

# BUSINESS BRIEFS

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## Everest Breathes Life Into Dying Industry

*Revolutionary Solution Prepares Consumers for Life's Certain Outcome*



**L**IFE HAS ONE CERTAIN OUTCOME. While you can't predict it, a revolutionary company has ushered in a first-of-its-kind solution that empowers individuals to prepare for it.

Everest has recently entered the market as an independent consumer advocate, providing impartial advisors who deliver on-demand service to assist consumers with preparing for and dealing with a funeral. These advisors are available every day of the year to provide support — similar to other on-demand services such as emergency automobile assistance, roadside service and lifesaving medical assistance — and provide the information consumers need to make the most informed decisions about funeral-related issues, then, as a single point of contact, put those wishes into action at the time of need.

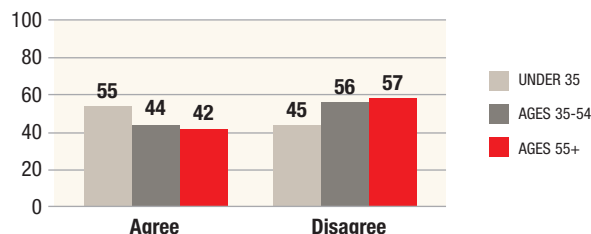
On-demand services reflect consumer demand for empowerment, and innovative companies are melding the product and service continuum to create solutions aligned with consumer preferences. “The baby boomers have changed everything at every lifestage - next year the oldest of the boomers will be turning 60. They will demand new solutions that help them make smart choices in later life and take control of the seemingly uncontrollable. A turnkey approach to final planning is long overdue and this is only the beginning of a wave of new ideas in old age,” notes Joseph Coughlin, Ph.D., Director of the AgeLab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The escalating mindset for solutions, not products, makes Everest a timely introduction to the consumer marketplace, according to Mark Duffey, Everest's Chairman and CEO, and the former President of the nation's fourth largest publicly traded funeral and cemetery services company. Recognizing a significant void in the industry, Duffey left Carriage Services in 2000 to work in conjunction with EDS to focus on the tactical execution of a

customer-centric funeral solution. “Consumers want to make proactive provisions for events along life's way: selecting a college, planning a wedding, purchasing a new home, preparing for retirement... and now, with Everest, for the last step of life,” observes Duffey.

Billed as the first nationwide funeral concierge service — working for individuals, not funeral homes — Everest does not sell funeral goods and services, and receives no commissions from funeral homes or other service providers in the funeral industry. Filling a massive void in the death care industry, Everest acts as a single point of contact for assisting customers in selecting service providers and making informed decisions about funeral services, burial and cremation options, and

**Poll Question:** Traditional funeral homes can be trusted not to take advantage of consumers during their time of need.



**Poll Results:** The majority of consumers over 35 feel that traditional funeral homes cannot be trusted.

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JOSEPH COUGHLIN, PH.D

Director of the AgeLab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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customized memorials, while also lifting the burdens for consumers to self educate.

Everest advisors work with providers to implement the customer’s wishes, manage the extensive range of issues that can be cumbersome, time-consuming and confusing. It also positions them to avoid the pitfalls of traditional funeral planning.

## How Everest Works at Time of Need

**Contact Everest.** When a loved one passes away, contact an Everest advisor by phone as your single point of contact for time-of-need services.

**Discuss Wishes.** Wishes are reviewed with the family if a plan has been completed and stored in Everest’s secure data vault. In the absence of a formal plan, a concierge works alongside the family to create one.

**Review Costs.** The Everest advisor contacts local funeral homes to collect pricing information, prepares a summary of those prices based on wishes and provides cost comparisons to the family and discusses them in detail. Upon request, Everest will assist with negotiating the terms and pricing with the funeral home.

**Finalize Arrangements.** Once the family selects a funeral home, Everest works as an advocate with that funeral home to ensure that each wish is understood and respected.

**Stay in Touch.** Everest’s 24-hour advisors can assist with the selection and negotiation of other providers of funeral services and products, including monument and memorial suppliers, cemeteries and crematoriums. As a consumer advocate, Everest’s concierge is also available to address issues, questions and problems that arise during and after the funeral process.

“This is a disruptive innovation,” says Coughlin, “which is going to touch a cultural chord. It aggregates the decision making and gives people a sense of empowerment.”

A recent survey conducted by Gelb Research revealed that Baby Boomers in particular — a group likely to make funeral services for a loved one in the near-term — have generally negative perceptions about funeral-related issues. Specifically, 59 percent of Aging Baby Boomers (ages 55 and greater) do not perceive traditional funeral home services to be a good value, while 57 percent believe funeral homes take advantage of grieving families at their time of need. Relative to the creation of proactive solutions, 90 percent of adults ages 35-54 and 81 percent of respondents 55

Everest Vs. Prepaid Funeral Plans <i>A Comparison of Apples to Oranges</i>	
Everest	Prepaid Funeral Plans
Consumer advocates who represent the best interests of individuals, not funeral homes	Funeral home employees who sell funerals
Knowledgeable, impartial advisors	Funeral home employees
Innovative, fresh, first-of-its-kind concierge service	A set-in-stone, outdated, old-fashioned/decades-old idea
Plan now, buy a funeral when needed	Plan now, buy a funeral now
Does not sell funeral goods and services	Sells funeral goods and services
Earns no commissions or fees from funeral homes	Generates revenues for the funeral home
Customer-centric	Sales-driven
Advisory-focused	Sales-focused
Flexible and portable	Inflexible and “locked in” to a funeral home

and older revealed their desires to spare loved ones from the burdens associated with arranging and paying for funeral services.

Knowing that death cannot be predicted underscores Everest’s timeliness. And for an industry that hasn’t changed in more than 100 years and in which “solutions” are unheard of, Everest now empowers consumers through a proactive process in which they maintain control. For more information, please visit [www.everestfuneral.com](http://www.everestfuneral.com).

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