

Complete Care

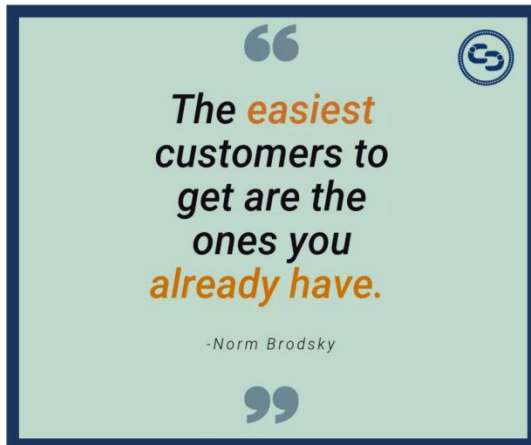
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We couldn't agree more with this quote! Do you have a strategy in place to stay connected to those families that you served this year?



This quote by Norm Brodsky, Street Smarts columnist and senior contributing editor to **Inc.**, is a veteran entrepreneur who has founded and expanded six businesses. His message is replete with merit and easily actionable . . . now with a new strategy for you, perhaps.

As we have heard, “Words mean things!” Before introducing a possible new strategy to provide an example of Mr. Brodsky’s meme, please bear with me in dissecting and better understanding a couple simple words.

First, the word, Complete - *Having all necessary parts, elements, or steps. Fully carried out. Thorough. To bring to an end and especially into a perfected state.*

The second word is Care – *To be concerned or have a special preference. To make provision or look out (for).*

Now combine the words; *Complete Care*. This is my reference to, “the easiest customers to get are the ones you already have.”

Consider these questions regarding your current business practices:

- ♥ Is it your goal to provide the best possible care for your families?
- ♥ Are you guiding your families in all decisions related to their loved one, i.e., ceremony, final rest, meaningful merchandise?
- ♥ Do you assure families you will provide them an opportunity to make plans in advance?
- ♥ Would it be valuable to your business if the families you currently care for made plans in advance for themselves?
- ♥ Is your current method of providing information for advance plans to, “the customers you already have,” effective?

If you are unable to answer “yes” to each of these questions, please read on!

Perhaps we should agree on a couple of things before I outline the method. Do you agree that as a funeral service professional, you are the best in communicating the comfort, value and relief experienced by making plans in advance? Do you agree that sharing the options of advance planning is no more “selling” than providing options when meeting in at an at-need arrangement? If you are convinced that plans made in advance are of benefit to families and an advance plan is simply an option available to all families, then you are ready for the method!

Oh, one more thought to consider . . . Is there any objection you could imagine when assuring families you are committed to provide them everything necessary in the care and experience related to their deceased loved one AND for future care, introduce them to decisions their surviving loved ones will eventually make? Isn’t this really the FULL COMPLIMENT of services within our profession? Let’s continue.

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There is a way of providing *Complete Care* to the families for whom you are already caring AND communicating that their needs will be “fully carried out” making sure they will experience all the “necessary elements” when they make plans for their loved one.

There are three primary places in the arrangement where talking about *Complete Care* is effective. Early in the arrangement, after introductions and learning about the life, you move to presenting the GPL, provide assurances and introduce that information about advance planning will be made available to them; part of your *Complete Care*.

Example: “As we begin, this Family Folder will be yours to take home once we are finished today. I will use some of the documents inside. Others will be helpful to you afterwards and is our gift to you. Everything we are going to talk about today is reflected in the General Price List and Product List that are included. We are available to your family around the clock and are committed to your comfort. In addition, you will realize by the time we are finished today, why families appreciate the information we provide that assists in making these plans in advance. This is a part of our Complete Care to you.”

This is a subtle way of telling them that you are going to give them all necessary information to support the arrangements for their loved one and helpful, personal direction for their future. The mention of *Complete Care* is easily couched in this introduction and is a gentle way of beginning the idea of how the challenges around one’s death can be softened. So simple.

Another effective juncture to mention your practice of providing *Complete Care* is when describing all the services and their value in advance of giving a subtotal of services and ceremony. This Value\$Defined® is described just before going to select meaningful merchandise. The Value\$Defined® is a chronological narrative told to the family to build value by explaining all that will be done on their behalf and give a preview of what the staff will do for them in the days before and during the planned services. It is important to tell the story to substantiate the services subtotal (plus cash advance items) that you give them afterwards. Be sure to explain the benefits of each of the steps you describe rather than just a “laundry list” of activities.

Example: “Our services to your family began last evening when we received the call your mom had died. Immediately Jim and Barb came to your home to bring her into our care. She is with us, we have cared for her waiting to have this time to visit to know how you wish to remember her with family, and friends . . . In that you wish to have her present at a time of visiting we will arrange the suite in living room fashion for the casual comfort of guests. With the photos and music you will bring, we will create what is like a video scrapbook. It will surely inspire many memories for conversation. Any plant or floral expressions will be set to compliment the personalized area with your mother’s life as the theme . . . In a funeral coach; we take your mom privately, to the front door of the crematory . . .”

Continue with the details and finish by saying,

“Part of our Complete Care is helping you to fill out the necessary forms (if appropriate) provide you death certificates, as well as provide you an opportunity to create your own plans and provide future peace-of-mind for your family which I or another counselor will be sharing. This is only the services and cash advance subtotal. It may be approximate, rounding up to reflect the obituary charges. The subtotal is, fifty-five, eighty five, (\$5,585).”

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When we are at the point of describing the value of services and ceremony, adding the element of *Complete Care*, raises the perceived value, supporting whatever the subtotal may be.

Finally, when completing the arrangement and providing the family their folder, you can close by saying, *"I will see you out. Just a reminder of our Complete Care; later we will be calling to set a convenient time for you, to provide you with the death certificates and assistance where we can."*

As it regards families whom you have previously served and did not introduce them to Complete Care in the arrangement, what better way to follow-up with them with your new *Complete Care* initiative?

Example: *"Good morning Mrs. Blake. This is Melanie from First Family Funeral Home. I was an attendant at your husband's ceremony and met you at the evening gathering. Is this a good time to visit for a moment? . . . As a part of our Complete Care, I would like to set a convenient time to bring your death certificates as well as some information that you may find comforting. I wouldn't need much time and if you prefer, we could meet here in one of our family suites."*

That's it! As it regards your at-need or previously served families, you can easily integrate the concept of *Complete Care*. It is a strong reference to what you believe provides the best care and the most effective direction for everyone whom you are attending.

Norm Brodsky is spot on, "The easiest customers to get are the ones you already have."

These principles and additional skills are featured in our on-line video training C.A.R.E.Ring C.A.R.E.munication®, our single, premier training tool that affects the Performance Tracker and Customer Satisfaction Survey! For more information and a complete description [click here](#).