


4 October 2019

Welcome to your latest round-up of news from the Good to Great programme.
Head on over to www.dignitygoodtogreat.co.uk to see the news first.
Why not join the conversation today?

INVESTING IN OUR QUALITY BUSINESS



We're investing millions of pounds into our business to take us from Good to Great. Here, Mike McCollum reflects on what he's seen from this investment on his recent visits to the North West.



Every year I try and visit every area of our business – all eight regions in Funeral Operations and all four regions of our Crematorium business. Most recently, I have been visiting branches in the North West, which have all recently had their new, blue Dignity signage installed.

As always, I have been very impressed with everything I've seen on my visits. I have very much enjoyed meeting and talking to our colleagues, who have assured me of a very warm reception for our new signs, from colleagues and their communities alike. It is good to know that people admire the new signs and appreciate the significant investment into

our business and statement of intent these represent.

But of course, it's not just our branch fascias which have been getting lots of attention in the brand pilot area and beyond. We've also been investing heavily in promoting our business, from our low-cost Simplicity service, to our full-service Dignity funerals. From radio adverts, to bus stops, to newspaper ads, we've been drawing people's attention to us and reinforcing that Dignity is the sign of a quality funeral director.

Indeed, the promotional investment hasn't stopped there. Funeral Notices are growing in popularity and so continue to support our brand awareness.

In fact, over 1.8million people have viewed a funeral notice so far this year, helping us get both our national and local brand names seen across the country. These are a tremendous way for us to promote our business and draw attention to the amazing service we provide day in, day out.

Likewise, our clients are also taking to the internet to share their experiences - over 6000 consistently outstanding reviews, with an average rating of 4.95 out of 5, is a simply fantastic testament to the service we provide.

In fact, we have continued to grow and improve our online presence and digital capability so much that we can now say we are one of the

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most recognised funeral brands online. We should all be very proud of this.

In a period of substantial and rather public investment into our business, there's also a substantial amount of work and engagement going on behind the scenes with the CMA (Competition & Markets Authority), as we explore the very real likelihood that regulation will be brought to our industry. As upholders of quality, this is something we can only welcome.

Similarly, the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) are intending to regulate prearranged funeral plans, bringing them into line with other insurance style products. Although that will bring some challenges and changes for the way we structure and operate our pre-need business, many of our partners are already FCA regulated, and so because we already operate to a very high standard, this is a real positive for us.

As the last couple of weeks have turned cooler and leaves have begun their change to autumnal colours, my thoughts have inevitably turned to next year and the changes we're proposing for our new ways of working - which is easily the biggest and most important activity taking place in the business at the moment. Assuming the pilot networks go

smoothly, then we hope to roll out the new ways of working across the country and make serious progress on our journey from Good to Great next year. I know this is a very hot topic for many of you and I promise we will share more information with you as soon as we can.

All of the investment I've spoken about here - in our operating structure, marketing, property and more - is materially going to improve the quality of the service we're able to offer to our clients, both in terms of our interaction with them around arranging the funeral and how we make better use of our resources and logistics. And with so much going on and the pace of change only going to increase, it's important that everyone knows what's going on in a timely manner. So, I would very much encourage you to register for (and regularly visit) the Good to Great website.

Hundreds of you have already signed up and joined the conversation - make sure you don't miss out.

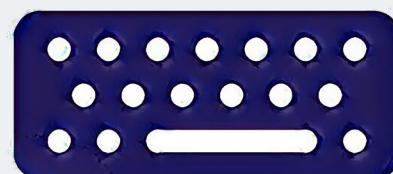
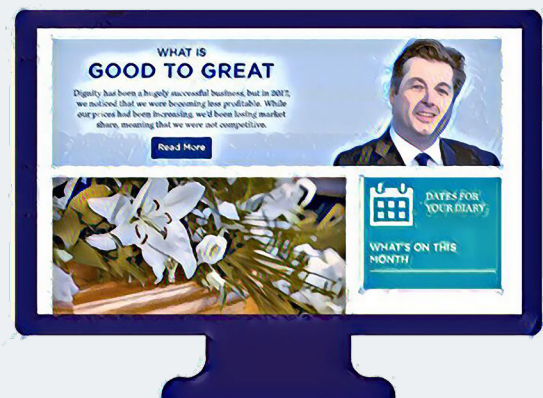
Warm regards,
Mike McCollum
CEO



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Over 1.8million people have viewed a funeral notice this year, helping us get both our national and local brand names seen across the country.

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A TRIP TO 2022: OMNI CHANNEL

In our third instalment of this series, we go back to the future to see what omni-channel is all about.

But first of all, what even is omni-channel anyway? Is it a yoga-inspired You Tube channel? An all-seeing presence? Actually, that last one is a bit closer to the truth...it is in fact an 'all-seeing,' seamless experience for our customers.

We hopped into the Dignity DeLorean and set the dial for 2022 to find out more...

In a matter of seconds, we pull up outside a smart bungalow in South London on a chilly autumnal evening. The door opens and a smartly dressed colleague steps out, taking an elderly lady's hand in her own and offering some kind words before getting into her car.

Jane, the colleague we've just seen, is just entering the final few

details of the arrangement onto her tablet. "They'd been married for 57 years," she says. "Mrs. Lawrence was telling me all about her husband's love of the Gunners and his days on the railway before he retired. I expect the family will be sharing some good memories about him, he sounded quite a character."

Jane shows me the arrangement notes she's made. "Look, I showed them the coffins and different flowers on here. The family really appreciated us coming to see them in the evening so all the children could be there, especially as Mrs. Lawrence isn't too steady on her feet these days."

"Have they made all the arrangements then?" I ask.

Jane explains that they were a little unsure about the coffin and number of cars they'll need, "but I've advised that they can ring us or even make some changes online if they need to."

I wave goodbye to Jane and get back into the DeLorean, to see where it will take me next.

In a flash, we arrive at CSC in King Edward's Court. It's 7pm the next day and Nick, one of the agents, is waiting for me, headset in hand, so I can listen to the calls.

A call comes in, it's Gary Lawrence, Mrs. Lawrence's eldest son. Nick answers listens carefully as he takes the details.

"Mum wants the whole family to travel in cars," he explains. "If it's

not too much trouble, can we have two cars instead of one?"

"Of course, Mr. Lawrence. I've updated the details now to make sure you'll have two limousines on the day. Is there anything else I can help with?"

Nick ends the call. "It's so much better being able to help clients directly now," he says. "All we could do previously was pass a message back on to the funeral home for them to update, but now we can do it instantly, it means we can give instant peace of mind. And, we get to make more of a difference too."

A bit of a crowd is around the DeLorean when I go outside and I'm wondering where the digital element comes into it. I sit and think for a few moments before the flux capacitor fires up and sends us on our way.

This time, we arrive outside a café – and hang on, this doesn't look like the UK anymore. I look up and I see that we're in Berlin. Odd. I poke the dashboard, but it tells me we're in the right place. Might as well grab a coffee while I'm here.

I take a table next to a businessman tapping away on a small laptop and place my order. "Ah, you're British too?" he says. I explain I may have taken a wrong turning and as we get chatting, he tells me

that he is making arrangements to fly home for a funeral.

I offer my condolences and he turns his laptop towards me, impressed. Suddenly, my little detour makes sense. He is on the Dignity website and making an appointment through our new webchat facility to view his uncle, the late Mr. Lawrence. "I'm always in meetings and going back and forth," he says. "Making an appointment online is so much easier and I really wanted the opportunity to say goodbye to my uncle, even if he was a Gunners fan. I'm Spurs you see," he smiles wryly. "I'll miss our good-natured rivalry."

I finish my latte, say goodbye and wonder where my omnichannel adventure will take me next.

As it turns out, it's at the care centre where we are looking after Mr. Lawrence. The system has just alerted our service delivery colleagues that Mr. Lawrence's family have requested an appointment to view him one last time and have changed the coffin trimmings to include his team colours. They begin to make the preparations and I decide it's time to head back to 2019, but not before catching up with Director of Funeral Operations, Andrew Judd, who happens to be visiting. He was in the mortuary commending colleagues for their presentation

of the deceased in our refrigeration; crisp white sheets neatly folded for everyone and a single flower symbolising an individual's right to respect and Dignity.

"Some things will never go out of date," remarked Andrew.

"Unlike yellow sticky notes, faxes and message books! It seems to me that our customers' experience with us these days is rather like a patchwork quilt," he continued. "We had lots of different components before – face to face arrangements, telephone calls to CSC, postal notes at the branches, oh and faxes (remember them!) and so on, but our systems just weren't joined up – what we have done through implementing omnichannel is sewn those patchwork squares together to create a much better experience for the client, no matter how they choose to communicate with us."

And that, I decide, is what Taking the Greatest Care is all about – making it possible for our clients to access us how they want to and when they want to. The beauty of our new omni channel is that no matter who is dealing with our clients at any particular time we will know how to respond. The left hand always knows what the right hand is doing – that's a good thing for us and a great thing for our clients.

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?

NORTH WEST

• FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2019

WORLD NEWS

DIGNITY NEWS UPDATE

EXTRA! EXTRA!

PRESS ADVERT EXCLUSIVE

We're at the half-way point in our six-month trial of the new blue Dignity brand in the North West, and we're testing the 'promotional waters' with some well-timed advertising that will showcase the new brand in the region.

The localised press adverts (see example on the right) will be printed in newspapers such as the Manchester Evening News, Liverpool Echo, Crewe Chronicle and Rochdale Observer and follows on from the **radio advertising** we launched earlier this month.

Let us know what you think by leaving **a comment or two!**



**IS THERE ANYTHING BETTER
THAN A FUNERAL DIRECTOR
WITH FIVE OF THESE?**



**YES. A FUNERAL DIRECTOR
THAT ALSO HAS ONE OF THESE.**

If there's a mark of excellence amongst funeral directors, it's the sign that says Dignity. Because it comes with a reputation for quality that's second to none.

It's also your reassurance that your loved one will be looked after with the utmost in care and professionalism. And at the end of the day, isn't that what really matters?



DIGNITY
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

TAKING THE GREATEST CARE

Your local Dignity Funeral Directors

Cottage Funeral Directors
Heywood

Spotland Bridge Funeral Directors
Rochdale

www.dignityfunerals.co.uk/rochdale



WINNING HEADSET REVEALED

The scores on the doors are in, and we can finally reveal the winning headset that will be rolled out to almost 100 colleagues in the Client Service Centre (CSC)...

We met Client Service Advisors, Nicholas Aston and Jake Ellett in our previous article. As the first port of call for both pre-need and at-need customers, having the right headset is crucial for them to take the greatest care of our customers. Luckily, they both agreed on their favourite... introducing the Plantronics H725 Binaural headset.

In total four headsets were assessed against set criteria, including comfort, quality and sound, with the Plantronics H725 topping the leader board. The headsets will be introduced to CSC as part of the move to a brand new Mitel telephony platform.

Nicholas said: "The Plantronics H725 headset was by some

distance my preferred choice as it has two earpieces (duo headset). I find it much easier to hear our customers with a duo headset – the CSC can get very noisy and so having a duo headset helps to drown out background noise and focus entirely on the caller without distraction.

"The sound quality is good, customers can hear me clearly, I can hear them, which makes for a much smoother customer journey."

Jake agreed with Nicholas' review: "It feels very light weight and the call volume is crisp and clear, which helps so much to deal with any query fast and effectively. I believe this headset will make a big difference to the CSC and I



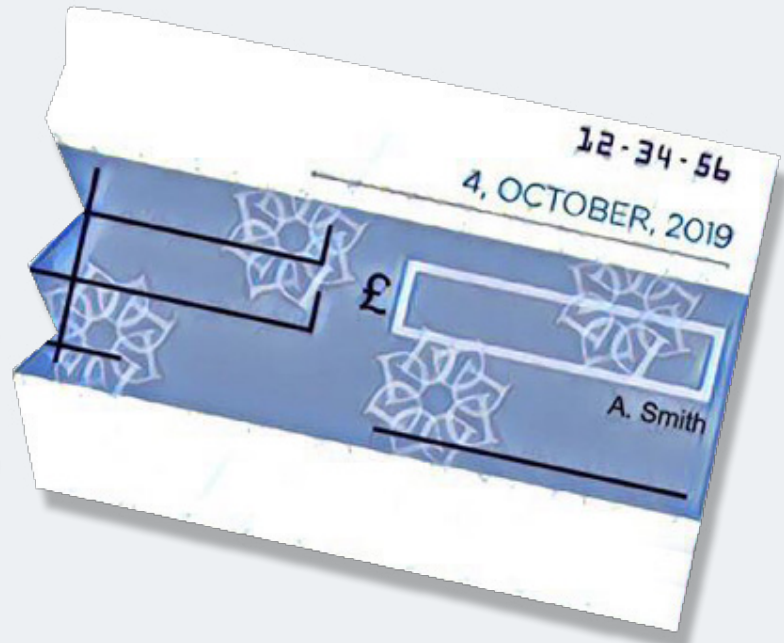
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am very excited that my colleagues will get to experience this."

All colleagues in CSC will receive training on how to use the new headsets before being used operationally later this month. Watch this space for more updates!



IT'S CHECKMATE FOR CHEQUES

Cheques are soooo last century. Find out how you can pay doctors, ministers and gravediggers' disbursement fees much more quickly.

When was the last time you wrote a cheque at home?

For many of us, dusting off our chequebooks is a pretty rare occurrence, yet we write hundreds and thousands of them at Dignity every year, mainly for doctors, ministers and gravediggers' disbursement fees.

But did you know that we can also pay these smaller suppliers by BACs?

Faster and more efficient than cheques, these electronic payments can also be tracked by the ledger team, making it a win-win all round. In fact, as the money can be in their account in just a couple of days, you can see supplier relationships go from good to great as a result.

Want to get a supplier set up?

To get payments set up for the first time, you'll need to send the supplier's bank details, address, contact number and email address to the

Ledger team, based at King Edward's Court:
payment.team@dignityuk.co.uk.

They'll get them set up on the system for this and any future payments. They'll be paid within three days and get an electronic remittance to confirm payment too.

Got an emergency payment to make?

Then the ledger team can help with this too. In fact, if you send the request **before midday** they can even pay your supplier the same day, although they won't be set up in the system or get an electronic remittance.

If you have any questions, or need help to get a supplier set up, contact the ledger team at payment.team@dignityuk.co.uk or call 0121 272 6513.





We spoke to Funeral Service Arranger Sharon Smith and quizzed her for our 60 second special. Here's what she had to say...

Where are you based?

A Hazel & Sons, Sutton Coldfield.

What was your first ever job?

Shop assistant at Woolworths.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Everyday is different, but normally upon arrival at my funeral home the first thing I do is go into the chapel to say good morning to my loved ones resting with me. I'll then go to the office and I'll check if I've received any first calls or messages from CSC from the night before and action anything on those. After that



I will check and action anything urgent on my emails.



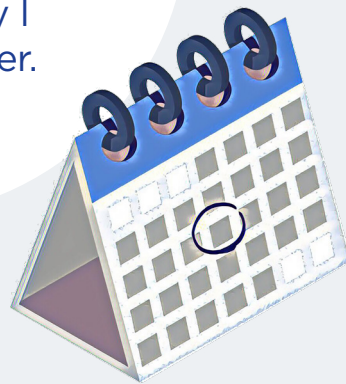
Everyday is different, so from here anything can happen! From families arriving to arrange funerals or to visit their loved ones, flower deliveries, staff arriving for funerals that day, phone calls and emails to do with on-going arrangements from hospitals, doctors, ministers, families, florists coroners - there's always lots of phone calls to make and receive.

I try and structure my day (although that doesn't always go to plan!) so that every family that comes to me feels that they are the only family I am looking after. At the end of the day I then say goodnight to my loved ones in the chapel before I head off home.

“

I try and structure my day (although that doesn't always go to plan!) so that every family that comes to me feels that they are the only family I am looking after.

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Arranger - which having had more exposure to the industry - is where my heart lay, and the rest is history as they say.

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

I look after people before they go to the angels and I help people say goodbye to their loved ones.

What's the highlight of your day?

That can be different everyday, but mainly I love it when I've made a difference to a family by doing the smallest of things. It isn't always the biggest gestures that mean the most.

How and why did you get into the funeral industry?

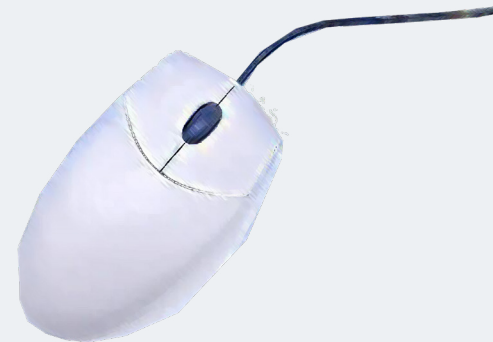
Purely by accident. I'd had some time out of the working environment after having my second child and when I was ready to go back to work, I registered with an agency who called me to ask if I was interested in a position. They explained the person profile and expectations, but they didn't actually say what the title of the role would be. I listened and then asked who would I be working for and what is the job title? When they said Funeral Services for Dignity, I was very intrigued, so I went along for the interview where I became a Client Service Adviser at Head Office. An opportunity arose for me some years later to become a Funeral Service

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

Don't follow the competition, be different.

Are you excited about the future of Dignity?

I would say at this moment in time apprehensive, but I'm looking forward to going more into the digital age.



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.



LET'S TALK RUBBISH

We've had a great response to our waste survey – but we'd love to hear from a few more of you.

Going from Good to Great means making the most of our size as a nationwide business to get better deals, and how we deal with our waste is just one of the areas we're looking at.

Your responses will help us plan our strategy and make sure we have the right suppliers in place.

To help us, please tell us how you tackle your rubbish in our short survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Dignitywaste>



JARGONBUSTER

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

CRM

Deciphering this term due to popular request, these three little letters stand for 'Customer Relationship Management.' It may sound a bit like a dating site, but in fact it is the type of software which will make our omni-channel strategy come to life. The clever computer programme manages customers' information from their contact with us over email, online, phone and more - and brings all our processes together to help us deliver a seamless experience as we strive to take the greatest care of our customers.

Eat the elephant one bite at a time

You wouldn't try and eat an elephant all in one go, so this rather visual phrase is a reminder that even the largest problems can be solved by breaking them down into manageable bits - in other words, one bite at a time.

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.

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR TEAM BRIEF YET?

The latest team brief is well underway, and we'd love to know how it went for you. Please take just one minute to complete our **quick survey** to let us know.