



SouthernTM

◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆

MAGAZINE

February & March 2017

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Nashville Welcomes 2017 ICCFA Convention & Expo

ICCFA Annual Expo and Convention - Agenda,
Speakers and more....

Federated Funeral Directors of America Cash
Flow Invitational....PGA Sawgrass

Dealing With the Media - The Lack of Skills
by Todd Van Beck

The Independent Funeral Group Trade Show -
Chattanooga, TN - Photos

23rd National Museum of Funeral History
Annual Charity Golf Classic

Johnson Consulting Presents - Sales vs Surveys
= Trends and Insights

MAY 13 - 16, 2017

SAVE *the* DATE

the CASHFLOW INVITATIONAL

DRIVE FOR SHOW & CASH FLOW TO GROW

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THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sawgrass

May is a great time for a golf fan to be in the Jacksonville, Florida area. Each year the Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass hosts THE PLAYERS Championship, home of the most famous hole in golf, No. 17, The Island Green.

On Saturday we'll be attending THE PLAYERS Championship third round, typically known as 'moving day'. There should be plenty of excitement as one of the most star-studded fields in all of golf competes for 'The Fifth Major'.




Stadium passes grant access to more than 19 on-site public venues • Local food & beverage options Rope-side access to your favorite players & much more!

After watching golf's greatest play one of the most challenging courses in the world, we'll tee it up ourselves for Federated's Mother's Day Scramble.

This for fun outing will tee off at 11am on the Slammer & Squire course located in the World Golf Village. Design consultants Sam "The Slammer" Snead and Gene "The Squire" Sarazan helped create what has become one of Jacksonville's favorite courses.

SLAMMER & Squire



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THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP
 SAT., MAY 13, 2017 • TPC SAWGRASS-STADIUM COURSE

MOTHER'S DAY SCRAMBLE
 SUN., MAY 14, 2017 • SLAMMER & SQUIRE WORLD GOLF VILLAGE

The Sheraton Jacksonville is home to our Welcome Reception & The Cash Flow Invitational.

Located at:
10605 Deerwood Park Blvd.
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Monday May 15, 2017

Two events to meet the staff of Federated and mingle with attendees & presenters

OPEN HOUSE - FEDERATED
 9418 WAYPOINT PLACE • JACKSONVILLE, FL 32257 1-3PM

WELCOME RECEPTION
 SHERATON JACKSONVILLE • BUCHMAN ROOM 5-7PM

Tuesday May 16, 2017

The Cash Flow Invitational
Drive for Show and Cash
Flow to Grow

6 HOURS CE APPLIED FOR IN GA, FL, AL, SC & IN
 SHERATON JACKSONVILLE - BUCHMAN ROOM 9AM - 3 PM

SPEAKER	COURSE	COMPANY
Ryan Thogmartin	<i>How to Drive Leads on Social Media</i>	Disrupt Media
Jamie Meredith	<i>Simple Strategies to Increase YOUR Bottom Line</i>	C&J Financial
Curtis Dailey, ACE	<i>Taking Control of Your Accounts Receivables</i>	FFDA
David Snyder	<i>Employee Theft Prevention and Detection</i>	FFDA
Shannen Mayfield, CPA/ABV	<i>What's Your Business Worth</i>	FFDA
Tim Bridgers	<i>Funeral Industry Access to Capital</i>	Live Oak Bank



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February & March 2017

Southern Funeral Director Magazine®
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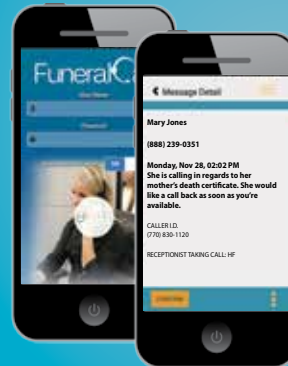
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ICCFA
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THE STAGE IS SET

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**ICCFA ANNUAL
CONVENTION & EXPO**

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

APRIL 5–8, 2017

ICCFACONVENTION.COM

WELCOME FROM THE 2017 ANNUAL CONVENTION CO-CHAIRS

This year at the ICCFA 2017 Annual Convention & Exposition, the stage is set for you.

Every year, we see how important the Annual Convention & Expo is. We see everyone who attends come away with mind-blowing ways to meet and exceed a client's needs. This year will not be any different. Being held in the Music City Center in Nashville, Tennessee, attendees will not only be taken away by the incredible educational sessions, and services and products on the Expo floor, but also the new venue in which the very event is taking place.

Attendees will be surrounded by industry colleagues who are eager to learn and try new things. The stage is set for opportunity, education and more.

During the keynote sessions, learn from four professionals in the communications & marketing industry as they talk change and how to adapt by innovating ourselves in four crucial areas: business, relationships, marketing and personal success.

At the Exposition, see fresh and upcoming products to meet our client's needs and take a step further by going beyond their expectations to generate a lasting and valuable impression.

The ICCFA 2017 Annual Convention & Exposition will prove to be exciting, invigorating and have a long-lasting impact on our profession. We hope you can join us for this event that promises to set the stage for the future.



NÉCTAR L. RAMÍREZ

Batesville Casket Company



MITCH ROSE, CCFE, CCrE

The Woodlawn Cemetery

ICCFA EXPO HALL HOURS

Wednesday, April 5

4:00– 7:00 PM

Thursday, April 6

12:00 NOON– 5:00 PM

Friday, April 7

11:00 am–2:00 PM

MUSIC CITY CENTER NASHVILLE



The Music City Center is Nashville's convention center located in the heart of downtown. The 2.1 million square foot facility opened in 2013 and was built so that Nashville could host large, city-wide conventions in the downtown area.

All keynotes, general sessions and breakout sessions will be held at the Music City Center.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

2:00 PM

How Can Cemeteries Meet the Digital Expectations of Millennials

Sean McAllister & Leona McAllister

Leading a Life of Legacy

Rabbi Daniel Cohen

3:00 PM

Breaking Bad II: Is Your Cemetery Being Used As a Meth Lab?

Chris Cooke

Engaging Families & Community Partners by Providing Comfort, Information & Support

Dr. Jason Troyer

FRIDAY, APRIL 7

2:00 PM

Government & Legal Panel: Stumped by Trump?

Garnering Publicity: The Media and You!

Lynn Sullivan

Planning for Perpetuity: Embedding Sustainability

Cliff David Jr., Jennifer Anderson & Gino Merendino

Resilience After Loss: The Reflection Effect

Allison Gilbert

Crisis Communication Management:

What to Do When Your Brand or Profession Becomes Headline News

Jodi Clock & Poul Lemasters

3:00 PM

The New Value Brand: Dominating Marketshare, Creating Experiences

Justin Baxley & Erin Whitaker

Natural Burial, the New Generation of Funeral Consumers

Kate Kalanick & Ed Bixby

Survey of 21st Century Cemetery Technology

Nick Timpe

The Millennial Workforce: Recruiting Implications & Career Management

Mark Jorgensen & Mike Jorgensen

3:30 PM

The Hospice Perspective: How Improved Understanding Can Help Your Firm Better Serve Families"

4:00 PM

Expand Your International Sales with a Little Help from Uncle Sam

William Lawton

Legal and Property Interests in Burial Places

Tanya Marsh

How to Create Pre-need Opportunities for Your Funeral Home Through Your Pet Loss Business

Jodi Clock

How to Protect and Grow Your Trust Assets and Why You Should Turn Off CNBC

Paul Gottlieb

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

9:00 AM

Pet Cremation Standards

Dr. Richard Hobart

Radioactive Decedents: What is the Risk?

Glenn Sturchio & Daniel Crutchfield

Perpetual Solutions for Perpetual Care Cemeteries

Bill Williams, Jr.

Shaping the Future One Relationship at a Time

Mike Watkins

Litigation Avoidance Techniques

Steven Gurnee & John Mason

10:00 AM

Getting to "Yes" with Your Veterinarian & Loving Selling

Along the Way
Ed Albertson

iCremation - Selling Cremation in the Mobile World

Poul Lemasters

The Rise of the Micro-Cemetery

Christopher Keller

Something Borrowed from the Bridal World

Dale Amundsen

Just When You Think You Have Arrived, Someone is Moving the Destination

Doug Gober

11:00 AM

Setting a New Standard: Cremation Arrangement Process

Néctar Ramírez

Turning a Small Town Cemetery into a Big Time Asset: Part II

Erin Whitaker

Best of Breed 2017: How to Thrive in a Fragmented Funeral Market

Paul Seyler

The 10 Biggest HR Mistakes in Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

Stephanie Ramsey

12:00 PM

PLP Best Practices Hour

Coleen Ellis

Anatomy of a First Call

Poul Lemasters & Cole Imperi

Cemetery Master Plans & Section Development Require a Team Effort

David Crispin & Thomas Daly

Our Why of Being: Where the Healing Begins

John McQueen

Prudent Management of Endowment Care Funds

Pat Severo

THE STAGE IS SET

THURSDAY, APRIL 6
9:30 TO 11:00 AM



JOE CALLOWAY

How Extraordinary Companies Transcend Commodity and Defy Comparison

Becoming a *Category of One* is based on Joe's game changing best-seller about what

extraordinary companies and top performing individuals do to create, sustain, and grow success. It's not just what you do, it's how you think that makes all the difference. Developing and always growing a Category of One mindset can be the most powerful thing you do in your business.

You won't be day-dreaming your way through this interactive presentation. Ideas will be flying around the room and you'll be taking part in a dynamic session that engages and motivates people to take action on ideas that can change everything.

Becoming a Category of One is about going beyond being one of the leaders in your category. It's about being so good, creating such value for the customer that you create your own category – and you're the only one in it.

Joe Calloway is a business performance expert and author. Joe will discuss how to separate yourself and your company from your competition in a way that truly sets you apart and how to compete and win in the real world marketplace of today (and tomorrow), and not get stuck in past success.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6
11:00 AM TO 12:00 PM



SETH MATTISON

Relationship Revolution: Building Better Connections in the Digital Age

In today's super-wired, highly digital society, humans still crave social interaction and

relationships. In business, creating strong relationships is the key to achieving success, both individually and as an organization. What's the secret for cultivating successful relationships, particularly in business? As more and more of lives play out virtually, connections can sometimes feel less than fulfilling. From Facebook to LinkedIn, Twitter to Foursquare, it's important to remember just how powerful it can be to reach beyond the fiber optics and make that physical connection. By balancing the time and energy we spend in both the physical and virtual space we can create deeper and more meaningful connections. In *The Relationship Revolution*, Seth will explore 5 key insights that will equip you for building better, stronger, more authentic relationships in the new world of work.

Seth Mattison is an internationally renowned expert on workforce trends and generational dynamics. As Founder and Chief Movement Officer of FutureSight Labs, Seth advises many of the world's leading brand and organizations on the key shifts happening around talent management, change and innovation, leadership, and the future of work. His ideas have been featured in such publications as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Globe*. He was named one of the "Editors' Picks For Favorite Speakers for 2013," by MeetingsNet and as been called one of the most dynamic young speakers on the circuit today.

FOR AMAZING SPEAKERS

FRIDAY, APRIL 7
9:00 TO 10:00 AM



KELLY MCDONALD

Crafting the Customer Experience for People Not Like You: How to Delight & Engage the Customers Your Competitors Don't Understand

Learn how companies, brands and products struggling to differentiate themselves in a sea of sameness can foster long-term loyalty and brand preference with exceptional and customized customer service.

A "one-size fits all" approach to customer service is no longer viable. Businesses competing on service need to understand and cater to customers' racial, ethnic, religious, generational, lifestyle and geographic differences in order to meet or exceed customers' service expectations.

This session will cover core customer groups, including women, the five generations (Matures, Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z), racial and ethnic segments, such as Hispanics, Asians and African-Americans, as well as those who are defined by key lifestyle and life-stage attributes. Includes consumer insights that will help you deliver a better business experience for every customer.

Kelly McDonald is a marketing and communications expert who speaks on how to grow business with effective marketing techniques and how to connect with others to form relationships that are constructive and effective in business.

FRIDAY, APRIL 7
10:00 TO 11:00 AM



RORY VADEN

Take the Stairs

An award-winning entrepreneur and business leader, Rory Vaden co-founded Southwestern Consulting™, a multi-million dollar global consulting practice that helps clients in more than 14 countries drive educated decisions with relevant data. He's also the Founder of The Center for the Study of Self-Discipline (CSSD).

Rory speaks and consults on how to say no to the things that don't matter, and yes to the things that do. He is a regular contributor for *American Express Open Forum*, *Huffington Post*, and *The Tennessean*. His articles and insights average more than 4 million views every month.

Rory relates profound truths coupled with humorous anecdotes that empower professionals to conquer their fears and take immediate action in all aspects of their lives. He is the perfect speaker for increasing employee engagement, overcoming procrastination, raising productivity, growing sales, maintaining better work life balance, managing change, having more effective time management and motivating people to do the hard work necessary to achieve success in life. Rory's insights on improving self-discipline, overcoming procrastination and enhancing productivity have been shared on Oprah radio, Fox News, CNN, CNBC, CBS, in *Businessweek*, *Entrepreneur*, *Fast Company*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal* and in *SUCCESS™ Magazine*.

Schedule and program may be subject to change.

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Media Publicity

Dealing with the Media - The Lack of Skills

By: Todd Van Beck, Director of Continuing Education, John A. Gupton College, Nashville, TN

A title or a recognized position does not automatically translate into the possession of impressive skills as being person who can come across in a positive way with the media. George Washington was reputed to have had horrible skills as a communicator – but in 1776 who cared? George did not once in his life have to get his wig powdered for a head shot on CNN – but you and I might have to get our wigs powdered someday figuratively speaking to prepare for a media interview.

In the past articles we covered the topics of developing likeable confidence with the media. This article is devoted to another part of the liking formula which is one's skill level in communication, particularly with the media.

Throughout my career I have known mighty fine funeral professionals who are basically skilled at everything else except how to deal with the media. In fact this issue became so important in England that one of the national associations actually appointed the “media spokesperson” who was a funeral director to deal exclusively with the media and he did an outstanding job.

However in the states that is often not been the case and many times, too many times, funeral directors who achieve positions of prominence within the funeral world make the error that because they are designated with this title or that the designation alone qualifies them to take on the likes of Larry King or some local talk show host – sometimes the results have been favorable and sometimes well..... Not too many years ago one of the executive directors of one of the national associations was so keenly aware of this potential problem that he and he alone wrote all the speeches that the President of the group would give across this country.

In a past article I addressed the issue of dealing with reporters so no need to review that again, suffice to say that possessing a developed skill level in dealing with the media is just a common sense insurance policy that someone, usually you and I, will not be embarrassed or worse made to look like we had something to hide, or the worse of all that we did not know what we were talking about when we are interviewed.

Some years back I was involved with the funeral lobbying efforts in a state where I was working. I in the end had little to do with the proceedings save for the fact that the people who invited me thought I might have something to say – thank God I was NOT asked to speak! In our team of funeral directors who traveled to the state capital was one man who I have known for many years. He is a mighty fine person and has been a premier leader in his community for years even serving as Mayor of his town. He has enjoyed years of community relations comfort and during that time he was not once ever challenged publically let alone verbally beat to a pulp publically and hence he developed the false confidence syndrome in his ability to deal with the media which he himself was I believe actually unaware of. The day the legislative session began and I must confess that I personally got caught up in the drama and excitement of walking up the steps of the grand impressive state capitol building, the place was huge. Marble arches, grand staircases, flags everywhere, portraits of dead politicians (honest and not so honest) hanging everywhere, the Senate chamber, the House chamber, and hundreds upon hundreds of people running around the hallways with a terribly serious look on their faces which bespoke to me that “the entire future fate of this state rests on me delivering this envelope of expense vouchers to the mail room downstairs.” Looking back I am somewhat embarrassed that I did get caught up in what I have before heard of referred to as the “storming” of a

Capitol Hill by a contingency of funeral directors. Honestly looking back I have to admit that this group of funeral directors did not “storm” anything that day, let alone the entire Capital building in fact I don’t believe most people in the building that day even knew we were there. Frankly I have never ever seen a group of funeral directors “storm” anything – but that is a subject for another article.

My good friend, the community leader and former mayor, was to serve as the lead spokesperson. His hair was perfect, he was tall and slender, he spoke in a familiar down home tone of voice with an accent which was acceptable to that part of the country, and he was articulate, he knew how to communicate. However what we did not realize and hence did not even give any preparation to was the fact that the media was to be present. Things went from bad to worse quickly. First the legislative hearing panel the elected representatives of the people of that state, were rude, crude, rough, caustic, sarcastic, disrespectful and downright nasty to my friend and basically to everyone else who stood up to express their constitutional opinions – I was stunned at the horrible behavior of the elected representatives. My friend stood up, spoke and got sucker punched time and time again. When I saw what was happening I leaned over to the lobbyist and suggested that I ought not to get up and speak. After the legislative hearing session was over the next blow was waiting for him outside the hearing room. The media basically attacked and stampeded him. They were relentless and finally my friend and our group made a hasty exist and took off for the airport.

I felt terrible for my friend, but privately was mighty relieved that he got the hammer – not Todd. Now his perfect hair was in turmoil, his shirt was soaked with perspiration, he was shaking, his tie was off to one side and he asked us after pouring himself a stiff drink “How to you think I did?” In unison we all chimed in “Marvelous, you were wonderful, no one could have done it better.” He seemed slightly satisfied but all through the silent trip home he would ask “Did I really do alright?” Looking back it was sad, for this man was truly a great American funeral director all he lacked was skill with the media and in dealing with objections.

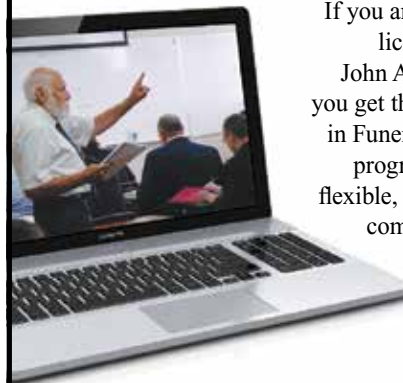
So what about skills? We all can improve our skills as a communicator with anybody by concentrating on four elements: our mind, our face, our body, and our voice.

Each plays a vital role. Substance without style is the mark of the bore. Style without substance is the mark of a phony.

Today style is frequently favored over substance. People with brilliant minds and poor speaking styles are often less popular than people who can please and charm the crowd without really saying anything that means anything, many politicians and game show hosts have this skill in common. Is it not the charmer who is frequently promoted, rewarded and elected?

Just look at some elections; Ronald Reagan, actor – Governor of California and President of the United States, Clint Eastwood , actor– Mayor of Carmel, California, Jesse “The Body” Ventura, professional wrestler – Governor of Minnesota, Arnold Schwarzenegger, professional body builder and actor – Governor of California. All these elected officials were first media celebrities who mastered the art of style. Even way back in 1932 incumbent President Herbert Hoover, who was truly a great American and a highly skilled statesman, did not stand a chance against the style and showmanship that the American people saw in Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Herbert Hoover was

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a genius but he was also a bore, and the bore rarely prevails in effective human communications. In fact many of FDR's "New Deal" policies were taken almost verbatim from Hoover's own Reconstruction Finance Corporation but no matter; in the public's mind the "New Deal" was and still is today FDR's period. Simply put concerning style is that Herbert Hoover never smiled, FDR never stopped smiling and he went on to be elected President of the United States four times. Powerful stuff!

Interestingly many people who have a charming style and are really charismatic fail to succeed to their potential heights that by just adding substance to their communications might have taken them. To really succeed in speaking to the media and be more than just a mere celebrity we need both charisma and a message built on solid facts that you believe in.

Your style ought also to help you get people to like you. There really are not many other options. They can dislike you, they can feel neutral about you, and they can feel sorry for you – none of these are desirable. Our goal is to make the media like you. If you have any other goals in mind, like "I'll show those meddling noisy media people a thing or two" seriously consider hiring or assigning someone else to do your media interviews. We all send signals. If the signals are the right ones you can make a lot of headway toward your goal of being liked.

I watched the movie "Frost/Nixon Interviews" the other evening and was absolutely spellbound. In the Frost interviews the famous 1960 Kennedy-Nixon televised debates came up and Nixon started babbling on about his problems with perspiration, his heavy beard, and how just those two images on TV basically cost him the Presidency in 1960. Personally I remember Nixon's shifty eyes because I watched the actual debates out in Iowa as a lad. I remember well that Nixon looked on TV like a crooked pirate who had just either stolen a plate of cookies from his mother or robbed a bank, and his beard reminded me of Bluebeard the Pirate and I remember being afraid of him. John F. Kennedy in the 1960 debate however looked the picture of health, tanned, slender, looked the camera straight in the eye, smiled all the time, spoke with eloquence and basically smashed Nixon – on TV anyway. However people who listened to their debate on the radio thought that Nixon had won – hands down. Of course when one is listening

to radio the only thing you have to go on is substance.

Nixon's style came out on TV this way – even though he knew what he was talking about:

"I am untrustworthy"

"I don't care what I look like"

"I am a sneaky person"

"I am not telling you the whole story"

Kennedy's style came out on TV this way I even though his answers were not as solid as Nixon's:

"I like the American people"

"You can trust me"

"You can believe me"

"I want you to consider me as your friend"

"I am a really nice person"

I have often observed that individuals who with a good heart get involved with a bereavement support group make the glaring mistake that because they have lost a significant relationship this immediately packs their minds with wisdom and knowledge concerning the psychology of grief. Wrong.

People who assume leadership roles in bereavement support groups or in dealing with the media need a command of what they are talking about which goes way beyond just daily experiences. Daily life experiences is of tremendous value to be sure but to hold out to the public and media that one's own expertise alone a type of "been there done that" criteria which makes me the "expert" is asking for trouble – particularly with the media. To "wing it" to "dance around issues" to "make it up as you go" is usually a disaster in the making and this is particularly true in dealing with the media. This is why spontaneous television interviews are so often failures for the person being interviewed. I have found that if I am not given the opportunity to take time to prepare for an interview I will simply decline the invitation and get ready and brace myself for the media reaction and negative consequences because while the media expects the interviewee to be thick skinned the media themselves are extremely thin skinned and do not deal with rejections very well.

Here is an example: In another lifetime ago I was the head of an extremely small Mortuary Science program in Upstate New York. One day a roving reporter called and wanted to come out to the Mortuary School and get the "scoop" on the training of up and coming

morticians. I asked her on the phone if she had ever been exposed to the world of the funeral home and she, on the phone mind you, with extreme confidence assured me with all the eloquent bravado of the typical reporter on the street beat that she had been to dozens of funerals, had witnessed several autopsies, and was not in the least uncomfortable with the funeral world – she even indicated that she had considered becoming a funeral director/embalmer herself. In short order she and her “crew” arrived resplendent with camera, cables and then more cables, microphones, hair spray, lip brushes, a van with the TV station logo on every side of the vehicle, camera men with strange haircuts and terribly serious looks on their faces barking orders at each other nonstop, and finally the roving reporter herself who presented herself as a gorgeous in control debutante who was on her way to CBS on West 57th Street in the Big Apple. I was not impressed and felt that old pit in my stomach which is always a warning sign.

As we approached the door leading into the mortuary science area I looked down at the gorgeous, New York bound roving reporter and the look on her face was of one of fear, terror and trepidation. I asked her “Are

you all right?” She responded, “I don’t know, ah, I feel faint, give me a minute, I have never seen anything like this in my life - honest.” Hell folks we had not even entered the building we were standing in the parking lot and this highly confident reporter was having a mental death anxiety melt down in front of our eyes. So much for her claims to of having “had been there done that.” It is one thing to talk about embalming, death, funerals and the like on the telephone, it is quite another to be exposed first hand to it and when she was s her self-control vanished in a New York second and her focus evaporated as well and hence her professionalism went out the window and I in turn stopped the interview on the spot. I knew all too well that given her obvious mental and emotional state I was not going to risk exposing my student’s, my program, and my beloved profession to this reporter’ death anxieties – Lord knows how the interview would have turned out later on the Six O’clock Sky Team Award Winning Peabody Totting Evening News Report . When I told her the interview was off she threw a hissy fit in the parking lot (“this undertaker is messing with my New York career!”) and threatened every dire consequence that one could imagine short of charging me with violating

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her constitutional right – she kept yelling something about freedom of the press – I was not impressed. She wrote letters to me blasting me and she even sent the President of the College virulent letters concerning what a despicable and worthless human being Todd Van Beck was. I was not moved in the least because I knew what the final article would have been – nothing more than an adolescent reporter using words and phrases to explore her own death anxieties and exploring her anxieties that was not the purpose of the interview, nor was it the purpose curriculum at the mortuary college – which should not cause anybody anxieties – it is only textbooks. My students were already sustaining ill-timed criticisms and immature jokes and cruel remarks on campus by both other students and some faculty members by just being enrolled at the mortuary college, I was not going to add to their struggles to come to terms with this reality and their own identities as funeral professionals by being an accomplice with this reporter – the interview was off. There is wisdom sometimes in rejecting the media even though be well prepared that some will hit the roof and behave like a three year old. I could not take the risk of what this person would do on camera to funeral service – the price was too high. There is such a thing as bad publicity.

What is in your mind is the most vital skill a person can have in dealing with the media. The knowledge you have about every aspect of funeral service is your greatest asset, it is your thought machine, it is your information bank, it is your personal brain computer that does not require an off on switch to operate. As mentioned before style is important, sometimes critically so, but knowing what you are talking about rivals style almost equally – to be highly effective and leave a lasting, life changing impression on people. Winston Churchill was the undisputed master of combining these two essentials in dealing with the media. In fact the media became his main weapon that he used to verbally inspire the British people to accomplish things they never thought possible, to never surrender when everything looked dark and ominous, while at the same time using the substance of his message to verbally blast away and send blow after blow, insult after insult, resolve after resolve to Adolph Hitler – to erode and irritate and needle Hitler’s own identity. It is well know today that Churchill’s use of style and substance via the media ended up having had an unbelievable negative effect on Hitler’s own

perception of himself and the Nazi movement as a whole, and Churchill did this almost entirely through broadcast media. It was widely reported that after Churchill became Prime Minister of Great Britain and the information each Hitler that Churchill was to give another speech to the world, Hitler would put his hands in his head and say “Not another Churchill speech – does he ever run dry?” If Sir Winston was anything he was NOT a bore.

Some years back I remember sitting in a hotel room in Canada watching an investigative report program concerning corruption in funeral service in Canada. I was with several other funeral directors buddies that I have known for years. The producers of the program had engaged one of the most highly knowledgeable people I knew concerning every aspect of funeral service in the Dominion of Canada. The interview was a disaster. The funeral expert, which she certainly was, had superior mental capability but somewhere along the line she had never learned how to use this important information to get her message across to Archie and Edith Bunkers in Canada – in other words she came off as being a professional bore. I felt terribly sorry for her, and it has had a lasting effect on her own self image because now in Canada anytime anything is reported concerning funerals they replay portions of this interview. My friend is NOT a fan of the Canadian media and has sworn to me that she will never consent to another media interview, which is too bad because her wealth of funeral knowledge will probably never reach Archie and Edith simply due to her lack of skills – she certainly had the substance.

I believe that our job as funeral communicators (which we all are) is to give out important and meaningful information to anybody at anytime. Giving it out though is really never enough, it must be given in such a way that the listener will in the end have NO trouble at all receiving it and understanding it – and concerning funerals this can be tricky – right?

In my career I have concluded that two of the most dangerous waters for a funeral communicator to navigate are 1. Small talk and 2. The role models we encountered along the way in our respective career journeys.

I believe today that there is no such thing as “funeral” small talk. It does not exist simply because the subject

itself refuses to be small. The subject of funerals looms ominous on the horizon because in the end when people discuss funerals they ultimately arrive at talking about their own funeral and that discussion is tantamount to discussing their own personal death – and this is never small talk.

Here is an example of small talk. We don't really intend to communicate in depth when a person gets on the elevator and we say, "How are you today?" We really don't expect a in depth conversation about the meaning of life and death in a elevator – so in the end much of daily human communication is simply "babble" we babble at each other for hours and nothing is really said – it is small talk – nothing comes from the conversation it is just talk nothing more. Funerals do not fit in this category. If a funeral communicator engages the same "babble" talk, tries funeral small talk, in dealing with the media or attempts to carry it to the public platform the results are usually not good – for the funeral communicator.

I remember watching a famous talk show host years ago and during his program the President of one of the leading funeral director associations was his guest. The talk show host started out with the standard funeral director jokes "How's business ? A little dead?," or "People are really dying to get into your place," and the like. I sat in my chair in the privacy of my own home and just rolled my eyes and thought – here we go again. The audience lapped the jokes up as fast as the TV host could toss them out. It was like watching little children scrambling for candy which has been tossed to them in a parade.

Eventually the funeral director looked into the camera and said "I have a joke." I froze and braced myself in my chair and thought "Jesus give me strength," then I prayed "Jesus make his memory fail him right now." My prayers were not answered that day. The funeral director took off on telling his joke and the camera surveyed the audience – they were spellbound, waiting for the moment of the punch line. When the TV host told his jokes the audience was animated, smiling, nudging each other and preparing themselves for the "Applause" sign to be illuminated which told them the joke was over and laugh now. Not so when it came to the funeral director.

I had heard this joke on many occasions and frankly it is horrible. The joke was one of those "Dark Side" type

jokes that might be able to get a laugh at a cocktail party at 11:30 p.m. However being on national television at 3:00 p.m. with a 40 million plus home audience is a different thing altogether. When the funeral director finally told the punch line, which is horrendous, the audience was literally stunned and an audible gasp could be heard from everybody.

The TV host immediately went on the defensive and asked "You people don't actually do that sort of thing, do you?" The funeral communicator tried in vain to regain his footing but the damage had already been done. For the next 15 minutes all the host did was return time and time again to the "funeral director's own joke" which each time wasted the valuable air time which the solid, truthful, meaningful and important information that the funeral director was prepared to communicate needed.

Here is a confession. Two weeks ago I was giving a seminar in Canada to a group of non-funeral service people on of all topics dealing with personal death awareness. I don't know why exactly I did this – senility I suspect, but for some reason I was inspired to tell this exact horrible funeral joke. It was a disaster. During the break people came up to me and asked "You people don't really do that do you?" Later I tried to explain my thinking in telling the joke (something to do with the identification of personal death anxieties), but the damage was already done – who knows if I will ever be invited back?

The other road block to skill development is the role models that we might assume over our career. Certainly there are positive role models in fact I have been astonished in my own career just how many great role models in funeral service I have encountered – what a blessing. Now to be sure there were duds, but not many. Solid, respectable, knowledgeable role models are always a blessing, but the danger exists of becoming the role model yourself instead of becoming who you are as a human being. A person's style needs to be theirs and theirs alone.

In dealing with the media so many role models we watch are in truth simply flops. I am not talking now about the funeral directors I served my apprenticeship under I am now talking about the unskilled corporate and/or political role models that appear to us constantly and appear important, probably are important but in

the end their lack of style puts people to sleep and unfortunately they are not singing lullabies. If anyone doubts the veracity of this position just turn on the evening news and watch and listen to the role models on Wall Street and or the centers of government across this county babble on and on and on.

So what skills are essential skills in communicating funeral stuff with the media?

1. Honest. If you make it a practice to tell the truth you never have to issue a correction or retractions and you never have to remember what you have said. Remember my example of Hilary Clinton in the last article of her knowing from experience what enemy fire is like?

2. Positive. The media tends to gravitate, as do people in general, to people who are positive. I believe that the line was crossed years ago whereby the American people just became disenchanted with speakers who bad-mouthed the opposition (in politics) or in competition (in business). With that said one must, I believe, tread a careful course in being positive about funeral service without spending too much time explaining that position. In interviews when I confess that I really have a love affair with my career in the past I end up spending the rest of the interview time explaining that “strange” position of funeral love to a reporter who just did not get it, and probably never will. In talking in a positive way (absent of Todd’s professional love affair) about funeral service I have discovered that words like honor, respect, dignity, reverence, ministry, mission, compassion, caring, concern, privilege, calling, vocation and the like can convey the same message without the reporter dissecting the seemingly odd condition that someone could actually love being a funeral director and be somewhat normal. Interview time is much better spent talking about critical issues facing our beloved profession.

3. Brief and simply is better than long and winded. It is a waste of time to try to tell all you know about funeral service and in the end the reporter just might not care all that much. I had a good buddy in funeral service that died last year and after his funeral an elderly minister called me and told me this interesting story. This clergy had his first funeral with my buddy and he had never done a funeral before in his life and was scared to death. In short order my friend observed

the nervous clergy and asked him what the trouble was. This minister blurted out his plight and asked “What do I do.” My funeral friend thought a minute and replied “Preacher you do three things on a funeral. You stand up, you speak up and then you shut up.” The elderly clergy said it was one of the best pieces of advice he had ever received. Friends we do three things in speaking with the media – stand up, speak up and then shut up.

4. Be logical and organized. It is wise in an interview to stay the course the very best you can. Certainly at times a person can easily be detoured but work hard to stay on the course you have set, it is the best use of your time. Last Sunday I was watching a TV preacher, which I rarely do, but this one caught my attention because he was suffering from what I call “intellectual dysentery” in others words he just talked and talked and talked with a constant flow of words and sounds with an obvious total disregard to the continuity and structure of his message. He had style but his substance was diluted.

5. Quotable and memorable. Story tellers tend to make great people to have on the media, simply because most of the work and purpose of the media itself is a form of constant storytelling, this is how CNN spends its entire broadcasting cycles and everybody, I mean everybody loves to be told a story. For years I have watched presenters, and people being interviewed come equipped with some mighty impressive sets and collections of statistics, charts, graphs, and pictures. They punch this or that button on their sophisticated machines and sometimes read the chart verbatim off the projected screen image. While I recognize the importance of this method of funeral communication I also know that I have never seen a graph or pie chart fill the interview and audience with life stories that either made them laugh or brought a lump in their throats or both, or just plain old head “nodding” because they can and do relate first hand to the story you are telling them. When this happens, my friends in funeral service you have the 100% litmus test to prove that your audience or interviewer understands exactly the meaning of the story. The story brings connection and recognition. People remember the story long after the chart is but a blur in their memory. The story leaves an impression. The only people I have encountered who really disagree with the power of storytelling are the people who are poor storytellers.

6. Authentic pride. I have found that it is really hard to be boring in an interview when you are proud of your life and career. It brings people the “goose-pimply” experience with pride over what you have just told them. I have found being proud of being a funeral director is usually, not always, but usually, the best way to bond with a reporter. So many reporters enter the interview already convinced that you and I are a bunch of “creeps and crooks,” (I know that smarts, but that has been my experience and most people know that TVB is not Pollyanna) but when they encounter someone who exhibits authentic, not fake, but authentic pride in funeral service almost instantly they begin to ponder the thought that there just might be something more to the whole profession than what Jessica had to say. You do not have to be a self-absorbed egomaniac to be proud of what you do for a career.

7. Delivery –I will have more to say about delivery in the next installment on preparation.

8. IT’S NOT ENOUGH. When all is said and done the end results of your new found confidence, being likable, and your new skills in funeral communication

is that you want most everybody to say to each other “It’s not enough, we want more, bring him/her back again and soon.” I believe there can be no more positive affirmation than to be asked to come back. It has to be the Nobel Prize in dealing with the public and media. To have the media point to you as the funeral communicator means that you have accomplished everything we have so far covered in this series.

Remember my spokesperson friend in England? I remember when the Association asked him to be their media spokesperson he was naturally hesitant but I encouraged him from my peanut gallery (where I spend a great amount of my time) to seize the moment and get on with it, and he has done a marvelous job. As I have said on many occasions if funeral directors, experienced funeral directors do not stand up and talk about the value, benefits and meaning of the funeral – who will?

Next series – “In Front of the Camera – FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD TO SEE – Your Preparation”

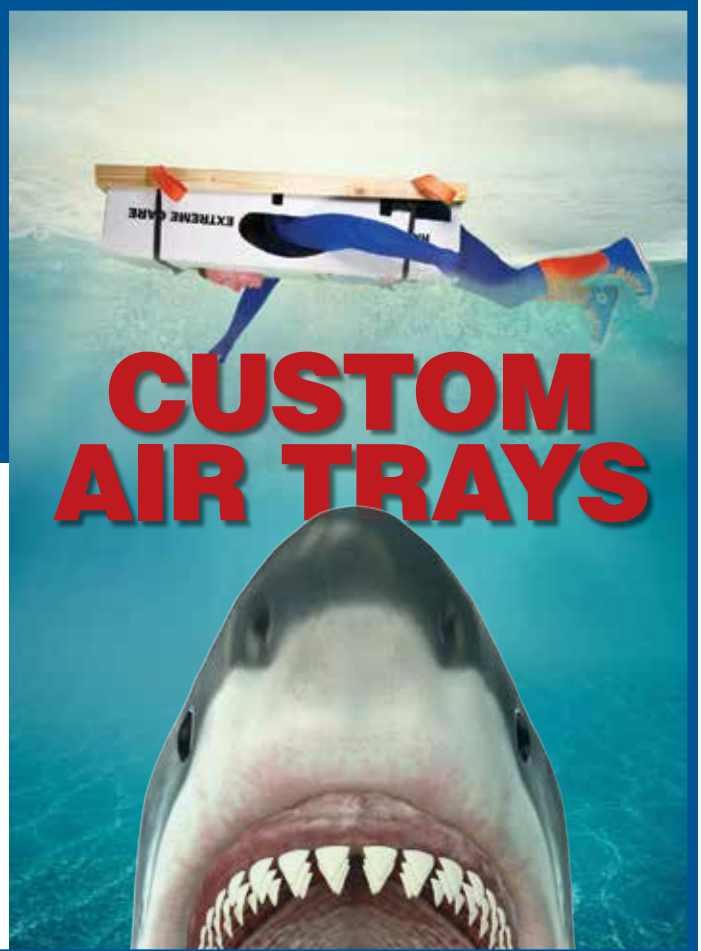
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the Charity Golf Classic's shotgun start, after which players compete in a five-person golf scramble. On-course contests with tee-prizes and professional long drive fundraising entertainment are located throughout the course. Following the 18 holes, players retreat to the clubhouse for a silent auction, dinner, and awards ceremony. go to www.nmfh.org for more information

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“Sales vs Survey = Trends and Insights”

by Lynn Lukins and Rose Milton

Trends and Insights

Just what happens to all the data collected by Johnson Consulting Group (JCG)? We use it to help the profession! We took all of the sales and survey data collected through our Performance Tracker™ program in the past two years, combined it and crunched it to understand trends, then used statistics to determine how family satisfaction is related to sales.

There were three parts to our analyses:

1. Comparison of sales data from 2014 and 2015
2. Comparison of family satisfaction survey data from 2014 and 2015
3. Correlation analysis to determine the relationship between sales and survey ratings

So you have an idea of the amount of data we analyzed, below shows the number of at-need sales records and the number of survey responses we analyzed for each year:

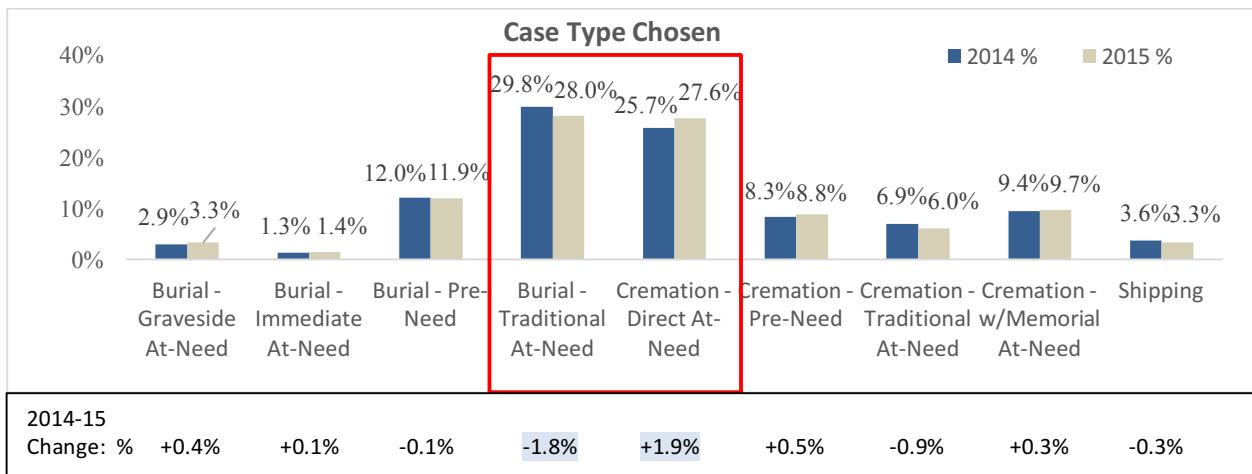
Year	At-need sales records analyzed:	Survey responses analyzed:
2014	64,916	20,438
2015	80,780	25,720
Total:	145,696	46,158

We have a lot of information, and have included the key findings in this article. Read on to understand the trends we are seeing and gain insight into how family satisfaction affects your sales.

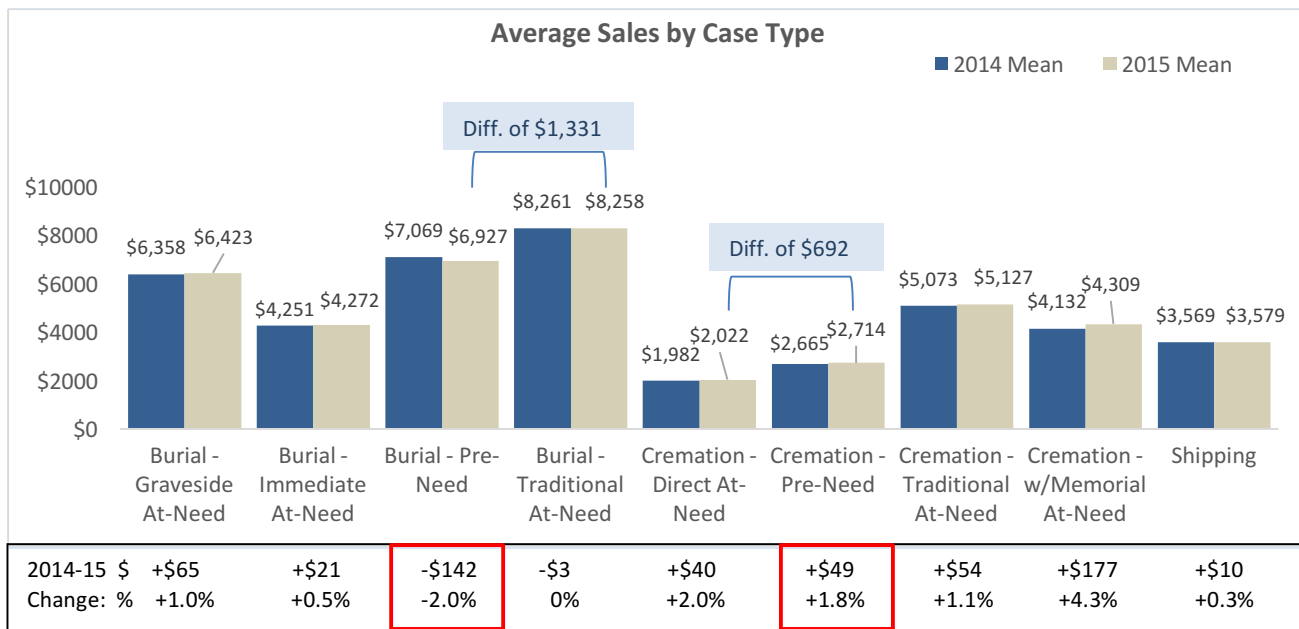
Key Findings

Dispositions and Case Types

- From 2014-2015 cremations rose 1.8%, and in 2015, about the same amount of consumers chose traditional burial as those who chose direct cremation. The percentage of families selecting direct cremations rose about the same amount that traditional burials declined.



- Average per case dollar sales for pre-need burials declined 2.0%, which seems to be replaced by the nearly 2% increase in per case pre-need cremation sales.
- Pre-need burial sales generated \$1,331 less per case than at-need burials in 2015, and average pre-need cremation sales per case were \$692 higher than direct cremations. To bridge the pre-need burial sales gap, ensure families know all options for services that increase family satisfaction (and sales).
- At-need cremations with memorials are showing significant growth in one year's time.

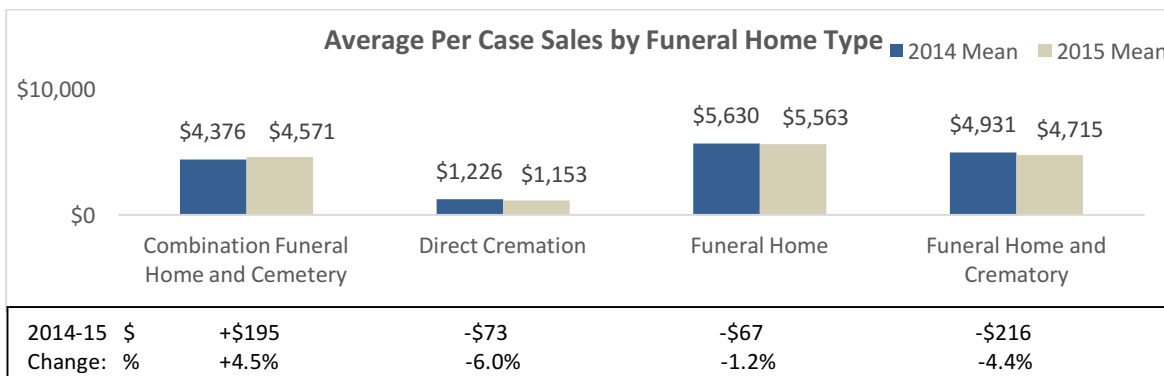


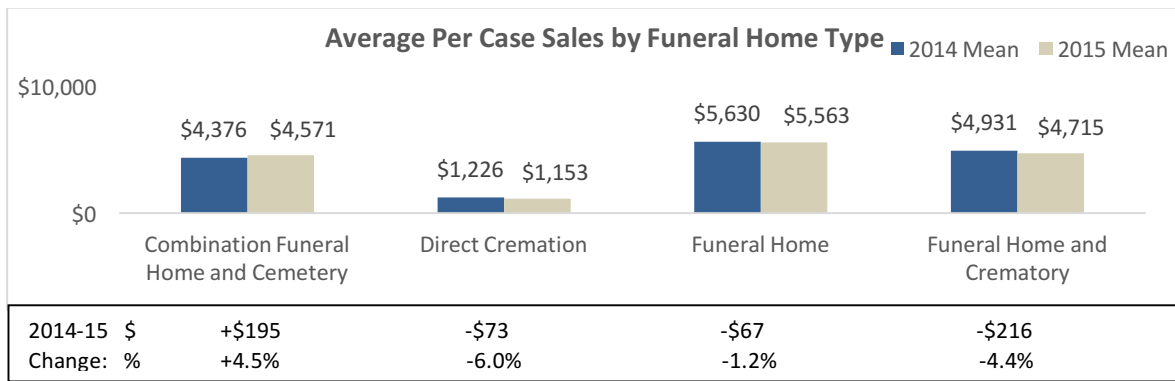
Overall Sales

- Looking at all case types combined, the average sale per case is \$5,051 – a decrease of \$100, which is about 2%, in just one year (2014 to 2015).
- This is likely a result of the increase in families who chose less costly cremations rather than burials.



- Combination funeral home and cemetery firms show significant average per case sales growth, whereas combination funeral home and crematory and direct cremation firms show decline from 2014. Standalone funeral homes had the highest average per case sales both years of all funeral home types.

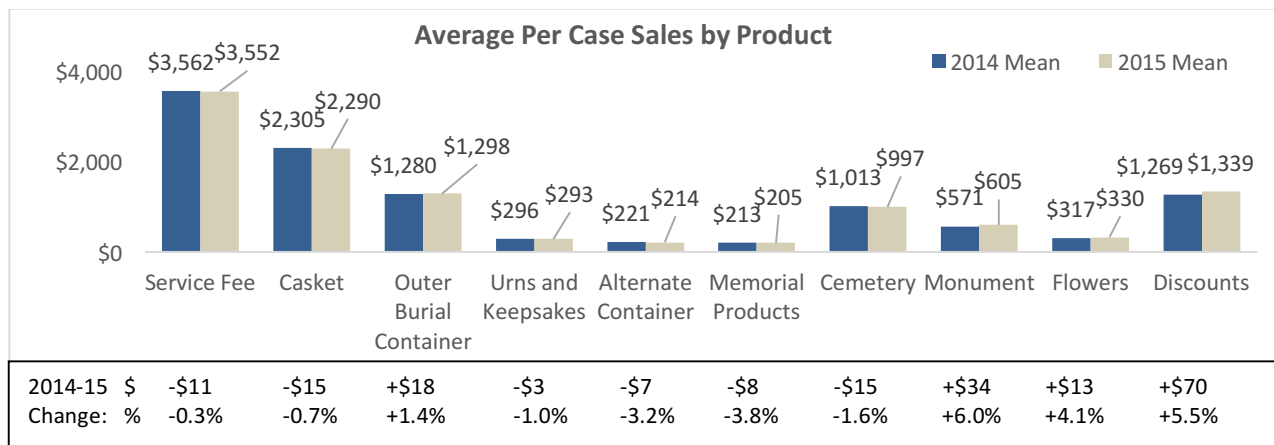




- As call volume increased, per case sales decreased, especially among the largest firms which suggests that low prices may be driving volume.
- On average, firms in smaller markets (population <50K) have higher per case sales than larger markets – possibly a result of less competition. They also earn higher overall satisfaction ratings than larger firms, which might be a function of the personal relationship the owner/staff enjoys with families in the small market, resulting in better service provided.

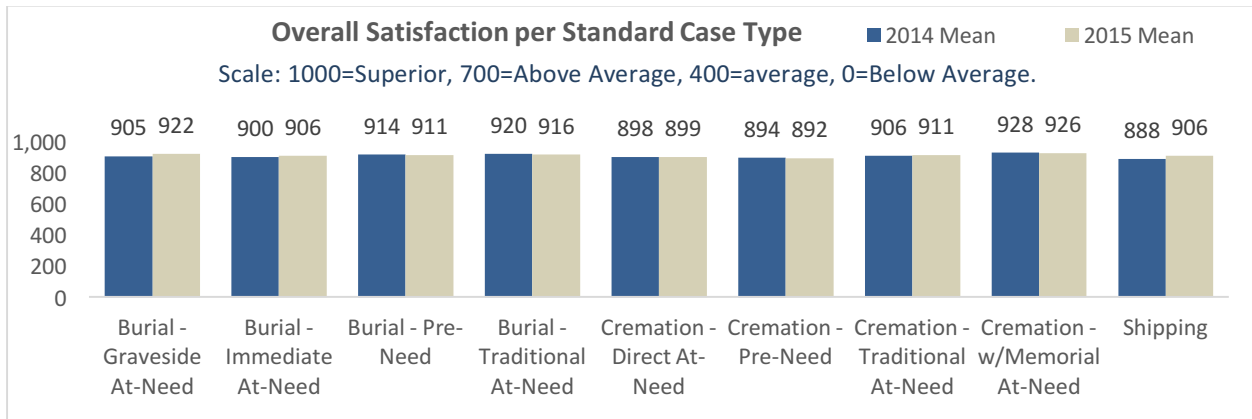
Product Sales

- Service fees generated the highest per case sales both years with an average of \$3,552 in 2015, followed by caskets (averaging \$2,290) and both remained relatively unchanged from 2014-2015. Sales per case increased an average of \$34 for monuments, \$13 for flowers and \$18 for outer burial containers. All other per case product sales decreased.



Overall Satisfaction

- Overall, families are very satisfied with their funeral experience but also see room for improvement. In 2015 satisfaction was highest among families choosing:
 1. At-need cremation with memorial
 2. At-need graveside burial
 3. Traditional burial
- Despite the rise in families opting for cremation, pre-need cremations were rated lowest in satisfaction and at-need direct cremations were next lowest. This illustrates the importance for funeral directors to understand each family’s reasons for choosing cremation and meet those needs to increase satisfaction.



- Funeral homes serving primarily Whites and Hispanics earned the highest overall satisfaction scores, and those serving primarily Asians were rated lowest, indicating this is an underserved ethnic group.
- Among funeral home types, standalone funeral homes earn the highest average overall satisfaction for both years, and combination funeral home and cemeteries the lowest.

Likelihood to Recommend

- While most respondents are very likely to recommend the funeral home, they are less likely to do so in 2015 compared to 2014, mostly due to lack of, or miscommunication regarding costs, unwanted sales attempts, and performance issues.
- Likelihood to recommend was down from its 2014 averages for every case type and across all market segments. Because of the widespread decline and reasons consumers cited for their rating, funeral homes may be trying to make up for the decreased revenues with increased costs without notice, unappreciated sales attempts, and/or lower quality service levels provided.

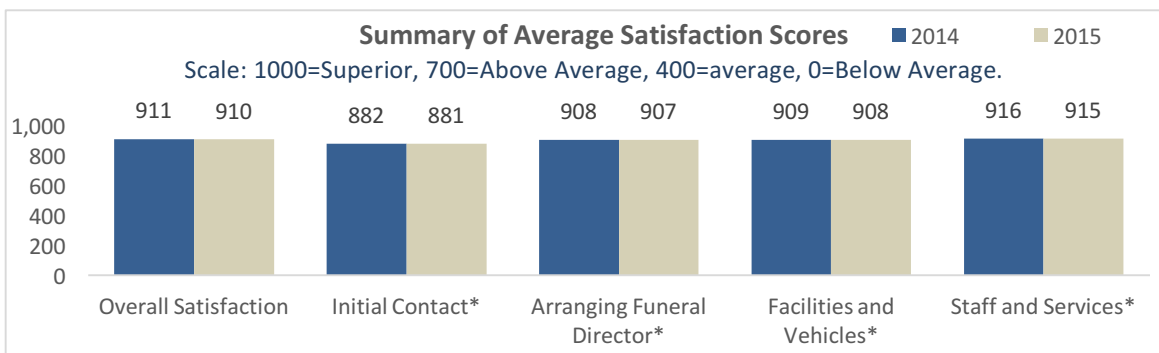
Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Funeral Experience

The survey included several specific questions about respondents’ initial contact with the funeral home, the arranging funeral director, facilities and vehicles, and staff and services.

Overall

The following chart summarizes the various areas of the funeral experience ratings.

- Overall, funeral homes earned high ratings in all areas, with consistent satisfaction levels from 2014 to 2015. Staff and Services earned the highest satisfaction ratings, and Initial Contact the lowest.



*Composite scores: Score represents an average of all attribute ratings in each respective area.

Initial Contact

- Consumers were most satisfied with the genuine care and concern expressed but least satisfied with their initial phone conversations and welcome received. Some commented their first contact with the funeral home was an important reason they chose the firm, so this is a critical area to improve.

Funeral Director

- For both 2014 and 2015, consumers rated their funeral director highly across all attributes measured, but they earned the highest ratings on effectiveness in listening and answering questions and being attentive to your needs.

Facilities and Vehicles

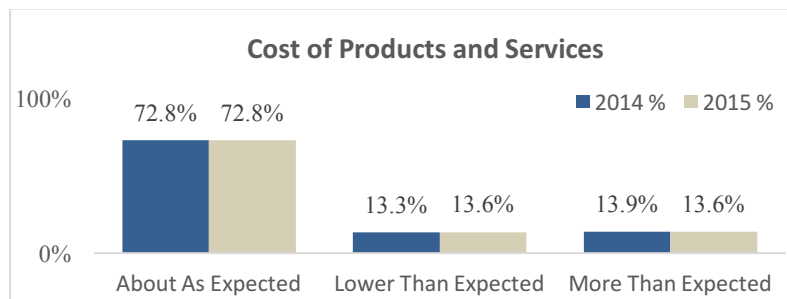
- Satisfaction with vehicles appearance, cleanliness and condition was rated highest, and the convenience and comfort of the facilities received the lowest scores, primarily due to outdated or poorly maintained appearance, or musty smell of the funeral home.

Staff and Services

- Families were most satisfied with the funeral home staff’s friendly and accommodating manner followed by the actual service or ceremony.

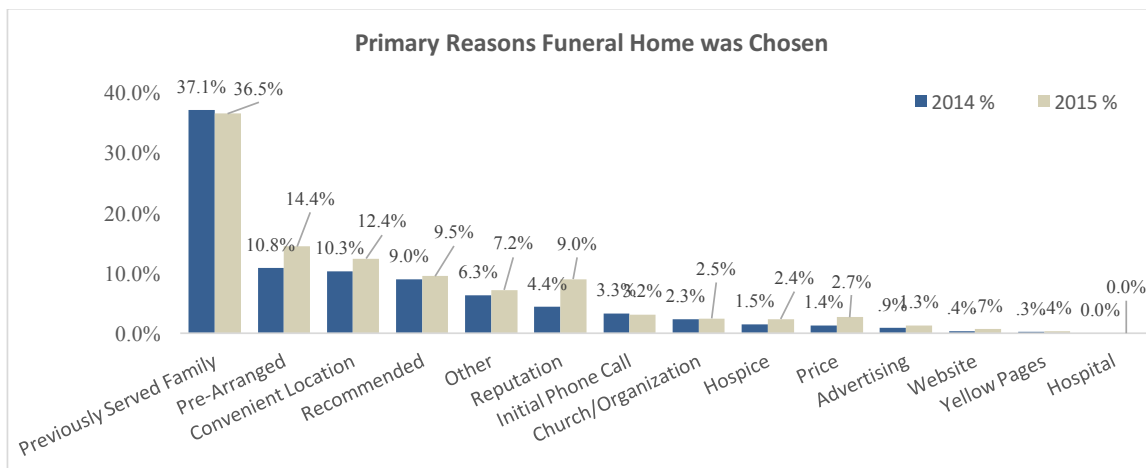
Cost of Services and Products

- Most respondents say the cost is what they expect, and most cost expectations are unchanged from 2014. Of note are direct cremation firms are trending to lower than expected costs and firms in the North Central region are trending to higher cost perceptions.



Reasons Funeral Home was Chosen

- Survey respondents most commonly chose a funeral home because it previously served their family, although other reasons are starting to trend up, especially pre-arrangement and convenient location.



Relationship between Sales and Client Satisfaction

Correlation analysis was performed to determine whether relationships existed between the overall satisfaction measures in our survey and total sales for the year.

- Overall, firms with higher satisfaction had higher sales, and vice versa. So, as family satisfaction increased, sales also increased. The relationship between sales and satisfaction is moderately strong; however, more research is needed to understand what funeral aspects most impact sales.

Conclusions

- We know statistically that higher satisfaction translates into higher sales, so improving satisfaction is a win-win for families and your firm.
- While cremations are rising, it is unclear if families are aware of all their cremation service options. Cremations with memorials and traditional cremations have higher satisfaction (and sales) than direct cremations, yet direct cremations are the most common cremation disposition chosen – and are trending up.
- It is important to be transparent with costs using clear and consistent language in communications – oral, written, and advertising, so families understand what they are receiving for the cost and your firm builds upon its positive reputation.
- When a consumer makes their initial contact with the funeral home, that is the only chance you will have to make a positive first impression – make sure it is indeed positive.

Analysis and article prepared by:

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Infant Removal Bags



\$125.00

Canvas Exterior –
Choice of Blue, Hunter Green, or Burgundy
Includes a removable polystyrene ribbed tray
for easy cleaning
Interior of bag lined with Pro-Tec nylon that is
fluid and bacteria resistant
Includes two fleece receiving blankets
Bag dimensions are 13" width and 24" length

Ferno Cots



400 lb capacity

Model 24 Multi-Level
Mortuary Cot
\$2175.00
Package Price
\$2495.00



900 lb capacity

Heavy Duty Mortuary
Cot MC-100 A-IID
\$1795.00
Package Price
\$2150.00



1000 lb capacity

Model 24 Mini Maxx
Mortuary Cot
\$2675.00
Package Price
\$2995.00



900 lb capacity

Oversized Mortuary
Cot MC-100 A-OS
\$1945.00
Package Price
\$2395.00

Package price includes 1 Quilted Cot Cover (per any design on brochure) and 1 Easy Mover

Junkin Cots



900 lb capacity

Quilted Cot Covers








\$225.00 each

Multiple patterns to choose from
Machine washable
Lined for better protection
Competitive pricing
Size fits regular and oversized cots
Pocket sewed into top cover for paperwork

Easy Movers



SLIDER BOARD
\$145.00

Maintenance-free
Smooth surface allows
easy sliding for removal
Durable, Light Weight Construction
Measures 72.25" L x 18.25" W

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