



CASE STUDY

SCI relies on new technology to keep its focus on compassion and dignity in the funeral planning process

## CASE STUDY

SCI relies on new technology to keep its focus on compassion and dignity in the funeral planning process

Service Corporation International (SCI),\* a leading funeral services provider in North America, partnered with Avanade on several projects to modernize its technology platforms so that SCI employees could better support loved ones during the funeral planning process and even help individuals pre-plan their own funerals.

SCI employees now rely on optimized tools that enable more personalized, compassionate communication with families during the entire funeral planning process.

In addition, SCI's investment in new technology has significantly streamlined communication and collaboration between all the employees involved in a funeral so they can help families celebrate the life of their loved one.

### **Situation** A need to deliver innovative approaches to funeral planning

Dealing with the death of a loved one can be an overwhelming experience. Amidst shock and grief, family and friends must plan a funeral that celebrates their loved one's life and legacy. Many decisions must be made during the funeral planning process, adding stress to what is already a difficult time.

For Service Corporation International (SCI), which owns and operates a network of over 2,000 funeral homes and cemeteries across North America, providing personalized, compassionate care during the funeral process is a primary focus.

Without digital innovation and optimized technology, SCI knew that it would not be able to focus on delivering the best experience to families, so it embarked on a long-term partnership with Avanade to develop innovative approaches to the funeral planning process.

Its work with Avanade focused on three main areas: helping people more easily make arrangements for their own funeral services ahead of time (known in the industry as pre-need), ensuring better communication and collaboration among employees during the funeral arrangement process and providing a better way to educate families on their options.

## CASE STUDY

SCI relies on new technology to keep its focus on compassion and dignity in the funeral planning process

### Solution

#### New digital platform personalizes customer service

SCI invested in three areas where it believed digital technologies could make the experience more personal:

##### 1. Better collaboration and communication among SCI employees during the funeral arrangement process.

SCI opened Personal Care Centers across North America so that it could centralize many services across a number of its funeral homes in a given region. This new approach enabled SCI-owned and operated funeral homes to share resources and further streamline a few arrangement-related services. While SCI was able to deliver a more consistent arrangement experience, it created a need for better collaboration and communication among employees.

Avanade created a fully automated communication and collaboration approach for SCI using state-of-the-art web technology that allows everyone to follow the same approach for receiving, preparing, scheduling and tracking each step of the arrangement process.

##### 2. Helping SCI employees guide individuals through their pre-need funeral arrangement options.

Many people choose to arrange their own funerals prior to their death, but SCI believed there was room for technology improvements in the field to provide customers and employees with a better experience.

SCI worked with Avanade to create a cloud-based mobile application that its counselors could use in the field at pre-need appointments – and with great success. Avanade worked closely with SCI's counselors in the field to identify and address gaps with the old technology platform, completing a small pilot project before launching an optimized application to all of the company's field sales counselors.

This application, known as Beacon, has significantly streamlined pre-need funeral planning. The new technology has proven to be more efficient, with adoption among SCI counselors at 90%. The average length of a pre-need visit reduced from three to four hours down to an hour, resulting in less time required of the customer.

##### 3. Optimized Dignity Memorial® web sites.

People seeking help with funeral, cremation or cemetery needs often turn to the web – first for knowledge and then for support during and after a funeral. SCI worked with Avanade so that its Dignity Memorial® network of more than 2,000 licensed providers could deliver a more intuitive and personal experience.

Avanade worked to build the company's new web presence on the Sitecore platform. Today, customers have access to a full range of services from Dignity Memorial's website, including a more robust customer service portal and information on nearby services and locations. Family members can now find locations swiftly, learn about the arrangement process, get help with initial questions, send flowers and much more.

## CASE STUDY

SCI relies on new technology to keep its focus on compassion and dignity in the funeral planning process

## Results

### Focusing on what's important: compassionate care for all

SCI's work with Avanade demonstrates a key benefit of technology: enabling people to do their jobs better and with more compassion at a time when it matters most. SCI's optimized technology platforms enable it to focus on delivering personalized service during a difficult time while ensuring more efficient operations. These new platforms work behind the scenes to help SCI employees put families first.

## About Service Corporation International

Service Corporation International (NYSE: SCI), headquartered in Houston, Texas, is North America's leading provider of deathcare products and services. At June 30, 2019, we owned and operated 1,478 funeral service locations and 481 cemeteries (of which 287 are combination locations) in 44 states, eight Canadian provinces, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Through our businesses, we market the Dignity Memorial® brand, which offers assurance of quality, value, caring service, and exceptional customer satisfaction. For more information about Service Corporation International, please visit our website at [www.sci-corp.com](http://www.sci-corp.com). For more information about Dignity Memorial®, please visit [www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com).

\*As used herein, "Service Corporation International" and "SCI" refer to affiliates of Service Corporation International.

### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 36,000 professionals in 24 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com)

©2019 Avanade Inc. All rights reserved. The Avanade name and logo are registered trademarks in the U.S. and other countries. Other brand and product names are trademarks of their respective owners.

### North America

Seattle  
Phone +1 206 239 5600  
[America@avanade.com](mailto:America@avanade.com)

### South America

Sao Paulo  
[AvanadeBrasil@avanade.com](mailto:AvanadeBrasil@avanade.com)

### Africa

Pretoria  
Phone +27 12 622 4400  
[SouthAfrica@avanade.com](mailto:SouthAfrica@avanade.com)

### Asia-Pacific

Australia  
Phone +61 2 9005 5900  
[AsiaPac@avanade.com](mailto:AsiaPac@avanade.com)

### Europe

London  
Phone +44 0 20 7025 1000  
[Europe@avanade.com](mailto:Europe@avanade.com)