

23 August 2019

Welcome to your latest round-up of news from the Good to Great programme. Head on over to www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk to get involved in the conversation today.

MY JOURNEY THROUGH TRANSFORMATION

Commercial Director Steve Wallis tells us how he's discovered you're never too old to learn new things, and what keeps him going through times of change.



It's a year since I started my transformation journey. Last time I wrote about how I found it challenging to have people questioning everything I had been doing. If you are going through this now, bear with it – it gets easier!

My role has continued to change and I'm glad to report that at 48 I'm still capable of learning new things! There are days when old dog, new tricks feels like hard work and there are definitely still areas I need to improve on – but I'm still trying!

Three things keep me going and make me really want to keep improving: helping our clients, helping all my colleagues (especially those directly serving clients), and beating our competitors. I love the opportunity we have to really help consumers with the best advice on what to do at a difficult time by introducing to them Dignity, to our fantastic funeral directors and caring colleagues. To make it easy for them to find us and contact us.

We've already lowered prices, but we have more to do to change

our pricing and improve our range of services. We need to help the increasing numbers of consumers that want a quote before proceeding, we must get comfortable with this and treat the person enquiring as a treasured client. We must get even better at arranging the personalised, individual services clients require of us. We're working to improve our systems, tools and training and to help you spend more time with clients understanding the right way to remember loved ones and to create funerals that really honour the unique individuals whose funerals we are privileged to carry out.

We're only just getting started and I'm looking forward to showing the world what we're all capable of!

🗨️ Please feel free to get in touch with me directly at steve.wallis@dignityuk.co.uk if I can help you in any way.

Best wishes,

Steve Wallis
Commercial Director

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A TRIP TO 2022: **OUR PRODUCTS**

In the second episode of our time travel series, we travel to 2022 to see what the outcome of the CMA investigation has been. Buckle up and settle in as we take you on a journey to the Dignity of the future...



After our trip to see [the care centre of the future](#), we've fired up the trusty Good to Great DeLorean once again and arrive outside a spick-and-span branch in Norfolk.

We've come to talk to Robert, one of our Funeral Managers, to see how the new Tailored Funeral service is working for the business, and of course, our clients.

Over a cup of tea (and a custard cream, naturally), we settle down to chat about pricing, which quite frankly, to someone from 2019, feels a bit awkward in our sensitive business.

"But that's the beauty of the Tailored Funeral!" exclaims Robert. "Really, it's made our lives so much easier."

HOW SO?

"Well rather than having everything bundled up into a package, some of which might not be wanted or needed by a client for their loved one, we get to go into the detail and make sure the client understands exactly what they're going to get for their money."

I still feel a bit squeamish. Coming from 2019 it feels a bit unsavoury to talk about money at a time like this. Still, I remember that this is exactly why the CMA (Competition & Markets Authority) began its investigation into the funeral sector last year.

"It's much fairer now," chips in Annette, who's making drinks for some clients downstairs. "The Tailored Funeral means families have much more ownership over

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arrangements for their loved ones – they know exactly what they're paying for now, even if it does end up being a similar price to the old bundled product. I'm much more comfortable talking price these days thanks to the training we had. I actually feel I make more creative suggestions for them too."

Robert nods in agreement and pulls up an article on his tablet.

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“Look here,” he says. I look at the complimentary article published in the Mail on Sunday a couple of months earlier. “We’re noted as being industry-leading now.”

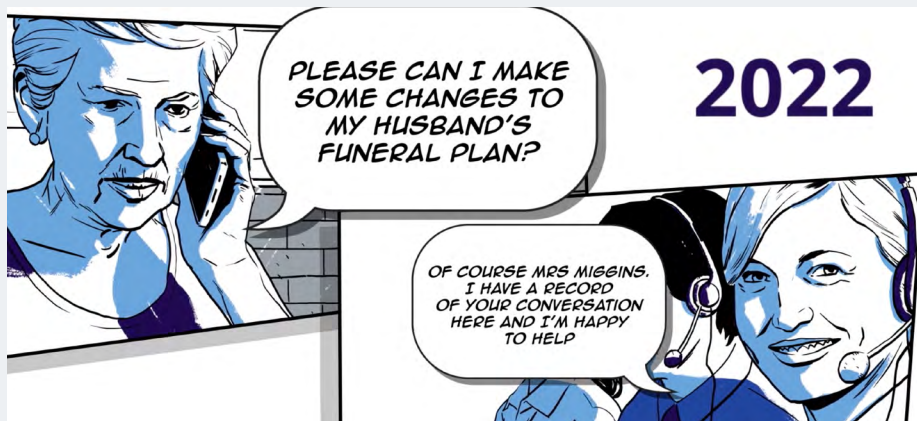
It’s certainly an about-change from when the funeral industry was being criticised for being expensive and even mercenary at a time when people are at their most vulnerable.

But I can’t help wondering how our clients feel about it. After all, it’s clear we’re still not the cheapest on the high street.

“It’s about quality,” says Robert. All the marketing has really boosted what people think of us. They notice us now and they know we’ll take the greatest care of them and their loved ones. We

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2022

always have of course, but now people are more aware of it.”

I decide to see for myself and visit the company Facebook page.

OK. I’m convinced, but Good to Great was about stabilising market share too, with more transparent pricing helping to do that. How’s that going?

Robert swipes on his tablet again (nifty bit of kit there) and brings the latest report from this area. “Look at this.” I do, and I see graphs clearly showing improvement. “This is for our network,” he says, pointing out some slow but steady growth, “and this one here shows how we’re doing at a national level.” Again, a positive view. “But this one here,” he stabs at a

downward trajectory, “this one shows how we’re getting far fewer complaints from customers.”

THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

As I go to leave, I bump into Annette. She’s finished her arrangement meeting and is looking forward to adding some personal touches. “They already had an idea of price from the website,” she says, “so they knew roughly what they’d be looking at. I’ve been able to help them personalise the funeral for their Dad and with no hidden costs.”

So, what difference has the Tailored Funeral made to you?

“It means I can take the greatest care of our clients,” says Annette. “And because of the training I got last year, the client packs we get and the details going straight into the system, there’s less chance of any mistakes being made.”

Robert nods again. “I have far more confidence that we’re giving great quality but fairly priced funerals these days – and that we’re leading the way for the rest of the industry too.”

Look out for the next article in the Time Travel series to see where (or when!) the Dignity DeLorean takes us next. Why not tell us where you would like us to visit in 2022?



f Mandy_hawes91 – Great service from S.P. Astley for my Nan. Very personal and compassionate and suited her to a tee.

f FreddieBarnesIsMe – Just wanted to say a big thank you to Sally at Ginns & Gutteridge. I had been so worried about how to pay for Gerry’s send off, but we were able to see exactly what it was going to cost, and it was a sad, but fitting day.

f MungoandTamsin99 – Amazing service. Even better this time than for Dad’s funeral. Have recommended.

INCREASE IN PRE-NEED SALES FOR SIMPLICITY

It looks like brand awareness is at an all time high for Simplicity, with a significant increase in sales of pre-need funeral plans.

Simplicity launched its pre-need service in February 2018, selling 181 plans by the end of July 2018. This year, sales in the same time frame (February to July) came in at 789 – that’s an increase of over 330%.

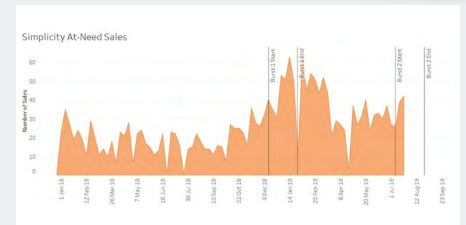
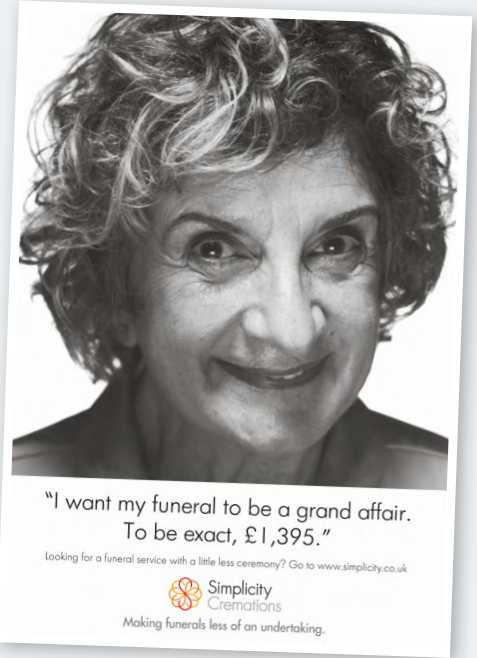
So, what’s been happening to cause such a shift?

Behind the scenes, the Marketing Team has been delving into search optimisation to improve the ranking of Simplicity’s website on search engines such as Google – making it easier for potential customers to find Simplicity and see what the brand offers. And that’s not all.

Some particularly clever TV and radio advertising has definitely put the spotlight on the brand’s

no frills approach to funerals and cremations. This has been supported by a brand-new website which launched at the end of 2018, making it easy for potential customers to purchase a plan or just look for some help or guidance on how to arrange a funeral.

Why not head on over to Simplicity’s website and check out some of the TV and radio advertising for yourself? Let us know what you think by leaving a comment on the [Good to Great](#) website.



FILM PREMIERE: DIGNITY TIME LAPSE

We took a trip to Thompson’s Funeral Directors in Aintree, Liverpool to record the burgundy to blue signage transformation.

There might not be a red carpet (or blue!) but you can still grab some popcorn and watch our latest videos of the new brand signage installation at a Dignity branch in Liverpool. We even interviewed a couple of colleagues to see what they think. Go on, **take a peek...**

(Don’t forget to turn on your speakers or plug in your headphones...!)

CLIENT PAYMENT PORTAL

Way back in issue two we told you about a new Client Payment Portal that was being piloted that would allow clients to pay for funerals online. It's been so successful that it has now been rolled out to the whole of funeral operations, giving our clients even greater flexibility.

Paying for a funeral is not often at the forefront of our client's minds when arranging a funeral for a loved one. And anything we can do to make the process as easy as possible goes a long way in giving our clients a better experience of our services. That's where the Client Payment Portal comes into its own.

The portal allows our clients to pay for funerals online via credit or debit card, giving them the flexibility to pay deposits or invoices from the comfort of their own homes.

The pilot started in Anglia in March of this year, before being rolled out to North London. The payment portal worked well in both regions, and during July and August it was rolled out to all of Funeral Operations. To date, 437 payments have been made via the portal, totalling over £721,000.

Feedback from the business has been excellent so far, with reduced paperwork and administration in branches giving our colleagues more time to spend taking the greatest care of our clients and their loved ones.

**INTRODUCED
MARCH 2019**

**PILOT IN
ANGLIA
= 160
TRANSACTIONS**

**PILOT IN NORTH
LONDON
= 179
TRANSACTIONS**

**ALL DIGNITY
= 437
TRANSACTIONS
OVER £700K**

A GOOD INNINGS

From leftfield, Simplicity sponsors the Ashes...

Simplicity Cremations is making quite a name for itself with its down-to-earth no frills approach. And eagle-eyed cricket fans who took their eye off the ball during the first test match of the Ashes may have spotted Simplicity's latest advertising campaign entitled 'making funerals less of an undertaking.'

This campaign started on 1st August and as a result has seen a host of comments and chatter across social media.

The 2019 Ashes series between Australia and England kicked-off (or perhaps we should say bowled off?) on 1st August at Edgbaston Cricket Ground.

There will be a total of five test matches as part of the series before it finishes in mid-September, and you'll be able to see the Simplicity advertising boards at each and every match. That's Lord's, Headingley, Old Trafford and The Oval cricket grounds.



UPDATE: TESTING TABLETS FOR ARRANGEMENTS

We're almost at the half-way point in the arranger tablet trial, and so we thought we'd take the opportunity to find out how it's going.



Six of our branches - three in the Midlands, and three in the North East - have been using tablets as part of their arrangement meetings with clients over the past few weeks. The tablet holds online catalogues of our selection of coffins, caskets, flowers, orders of service and even photos of the local branch in question. Feedback and suggestions for enhancements have been coming in thick and fast...

“ I like it, it feels less bulky and makes us look more professional. ”

“ An option to click into each individual coffin for a more detailed description and additional pictures would be good. ”

“ My clients enjoyed getting a vision of ashes caskets. ”

“ Early indications on every visit are extremely positive and welcoming. ”

“ Consider putting photos of Funeral Directors on the tablet so the arranger can initially introduce the family to them. ”

“ It is easy to use, and even after a short amount of time with it, I felt very comfortable handling it. ”

“ Easy to navigate, clear and concise. ”

“ Charge is great, lasts a long time. ”

Watch this space for more info!



seconds with... **Emily Skelton**

AREA MANAGER



Where are you based?

South West London.

How long have you worked for Dignity?

Four years in September.

What does a typical day look like for you?

No day is typical or the same as an Area Manager, which for me is part of the appeal. I enjoy the rewards of working hard and the fast pace at which you need to work as an Area Manager. My days are often long as I get the pleasure of commuting on the M25 so I normally leave home around 5.45am and get back in around 7.30pm.

It is very important to me that my staff and my clients come above all else and therefore it is vital that I can be flexible with my plans; as a rule I try to start my day at my service centre and from there I try to split my time between my office, my branches and the service centre.

I like to work client facing with my team too, on the ambulance, conducting services or whatever is required. It is sometimes the best way to understand things from their perspective and can break down the barriers between the 'management and staff' attitude.

How would you explain your job to a three-year-old?

I help people go to the stars.

What's the most unusual/most eventful thing that's ever happened to you at work?

Being a fairy tale princess for the day! My Frederick W. Paine funeral home in East Molesey regularly participates in the large local carnival. I enjoy supporting the branches with local activities and have been happy to take part with them for the last couple of years. This year's theme was Cinderella, so I got to dress up as Cinderella and ride in a carriage while some of my team dressed up as the other characters, handing out sweets and blowing glitter and bubbles at the crowds. It was a great day, what girl doesn't dream of being a princess at some point?!

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If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

Fewer manual processes.

What song/piece of music would you choose for your own funeral?

This is me, Keala Settle.

What would your top tip be to take Dignity from Good to Great?

Be open, honest and transparent.

Who would you like to hear from in the next 60 Seconds update? Would you like to take part yourself?

Let us know at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk.

YOUR QUESTIONS

We've had some fantastic questions come in through the Team Brief. We answer some of them here, but don't forget, you can find more in the FAQs section at www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk

Why are we changing the signage and stationery again; is this not a waste?

Our research has shown that the Dignity brand is not visible enough, and we are losing funerals to our competitors. By investing in a national brand and supporting our local branch names, we can make sure that we stand out from the competition and become known for taking the greatest care. During the process of implementing the new brand, and investing in signage and stationery, we are carefully managing stock levels of literature in the current brand to ensure that any wastage is kept to a minimum.

Will the Tailored Funeral be available soon?

The Tailored Funeral has been well received by both clients and employees so far. We are analysing how it's performing in regions where it has been released, before deciding when to rollout to other regions.

How soon will the tablets support funeral data entry?

At the moment we are testing the concept of a basic tablet in arrangements to see whether we can use them easily and if the client experience is a good one. At the same time, we are working on solutions that include capturing the arrangement on the tablet and

automating the data entry from the tablet to our systems. We will provide an update when we have more certainty of the final technology solution on what we intend to roll out and when.

How do you set up a personal email address for the Good to Great website?

If you haven't got a work email address you can use, and you don't have a personal email address, it is very easy to set up a new email address yourself. There are lots of providers out there, for example gmail, owned by Google.

[Click on this link to follow their account set-up instructions.](#)

Win a Costa Coffee Voucher

Tell us what you really think about IT to win a Costa Coffee voucher.

With our plans to go from Good to Great gaining momentum, we need to make sure we're hitting the mark in IT – and your opinions can help make all the difference.

There's still time to tell us what you think about IT in our [short survey](#) and be in with a chance to win a Costa Coffee gift card.

If you have any urgent IT issues, call the IT Service Desk on 0800 151 3795.



THERE'S STILL TIME TO WIN!

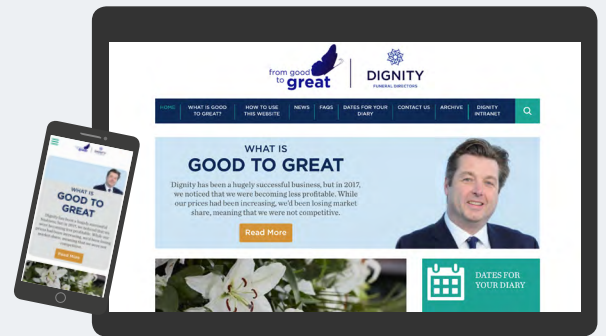
There's still time to register to win
some great prizes...

Over 1,200 of you have already signed up to the Good to Great website and we're delighted to see so many of you join up and get involved in the conversations.

Don't miss out! If you haven't registered yet, then don't forget we're entering every colleague who registers before 31st August into our prize draw to win some amazing prizes, including an Amazon Echo Show, 7" tablet and more.

www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk

Why not have a read of our [user guide](#) for some top tips to get you started?



Jargonbuster

Don't know your BAU from your ROI? Then we're here to help!

Hard stop

This sounds like it could be painful, but simply means the non-negotiable end of a meeting, usually announced at the start. "Clients are visiting this afternoon so we have a hard stop at two."

Washes its face

This unusual term may have you reaching for the soap and a flannel, but is just business terminology that means something needs to pay for itself or break even. For example, "We need to make sure this campaign washes its face."

Got a phrase that has you bamboozled? Let us know at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk.

Get in touch 

If you have a question about transformation, heard something on the jungle drums, have some feedback or a suggestion for the next newsletter, then drop us an email at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk.