Community Outreach - Funeral Information Lines

This program is very reasonable in cost and yields beneficial public relation results.

1. Here is what you do
	1. Low Tech Version:
		1. Arrange for a separate phone line.
		2. Buy an answering machine from any store
		3. Record a weekly message concerning different aspects of the funeral.
		4. Change the message weekly
	2. Hi Tech Version:
		1. Subscribe to a VOIP system like RingCentral.com
		2. Choose a phone number for your area
		3. Record a weekly message concerning different aspects of the funeral by dialing into your VOIP service.
		4. Change the message weekly.

That’s it!

1. Here are some types of messages that you might consider:
	1. The value of a funeral
	2. How your staff helps people
	3. Why have a funeral
	4. What people need to know about cremation
	5. When death occurs away from home
	6. Death benefits
	7. Funeral costs
	8. Children and the funeral
	9. How to comfort people
	10. The history of the funeral home
	11. The experience of value

Take an ad out in your local media to let the public know about your new consumer information line.

 See your ready-to-use sample scripts on the next page.

# Sample Phone Scripts

**The Value of the Funeral**

The funeral is the oldest ceremony known to humankind—a leave-taking ritual that involves both care of the dead and care of the living. This rite of passage provides an organized, group-centered opportunity to share the experience of death—to link past and future, to express emotions, to affirm religious and theological beliefs, and to share memories with friends, family and the community.

It is a ritual with many values, but above all … the funeral is a meaningful celebration of a life that has been lived.

This message is part of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Funeral Home Information Line. This is another quality service of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Funeral Home, serving \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_.

**How Our Staff Helps People**

It takes a special type of person to be a Funeral Director. Not only must they have the maturity, strength and integrity to deal with death on a daily basis, they must also possess the compassion and understanding to deal with those who are grieving.

Our staff is trained to handle all aspects of funeral service. Their special education includes graduation from Mortuary Science College, successful completion of a national conference exam, followed by an internship and a state law exam. (Adjust according to country/province/state)

These people have worked hard to prepare themselves for a profession that demands them to be available at any hour of any day.

To those who have dedicated themselves to the profession, funeral service is not an occupation … it is a ministry.

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**Why Have a Funeral?**

The funeral has long been recognized as a rite of separation that serves many purposes.

Viewing of the deceased is an important step in confirming the reality of the death and giving identity to the purpose of the funeral—whether it be a public or a private service.

Death touches more than just the deceased’s loved ones. In fact, it is difficult to know just where to draw the line between who it does and does not affect.

A private funeral limits those who may attend, therefore removing the opportunity for those excluded to confirm the reality of death and grieve with others. A public funeral allows a broad mixture of family, friends and the community to share their memories and sorrows, and to support one another.

The funeral, and all the events surrounding the ceremony, is not for the deceased … they are for those who live on.

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**Facts About Cremation**

Cremation funeral services need not be different from traditional funeral services.

Most crematoriums require a casket or container. Embalming is recommended for reasons of sanitation, health and time constraints. High heat in the cremation chamber reduces the body to cremated remains. These remains are composed of ashes and bone fragments.

Memorialization of cremated remains is advisable and can be done through burial, scattering, inurnment or other means of containment.

Some options include cremation memorials, cremation urns, columbarium niches, urn gardens, family plots and scattering gardens.

For further information on any of these options of funeral service, please call…

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**When Death Occurs Away From Home**

Our society is very mobile. People travel extensively and sometimes families experience the problems that are created when a death occurs away from home.

Because of our extensive experience in caring for families since \_\_\_\_, let us suggest a few ideas when this event happens:

If you are away from home and a family member dies, the easiest procedure is to call our funeral home collect immediately. We have the capability to handle every detail from our office and you will have the peace of mind that someone from home is helping you.

Our funeral home has professional contacts all across the country. We can notify the necessary authorities, engage a funeral service colleague, take care of all the paper­work, and arrange for all transportation for your loved one and your family.

To ensure that you are protected, we suggest that before you travel, call us or stop by to receive an identification card with our phone number on it. This number will assist you with expert care in the event of a death out of town.

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**Death Benefits**

This week’s message on the Funeral Information Line is about death benefits.

It is wise to be aware of the different benefits that you are entitled to in the event of the death of a family member.

Social Security and the Veterans Administration are government resources that offer death benefits. Today, entitlement to these specific benefits has specific guidelines and is not available to everyone. It is a good idea to call our office to determine eligibility.

Other monetary benefits at death include insurance proceeds, benefits from lodges and other societies, and coverage for death while traveling from airline companies, credit card companies and the like.

Because each individual situation is different, we suggest that you call our office and let one of our Funeral Directors assist you in putting together your benefit information. It will give you some valuable information, as well as peace of mind.

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**Funeral Costs**

The cost of a funeral is always an individual choice. When taken in its entirety as to what work and effort go into a funeral and when the funeral is compared to other life investments, the cost becomes very reasonable.

It is a little known fact that it takes approximately 136 steps to conduct one funeral. The investment of the funeral home is usually substantial because communities always insist on having funeral facilities of which they can be proud.

A quick comparison of funeral costs to other purchases will quickly put into perspective the reasonableness of funeral costs.

In 1934, a new automobile cost $800. In 1934, an adult funeral cost $124. In 1993, a new automobile cost $20,000. In 1993, the average adult funeral cost $5,000. When this comparison is made the cost of the funeral does not seem so high.

At the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Funeral Home, we believe that the funeral is more than an eco­nomic event. We believe it is a social, religious, psychological and cultural event. We offer a Special Needs Program that ensures those people who have no resources, and desire the benefit of a funeral, can have a funeral. Our funeral home will do those funerals free of charge.

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**Children and the Funeral**

Children have very little factual knowledge of the world, but their ability for feeling things about their world is unlimited.

Because of this, it is important to be truthful and up front with a child when someone dies. Children can usually accept any truth about life as long as it is presented to them in an environment of love, support, care and honesty.

It is also valuable for the child to observe the mourning and funeral practices that have been developed so they can learn that death is a part of life and how to mourn.

At our funeral home, we suggest that parents include children in the funeral rite. We have a room specifically designed for children while they are at the funeral home. There are toys, puzzles, coloring books and a TV with Disney videos. Now the child can parti­cipate in the mourning process, but leave when they feel like it and turn their attention to other things.

For more information, please call \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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**How to Comfort People**

One of the most common things that we hear from people about talking to a bereaved person is, “I never know what to say.”

Communicating with a bereaved person is more a matter of support and presence than it is of saying something profound. A clasped hand, a hug, a sympathetic expression, the words, “I’m sorry,” are all that are really needed.

Going through the experience and process of grief and mourning with a bereaved per­son is more important than going through it perfectly.

For these reasons, it is important that people make and take the time to attend, be pre­sent and participate in funeral home calling hours, the funeral itself and post-funeral activities. The support that the bereaved feel by knowing that they are loved and sup­ported really sets the foundation for a healthy bereavement experience.

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**The History of the Funeral Home**

Thank you for calling the Funeral Information Line.

“The Threshold of Sympathetic Understanding” is a term that has become a tradition with the (name) Funeral Home in our many years of economical, thoughtful and digni­fied funeral service in (city).

During our (number) year history, (name), a non-sectarian funeral home serving all creeds and beliefs, has conducted funeral services at a cost adapted to every means.

When (founder’s name) settled in (city) more than (number) years ago, he became one of the first to enter the funeral profession. The funeral home expanded and in (year) the ownership was transferred to (name), who operated the business until (year).

Mr(s). (name) was a well known resident of our city, being active in (organizations), (etc.), and (etc.).

Today the (name) practices the same ideals of service that (name) and (name) cherished. For nearly (number) years (city) families have been served by the (name) Funeral Home, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our service has always been marked by a sympathetic understanding, which is attested to by the fact that our staff continues to minister to families in our community.

(name) died on (date), but the tradition which he fostered is maintained to this very day by the staff of the (name) Funeral Home.

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**Experience of Value**

A funeral is a unique event. Although no two are exactly alike, each is an experience of value providing it meets the needs of those who mourn. It should be remembered that democracy is valued in death. The funeral of every per­son—famous or unknown, rich or poor—should be equally important and valuable for those who are left behind.

The funeral is one of the few personal events or ceremonies to which none is invited, but all should be welcome to come. In a very real sense, the funeral not only recognizes that a death has occurred but, more importantly, that a life has been lived.

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