



IFDF President's Message

The answer to, "Why?"

By Darin MacNeill, President

I recently posted a comment on Facebook stating, "I volunteer, why?" Frustration had set in and had me wondering why I do this to myself.

Now let me make something clear, I volunteer for many different things. But, all at once things were happening and I found myself not knowing which way to turn. My question was answered when people thanked me for doing different things and for being a part of their efforts to make a difference.

This made me stop and think. When you truly believe in something, you will sacrifice your time and energy to do the right thing, make a difference in someone's life, or bring a little joy to their hearts. I am proud to volunteer for all my groups and causes. We do good things every day, we give back, we make people smile, we protect what is right, and we preserve integrity and trust.

Over the years that I have been involved with IFDF, I have seen all the truly selfless hearts of our members and all the good we do. Not only do we enhance our profession, but we also make our communities better. Many of us are active in other things as well. I also volunteer with our local community theatre, which just ended a run of Fiddler on the Roof. We used our talents to bring joy to over 2500 people. When I stop and think about that, it gives me the chills.

If we really stop and think, all of us with IFDF touch thousands every year. I want to compliment all of you for what you do to make this association so great, not just for us, but most importantly the families we serve. I hope all of you have a great holiday season. Keep giving, keep caring, keep loving, and we can truly make a difference in someone's life.

We're Redefining the Member Experience with iPhone

IFDF members can now access the members only, password protected portion of the IFDF webpage from their iPhone. Members can now stay connected to the latest association and industry news anywhere, at any time. Users can access their own member profiles, launch a call, email or text message from the membership directory, locate nearby members with iPhone GPS, view upcoming events and continuing education sessions, track professional development and much more, all with a few taps of their fingers.

To use this application, members should simply use the same email and password for the iPhone as they normally use when logging in to the IFDF webpage from their desktop computer. If you have questions, please call Jessica in the IFDF office at 1-800-386-8778.

Customer Service Performance Standards

By Dr. Jerry Osteryoung

Being on par in terms of price and quality only gets you into the game. Service wins the game. - Tony Alessandra

So many of the businesses that we assist at the Jim Moran Institute have customer service problems. Many of them are related to a lack of awareness of the issues, but so many more are rooted in the absence of performance standards. It is great to set a goal of having outstanding customer service, but without a way of measuring or evaluating your staff on their performance, how effective could this goal be? With any goal you must be able to measure your progress and whether you have reached it.

Each element of customer service must have a measurable goal to attest to the progress that is being made. For example, the primary elements in customer service are greeting the customer, responding quickly to their requests, fulfilling their orders in a timely manner and dealing with problems. For each of these elements, you must establish a standard – or even a “gold” standard – to ensure that each employee knows both what is required and how their performance will be measured.

When greeting a customer in a physical location, the performance standard might be that each customer should be greeted with a smile within 30 or 60 seconds of their arrival. Making each customer feel welcome in your business is so important, and putting a time stamp on the greeting ensures that this critical element of customer service occurs without delay.

The second standard relates to how quickly your business responds to customers’ requests. Every business must adopt the standard that all customers receive a call-back within eight business hours of their inquiry. If you ever call me, my voicemail message does not say that I will get back with you as soon as possible (terrible customer service); rather, I say I will return your call within four hours. Customers’ emails must be acted upon within the same eight-hour window.

When a customer places an order, the time it takes to process and fulfill that order must be set and monitored. Here the standard might be that 98 percent of all goods ordered must be shipped within 48 hours. Too often I have ordered something over the internet only to have it delivered a month later with no explanation as to the delay.

The final standard involves dealing with customers’ problems. Here we want the issue to be fixed and dealt with in a prescribed way. Nothing drives a customer crazier than having a problem and being unable to get it fixed. I like to think that every business should be grateful for each customer that comes to them with a problem as this allows the business to identify the issue and then fix it. A standard here might be that each customer complaint should be remedied within 48 hours of receiving notice.

The bottom line is that in order to have outstanding customer service, you must have standards in place that will allow you to measure how you are progressing toward your customer service goals. Now go out and make sure that you have established customer service standards at your business. You can do this!

Dr. Osteryoung is the Director of Outreach of the Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship in the College of Business at The Florida State University, the Jim Moran Professor of Entrepreneurship; and Professor of Finance. He was the founding Executive Director of the Jim Moran Institute and served in that position from 1995 through 2008. He can be reached by e-mail at jerry.osteryoung@gmail.com. All of Dr. Osteryoung's articles can be found in a searchable form at <http://cob.fsu.edu/jmi/articles/index.cfm> or through his blog at <http://jerryosteryoung.blogspot.com/>.

In Memoriam

Randy Barton, 51, Smyrna, GA died November 17, 2009. He was a loyal and devoted employee of Crain MM Sales for over 30 years. Calling hours were held at the Hanley-Shelton Funeral Home, 473 Lawrence Street, Marietta, GA. The funeral was held at the Pine Street Missionary Baptist Church, Marietta, GA. Hanley-Shelton Funeral Home, Marietta, GA, (770) 428-6333, handled arrangements.

Clyde Swilley, a charter member of IFDF, died November 8, 2009. He is survived by his wife Lynne Bickford-Swilley; children, Pamela Jeanne Chillura (Frank) of Seffner, Florida; Jill Anne O'Neill (Bob) of North Carolina, Elizabeth Sue Gonzalez (Xavier) of Tampa, Florida; daughter-in-law, Susan Swilley of Land O'Lakes, Florida and Lynne B. Sokolnicki (Dave) of Sun City Center, Florida; ten grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren. He is predeceased by his first wife Jeanne and son Lynn C. Swilley. Calling hours were held at Swilley Funeral Home, 1602 W. Waters Avenue, Tampa, Florida. The funeral service was held at Tampa Baptist Church, Tampa, Florida. Interment was in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, Florida. Those who wish may make donations to Global Evangelical Missions, c/o Tampa Baptist Church, 300 E. Sligh Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33604. Swilley Funeral Home, (813) 932-6157, handled arrangements.

Classifieds

FUNERAL HOME FOR SALE:

Family owned funeral home located in Central Florida that has been in operation since 1953. The business has historically averaged 140 calls+/- per year. Owner will continue for a transition period with a second family member (funeral director/embalmer) continuing full time upon a transfer of the business. Please e-mail Jon Thomas (jcthomas@thomaspierce.com) or Karen McCurdy (kmccurdy@thomaspierce.com) with any questions or additional information.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR/EMBALMER SEEKING EMPLOYMENT:

I am a State of Florida Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer since 1992. I have an excellent ability to interact with my client families. From my years of local experience and my in depth product knowledge I have mature abilities that allow me to be an asset to your firm. I am flexible to work any hours or holidays as needed, as my children are all grown and serve in the military. I have taken a bit of time off for personal reasons and am anxious to be back into my profession once again. After 10 years of corporate experience, I am anxious to work for an independent business that is focused on high quality service. Fern Anne Panzer, 561-582-8006 (h), 561-644-4134 (c) or LFD3900@aol.com.

LICENSED FUNERAL DIRECTOR/EMBALMER WANTED:

Prefer 5 years experience and/or the ability to function in a 600 call environment. Must have computer skills and the ability to handle several files concurrently from first call to final disposition. For salary range, work schedule, and benefits, please email resume to Charles Davis, Inverness, FL at chas@chasdavis.com.

FOR SALE:

1996 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham funeral coach by Eureka. 5.7 ltr PFL engine, in good mechanical shape, black exterior, burgundy interior, full chrome package. 90,801 miles. \$7,000 or best offer. Call David Broadus, Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, (904) 284-4000.

IFDF 2010 Dinner Series

January 12	Gainesville	Haile Plantation Golf & Country Club
January 26	Pensacola	Mesquite Charlie's Steakhouse <i>Sponsored by Covington Casket Co.</i>

February 9	Jacksonville	The University Club of Jacksonville
February 23	Tampa	Jackson's Bistro
March 16	Tallahassee	Governor's Club

SCHEDULE FOR ALL DINNER SERIES MEETINGS:

6:00 pm Cocktails

7:00 pm Dinner & Program

PROGRAM FOR ALL DINNER SERIES MEETINGS:

"Tissue Donation" Speaker, Reva Riggins- Southeast Tissue Alliance

AND

"Outside the Beltway, Inside Funeral Service-Best Practices for Community Involved Funeral Directors" Speaker, Juhan Mixon- IFDF Legislative Consultant

WATCH FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION COMING TO YOU SOON!

Calendar of Events

December 2009

- 8 IFDF Board of Directors Meeting, Lakeland
- 25 Christmas, IFDF Closed

January 2010

- 1 New Years Day, IFDF Closed
- 7 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting (teleconference)
- 12 IFDF Dinner Series, Gainesville
- 18 M.L. King Day, IFDF Closed
- 26 IFDF Dinner Series, Pensacola

February

- 4 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting, Tallahassee
- 9 IFDF Dinner Series, Jacksonville
- 23 IFDF Dinner Series, Tampa

March

- 4 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting (teleconference)
- 16 IFDF Board of Directors Meeting, Tallahassee
- 16 IFDF Dinner Series, Tallahassee
- 17 IFDF Legislative Day, Tallahassee

April

- 1 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting, Orlando

May

- 6 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting (teleconference)

June

- 3 Board of Funeral, Cemetery & Consumer Services Meeting (teleconference)
- 10-13 IFDF 18th Annual Conference & Trade Show, Tampa

Attention IFDF Members

In an effort to serve our members more efficiently and effectively, IFDF has begun alternating months of publishing a printed newsletter and an E-newsletter. Every Issue – printed or electronic – will be posted on our website at www.ifdf.org. Newsletters will be published as follows:

PRINTED NEWSLETTERS SENT BY U.S.MAIL:

January

March

May

July (combined June/July issue with Annual Conference coverage)

September

November

E-NEWSLETTERS SENT BY E-MAIL:

February

April

August

October

December

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