



The True **Key** to Training Employees

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There are a wide array of guidelines, articles, books, and workshops on ways to effectively train employees. In fact, there are some very common catch phrases found in reference to training such as:

Identify resources for your training

Develop a training program

Evaluate the effectiveness of training materials

Strive for continuous improvement

What these catch phrases really mean is open to interpretation. Rather than define these terms, it is more productive to approach training from the “who”, “what”, “when” and “how” perspective.

Stop and consider the main intent of providing training to anyone for any position. Are you not sure what that is? Training intends to pass knowledge,

skills, and abilities (KSA) from one individual to another. The real key to success for training employees is the sharing of these elements. There are many reasons for sharing KSAs among employees. For example, an employee may be terminating their employment or retiring from your business. Alternatively, perhaps your funeral business has continued to grow, so you need another licensed funeral director. The question really becomes, how do you facilitate the sharing of key knowledge, skills, and abilities from one employee to the next?

Step 1. Gain an understanding of the many ways to pass KSAs person-to-person. Below is a list of some ways to pass these elements on (this is not an exhaustive list):

Studying examples of specific situations

Demonstrations on how a task should be performed

Reading documentation

Speaking to an acknowledged expert

Formal education

Job shadowing

Mentoring

Essentially, determining the way information exchanges from one employee to another provides you with the various options of “how” to train employees.

Step 2. Once you have some insights on the “how”, you can use these various methods of sharing KSAs to determine which form works most effectively in your funeral business and for the position that needs training. You can do this by reviewing a current job description and match the various methods to share knowledge to the tasks required in the position.

For example, if you are hiring an office administrative assistant who must answer phones and complete required forms, then a demonstration of how various tasks are performed and reading documentation of office procedures can be used to educate the new employee on appropriate KSAs. However, a funeral director position may require formal education, job shadowing, and mentoring in order to successfully develop the desired KSAs such as making arrangements or embalming.

Make a list of the positions within your business and identify which methods of transferring KSAs is preferred for the tasks required of the position. By tying the methods of communicating information to job descriptions or specific tasks, you develop the “what” to train specific employee.

Step 3. Now that you have some idea of the “what”, consider “who” is responsible for training the employee on specific tasks. This may mean that the same person trains on multiple tasks or just one depending on their level of expertise associated with the task in question.

In the example of training a new funeral director, it is likely that such methods as job shadowing and mentoring are very valuable to educate the employee on their responsibilities in the business. Job shadowing is very beneficial and does not need to be limited to just one specific trainer. Rather, the employee can job shadow various experienced funeral directors while they perform the myriad of tasks associated with that position. In addition, it is not necessary that there only be one mentor working with a trainee. Multiple mentors can provide the trainee assurance so that they know who to ask when questions arise. Give careful thought to “who” the most appropriate trainer is given

the various elements that need to be shared with the trainee. Make sure that the trainer is fully committed to sharing their knowledge, skills, experience, and abilities with the trainee. In fact, hold the “who” accountable for the results exhibited by the trainee to motivate trainers to give their best effort when educating the trainee.

Step 4. Most managers realize that a new employee will need training. Therefore, the “when” may appear

it may take only one day to train a new office assistant on how to answer the business phone properly. Be cognizant of the different training requirements for the various positions. Additionally, training is not limited to new employees. Established employees need training on new procedures or given refresher training if they are not performing to the level expected by management. Thus, the “when” of training becomes “as needed”.

Training for staff is critical for a funeral business to provide a high quality of service to the families they serve. It can be a challenging and frustrating process. Rather than making it a rigid and complex procedure, think about ways to simplify training and gain the most benefit with the least amount of effort. There are unlimited ways to develop and implement training programs for your specific funeral business. Make sure that the focus of any training considers the “who”, “what”, “when” and “how”. Remember, the true key to training is the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities from one employee to the next. When the sharing of KSAs does not occur, funeral businesses are vulnerable when they lose highly qualified staff. However, an established knowledge-sharing program can help a business weather the storm created when an employee departs from their business. Please reach out to The Foresight Companies if you need assistance creating a training foundation based on knowledge-sharing. ☘

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obvious at first, however, it actually can be more complicated. The amount of information and tasks that they need to learn overwhelms most new employees. Taking a much more measured approach and spreading training out over an extended period is likely to result in higher learning curve for the trainee. Consider creating a schedule that allows the trainee to experience training repeatedly on the KSAs that are required for tasks.

Most managers will not have a new funeral director make arrangements with a family after only shadowing one previous funeral arrangement. It takes time to develop the skills needed for such a complicated task. On the other hand,