



Group 3 Final Presentation

“A Preneed Consumer App”

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Demo Website Screenshot

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The Project

Any funeral Director can relate there just are not enough hours in a day. From the increasing demands of the families we serve, to the decreasing number of qualified professionals in our field. The challenges are real and are not being solved quickly enough.

While many are focusing on how to get more people interested in the profession, attending school and obtaining a license; which are all good ventures. Others are in desperate need of help and change NOW. We are hearing about closures, mergers and acquisitions every day. So how can one funeral Director potentially do more with less?

In the last several years, most of us have attended a lecture or read an article about some of the technology that has become a staple of service expectations throughout the COVID pandemic. Live streaming, memorial slideshows, and even online obituaries for those who were late to the party. While all these services are wonderful and worthwhile to pursue, what about technology that can play an important role in improving a funeral director's job and in turn, give the families we serve a better customer experience. Funeral homes that embrace technological advancements can stay ahead of the curve and provide their customers with the convenience and service they expect.

We would like to introduce our advanced planning app, which we have entitled for the purpose of this project, My Farewell Sunset. It will be a website and application backed by the NFDA for common devices that facilitates and encourages advanced planning of end-of-life arrangements. By scanning the QR Code on the screen you will be directed to our demo website for My Farewell Sunset that you can peruse at your leisure.

My Farewell Sunset's home page will invite consumers to learn the basics about advanced planning. It will walk them through making some initial decisions regarding type of services, memorialization, and disposition. It will also help explain the difference between advanced planning and advanced funding.

There will be a section of the website and mobile application where biographical information, service and disposition preferences can be recorded. This information shall be gathered in a way which will be securely stored, and eventually forwarded to the funeral home or cremation provider the individual selects. Simultaneously, select pieces of the data that is collected will be available for other use cases, such as preference tracking, average age of those preplanning, and other statistics.

One of the key features of My Farewell Sunset will be giving consumers the ability to search for funeral providers in their area by searching by zip code or city. This will take a national platform, and make it an easy tool to utilize for local funeral homes. NFDA member

funeral homes would have the ability to personalize their landing page on the app, and direct the app to link to a specific page on their website, should they choose. This would be a key benefit to NFDA member firms, and could be made available to non-member firms...perhaps for a fee. This will take a national platform and make it relevant to the local funeral home, and the local consumer population. It will be an ideal tool to market to select partners and gain traction for preplanning. All technical support would be provided or coordinated by NFDA.

The app's primary advantage lies in its ability to educate consumers, empowering them with knowledge that leads to a greater appreciation of the value our services provide. By focusing on education, we can establish trust and foster strong relationships.

Based on our collective experience, we understand that pre-planned services significantly streamline the facilitation process during times of at-need arrangements. When a family has previously utilized the app, they have already documented crucial information and had many of their uncertainties addressed, ultimately saving us valuable time.

My Farewell Sunset aims to establish a centralized marketing initiative for advanced planning, delivering a cohesive message to a wider audience. This platform will effectively promote funeral homes to previously untapped demographics, resulting in new and sustained business opportunities. Additionally, as a valuable byproduct of the app, we will create a comprehensive national database of pre-funded contracts.

We all know from personal experience that the subject of death is uncomfortable for people to talk about and some avoid the subject entirely. Our goal with our advanced planning app is to make the first steps in exploring and planning for your own final journey more accessible and less intimidating. We know as funeral service professionals that pre-planning can ease the burden on your loved ones, help make your final wishes known and help you save money if the individual chooses to pre-fund.

My Farewell Sunset will provide a safe place for consumers to begin discovering and researching options such as disposition options, service types, final resting places, and memorialization without leaving the comfort of their own home. It will also answer common questions regarding social security survivor benefits and benefits available to veterans and their families. Pre-planning checklists can be uploaded by the funeral home to help keep individuals more organized. Information regarding pre-funding through different vehicles such as trusts and insurance will be available within the app and website. Funeral homes may upload information based upon their state's requirements and laws.

We believe that there not only is a need for the app but also a consumer demand. In a recent survey done by the Funeral and Memorial Information Center or FAMIC, 89% of

respondents stated that a discussion about their end of life wishes would be beneficial; 69% would prefer to pre-arrange their own funeral services; and 17% have actually pre-planned their arrangements. What if we could increase those percentages by 40 or even 50% by just using technology to streamline the process of advanced planning.

The Farewell Sunset app can be effectively marketed to consumers through various established channels. One such avenue involves targeting Funeral Directors through the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA). Collaborating with NFDA would enable direct outreach to Funeral Directors who can, in turn, promote the app's benefits to their clients.

In addition, forging partnerships with hospice organizations presents an excellent opportunity to highlight the app's convenience for individuals facing imminent deaths. By working alongside hospice staff, the app can be introduced as a valuable resource for end-of-life planning, aiding patients and their families during this challenging time. Another effective strategy involves engaging social workers, estate planners, and financial planners. These professionals interact closely with individuals and families, making them ideal advocates for communicating the importance of advanced planning and emphasizing the app's convenience in this regard.

To reach a wider audience at the national level, marketing through AARP publications can be a highly impactful approach. Leveraging AARP's platform would enable broad exposure to a diverse range of individuals, allowing for widespread awareness and adoption of the app.

By capitalizing on these marketing avenues, Farewell Sunset can effectively communicate its benefits to consumers, empowering them to make informed decisions about their end-of-life planning.

One of the key benefits of using technology for funeral planning is the ability to provide consumers with information and resources at their fingertips. With My Farewell Sunset, consumers can access information about funeral products and services. They can also begin the planning process on their own terms, without feeling pressured or overwhelmed.

From the funeral director's perspective, an app like My Farewell Sunset can provide a valuable tool for managing advanced planning arrangements. By streamlining the process and centralizing information, funeral directors can save time and reduce the risk of errors or miscommunications. This, in turn, can lead to a better customer experience for families.

Overall, technology can play an important role in advancing the funeral industry and providing consumers with more accessible and convenient options for funeral planning.