



Letter from the President

July fireworks are fading away, it's almost the All-Star break in baseball, the kids are at summer camp. How can we already be here? It seems like it just stopped snowing the other day! Let's take a quick look back, and forward.

As you know, change and growth were the theme in 2012. It is with great appreciation that that I say, "Thank you" for your willingness to embrace change and your eagerness to grow in your profession.

As summer is in full swing, there are several developments gaining momentum at The Outlook Group. The addition of the Physicians Mutual product portfolio has been well received by funeral home owners and AFPs alike. The continued evolution of Physicians Mutual product features and benefits will help meet the ever-changing needs of your families.

In addition, we are looking forward to increased lead generation effectiveness through our new marketing campaigns as well as new presentation tools coming out of The Academy.

Every day, The Outlook Group will strive to "Obsess About the Customer"...YOU. Thank you for all you do for the funeral homes you represent and the families you serve each day. Your efforts are appreciated and admired.

Here's to a great rest of summer and fall 2013!



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Company News

Advanced Funding Solutions Approaching One Year Anniversary

The Outlook Group, Inc., in collaboration with Physicians Mutual®, a premier provider of health, life and retirement products, announced an innovative new suite of products, Advanced Funding Solutions™ (AFS), almost a year ago.

The Outlook Group is proud to team with one of the most trusted insurance carriers in the nation. The Physicians Mutual family maintains one of the pre-need profession's strongest capital positions, with capital and surplus of \$843 million.

This new pre-need program delivers sustainable pre-funding options to proactive and progressive funeral homes across the country.

Tim Reed, Vice President, Pre-Need Operations at Physicians Mutual, says, "We learned funeral home owners want simple products that earn growth every day the policy is in force, and treat their families right. That's why we offer daily growth crediting and simple early payoff options that never charge a fee and provide discounts on remaining premiums to families."

As a mutual company, Physicians Mutual takes the long-view approach. "Our 110-year history proves this," added Reed. "That's why when we enter a new market, we are there to stay. This is one of the most exciting opportunities we have embarked on."

For more information on Advanced Funding Solutions or to become a partner, please visit www.advancedfunding.com.

Christian Chambers Mortuary Science Scholarship Award

For the next 20 years, the Christian Chambers Mortuary Science Scholarship Award, an award of \$2,000, will be presented annually to selected students in a mortuary science program accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Christian's knowledge of the funeral profession, combined with his extensive pre-need experience, has given him a unique ability to assist funeral home owners, managers and pre-need sales professionals. For more information, please visit www.theoutlookgroup.com/chambersscholarship/

SALES INFO

By John T. Feher, VP of Sales

Q: What is the one priceless and limitless commodity in the funeral profession?

A: People.

Notice I didn't reference pre-need or at-need, just the funeral profession in general. As public servants and advanced planning advocates, we must always be ready to extend our hand and an inviting smile in welcome to others.

We don't have the luxury of "checking out" while at our children's sporting events, on an elevator, at a hospital or while picking up dinner. We must realize we're always on stage.

How does this relate to advanced planning? As more people know you're open to them, the more ways they'll find to connect with you. You'll be able to network, give presentations and call upon others to work together.

Think of those people who've "never met a stranger." They're friends with everyone they meet. They have the right idea. Try it out.

Make it your goal to meet one new stranger per day. See if that opens some new doors of opportunity for you and your business.

As the late Dicky Fox, sports agent in the 1996 film Jerry Maguire said, "Unless you love everybody, you can't sell anybody."



Lead Generation Update

*By Michael Anderson,
VP of Marketing &
Business Development*

Here's What Consumers Want When it Comes to Marketing

According to the 4th Annual MyBuys/e-tailing group Consumer Insights Survey, 72% of consumers want an integrated marketing approach. Consumers want to see essentially the same marketing message in different channels such as direct mail, emails, banner ads, print ads, etc. But in reality, only 79% of those customers are receiving an integrated marketing approach.

More and more, we at The Outlook Group find ourselves talking to funeral home owners about this very thing: having integrated marketing plans and leveraging the pieces of their plan so they all work together.

But what do words like "integrated" and "leverage" really mean?

We're simply saying that when it comes to a funeral home's marketing, we're asking funeral home owners to decide where she or he wants to go, and make a plan and budget. Then

decide how they will get there. What kind of marketing will they do? Whatever kind it is, make it fit together, make the parts work together as a whole.

First of all, consider the big picture in marketing. Marketing plans shouldn't rely on one channel alone for lead generation, but should focus on leveraging both online and offline channels. It's no longer a question of choosing between print ads or direct mail as a marketing tool. The question now is how much one should spend on each of these within your budgetary constraints, because you must use both to keep your name out there prominently.

As your funeral homes are designing the plan, keep in mind that mailings, brochures, community presentations, newspaper ads, social media and paid search are equally essential.

Next, keep in mind the frequency of your message matters. We're bombarded with ad messages

these days, constantly. Your funeral home isn't just competing with other funeral homes now; you're competing with all the noise out there. How many times potential customers are exposed to a brand is crucial to what they'll remember.

Finally, the consistency of your message matters. This is how you can leverage all the elements of the campaign or campaigns. Send the same message out in all of the pieces. Let the consistency in the pieces help create repetition as well.

Let's go back to that statistic above. Remember, well over half of consumers surveyed would be receptive to and desire an integrated approach from marketers. But well over half aren't getting it.

The stage is set to
bring it on!

In The Spotlight ...



“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.”

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

The Wichmann and Fargo Funeral Homes and Crematories posted the quote above on their Facebook page as a way to tell their story. And it's a story of longevity and integrity.

Located in five Wisconsin cities in the Fox Valley area, the Wichmann and Fargo Funeral homes are locally owned and have been serving the Fox Valley area for over 110 years.

Wichmann and Fargo is unique in the Fox Valley as the only funeral homes

with exclusive offerings like comprehensive bereavement support services and educational seminars presented by nationally renowned grief experts such as Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Doug Manning, Dr. Bill Hoy and others. Two private crematories on premises assure dignified treatment without leaving the area for contract crematory services. Two state-certified Advance Planners help customers with future needs.

Wichmann and Fargo takes great pride in their local ownership and the many ways in which they contribute to communities through educational offerings, charitable donations and hundreds of volunteer hours. They passionately believe in

doing their best to make the Fox Cities a better place to live.

For example, they proudly co-sponsored events such as the 6th Annual Grief Support Symposium held at the University of Wisconsin-Fox in Menasha.

Believing there is a distinct difference between their funeral homes and those owned by publicly traded companies, Wichmann and Fargo is firmly committed to providing the very best professional services, the finest facilities, and the most experienced and compassionate staff at a fair and reasonable price.

Find them on Facebook and at <http://www.wichmannfuneralhomes.com>



By Candace Franco,
Academy Director

Planning a memorable funeral is the responsibility of the funeral professional. At-need or pre-need -- the end result should be the same. Only the approach is different.

For at-need, we work from the outside in. The funeral director works with family and friends (outside) to learn about the deceased (inside). We learn about the person's roles: career, community and family. We use this information to capture the essence of the individual, so we can celebrate their life in a way that brings comfort to survivors.

In the pre-need setting, we work from the inside out. We begin with our customer, who will one day be the deceased. Has he thought about his funeral service? Has she thought about her roles and accomplishments? We expand our customer's thinking. Has he considered those he will leave behind? What kind of service will be most helpful to her family and friends?

The memorable funeral, whether at-need or pre-need, accomplishes three goals:

- It honors the life and relationships of the deceased.
- It supports the grief needs of the survivors.
- It is affordable.



Glad You Asked...

Can I help set my funeral services apart with quick, inexpensive ways that make a big difference?

We recently learned about a pre-planned service for a woman who passed away at age 85 that specified nametags were to be worn by all the family members in the reception line at the wake.

We know some of you already do this, but this family added a special touch. The departed woman had seven children of her own and twenty grandchildren, one of the reasons she wanted them to have the identifying tags. She specified that they be decorated with shamrocks, too.

A half hour or so into the wake, one of the daughters suggested the final touch. The woman's peers were all asking the grandkids the same question: "Now, who do you belong to?" So, on each grandchild's nametag, they added, "I belong to..." with the name of their parents.

It was a huge hit, and the talk of the luncheon. Everybody agreed; it was a fun and easy introduction. It took minutes to do.

At a time when simple efficient ideas matter, this might be one for you to try.

Upcoming Events...

- **95th Annual CANA Convention**
Aug 7-10, 2013
Washington, DC
- **NJSFDA Convention and Expo**
Sep 24-26, 2013
Atlantic City, NJ
- **2013 NFDA International Convention & Expo**
Oct 20-23, 2013
Austin, TX
- **FSCA of Wisconsin Annual Fall Conference**
Oct 29-30, 2013
Brookfield, WI

Academy™ Training Schedule

July 16-19

Advance Funeral Planning...The DEER Way

November 19-20

Funding Advance Funeral Plans

July 30- August 1

Three and 1/2 Days of Leads

November 21-22

DEER Level II VBS (Value Based Selling)

September 17-20

Advance Funeral Planning...The DEER Way

November 5-8

Advance Funeral Planning...The DEER Way



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