



**Matthews® Aurora**

FUNERAL SOLUTIONS

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

— Course Guide —

# Course Guide

## SEMINAR TOPICS

The Matthews Aurora™ Professional Development Courses are divided into four distinct tracks: Arrangement Skills, Cremation Training, Culture and Teamwork, and Vision and Leadership. The core courses are identified within each track. These courses provide the foundation of our training and require 1-6 hours of dedicated personnel time. Auxiliary courses provide content that can be added to core training to address specific issues.

### Arrangement Skills

Core Courses:

Thriving in Today's Changing Marketplace  
Lifetimes: Making the Emotional Connection  
Decoding the Generations  
Navigating through Conflict

Auxiliary Courses:

No Religion Please  
The Opioid Epidemic

### Cremation Training

Core Courses:

The Art of Cremation Phone Inquiries  
Meeting the Needs of Cremation Families

### Culture and Teamwork

Core Courses:

Engaging Your Employees  
Creating a Culture of Trust  
Building Teamwork

### Vision and Leadership

Core Courses:

Be Audacious in Business  
Developing Leaders in Funeral Service  
Setting and Reaching Goals  
Time Management

# Arrangement Skills

## Thriving in Today's Changing Marketplace

Funeral service is ever changing. Over the past two decades, we have experienced a remarkable increase in cremation and a decline in traditional religious funeral services. Leaders in funeral service need to be vigilant, creative and nimble to stay fresh and relevant for today's consumer.

This engaging, full-day workshop helps funeral directors understand the needs of funeral clients. Through exercises and discussion, you will develop skills and solutions for not only surviving, but thriving, in change. The full-day seminar explores five specific trends: individualized services, non-religious clients, family conflict, communicating across generational lines and cremation inquiries.

### You Will Learn:

- Why we resist change
- A formula for adapting to change
- Establishing value through personalization
- The WOW factor - exceeding expectations
- Discovery questions and effective listening skills
- Understanding non-religious trends
- Helping non-religious families find meaning
- Techniques for navigating through conflict
- How to handle difficult conversations with employees
- Common challenges in working with other generations
- Ideas for meeting the needs of four distinct generations
- Best practices for handling cremation telephone inquiries

### **Credit: 6 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and aftercare coordinators

Available As: Keynote address or on-site seminar

## Lifetimes: Making the Emotional Connection

The Lifetimes seminar is a proven framework for the funeral arrangement conference, based on the belief that every funeral should genuinely reflect the life of the individual, and designed to not just meet family needs, but exceed their expectations.

You Will Learn:

- Techniques for connecting with families and building credibility
- The Relate - Explore - Advise - Assure Framework
- Creating a MAP for managing family expectations
- How to grow in empathy and emotional intelligence
- Questions that get to the heart of the matter
- Tuning out distractions and listening fully
- How and when to advise
- Designing meaningful services through props, products and participation
- Creative ideas for exceeding family expectations

**Credit: 1 1/2 - 3 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and aftercare coordinators

Available As: On-site seminar; online training; webinar

## Decoding the Generations

Today's families include members from four distinctly different generations: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. As a funeral director, how do you relate to family members of the various generations to ensure that their needs are met?

You Will Learn:

- Common history, values and consumer motivations of each generation
- Communication preferences and styles
- What type of funeral products and services appeal to each generation to better meet their needs

### **Credit: 1 - 1 1/2 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and aftercare coordinators

Available As: Keynote address; on-site seminar; online training; webinar

## Navigating through Conflict

Due to the rise in divorce and single-parent families, the American family is more complex than ever before. Funeral directors report increasing conflict, tension and disagreements during the arrangement conference. This insightful seminar provides strategies and skills for navigating through difficult conversations with courage and tact and helping families resolve conflict.

You Will Learn:

- How to create a safe environment for open discussion
- Skills for diffusing situations before they get out of hand
- Techniques for remaining calm and restoring dialogue
- Engaging the family in problem solving
- The steps for discovering a path forward
- Finally, participants will practice learned skills

**Credit: 1 hour**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors and pre-need counselors

Available As: On-site seminar; webinar

## No Religion Please!

As a funeral service professional, you provide an important role in advising families about funeral rites and rituals. Direction for religious families can be quite simple, given that funeral rituals and ceremonies have been around since the beginning of time. However, there is a growing population of Americans who seldom or never attend church. This brief seminar provides guidance in understanding non-religious individuals and ideas for helping them arrange appropriate and meaningful services.

You Will Learn:

- Trends in religious affiliation
- How to help families create a service that meets their emotional needs
- Six questions for discovering preferences
- Choosing your words carefully
- The role of the funeral celebrant

**Credit: 1/2 hour**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and aftercare coordinators

Available As: On-site seminar in conjunction with other courses; webinar

## The Opioid Epidemic: Being a Part of the Solution

In 2016, deaths from drug overdoses in the U.S. exceeded 60,000 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Potent synthetic opioids such as fentanyl have accelerated the number of deaths. Complicated grief and the stigma surrounding overdoses make these deaths particularly difficult for surviving families. There are several issues that funeral directors need to be aware of in order to safely and effectively serve families in this situation. This presentation provides practical ways that funeral directors can be a part of the solution through their treatment and communication with families and through education and involvement in the community.

You Will Learn:

- The scope of the problem
- Understanding that opioid addiction is a disease
- How the epidemic may impact your funeral home
- Educating families on what to expect
- Celebrating the life
- How you can help create awareness and understanding in your community

**Credit: 1/2 - 1 hour**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and aftercare coordinators

Available As: On-site seminar; webinar

# Cremation Training

## The Art of Cremation Phone Inquiries

Most funeral homes receive cremation phone inquiries weekly, if not daily. This workshop provides practical tips and a framework to ensure that every funeral professional can communicate the value of the services you offer.

You Will Learn:

- To view the call as an opportunity and yourself as the specialist
- Tips for making a proper introduction
- How to engage the caller through discovery questions
- Words that add value
- How to exceed the caller's expectations
- Methods for taking one next step in building a client relationship
- Proper business phone etiquette
- To lock down techniques through skills practice

**Credit: 1 1/2 - 2 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors, pre-need counselors and administrative assistants

Available As: On-site seminar; online training; webinar

## Meeting the Needs of Cremation Families

Cremation continues to grow as the choice for many families. As funeral professionals, we need to become experts in addressing this growing preference. This seminar is designed to provide you with inspiration and best practices to serve the needs of cremation families, with the goal of helping families plan memorable life celebrations.

You Will Learn To:

- Communicate the value of your services
- Set the tone of the arrangement conference by focusing on the family's loved one
- Equip families for the "Decision Zone" prior to the arrangement conference
- Manage expectations through MAP statements
- Discover family cremation traditions
- Partner with the family to create unique ceremonies
- Present four consumer-friendly cremation packages
- Ask a key question for urn selection

**Credit: 1 hour**

Who Should Attend: Funeral directors and pre-need counselors

Available As: On-site seminar; webinar

# Culture and Teamwork

## Engaging Your Employees

According to a Gallup poll, only about 30% of people feel fully engaged in their work. Just think what can be accomplished if we are able to engage the other 70%! This enlightening session provides techniques for making your employees feel valued and a part of the team so that they will sing your praises in the community.

### You Will Learn:

- Insight into the experience and desires of each generation in the workplace
- Four steps on the ladder of employee engagement
- Communicating vision and expectations
- Taking the time to listen to employee preferences
- How and when to provide feedback
- What it takes to mentor

### **Credit: 1 - 1 1/2 hours**

Who Should Attend: All funeral home employees, owners and managers

Available As: Keynote address; on-site seminar; webinar

## Creating a Culture of Trust

Every funeral home has a culture. It is the way owners and employees treat families and each other and how work gets done. You can feel it when you walk in the building. Company culture is so important that it is said that “culture eats strategy for lunch.” Rather than overlooking this important aspect of the business, this seminar guides funeral home owners and managers in intentionally creating a positive culture in which trust is paramount.

You Will Learn:

- The importance of developing a mission and vision statement
- How to identify your funeral home’s core values
- Five core values that build trust; honor, compassion, attentiveness, dependability and creativity
- Specific techniques for driving positive culture
- 18 items for improving personal effectiveness

**Credit: 1 hour**

Who Should Attend: Funeral home owners and managers

Available As: On-site seminar; webinar

## Building Teamwork

Creating a well-orchestrated, seamless memorial event involves many moving parts. Does your staff work together like a well-oiled machine? This comprehensive and energizing training teaches strategies for building and maintaining strong and successful teams throughout your organization.

You Will Learn To:

- Identify obstacles to successful teamwork
- Foster trust and cooperation among co-workers
- Fulfill commitments in the face of difficulty
- Adjust to change
- Evaluate the level of teamwork in your organization
- Reinforce positive values that promote unity and cooperation
- Develop a strong team with clear goals, guidelines, expectations, and encouragement

**Credit: 2 - 4 hours**

Who Should Attend: All funeral home employees

Available As: On-site seminar

# Vision and Leadership Development

## Be Audacious in Business

Funeral service is undergoing dramatic change. In fact, it is true to say that all successful businesses require change to thrive in today's technological world. The cookie-cutter approach to funerals is no longer working as many families are moving away from tradition and even religion. Families "shop" for their funeral service needs and competition has popped up in some very unlikely places. These changing times require leaders to take bold actions in responding to the needs of today's funeral clients. This eye-opening presentation looks at shifting paradigms and perceptions in funeral service and challenges the participant to step forward to be better, be proactive...in fact, Be Audacious!

You Will Learn:

- How to perform when the odds appear to not be in your favor
- The price of doing things the same as "we've always done it"
- Why we resist change and how to adapt to it
- How to adapt not just to cope but to WIN
- The attitude of success
- How our perceptions can get in the way
- Unique aspects of four generations in the workplace
- 10 practical tips for being audacious

**Credit: 1 - 1 1/2 hours**

Who Should Attend: All funeral home employees

Available As: Keynote address; on-site seminar; webinar

## Developing Leaders in Funeral Service

A “bad boss” is the number one reason why employees leave their jobs. This seminar is designed for funeral home leaders and anyone who wants to take that next step in developing their leadership qualities and skills and realizing their highest potential.

You Will Learn:

- How to influence others through vision, example and commitment
- How leading differs from just managing
- Core values that drive behavior
- Key characteristics of effective leaders
- Why some leaders succeed, and others fail
- Five levels on the ladder of leadership and characteristics of each level
- Best practices for engaging employees
- How to manage change
- Strategies for battling negativity and creating a positive work environment

**Credit: 1 1/2 - 3 hours**

Who Should Attend: All funeral home employees

Available As: On-site seminar; webinar

## Setting & Reaching Goals

Do you have concrete and actionable personal goals and do you know how to achieve them? Do you know and understand the goals of your funeral home? This strategic and effective training will help you identify and quantify goals, set appropriate expectations and make a plan for attainment.

You Will Learn To:

- Identify “big picture” goals and specific steps you can take to reach them
- Get everyone pulling in the same direction
- Design a working plan to implement your goals
- Implement goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely
- Get back on track should your goals attainment get derailed
- Align personal and professional goals

### **Credit: 2 - 4 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral home owners and managers

Available As: On-site seminar

## Time Management

Due to the demands of funeral service, time management is always a challenge. Do you find yourself wavering between “crazy busy” and waiting for the phone to ring? Do you want more control over your life and schedule instead of feeling pulled in every direction? This essential and effective training will help you learn to identify opportunities and turn them into reality. Learn to prioritize and decrease the stress caused by “last minute delivery.”

You Will Learn To:

- Connect “Time Management” with “Life Management”
- Balance your personal and professional goals
- Evaluate how you currently spend time
- Identify and quantify opportunities
- Set priorities
- Allocate your time efficiently and effectively
- Avoid common time management mistakes
- Break down and schedule your 24-hour day

### **Credit: 2 - 4 hours**

Who Should Attend: Funeral home owners and managers

Available As: On-site seminar







1-800-457-1195