

It seems that you can't pick up a magazine, go to a convention, or talk to other funeral directors without hearing about personalizing services and the latest ideas. With all that taken into consideration, this funeral home came up with some ideas that are so innovative, they're not very popular with most others.

In a day that some funeral businesses are doing elaborate billboard campaigns, controversial television ads, and driving hearses in parades, we're making a few brave moves ourselves.

First we decided that maybe when someone dies, their loved one probably wants to talk to a funeral director – yes, a funeral director, not someone at an answering service, but a funeral director. Is it popular to suggest a funeral director should answer the phone when it rings at 2am? We think it's not only necessary but just plain nice.

Then we realized that we were hearing people comment during arrangements about being overwhelmed with so many choices. There was also that "little" annoyance of feeling like they were being "nickled-and-dimed" with a charge attached for every item they desired. Since we try to be sensitive to our families' need, we decided we needed respond to that. It was agreed that there would no longer be a separate charge for a guest book, prayer cards, thank you cards, and even the cross or crucifix that would be displayed in the casket!

You asked how our community responds to this. Our funeral home is in a close-knit community. When people call in the middle of the night, the person who answers the phone is not only a funeral director, but someone they know and call by name. You can imagine how comforting that is!

As for the pricing itemization, think about the funeral director asking about a book for guests to sign, prayer cards for them to take home, and thank you cards to express gratitude. "How much do all those cost?" they ask. We feel like heroes when we can tell them there's no charge.

Yes, we need to keep our eyes open for new cutting edge ways to serve people and we do incorporate several, but let's not forget the importance of these basic fundamental ways of showing we care. They're the things that our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers did to start this business and to let people know they wanted to help them. No matter how advanced our society becomes, people still want to know someone cares.