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In What World Does Aftercare
Benefit Your Business?

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IN WHAT WORLD DOES AFTERCARE BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS?

by Ann Marie St. George, CPC

Seriously? You just worked your tail off bending over backwards to make sure every whim of that pain-in-the-butt family was taken care of, why would you want to do anything with or for them “after” the funeral. Rumor has it, if you want to take your business to the next level you need a super duper aftercare program. Oh boy, another thing we got to worry about besides picking up the wrong person at the morgue, putting the wrong clothes on someone, or cremating someone in a solid mahogany instead of the air tray the family paid for. I say we are all just better off not being proactive and waiting to see whether or not families will want us to take care of them at the “time of need”; aftercare, schmafter care.

Top 10 reasons an absent minded funeral director wouldn't have an aftercare program.

1. An aftercare meeting would never open the conversation of prearranging one's funeral

There is no way the benefit of prearranging one's funeral would ever come up during the aftercare appointment. A distressed family whose loved one never spoke of what they wanted when they died would absolutely have no interest in discussing the advantages of prearranging one's funeral. They, of all people, would not see the benefit.

2. There is no added value to having a bereavement library with books, videos, audiotapes, pamphlets etc.

Joe-public would think it odd if you had a place in your funeral home where they could spend time learning how to cope with their grief and the grief of other family members through reading, watching and listening to experts explain the emotions they are going through.

3. No one would benefit from organizing grief support groups

Holy cow, can you imagine spending the time to locate a local grief counselor that might want to help you organize a grief support group? Why should we be the ones to look for outside help for these grieving families - it's not like we know anything about dealing with death.

4. Symposiums on grief would be a tough sell

What grief counselor would want free CEU's? What school counselor or teacher would want to have a greater understanding of grief and how it affects their students? No way would those teachers then reach out to the funeral home to bring someone into the school to work with the children, they would never see the significance. Why would we want to improve our community's understanding of death by helping our educators recognize the importance of the funeral and what the funeral process does to help people through the grieving process?

5. Educational programs for the younger generation would go totally unnoticed

Reaching the young to help them understand the importance of the funeral and its value is out of our realm of expertise and way too challenging. Why would anyone young want to talk about death? Why would they want to understand the funeral process before they have to ever deal with it? Why waste your time on helping the young understand the value of a funeral so that as adults this better understanding creates smarter more conscious funeral consumers.

6. Waste of money training your employees

We pay them too much already. Why would we want to make them more valuable to us and themselves by sending them to learn how to be better at what they do? Dare to dream of a letter received from a family member telling us how our employees went above and beyond and were so caring that though they don't want to see us any time soon they will let everyone know how fantastic we are.

7. Sending Funeral Home Newsletters to families that we have serviced would be a flop

The thought of having to put together a newsletter of what is going on in our funeral home has me wanting to go back to bed. Wouldn't it be easier to just hang a few notices on our bulletin board in the front hall of the funeral home and let visitors and passersby read them

when they are in the neighborhood? What is the big deal with connecting with our families year round anyway? Where is the value in offering useful information that would be appreciated by all who receive it? To think anyone would look forward to a unique newsletter filled with useful information that will make you laugh and cry at the same time is ludicrous. A newsletter that everyone will be talking about; Geez that's crazy talk.

8. Creating programs & hosting social events for seniors is a really dumb idea

It is so hard to put up with all the cards, phone calls and personal words of thanks from those seniors who have attended any of the events created for them. These appreciative seniors tell all their friends about these events, creating a demand from other seniors for us to continue to offer these events. What would we ever do with all these potential referrals? Frustrating isn't it? Organizing programs for the generation who could give a crap is too time consuming.

9. Hosting any events in the funeral home would just get the rugs dirty

Why would we open our doors to the community for annual memorialization events? It would only offer families an opportunity to share their personal stories about those they lost while helping them to heal. This really wouldn't help them to get to know and appreciate what we do while enjoying our space. It's fine that they think of our place as dark and depressing and not warm and inviting, we really don't want to give them the wrong impression.

10. Adding value to your community through sponsoring charity events is over rated.

In what world is creating a philanthropic business a really awesome thing to be known for? For those of you who have heard the word however are not quite sure it's meaning; Philanthropy is a Greek term which directly translated means "love of mankind." It is an idea, event, or action that is done to better humanity and usually involves some sacrifice as opposed to being done for a profit motive. So I guess serving our community in a selfless way because it is the right thing to would fall under this definition. Unfortunately, in establishing this type of mindset, the community is more than likely to want to reach out to us in a time of need and um that really isn't what we are all about. What do people think; we are all available 24/7? Pure craziness. Like I said aftercare schmafter care!!! **FBA**

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