

How the ASD Mobile App Enhances Funeral Home Communication

In today's rapid business climate, funeral professionals are pulled in a dozen different directions. While an increasing number of industries have shifted towards automation, funeral service remains deeply invested in tradition and personal service. The stress factors that burdened directors 50 years ago such as an unpredictable schedule and labor-intensive tasks still exist. Today's funeral professionals face added challenges due to society's demand for instant results.

The expectations of the public have shifted considerably yet few tools are available to help funeral homes streamline their operations. As a result, directors are forced to stretch themselves even further than in the past. In 2011, ASD – Answering Service for Directors set out to develop a mobile app that would provide more efficiency and convenience to funeral directors. The company's Smartphone app, ASD Mobile for iPhone and Android, has enhanced communication for thousands of funeral homes nationwide.

The ASD Mobile app was developed to simplify the way funeral professionals receive messages and relay information to ASD. Using any Apple or Android device, funeral directors have one-touch access to send service or on-call information to ASD and can monitor all incoming telephone activity from any location. In less than two years, the ASD Mobile app has been downloaded by more than 3,500 funeral directors and has received over 80 Five-Star reviews. Last October, the NFDA selected ASD Mobile as the winner of the 2012 Innovation Award, recognizing the app's numerous benefits.

24/7 Office Mobility

A funeral home is not merely a building or a structure. It serves as a network of support that extends beyond the boundaries of its physical location. For years, funeral directors had to decide whether to leave the office and risk the loss of an important phone call or remain tethered to their desk with no opportunity to spend

time in the community. The ASD Mobile app allows funeral homes to carry their office in their pocket 24/7 with the freedom to come and go anytime.

Every call answered by ASD is categorized on the app. Directors can listen to a recording of each conversation or read the message with just a quick tap. A wide array of tools streamlines tasks that once required a great deal of time. Directors can tap any phone number to see it displayed in their dialer or on any address to see the location mapped out on their phone's GPS. Call recordings can be played through the phone's speaker or, if in a quiet environment, through the internal handset.

"I can respond from anywhere and still retain personal service."

-Andy Powell, Director of Powell Funeral Home.



The mobile app is synced to each ASD account providing flexibility to make changes anytime without contacting ASD directly. Rather than returning to the office to send ASD information on an upcoming service, directors can relay this information with just a few taps. Funeral homes with a rotating schedule will appreciate the ability to seamlessly switch the designated on-call person. Users can customize which messages should be dispatched, which contact method should be used to reach the on-call person and what protocol should be followed if they cannot be reached.

Instantaneous Messaging

The utilization of push-notification technology is one of the biggest differentiators between ASD Mobile and other answering service apps. These rapid notifications use Wi-Fi to send a message directly to the device, bypassing telco carriers and surpassing text messaging as the fastest communication method available. Push Notifications create a two-way channel between ASD and funeral directors. Clients can respond to messages and use the app to manage how and when they are notified.

Know how quickly to respond to a push notification without even looking at your phone. Select a different sound alert for death and urgent messages and specify what time of day you prefer sound alerts to play.

Since push notification settings can be modified at anytime, using the app, funeral professionals can change their vigilance level depending on their daily schedule. During a service, a director can change the settings so that they are only pushed messages that relate to a recent death. Immediately after the service, the director can restore the settings to their normal preferences. There is no limit to how many times directors may change their preferences. This flexibility suits the needs of funeral professionals who must make accurate and timely decisions in coordination with the daily schedule.

Transparency

The ability to oversee the daily operations of the business is paramount for funeral home owners. The ASD Mobile app optimizes monitoring capabilities so that directors retain maximum oversight even when miles away. ASD is the only answering service to offer a patented First Call notification that gives advance warning of an incoming First Call. The app will push a message to the on-call person the moment ASD begins to gather First Call information. This message will include a phone number directors can tap to listen in or connect instantly as if they were picking up a second line at the funeral home.

"Death in progress alerts allow me to contact removal personnel and respond to the family in an expedited manner."

-Justin Clark, Director of Valley Lawn Funeral Home & Cemetery.

For owners and managers who are not on call but must oversee operations, ASD Mobile's First Call Report provides a simple solution. After the on-call person receives a First Call, ASD can push a report that includes a recording of the call to the owner's cell phone or email account. The First Call Report will display each step taken to reach on-call staff enabling clients to keep on top of all business opportunities even when others are on call.

Team Building

Funeral home employees must often work from different locations. The ASD Mobile connects the entire staff to a portable communication center. Every message can be copied to the clipboard or shared via email so directors can easily forward information internally. Employees can also click a Re-Dispatch link to notify ASD when a different on-call employee should be contacted with a message. These app features empower the entire office with an interactive database at their fingertips 24/7.

Not every employee who is on call at the funeral home wants to receive messages the same way. An owner may want to be notified of all telephone activity even when not on call while others may opt to check in periodically unless a death occurs. ASD Mobile's app settings are individual which allows employees to create their own unique set of instructions and preferences without affecting others.

Many funeral homes are multi-generational businesses with employees of all different ages. ASD Mobile's user-friendly design helps bridge that gap because it requires no additional training. Funeral directors with little to no technical experience can easily adapt to the app's intuitive functionality.

Peace of Mind

For years, funeral professionals have had to make compromises between their business and personal lifestyles, often sacrificing one for the other. The ASD Mobile app provides directors with a constant and reliable link back to the office to conduct business from anywhere.

