

ICCFA CONVENTION

SPEAKERS: CREMATION



Have you ever heard this: "When I die, use the extra insurance money to take the family on a dream vacation, or on a cruise"? How about making referrals to travel agents? Have a list of Web sites printed on your letterhead, or a concierge or a personal contact service in conjunction with your aftercare. This is something we need to look into.—Justin Zabor

Give cremation families what they want

Justin Zabor, Zabor Funeral Home, Cleveland, Ohio

How do we give cremation customer "Sam McGee" what he wants, and how do we make him happy? We give him what he values. How do we know what he values? Because he tells us—we have to listen.

More than our services and the cost of our merchandise, the three things Sam McGee values are:

- a party,
- a vacation and
- lots of other stuff, lots and lots of other stuff. This includes products (videos, memorials, books, artwork) and services (lawyer, financial planner, realtor).

Let's break this down. Actual comments I've heard in arrangements: "When I die, throw a big party, and invite all of my family and friends." Anybody else ever heard that? Why don't we do it?

I'm talking about family, friendship, fellowship and food in the form of a party, in the form of food and alcohol and joy. Why don't we do this for our families? I'm talking about catering, church or restaurant referral.

The old way of doing the party was the visitation, or the wake. The new way of doing it is a party, an event. I'm talking about catering.

Of course some people say, "Justin, I don't want to cater, because my church caters, or the family always goes to the church." That's fine, that's good. We don't want to step on the toes of the clergy.

But there's also a significant percentage of unchurched people out there, and where are they going to go?

We can refer them to the manager of a restaurant, but unless we know that manager really well, we're not going to get anything out of it. So why don't we do it ourselves?

Adjacent to our funeral home is a building we bought not long after we bought our funeral home. It's now our Century Home catering facility, where we provide luncheon and catering services for our families.

Now, not every family uses it, I'm very willing to admit that. But guess what? Sixty-five percent of our families choose us to cater for them, and it constitutes a significant profit margin for us.

This is what families want, they want a party. □

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SPEAKERS: COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Sales of Men of Mortuaries calendars at the ICCFA Convention raised \$1,255 for KAMM Cares, which helps people who have breast cancer. Convention speakers and calendar models Justin Zabor, left, and Marty Byars met fans and signed calendars at the ICCFA booth.

ICCFA 2007
Convention
& Expo
coverage