

What Cremation Families Really Want
When society and business disconnect

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- Reminding cremation families
 - More decisions
 - More choices
 - More flexibility
- The ugly reality
 - *Why don't burial families get the same choice and flexibility?*
 - *What do we expect burial families to do when they don't get those things?*

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- Think differently
- Behave differently
- Buy differently
- "I just don't get them"
 - THEM is not the same as US

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Them is Not The Same as Us:
Part I – Them

► **Mobility:**

- 17% of the U.S. Population moves every year.
- 27% of U.S. adults will make a long-distance move within 5 years
- Seniors (65+) are less than half as likely to move as non-seniors
- Kids and grandkids move much more often than the elderly parents (47% vs. 22% over 5 years)



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Them is Not The Same as Us:
Part I – Them

• **Mobility:**

- The dead lived here but the survivors are from somewhere else.
- Less rooted in a single community
- Less tied to local tradition
- *Less tied to everyone in deathcare, especially the cemetery*



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Them is Not The Same as Us:
Part I – Them

- **Decline in Religion**
 - No affiliation 19%
 - Affiliated, Inactive 24%
 - Total "unchurched" 43%
- **Intermarriage**
 - Blended families
 - Blended identities
 - Cherry-pick their traditions
- **Deritualization?**



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Them is Not The Same as Us:
Part II – US!

Family history

- Deathcare businesses: 78 years old
- Not participating in Mobile Society
- Inherited...
 - Real estate
 - Market position
 - Service model
 - Public Profile
 - Allegiance to tradition
 - Resistance to change



"I'll start thinking outside the box when the box is empty"

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The People Problem:
Part II – US!

Incompatible Skills

- Embalming vs. Customer Service
- License Shortage
- Regulation vs. Competition
 - *The Signature Grand*
 Ft. Lauderdale, FL




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What Do They Want???

A look at what we've learned...

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- Not an affirmative choice
 - Nothing attractive about the process
- NO desire to know what goes on

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Path of least resistance

- Less money
- Less time
- *Fewer decisions*
- *Less time pressure*
- *Less contact with "salespeople"*
- *"One call, that's all"*

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Memorials vs. Funerals

- Don't have to be sad
- Don't have to be religious
- Don't have to follow a fixed script
- Don't have to happen quickly
- Don't have to be in a funeral home or a church

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- Funeral Homes: first choice for arrangements
- Leverage the removal
- What's in a name: "cremation societies"



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- Facilities matter
 - Cremation merchandising lags the industry
 - Arrangement center seen as "big improvement"
 - *We define our opportunity by what we choose not to show*



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- Passive = Impersonal
 - You talk – I listen
 - You present – I watch
- Active = Personal
 - I personally shop and browse
 - I am free to have personal conversations with my family
 - I personally control the pace and content of my information gathering



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• The Wide-Open Question

- Cemeteries
- Scattering
- "The Closet Shelf"



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What About Cemeteries?

- Uniformity
- Order
- Maintenance
- Regulation
- *Celebrating Your Loved Ones' Names and Dates*



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- Cemetery's value proposition is the one least recognized (and most threatened?)
- Cemetery's position is most at odds with mobile society



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A Question of Perspective...

Self expression?
Upsell opportunity?
Or
Maintenance headache
Unacceptable cost increase



Silke Schindler
1915 - 1999
Adelwig Neugebauer
1892 - 1994

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Client: Sunset Memorial Gardens
Title: SMG 03-11 Football Um
Length: 30
Editor: Frank Layman
Date: 5/23/13

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The take-home message...

- Your key audience - guests
- Competitors' families in your chapel
- Their judgements?



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Cremation is an alternate form of disposition

• Removal	▶ Removal
• Storage	▶ Storage
• Embalming	▶ Cremation
• Burial	▶ (Final placement)

Wrong!

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Cremation is an alternate form of preparation

• Removal	• Removal
• Storage	• Storage
• Embalming	• Cremation
• Burial	• Final placement

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What do cremation families really want?

- *Less contact with sales people*
- *Less reliance on tradition*
- *Less time pressure*
- *Less religion*
- *Less of "what we do"*
- *More meaning*
- *More flexibility*
- *More individuality*
- *More value for my money*
- *More of "what I want"*

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What do cremation families really want?

- *A Real connection with the dead – and the living*
- *Real Choices, on their own terms*
- *Traditional burial services just don't provide that.*

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Two answers

- *Short Answer:
Just what everyone else does*
- *Long Answer:
Most cremation families won't settle for that much longer*

(Neither will burial families)

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