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10 Tips on how to be an unsuccessful funeral professional

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FASTEST. EASIEST.
TOP TEN REASONS WHY
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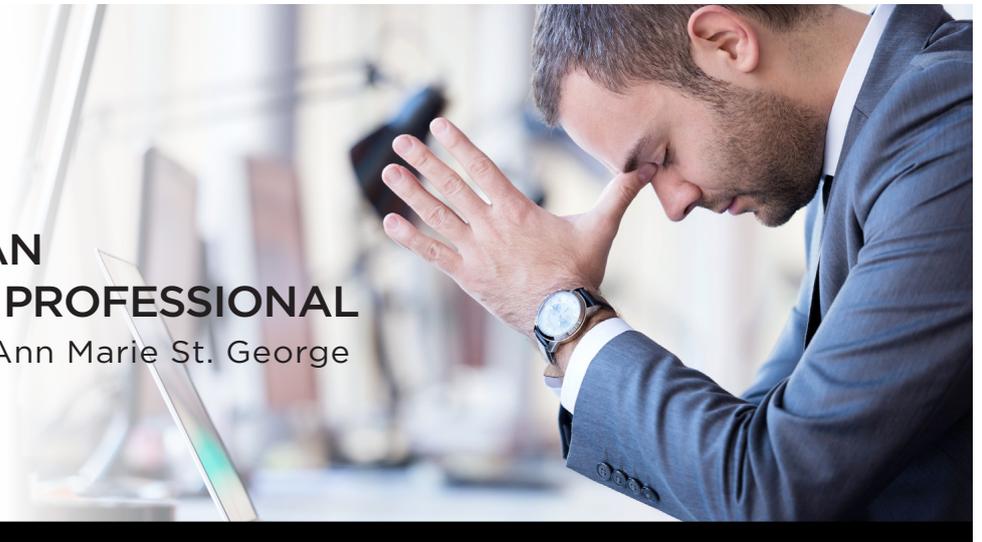
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TEN TIPS ON HOW TO BE AN UNSUCCESSFUL FUNERAL PROFESSIONAL

by Ann Marie St. George



As I tried to develop tips on making all of us better funeral directors and thus creating prosperous businesses, I thought I would try some reverse psychology. Please read these tips with a very open mind, especially while reading the words “unsuccessful” and “professional” in the same sentence.

1. Hire people less brilliant than yourself. Make sure none of your employees know more than you do. You don't want to hire anyone that might have any exceptional ideas or who may add to the growth of your business. Make sure your employees never think “outside the box.” You want to encourage them to always be late, show a lack of caring towards the families and to have a bad attitude towards learning anything new. Committed, dedicated, enthusiastic employees can be exasperating.

2. Attending educational seminars is only for dummies. If you have been in this business long enough you know all there is to know. It seems senseless to waste valuable time sitting through seminars where you might learn something that will teach you how to make more money and be a better leader. It's pointless to bother sending your employees; You don't want to give them a fantastic learning experience while making them more valuable. After all, there really is no teaching an old dog any new tricks.

3. Do not invest in a website. Why would you want the public to cruise the internet to learn about you and your funeral home? Everyone knows who you are and where your funeral home is located. No one looks for funeral notices on the internet. All of your death notices are in the local newspaper. If someone wants to go to the internet to find out someone's funeral details, the newspaper has a website. A website is just one more thing you have to worry about keeping track of- it's more bother than it is worth. Don't even worry about a Facebook page, that is just a fad.

4. Do not get involved with your community. You are so busy working all day, who has time to volunteer or offer funeral education to the community? The experience of getting to know your community and allowing them to know you is tedious. The rewards of sharing yourself and your expertise takes time, commitment, and passion.

It's more fun to go home hang around the pool and drink beer with your friends. After all, aren't these the people you are going to take care of when they die?

5. Never bother to call and test your answering service. If the service is rude or doesn't answer your calls correctly, families who are looking for compassion and a reassuring voice would never think to hang up and call your competition whose answering service has those lame empathetic agents answering their calls. Never worry if your answering service is always forgetting to give you messages because people, especially during a time of sadness and mourning, will always call you back because you are the best funeral director ever. The important thing here is that you are saving money every month.

6. Attending any trade shows like the ICCFA or NFDA are a waste of time. Checking out what is new in the industry is overrated. You have seen it all and it is always the same ole thing. What could really change and add value? No one is coming up with any latest and greatest ideas. There are no added value to mingling with other like-minded professionals and learning through these phenomenal experiences. Getting involved in these organizations is another feather in your cap you really don't need. Not to mention the fantastic sense of achievement that is created.

7. Keep doing the same ole thing with your preneed. Remember all those people you sat down with and spent quality time discussing all the details for their preneeds? The ones who at that time didn't have the money to invest. They would never be interested in eventually funding them. Do not waste your time and energy going through your unfunded files to send update letters to these families. Knowing you will ultimately be taking care of them, why take another opportunity to extol the benefits of completing their prearrangements? As you probably know, all preneed facilitation companies are the same. Why investigate what other products besides the ones you presently use are out there? Why find something new and improved; You are happy not knowing there may be better options. Obviously, don't even waste your breath on actively marketing your preneed, who would even be interested? Your community knows you offer prearranged funerals, they will come when they are ready.

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8. Do not offer cremation options. The only kind of cremation is a direct one. All those options for cremated remains seem so silly. Most families just want to scatter their loved ones' ashes willy-nilly. Why should you bother offering your help to guide them? Really, cremation jewelry? Who would take you seriously? You make enough money with your direct cremation options. Offering families additional choices to spend more money for keepsakes is ridiculous.

9. Do things the way you always have done them. What was good for great, great, grandpa's families is good enough for yours. Investing in memory boards or videotaping the service for family members not able to attend is pure nonsense. If someone overseas fighting for our country can't make the service, that is their loss. Who wants to deal with families putting a bunch of pictures together creating a memorable, healing experience in your funeral home anyway? Stick with what has always been done. Your community is never changing and by no means would want to offer a therapeutic experience unique to their family. They truly want to forget, not remember. Stick with the tried and true and ignore all the families going to the funeral home up the street that offers all those new-fangled options. Just hold on to the knowledge that everyone thinks you are amazingly set in your ways.

10. Never ever adopt a therapy dog. Imagine the annoyance of having to deal with a therapy dog in your funeral home and all the free publicity you would have with everyone talking about "Max" the cutest ever therapy dog. How irritating would it be listening to people's amazing experiences of how he helped them feel better? Why would you subject yourself to the added benefits of having "Max" around? Such benefits as having your mood boosted, relieving stress, lowering your cholesterol and blood pressure, and staying active and social. The infuriation of ultimately making you a better person is just unacceptable.

I hope you enjoyed my 10 tips and maybe even smiled through a few of them. My true hope is that all of you got the point and realize none of us can get better at what we do by sitting around and doing the same thing day in and day out while expecting different results. We need to step out of our comfort zones, open ourselves up to change and think outside that proverbial box. You will be amazed at what you will receive in return. **FBA**



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