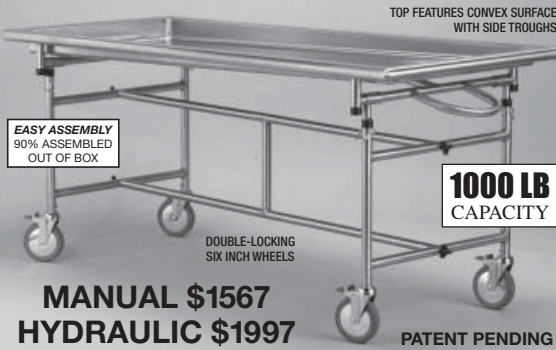


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## Helping Survivors Manage by Kat Reed



**SAINT PAUL, MN**— Following the funeral, after everyone has left and you return to the empty residence of the departed, where do you begin? *Begin Here: Helping Survivors Manage* by **Kat Reed** delivers practical everyday assistance to the people left behind after a death. It is a hands-on user's guide to help individuals (survivors) manage the day-to-day tasks after a death. It features spiral binding for ease of use, pockets for keeping loose papers, checklists, calendar pages for follow-up, and tips on delegating.

Everyone dies. Such a blatant statement might be shocking, but it is nonetheless true. There are countless organizations around the world that offer grief support, but none provides the product that *Helping Survivors Manage* offers. *Helping Survivors Manage* was created on the foundation of most new ventures: a void in the market. They hope to fill that need with their experienced team of subject matter experts—those who have been through it, as well as funeral directors, hospice, health and death care professionals—to help others through this difficult time.

Kat Reed has over 25 years experience in the financial/business world. Her background in bookkeeping and office management gives her the unique ability to address both the details and the big picture. She has been a hospice volunteer and has an affinity for the elderly. She became interested in the issues survivors face when both her parents died in a thirteen month span. This book arose from Kat's own work helping her predominantly deaf father manage her mother's affairs when her mom died. Kat and her dad wondered how people manage all these tasks when they don't have a family or support system.

For more information, contact *Helping Survivors Manage*, PO Box 16058, Saint Paul, MN 55116. Phone 612-293-6407. Visit [www.HelpingSurvivorsManage.com](http://www.HelpingSurvivorsManage.com).



## A Proactive Approach to Advance Funeral Planning

By Christopher Kuhnen

### How to Pick a Pre-Need Marketing Company

Earlier this year I had the good fortune to attend the ICCFA Wide World of Sales Conference in New Orleans. If you have never attended such an event, I highly recommend it. Several attendees approached me during the conference and asked me the following question: "How Do I Pick The Right Pre-Need Marketing Company to Serve My Funeral Home?"

To answer this question, I solicited the guidance of Mr. Tyler B. Anderson. Tyler is the Regional Development Director for the Outlook Group, Inc. in the Wisconsin and Greater Chicago region, working with numerous independent-family owned funeral homes. Tyler would love to hear from you. He can be reached at: [tanderson@theoutlookgroup.com](mailto:tanderson@theoutlookgroup.com).

If you are considering using the services of an independent pre-need sales and marketing company to work with your funeral home in developing and/or further enhancing your pre-need program, you need to do your homework.

Here are some key questions a funeral home owner should ask any marketing company you are considering partnering with:

- Will the marketer engage in a process to learn my business and uncover my unique needs?
- Will the marketer design a program that will be structured to specifically compliment / enhance the culture and reputation of my funeral home? If so, how will they accomplish this?
- Is the marketer providing a tailored program paired with proven systems and processes that are backed by in the field results and testimonials?
- What training / education / ongoing support programs does the marketer provide? (Not the insurance and/or trust provider, the marketer themselves)
- Is the methodology / philosophy of the marketer focused on educating your families to make informed decisions or just on "selling" your families'?
- What is the educational process the marketer uses to train counselors to take a family through the funeral preplanning process? Do they offer continuing education and support?
- How is the educational process consistently reinforced and refined for improvement?
- What lead sources will the marketer advocate working and are they working multiple sources simultaneously?
- Does the marketer provide a Lead Tracking / Lead Generation database to measure the results of a counselor's activity and effectiveness? Does this system also measure and track all marketing program effectiveness?
- Is the marketer focused on creating a LONG TERM mutually beneficial partnership or are they interested in just "putting contracts on the books"?
- What does your gut instinct tell you about the marketer? Do they instinctively feel right to you or are there lingering questions?

Carefully review any "marketing agreement" between yourself and the marketer. It is important to ensure everything is plainly spelled out in writing as you have agreed. The duties and responsibilities of all parties should be clearly outlined. Do not agree to and/or sign anything you are not completely comfortable with.

Always ask for a list of client references. Take the time to contact and speak with those they have and/or are currently serving. How do they feel about the marketer and the services they provide?

Working with a reputable pre-need sales and marketing company can be a very good thing for your funeral home. They can offer you tools and techniques found nowhere else in the funeral industry today. Make sure you do your homework about the company before entering into a business relationship. Once you are in agreement work right alongside them to make your pre-need program the best it can be.

It may take a little time to fully get your program where you want it to be and that's OK. Be patient, supportive and follow their advice. Rome wasn't built in a day. Quality, professional, sustainable pre-need programs are not developed overnight. There is a lot of strategic integration of thought, process and personnel that must take place in a proper timeframe to get your program moving in the right direction!

Want to know more? Contact me at [tanderson@theoutlookgroup.com](mailto:tanderson@theoutlookgroup.com).

Christopher Kuhnen is Vice President of Marketing for The Outlook Group, Inc., Franklin, Ohio. Mr. Kuhnen has considerable experience in the field of funeral prearrangement planning sales, training and marketing. He provides comprehensive consultation and support to funeral directors nationwide to help them coordinate and develop their funeral prearrangement advertising, marketing, image, sales and public relations strategies.

He is a Kentucky Licensed Funeral Director, Life Insurance Agent and member in good standing Funeral Directors Association of Kentucky. Additionally, Chris is a recognized Certified Preplanning Consultant (CPC) as bestowed by the Funeral Service Foundation and a recognized Certified Marketing Specialist as bestowed by the National Marketing Academy.

He has presented numerous continuing education, advertising, marketing and pre-need seminars to a variety of national, state and regional funeral associations. Chris can be reached at (800)331-6270 or [ckuhnen@theoutlookgroup.com](mailto:ckuhnen@theoutlookgroup.com).