



SPOTLIGHT ON: EMBALMING & PREPARATION IN THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

As the demands of families change and evolve over time, the industry adjusts and takes on new shapes to fit newly formed molds. The funeral industry does not look anything like it did 50 years ago, and the processes used surely aren't the same. When it comes to embalming and preparation, today's industry has seen some rapid changes over the past few years. Whether it's being more conscious of the impact chemicals have on bodies and the environment, paying closer attention to documentation of the bodies, dealing with delays due to organ donation, or just the fact that people are living longer and advanced medical treatments and medications can make embalming more difficult, embalming and preparation has seen some major changes.

"There are many more challenges facing the embalmer today that were not present in the past. There is often times a delay between the time of death and embalming taking place, due to families waiting to make a decision regarding final disposition, delay as a result of possible tissue and organ donation. Some of the other issues are people are living longer, new and advanced medical treatments and medications that all can create a difficult embalming. Now more than ever, there is a need for a complete case analysis on every case that comes into the preparation room. The professional embalmer must realize that there is not one fluid or procedure that will work on every case. Embalming is not cookie cutter every time. Speed is not as important as making sure the embalming is complete and done correctly on every case," explains Dana Goodell, Director of Sales of The Embalmers Supply Company.

Today, more and more embalming rooms are equipped with overhead lifts which allow a single person to move and casket larger bodies without the help of other staff members and reduce the risk of injury due to lifting. Additionally, the industry has become more aware of the dangers associated with the chemicals used.

"Specific to the preparation room I would say it would be safety! Funeral home owners need to make sure that everyone in the prep room has been properly trained on PPE and lifting

and that they are using the tools provided to keep them safe. The other big safety issue that everyone should take seriously is ventilation – the biggest preventable risk is formaldehyde exposure and with proper ventilation and PPE the risk of exposure is very limited," says Lance Ray, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of Pierce Chemical.

Studies show that more and more graduates of funeral service colleges enter the profession from outside the family structure.

"Many new graduates make comments to us such as, 'The first thing I want is a state-of-the-art prep room. The rest will follow.' The new practitioner expects to work in an environment that has health and safety as a top priority. Strongly trending are air quality and the overall reduction of airborne toxins, ease of use, improved sanitation, good lighting and low maintenance cleanup. Funeral Directors are becoming aware that modernizing the care center offers many benefits, not only to health and safety but to staff satisfaction and the bottom line as well," states Duncan Todd, President of Duncan Stuart Todd.

The request or necessity for traditional embalming can be decreasing as the rate of cremation, especially direct cremation, increases. However, quick viewings prior to cremation, without traditional embalming, accentuate the need for disinfection and restoration.

"Furthermore, families that pay extra for the viewing service now have higher expectations from the embalmer, meaning a pleasant look on the deceased face with more natural coloring and feel to the skin. It is more important than ever that funeral directors ensure their embalmers, or they themselves, are embalming to a higher technical standard and using the products able to ensure the results the family expects," Brian Yeazel, President and CEO of Frigid Fluid Co. goes on to say. **FBA**

Learn more about industry trends and get industry information and advice from top embalming & preparation companies for 2017 in this feature editorial.

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Although there have always been exceptions, historically it was not common practice for funeral home owners to consider the preparation room in business model development, but times have definitely changed.

“The room was often hidden away. As a consequence, embalming rooms had the potential to be neglected, under-funded and largely lost in the bigger picture. Fast forward to today’s reality with far more family involvement in arrangements and one finds ample evidence that the image of the embalming room requires greater focus. Families are asking questions from a new and more informed perspective while considering more providers and more options. They are walking more facilities, both physically and virtually and questioning how their loved ones will be cared for throughout all services offered. To address these developments many funeral homes are modernizing their care centers, while facilities with older, outdated prep rooms will likely suffer a competitive disadvantage. There is little doubt that in 2017 and beyond the most successful funeral homes will be equipped with modern, code compliant prep rooms that reflect the pride, dedication and mission of their organizations thereby providing families with the highest possible level of confidence when selecting a firm to honor their loved one,” explains Duncan Todd.

“With health and safety being a top priority, prep room equipment must address OSHA air quality, minimize airborne toxins, provide ease

of use within the work place and offer high levels of sanitation throughout the equipment line. As a result DST has developed the only OSHA compliant air system specifically packaged for prep rooms, eliminated the use of open bowl table drains, focused on hands-free product offerings and sourced sanitary and low maintenance products from floor to ceiling. A new or remodeled DST preparation room is more affordable than sometimes perceived. While it is true a DST room is the best in design and features, it is no more expensive than any other room in build-out cost. Studies show a DST room can pay for itself within 100-200 cases,” Todd continues.

DST offers a range of products from a single box glove holder to a fully equipped room including not only OSHA air and embalming stations but flooring, paint, wall protection, coolers, mortuary lifts and tables. Our Premier Source design service provides the highest level of expertise in the industry at a fraction of the cost of any qualified alternative approach. Our Premier Source service is complete including architectural design and layout, products, mechanical specifications, color selections, consultation throughout the project including counselling the general contractor and/or sub-contractors, providing technical manuals, conducting a new room startup conference and more, all from a single source and at a single low fee,” Todd states proudly.

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