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## **Pandemic Has Changed the Way Americans Mourn**

New experiences, technologies, and changing expectations have even the oldest Americans embracing non-traditional ways of mourning

Phoenix, Arizona – May 10, 2021 – As a result of the global pandemic, consumers have experienced new ways of mourning the loss of their friends and family, and that has permanently changed the way they mourn, this according to The Foresight Companies 2021 Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study. Nearly 1/3 (32%) of survey respondents say their attitudes have changed as a result of new experiences, including using new technologies and adopting non-traditional approaches to celebration.

The global pandemic has necessitated adoption of new technologies and behaviors to the highly traditional funeral and cemetery business, and the FCCBS survey, now in its second year, continues to show that consumers are re-examining even the most fundamental ways consumers mourn. This includes even those groups traditionally most resistant to change; 21% of those consumers over 75 say they have changed their behaviors based on new experiences, a 75% YOY increase.

“New technologies and experiences are opening consumers eyes to new possibilities, and these experiences have fundamentally changed the way consumers mourn the loss of their loved ones,” said Chris Cruger, Chief Executive Officer of The Foresight Companies. “The winners over the last year were those funeral home and cemetery operators who were flexible, consultative, and adapted to changing consumer behaviors.”

### **About Technology**

- 49% of respondents said attending a livestream service “shows how much I care” – a 99% YOY increase.
- 44% expect livestreaming of services will be available permanently, a 10% increase vs 2020.
- 79% are unwilling to pay for livestreaming despite the expectation of its inclusion.

### **About Convenience**

- 21% of respondents say they will pay more for technologies and approaches that increase convenience.
- 15% now expect “house calls.”
- 74% of respondents expect to view pricing online; 65% expect to view products online.

### **About Pre-Planning**

- 75% say it’s important to have pre-planned funeral arrangements, a 30% increase vs. pre-pandemic.

- That increases to 80% if respondents experienced a death in the last 6 months.
- Those who experienced a death plan to spend \$700+ more than those who didn't.
- Hispanic, African American, Jewish, and Catholic respondents are more likely to pre-plan.

Those who experienced new things are also changing another tradition – that of celebrating life on-site at the funeral home. 63% of consumers say a big celebration of life event is important to them, and nearly half of those consumers (49%) will consider conducting a celebration outside the traditional location of the funeral home and cemetery. This is especially true of the Hispanic, Asian, younger, and higher income consumers, which all have a higher propensity to look for new locations to celebrate.

“Consumers are demonstrating a renewed desire to celebrate life and to pre-plan, bucking decades of traditions of where and when celebrations happen, and the business implications for owner operators have seismically shifted over the last 12 months,” Cruger added. “The future is bright for those businesses who adapt and embrace these changes and act as true Last Responders. Conversely, those who don't adapt risk becoming commoditized.”

Analysts have widely speculated about how the pandemic will impact behaviors in the death care services business, especially in a year where 43% of consumers over the age of 45 report that they have experienced the death of a friend or family member. This study, now in its second year, puts metrics and measurement around the behaviors and degree of change. A \$20B industry, more than 2.4 million funerals take place in the US annually and employs more than 100,000 Americans serving families in their time of need.

The Foresight Companies 2021 Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study, conducted by Los Angeles-based SoCal Approach Marketing and Consulting Group, was designed to understand consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors about the funeral and cemetery industry during the pandemic and after the pandemic has passed. The study is based to 4,174 respondents drawn from a nationally representative panel sample of U.S. residents age 45 and older.

### **ABOUT THE FORESIGHT COMPANIES**

The Foresight Companies, one of the largest consulting firms serving the funeral and cemetery business, is dedicated to leveraging its expertise in operations, finance, mergers and acquisitions and other key areas necessary to drive success in the space. For more information visit: [www.theforesightcompanies.com](http://www.theforesightcompanies.com).

### **ABOUT SOCAL APPROACH MARKETING AND CONSULTING GROUP**

SoCal Approach Marketing and Consulting Group was founded to measure and deliver data-driven market insights businesses can use to understand and reach their target audiences. For additional information on SoCal Approach, visit [www.socalapproach.com](http://www.socalapproach.com).