

Park Lawn Corporation Continues its Strategic Expansion in North Carolina and Tennessee



Smith Funeral & Cremation Service



Grandview Cemetery

TORONTO, ONTARIO— Park Lawn Corporation (TSX: PLC) is pleased to announce that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire substantially all of the assets of Pugh Funeral Homes and New Hope Memorial Gardens (collectively “Pugh”), a business consisting of five funeral homes and one cemetery located in central North Carolina. The transaction is anticipated to close prior to the end of the month following the receipt of regulatory approval.

PLC is also excited to announce that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire substantially all of the assets of Smith Funeral & Cremation Service, Life & Legacy Cremation Center and Smith Event Centers, as well as Grandview Cemetery and Cremation by Grandview (collectively the “Smith” businesses), comprised of one funeral home, one combination funeral home and cemetery property and five event centers

in Maryville, Tennessee. This transaction is anticipated to close in mid-November following the satisfaction of regulatory requirements.

Finally, PLC is pleased to announce that it has completed the previously announced acquisition of another strategic group of businesses in the middle Tennessee market. Effective, September 1, 2021, PLC acquired substantially all of the assets of Williamson Memorial Funeral Home & Cremation Services and Spring Hill Memorial Park, Funeral Home & Cremation Services in Franklin and Spring Hill, Tennessee, respectively (collectively the “Williamson” businesses). These businesses consist of two combination funeral home and cemetery properties.

“Each of the Pugh, Smith and Williamson businesses represent premier funeral home and cemetery businesses with esteemed reputations in their respective North Carolina or Tennessee markets. The acquisition of

these businesses continues to deepen PLC’s presence in rapidly expanding high-growth areas in the southern U.S. We are honored that these distinguished businesses and their long-time owners have chosen to become a part of the PLC family,” stated J. Bradley Green CEO of PLC.

Pugh, Smith and Williamson transactions will mean the addition of six stand-alone funeral homes, one stand-alone cemetery, three combination funeral home and cemetery properties, and five event centers. The combined transactions represent 2,227 calls and 612 interments per year.

PLC provides goods and services associated with the disposition and memorialization of human remains. PLC and its subsidiaries own and operate businesses including cemeteries, crematoria, funeral homes, chapels, planning offices and a transfer service. PLC operates in three Canadian provinces and fifteen U.S. states.

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Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

Tips for Hiring in a Competitive Market

It’s no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic put pressures on businesses in all types of industries. One of those pressures is a national staffing shortage that doesn’t seem to have an end in sight—and funeral homes are no exception.

Help wanted signs are popping up in all types of windows, but employers are finding it difficult to connect with the right candidates. It’s a puzzling conundrum, as you might expect it to be a hirer’s market following the high unemployment rates and job losses during the pandemic.

In reality, job numbers as of late 2021 were approaching pre-COVID norms. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment at the height of the pandemic was about 15 percent. By September 2021, that number was down to 4.8, just 1 percent above pre-COVID figures.

With unemployment numbers falling and many people still nervous about the safety of working out of the house, employers across all sectors must make extra efforts to fill open positions.

Whether you’re trying to fill positions after people quit during the pandemic or want to staff up in your funeral home to meet the demand for additional services, you might need to do more recruiting work than you have in the past.

Create Job Postings That Work

Start with your job postings. These are the descriptions of the job you put in local job ads or on job boards online. Your job posting works a lot like a dating app profile: You need to say what you want as well as what you’re offering. The more specific you are, the more likely you’ll attract candidates you can actually consider.

Some tips for writing strong job descriptions and postings include:

- **Be realistic about demands.** Come up with four or five must-haves. These are skills, certifications, or

experience candidates must have to be hired. Ensure those are featured at the top of the description. When listing other requirements, use verbiage such as “preferred” to indicate candidates with those traits get extra consideration but you won’t discount an applicant without them.

- **Keep the job title straightforward and obvious.** It’s not a time to be clever. If you’re hiring a funeral home sales associate, calling the position a “clientele growth representative” confuses applicants and may reduce how many qualified sales professionals you connect with.
- **Provide information about compensation and benefits.** Prospective employees want to know what’s in it for them, so be as specific as possible about what you offer. Something like 401(k) options or flexible scheduling might be the factor that convinces the right candidate to apply.
- **Cover team culture and your firm’s values.** Top candidates can often afford to be picky, so they might be looking to work for a firm that aligns with their personality or vision. Let your funeral home’s mission and values shine through in a job posting to help candidates connect on a personal level.

Make Sure ATS Isn’t Booting Good Candidates

If you’re working with a recruiting firm or otherwise using applicant tracking software, make sure it’s not dropping candidates overzealously.

Applicant tracking software (ATS) refers to technology that automates part of the recruiting process. The software receives applications and resumes and scans them for keywords associated with your requirements. It only presents applicants that the system deems to be relevant to your position.

If you’re too specific in your keywords or filters, the ATS may skip over resumes that might be contenders. For example, imagine a scenario in which you’re trying to fill a funeral attendant position. Some of your requirements might include attention to detail, excellent communication skills, customer service experience, and funeral experience.

Rethink Perks and Benefits

For many employees, benefits are a major factor in whether they’ll apply for or take a job. Health insurance is a top requirement for most, but candidates are also looking for additional benefits and perks.

- More than 90% cite traditional benefits such as paid vacation and 401(k) programs as important.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has created a desire for paid leave programs outside of traditional PTO. Employees want to know they can deal with an emergency without taking a financial hit, within reason.
- Around half of candidates are looking for wellness programs that help them attend to holistic mental and physical health.
- Tuition assistance or education opportunities are popular, especially among younger job seekers that see work as a growth opportunity.

Many funeral homes have fewer than 10 full-time team members, and for those small businesses, competitive benefits and perks can be prohibitively expensive. If you’re having trouble hiring the right people because you can’t afford competitive benefits, you might consider looking into PEO options.

PEO stands for *professional employer organization*. Partnering with a PEO is a form of HR outsourcing, and PEO firms can help with setting up benefits, managing payroll, and many other human resource functions. One of the benefits of a good PEO is that these firms pull their clients into groups to obtain benefits such as health insurance or 401(k)s.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of *Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes*. For more information, visit www.FuneralHomeProfits.com.

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