



How to Keep Your Foot on the Gas Through Year-End

Turning Q3 and Q4 Into a Growth Opportunity

BY MICHAEL FAHERTY

As fall approaches and the calendar quickly moves through the third quarter of the year, it's natural for deathcare professionals to shift their focus inward: to catch up on administrative tasks, prepare for the year-end, or brace for a seasonal slowdown. Yet, this time offers a valuable, often underappreciated opportunity.

Rather than letting momentum stall, the second half of the year can offer a time of growth, deeper community engagement, and a stronger finish to the year for firms that know how to keep their foot on the gas.

Why Mid-Year Shouldn't Be a Time to Pause

The first half of the year presented its fair share of challenges: persistent inflation, evolving consumer preferences, and operational pressures. While it's tempting to view this season as a time to slow down, the risk is clear. Slowing down in Q3 can mean missed opportunities and a weaker foundation for Q4.

As we've shared before, today's consumers expect convenience, transparency, and the ability to make

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important decisions on their own time, and these expectations don't pause for the second half of the year, and neither should our industry's efforts to meet them. By employing a few targeted strategies, firms can keep up the momentum and finish the year strong.

Strengthen Preneed Outreach

One of the most effective ways to keep momentum alive is by maintaining robust preneed outreach. This is one of the greatest sources of revenue potential that many firms leave underleveraged. There are several strategies that can help boost this critical area:

1. Increase education efforts: Help consumers make informed, confident decisions. Your firm should position preneed as a caring, proactive choice rather than a transaction to help families see the value of planning ahead.

Try hosting educational events, either in person or as a webinar, to help break down the preneed planning process and answer questions in a relaxed, no-pressure environment.

Make sure your website has multiple resources to help families understand the preneed process, know their options to create customized celebrations of life, and view transparent pricing.

2. Bundle preneed offerings: Create a good/better/best preneed package to make choices easier for families. Bundled options reduce decision fatigue and encourage higher-value selections, which can generate larger sales.

These bundles should include non-traditional celebration of life options that reflect the preferences of today's consumers. Think happy hour services at the individual's favorite restaurant, a beachfront celebration at sunset, or a catered backyard gathering.

The convenience and flexibility of packages such as these can help consumers confidently make decisions.

3. Emphasize the financial benefits of preplanning: Preneed planning helps families lock in today's prices. The peace of mind that this can bring, particularly given the consistently upward trend of inflation, can reduce the financial burden on loved ones. Planning can protect against unexpected costs and help families avoid debt.

Consistency in these efforts can support a healthy preneed pipeline all year long and position your firm to serve families better, regardless of the season.

Review Preneed Trust Investment Performance:

Fixed-income securities have significantly higher yield, compared to several years ago, so reviewing your preneed trust investment performance is crucial. In a conservative allocation of 60% equities and 40% fixed-income securities, the fixed-income assets now have the potential to generate substantially more income during the next several years.

The investment performance of your trust portfolio is a key driver in the profitability of your preneed program, so firms should have a solid understanding of the asset allocation of trust investments.

One of the best ways to evaluate the performance of your investment manager is by benchmarking the trust portfolio to appropriate indexes, such as the Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index for fixed-income securities and the S&P 500 for equities.

Taking the time to review your preneed trust investment performance mid-year can help identify areas for improvement or spot whether major changes are needed.

Leverage Technology and Digital Tools

A strong digital footprint is no longer optional – it's essential. Encourage families to use online preplanning resources and eCommerce platforms, which offer transparency, accessibility, and allow families to explore and purchase at their convenience. eCommerce tools can also help capture leads, so your firm can support families that have not yet committed to a preneed purchase.

These tools not only help facilitate the preneed sale but also meet the expectations of today's consumers who value the ability to make decisions on their own schedules, without having to call or visit a funeral home in person.

Positioning technology as a year-round resource and priority ensures your firm remains competitive and relevant, particularly as we settle into the second half of the year.

Set the Stage for Q4

Now, while we're still in Q3, is the perfect time to get ahead of the year-end curve.

Review compliance, trust records, and contracts now to avoid a year-end crunch. Test new marketing campaigns and community outreach initiatives while there's time to adjust and refine. And proactively address staffing or scheduling challenges before the holiday season begins.

These steps will help ensure a seamless, successful transition into Q4.

Maintain Momentum, Empathy, and Consistency

The most successful deathcare firms are defined by their empathy, adaptability, and consistency. The second half of the year should be viewed as the growth opportunity that it is, not a time to slow down.

By keeping your foot on the gas: investing in your preneed pipeline, reviewing your trust performance, leveraging technology, and reviewing your records, you'll be well positioned to serve with confidence and momentum all year long. **FBS**

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