DEADTalks EVOLVE

January 26 - 28, 2027 | Park MGM | Las Vegas, NV

Schedule of Events

Schedule at a Glance

TUESDAY,
January 26

3:30 – 3:45 PM

FIRST TIMERS ORIENTATION
Ann Marie St. George, Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc.; Erin Creger, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries; Doug Gober, Foresight

3:45 - 4:00 PM

ICE BREAKER
Lori Bolton, CCFE, CSE, CXE

4:00 - 5:15 PM

"Whose Prospect Is It, Anyway?"
Host:
John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE, Park Lawn Corporation
Participants:
Erin Creger, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries; Tony Armogida, Global Considerations, Inc.; Kacie Derby, Park Lawn Corporation; West Foulger, Envision Strategic Partners

5:15 - 6:30 PM

WELCOME RECEPTION

WEDNESDAY,
January 27

8:30 AM

WELCOME

8:40 - 10:10 AM

TOPIC #1
KEYNOTE
Wrapped Years in Advance – The Gift of Planning Ahead
Néctar Ramírez, Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries

10:10 - 10:15 AM

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

10:15 - 11:40 AM

TOPIC #2
GETTING TO YES | OBJECTION HANDLING

10:20 – 10:40 AM
Closing Intentionally, Not by Accident
Kirk Roberts, Sherwood Memorial Gardens

10:40 – 11:00 AM
Closing Techniques: Straight from the Field
Moderators:
Néctar Ramírez, Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries; Erin Creger, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

11:00 – 11:20 AM
Building Confidence with NO!
Aaron Butler, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

11:20 – 11:40 AM
Q&A With Speakers
John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE, Park Lawn Corporation

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 - 2:25 PM

TOPIC #3
EVENTS

1:05 – 1:25 PM
The Data Behind Behind Attendance: Turning Insights Into More People Through the Door
Brad Palmer, Service Corporation International

1:25 – 1:45 PM
Events for Diverse Markets: Building Community, Trust, and Connection in the Funeral Industry
Aesha Humphrey, Marcom-Harvey Funeral Care

1:45 – 2:05 PM
Beyond the Event: Turning Community Engagement into Business Growth
René Negrete, Carriage

2:05 – 2:25 PM
Q&A With Speakers
Doug Gober, Foresight

2:25 - 3:50 PM

TOPIC #4
PRESENTING PRE-NEED

2:30 – 2:50 PM
It Doesn't Matter How You Show Up
Rob Shalvey, Security National Life

2:50 – 3:10 PM
Beyond the Burial: Reimagining the Cemetery as a Place for the Living
Kacie Derby, Park Lawn Corporation

3:10 – 3:30 PM
Stop Presenting. Start Training.
West Foulger, Envision Strategic Partners

3:30 – 3:50 PM
Q&A With Speakers
Tim Fish, NGL

3:50 - 5:15 PM

TOPIC #5
MINDSET MATTERS

3:55 – 4:15 PM
Your Emergency Contact Can't Be You
Ann Marie St. George, Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc.

4:15 - 4:35 PM
Million-Dollar Mindset: The Winning Habits of a Top Producer
Jenna Fialk, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

4:35 - 4:55 PM

Bringing Your Team Back from the Dead

Ashlinn Goodman, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

4:55 – 5:15 PM

Q&A With Speakers

Mike Harens, Matthews Memorialization

THURSDAY,

January 28

8:30 - 8:45 AM

ICCFA Educational Foundation Presentation

8:45 - 11:40 AM

Workshop – Leveraging AI in the Sales Process

Leads: Pierce Dempsey, CCrE, Leaf Cremation; Aaron Butler, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

11:40 - 11:55 AM

Monday Morning Mindset

Shane Pudenz, Carriage

11:55 AM - 12:00 PM

Wrap-Up

Lori Bolton, CCFE, CSE, CXE







Schedule of Events

Tuesday, January 26

3:30 – 3:45 PM

FIRST TIMERS ORIENTATION



ANN MARIE ST. GEORGE
COOPERATIVE FUNERAL FUND INC.



ERIN CREGER
SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES



DOUG GOBER
FORESIGHT

3:45 - 4:00 PM



ICE BREAKER
LORI BOLTON, CCFE, CSE, CXE

4:00 - 5:15 PM

"WHOSE PROSPECT IS IT, ANYWAY?"

HOST:



JOHN BOLTON, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE
PARK LAWN CORPORATION

PARTICIPANTS:



ERIN CREGER
SECURITY NATIONAL FINANCIAL CORPORATION



TONY ARMOGIDA
GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS, INC.



KACIE DERBY
PARK LAWN CORPORATION



WEST FOULGER
ENVISION STRATEGIC PARTNERS

A little quick thinking—and a sense of humor—can go a long way in your sales conversations. Inspired by the spontaneous fun of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, this improv-style session brings familiar pre-need sales situations to life with unexpected twists and plenty of laughs. You'll recognize moments from your own work as everyday conversations take entertaining detours. Along the way, discover how listening closely, adapting in the moment, and letting your personality shine can help you connect. Come ready to laugh and leave with fresh ideas for when the conversation doesn't go quite as planned.

5:15 - 6:30 PM

WELCOME RECEPTION

Wednesday, January 27

8:30 AM

WELCOME

8:40 - 10:10 AM | Keynote



WRAPPED YEARS IN ADVANCE – THE GIFT OF PLANNING AHEAD

NÉCTAR RAMÍREZ

FOREST LAWN MEMORIAL-PARKS & MORTUARIES

Reconnect with why your work as a pre-need counselor matters: helping someone give their family a gift that may not be opened for years. Through personal stories, reflection, and meaningful discussion, explore how planning ahead offers preparation, protection, and peace of mind during one of life's hardest moments. You will consider how your conversations today can ease difficult decisions tomorrow. Leave with renewed purpose as a trusted guide and a deeper appreciation for the lasting impact you can have on families you may never meet.

10:10 - 10:15 AM

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

10:15 - 11:40 AM | Getting to Yes | Objection Handling



10:20 – 10:40 AM

CLOSING INTENTIONALLY, NOT BY ACCIDENT

KIRK ROBERTS

SHERWOOD MEMORIAL GARDENS

Most family service advisors don't struggle with a lack of closing techniques—they struggle with having a consistent process for understanding what's really behind a family's objection and how to respond. Explore how the five buying motives—Pride, Profit, Love, Fear, and Need—work together with a five-step closing process: Neutralize, Isolate, Recommit, Answer, and Close. Through a live demonstration, see why the often-overlooked Recommit step is critical and what happens when it is skipped. You'll leave

with a practical framework for diagnosing objections, responding with intention, and helping families make informed decisions without unnecessary pressure. This isn't about becoming a better salesperson—it's about becoming a better servant to the families across the kitchen table.



10:40 – 11:00 AM

CLOSING TECHNIQUES: STRAIGHT FROM THE FIELD



NÉCTAR RAMÍREZ

FOREST LAWN MEMORIAL-PARKS & MORTUARIES

ERIN CREGER

SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES

What does successful closing look like in the real world? Hear directly from some of the most successful pre-need sales professionals across the country through an engaging, video-driven discussion showcasing the techniques and approaches they use every day. Explore what makes these strategies effective, why they work, and how you can apply them to your own sales conversations. Walk away with practical ideas to help you navigate objections, build confidence, and guide families toward informed pre-need decisions.



11:00 – 11:20 AM

BUILDING CONFIDENCE WITH NO!

AARON BUTLER

SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES

Hearing "no" is an inevitable part of preneed sales, but it doesn't have to mean the conversation is over. Discover how to approach rejection with confidence, recognize the difference between a genuine objection and a family that simply isn't ready to make a decision, and respond without becoming discouraged or defensive. Explore practical ways to ask better questions, uncover underlying concerns, and keep conversations productive while respecting each family's needs and timeline. You'll gain strategies for building resilience, maintaining a positive mindset, and turning difficult conversations into opportunities to strengthen trust and create future connections.



11:20 – 11:40 AM

Q&A WITH SPEAKERS

JOHN BOLTON, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE

PARK LAWN CORPORATION

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 - 2:25 PM | Events



1:05 – 1:25 PM

THE DATA BEHIND ATTENDANCE: TURNING INSIGHTS INTO MORE PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOOR

BRAD PALMER

SERVICE CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL

What drives someone to register for an event—and what keeps them from showing up? In this data-driven session, you will explore the behaviors, motivations, and trends that influence attendance decisions. You will learn how to identify the data points that matter most, recognize the barriers and triggers that impact registration and attendance, and separate meaningful trends from assumptions.

You will discover how to turn those insights into smarter marketing strategies by refining your messaging, targeting the right audiences, and improving when and where you reach prospective attendees.



1:25 – 1:45 PM

EVENTS FOR DIVERSE MARKETS: BUILDING COMMUNITY, TRUST, AND CONNECTION IN THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

AESHA HUMPHREY

MARCOM-HARVEY FUNERAL CARE

Your funeral home can be more than a place families turn to after a loss—it can be a trusted community resource. Discover how to create educational, engaging, and culturally relevant events that build trust and connect you with diverse populations. You will explore practical ways to identify underserved audiences, develop community

partnerships, and turn one-time events into lasting relationships. Drawing on real-world examples, you will gain strategies for making those connections authentically, long before your services are needed.



1:45 – 2:05 PM

BEYOND THE EVENT: TURNING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INTO BUSINESS GROWTH

RENÉ NEGRETE

CARRIAGE

Event marketing is more than showing up in your community—it's an opportunity to build relationships, strengthen your brand, and drive long-term revenue. Explore how strategic events, community outreach, and meaningful local partnerships can help you build trust with families and create both at-need and pre-need opportunities. You will learn practical ways to plan effective events, engage your community, and generate leads. Discover how to measure results and evaluate your return on investment so you can turn community connections into measurable business growth.



2:05 – 2:25 PM

Q&A WITH SPEAKERS

DOUG GOBER

FORESIGHT

2:25 - 3:50 PM | Presenting Pre-Need



2:30 – 2:50 PM

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW YOU SHOW UP

ROB SHALVEY

SECURITY NATIONAL LIFE

Whether working with a pre-need client or an at-need family, meaningful arrangements start with understanding who you're serving. Learn practical discovery techniques to uncover the details that lead to more personal services and stronger recommendations—"painting the picture before you sell the frame." You'll explore how to connect what you learn during discovery to merchandise and service options, avoid common presentation pitfalls, and better communicate the value of gathering, celebrating, and saying goodbye. By looking

beyond disposition and focusing on the purpose of each experience, you'll be better equipped to create meaningful arrangements, strengthen family connections, and confidently communicate the value of service—no matter how their loved one shows up.



2:50 – 3:10 PM

BEYOND THE BURIAL: REIMAGINING THE CEMETERY AS A PLACE FOR THE LIVING

KACIE DERBY

PARK LAWN CORPORATION

Cemeteries can be more than places people visit after a loss—they can be meaningful, relevant spaces within the communities they serve. Explore how understanding your community can shape the experiences, services, and spaces you create, and why being a bold recommender rather than simply an order taker can better serve families. Discover ways to give people a reason to visit when no one has died and use storytelling to build value, strengthen connections, and reimagine the role your cemetery can play in the community.



3:10 – 3:30 PM

STOP PRESENTING. START TRAINING.

WEST FOULGER

ENVISION STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Too often, sales organizations mistake presenting information for training. A meeting is held, a PowerPoint is presented, a process is explained—and everyone assumes the team is prepared to perform. But knowing what to do and being able to do it are two very different things. The true measure of training isn't "Did they understand it?" but "Can they do it?" Learn how to move beyond simply telling and teaching to turn information into action through practical approaches to demonstrating, practicing, coaching, reinforcing, and creating accountability—so your training translates into skills your team can actually apply.



3:30 – 3:50 AM

Q&A WITH SPEAKERS

TIM FISH

NGL

3:50 - 5:15 PM | Mindset Matters



3:55 - 4:15 PM

YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT CAN'T BE YOU

ANN MARIE ST. GEORGE

COOPERATIVE FUNERAL FUND INC.

When Everybody Needs You... Who Do You Need?
You spend your days helping families prepare for life's hardest moments—answering the phone, solving problems, calming fears, and showing up when people need you most. But what happens when the helper needs help?

Through relatable stories, practical ideas, humor, and a few hard-earned lessons from the trenches, you'll explore the importance of building your own support system before you need it. You'll discover why self-care is less about bubble baths and more about having the right people in your corner.

After all, you wouldn't let a family leave without naming an emergency contact. Why should you be any different?



4:15 - 4:35 PM

MILLION-DOLLAR MINDSET: THE WINNING HABITS OF A TOP PRODUCER

JENNA FIALK

SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES

What does it really take to become a top producer? It's not about having all the answers or finding a shortcut to success. It's about trusting the process, mastering the fundamentals, and showing up consistently—even when the results don't come overnight.

Discover how daily disciplines, effective use of your CRM, intentional follow-up, and a commitment to sharpening your sales skills can

create lasting momentum in pre-need sales. Learn why measuring your progress against your own potential, rather than someone else's achievements, can change the way you approach your goals.

Where you start doesn't determine where you can go. The question is: **What can you do?**



4:35 - 4:55 PM

BRINGING YOUR TEAM BACK FROM THE DEAD

ASHLINN GOODMAN

SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES

When your team is burned out, disengaged, or not producing, your leadership can make the difference. You will learn to recognize early warning signs before they become resignations and uncover what may be driving your team's behavior. Explore practical tools for leading effective sales meetings, establishing predictable routines, following through on commitments, staying accessible, and eliminating double standards that erode trust. Discover how consistent leadership can help you build an engaged, productive cemetery or funeral home team—even when members have no prior sales experience.



4:55 - 5:15 PM

Q&A WITH SPEAKERS

MIKE HARENS

MATTHEWS MEMORIALIZATION

Thursday, January 28

8:30 - 8:45 AM

ICCFA EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRESENTATION



8:45 - 11:40 AM

WORKSHOP – LEVERAGING AI IN THE SALES PROCESS

PIERCE DEMPSEY, CCrE

LEAF CREMATION



AARON BUTLER

SECURITY NATIONAL FUNERAL HOMES & CEMETERIES

Discover practical ways to use AI in your daily funeral and cemetery pre-need sales workflow, from prospecting and appointment preparation to personalized follow-up and objection handling. Explore how these tools can also strengthen training, coaching, and team development. Through live demonstrations and ready-to-use tools, you will learn how to get started in your role as a salesperson, manager, or owner while keeping personal relationships at the heart of the sales process.



11:40 - 11:55 AM

MONDAY MORNING MINDSET

SHANE PUDENZ

CARRIAGE



11:55 AM - 12:00 PM

WRAP UP

LORI BOLTON, CCFE, CSE, CXE





