual Golf Tournament
- WHEN:** Monday, May 18, 2015 | 8am Breakfast | 9am Shotgun Start
- WHERE:** Kingwood Country Club | 1700 Lake Kingwood Trail, Kingwood, TX 77339
- HOW TO REGISTER:** *Five-person teams range from \$5,300 - \$20,000. Individual player tickets are \$350. *Tee box and greens sponsorships are available starting at \$1,000. To register online, visit nmfh.org or call 281-876-3063.

###

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About the National Museum of Funeral History

The National Museum of Funeral History houses the country's largest collection of funeral service artifacts and features renowned exhibits on one of man's oldest cultural customs. Visitors can discover the mourning rituals of ancient civilizations, see up-close the authentic items used in the funerals of U.S. Presidents and Popes and explore the rich heritage of the industry which cares for the dead. The museum is located at 415 Barren Springs Dr., Houston, TX 77090 and is open Monday – Friday from 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday from 10 am – 5 pm and Sunday from 12 pm – 5 pm. Admission is \$10 for adults and children age 12 and older, \$9 for seniors and veterans; \$7 for children 3 – 11 years old; and free for children age 2 and younger. For more information, visit www.nmfh.org, like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/nmfh) or call 281.876.3063.

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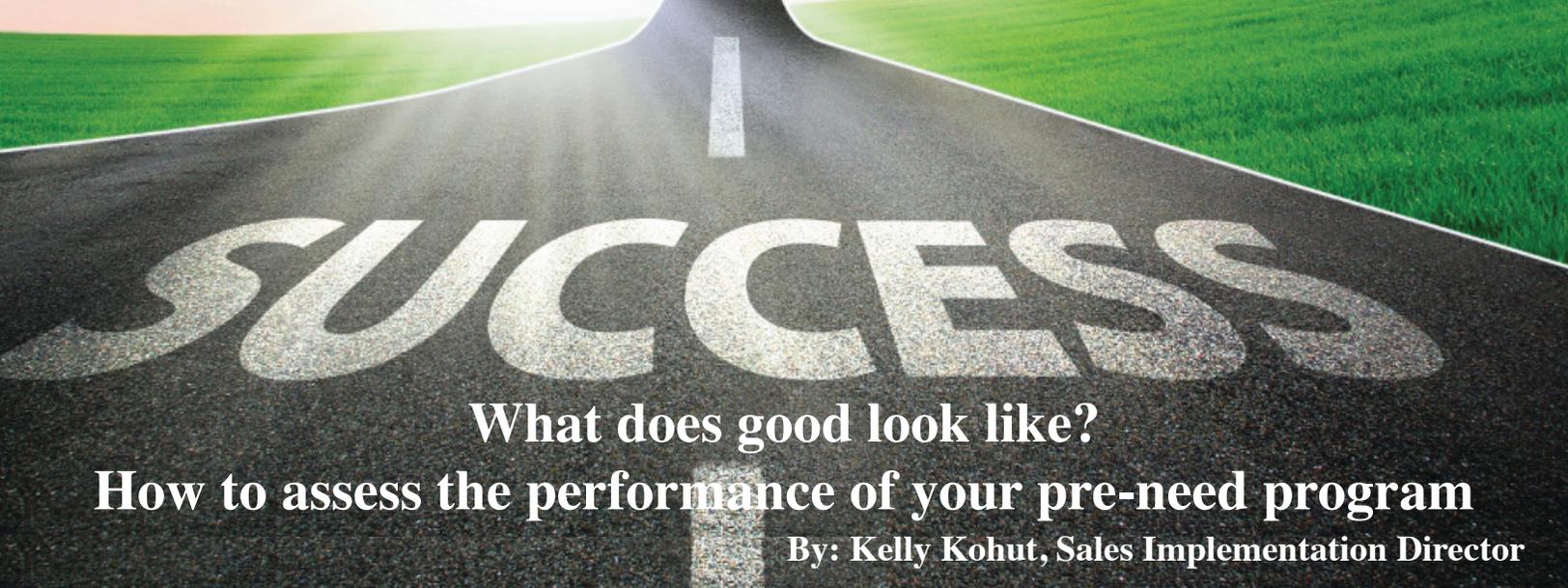
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What does good look like?

How to assess the performance of your pre-need program

By: Kelly Kohut, Sales Implementation Director

For any funeral home with an active pre-need program, it's important to set goals and assess progress toward those goals throughout the year. Often, when it comes to pre-need, many funeral homes rely on the measurements held dear to a chosen insurance carrier or pre-need marketer. In fact, what's important to the funeral home will often vary compared to what an insurance carrier, trust representative or marketing company will use to assess progress.

With over three decades of experience, The Outlook Group has the advantage of firsthand experience through our advisory board of funeral home owners as well as our founder who operates funeral homes today. They are a means to provide real-time insight into how pre-need is affecting the at-need business at their funeral homes and vice versa. The most important consideration should rely on goals set for a pre-need program that reflect the growth goals for the at-need business with any funeral home.

An important way to manage the pre-need business is through data mining. Leading indicators, or those activities that drive to a desired goal or outcome, can be mined through a customer relationship management system. Lagging indicators, or the sought-after goals or outcomes for a pre-need program, should be measured across several variables. At The Outlook Group, we've been able to shape the availability of specific data through Physicians Mutual, data that's important to a funeral home's success with pre-need and overall at-need growth goals. All of this information is then consolidated, analyzed and regularly presented to funeral home owners. While numerous leading and lagging indicators exist, a few are highlighted below for illustration:

Leading Indicators: Used to measure the activity of a funeral home or mortuary.

1. **Active Leads:** The number of active leads being worked will shed insight as to the current workload of the pre-need counselor as well as the overall marketing investment needed to obtain more leads.
2. **Lead Sources:** A review of the lead sources for available leads to be worked can be used alongside activity coaching with any pre-need counselor. It's important to maintain a variety of channels that are successfully attracting new customers and to think innovatively about reaching the customers who still haven't been touched. Additionally, the overall breakdown of lead sources for funded pre-arrangements will allow understanding of what marketing has worked to bring motivated consumers in the door.

Lagging Indicators: Used to measure the performance or the results of a pre-need program at a funeral home or mortuary.

1. **Service and Disposition:** In addition to the total pre-funded funeral amount for a funeral home, an understanding of the breakdown of services, merchandise and cash advances for burials and cremation provides insight into the overall profitability of the funeral home or mortuary. Oftentimes there is a considerable increase in services on a pre-arranged contract with a well-trained, experienced pre-need counselor. When a pre-need program is well managed, there's an expectation to see future business lining up with as many, if not more, calls that include services.
2. **Pre-Need to At-Need Ratio:** The pre-need to at-need ratio can be very helpful to understand

relative volume for an individual funeral home's market. In order to leverage pre-need to grow at-need business, a good target is pre-arranging and pre-funding about half as many individuals as are being served at-need. This magic number is a healthy target to set to ensure pre-arranged families are building quality relationships with a funeral home and ensuring too large a portion of future revenue isn't guaranteed at an old price point.

Based on the market, you may also want to understand more about that future revenue stream and the volume that has been guaranteed. Every state has different laws surrounding the availability or requirement to guarantee, and every market will tolerate a different level of approach to the guarantee. Understanding the local market and the pre-need volume as it relates to the percentage guaranteed, will garner understanding of how much future revenue is at a pre-set price that will grow with the pace of the funding vehicle. Removing the portion of the contract that will be going to outside vendors allows an estimate of the revenue by disposition and how much is dedicated to services versus merchandise. This insight can help reinforce

pricing decisions as well as marketing and advertising decisions as you position your brand within the community.

Typically a quarterly review of the aforementioned measurements is recommended. This isn't to be used for decision-making every three months, but to have a full grasp of any directional trends. At a minimum, these swings, both upward and downward, won't always require immediate action. However, these trends can help ensure consistent consideration for marketing throughout the year as well as clear expectations of the pre-need counselor. Also, a coming change can be detected before it's too late to be addressed.

After analyzing these data year in and year out, The Outlook Group has developed a very helpful tool, aptly named the strength index. This proprietary index tracks three basic measures:

1. Pre-need volume as it relates to the market
2. Average age of the consumer pre-funding
3. Lead source diversification

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Oftentimes there are slight shifts in this index from quarter to quarter, but overall it allows for quick identification of any trend that needs attention. For any funeral home working to grow an active program, the strength index is a great tool to assess progress and understand immediate needs.

With this tried-and-tested approach to the strength index, insight into some of the most important expectations for a successful pre-need program have been found. After working closely with funeral homes that consistently maintain high strength indices, a few commonalities were detected. These funeral homes have repeatedly cited three basic considerations:

1. Hiring the right pre-need counselor with the ability to build relationships with the community
2. Steady marketing investments
3. Consistent activity of the pre-need counselor throughout the year

These three items are clearly important, and an integral factor in the success of many growing, prosperous pre-need programs.

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costs have a significant impact on the bottom line, and we’re always looking for ways to improve our operations so we can keep prices low.” The fuel savings alone really made the decision an easy one to purchase the trucks. The fuel savings also helped to make the decision to hold prices on all Astral manufactured products through September 2015. Astral knows that even though many of their customers may never see these trucks, they’ll appreciate the savings reflected in their casket pricing.

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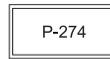
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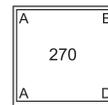
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