

Good to Great Update

Transformation Programme newsletter



Welcome to your latest newsletter about our Good to Great plans. In each issue you'll be able to meet the team, find out what's going on and understand what our journey will mean for you. Let us know what you think!

It's not all about the numbers



I suspect that many of you reading this will assume that given my role as Finance Director, my introduction to this newsletter will be all about numbers. Well, you're wrong!

Of course I spend a lot of time thinking about the economic impact of the changes we are making. However, as sponsor of the centralisation taskforce and member of the Steering Group, I'm pleased that I get to spend a lot of time thinking about the benefits the changes will have to our clients and to my colleagues across the business. I'm excited by the opportunities it is going to give us all to improve the quality of service we provide. For a central function such as finance, this means making it even easier for operational staff to look after families by ensuring the work behind the scenes is performed even more efficiently. That could be by making it easier to pay suppliers; to order goods and services more effectively; to know the same day when a client has paid to name just three examples.

Many of the ways of working we have now are identical to those in place when I started 20 years ago. In the main, that has been a conscious decision, as we know, however cumbersome, those ways work. We've all seen some ideas that have worked; and some that haven't.

If we're honest with ourselves, we don't like to change and clinging to present ways is comforting, even if we moan that they are awkward! We know that we don't get a second chance to get it right with a family. We worry if it will go wrong if we change something. I know I do.

That fear of change means that some of the plans we have will be difficult. We are all going to be asked to challenge what we think is possible, think differently and to do things differently. That means we need to say when we don't understand; we need to challenge when we don't agree; and we need to be prepared to accept that someone else's idea may be more appropriate than ours. It's not going to be easy, but it's going to be worth it.

I've been here 20 years because I love working with the people I do and I am proud of the way we help families at such a difficult time. We all do an amazing job by working together. The Transformation isn't saying we don't: it's asking us all to raise the bar, to work even more collaboratively. We can all do that.

Sorry, can't resist... we've committed to invest £50 million. That's a big number!

Steve Whittern
Finance Director

Better Call Paul

We tracked down the new IT Director, Paul Simpson, to understand why IT is critical to the success of Good to Great, and how his experience will help drive success in the business.



Every Good to Great taskforce has stressed the importance of IT to the success or failure of their projects and plans, which is why we've appointed a new Director of IT, Paul Simpson, to lead the team through the biggest changes in Dignity's history.

So what does the future hold, and what projects depend on IT? We tracked Paul down to find out.

Paul, welcome on board! You're just over a week into the job now – how are you getting on? Very well thank you, I've hit the ground running already!

You've had over a decade of experience in transition and transformation at organisations including the RAC, Jaguar, Moët Hennessey and Rolls Royce. What do you believe makes the biggest difference to successful IT delivery?

Teamwork, communication and ownership with a passion for delivery, without a doubt.

“

Technology needs to be the silent power in the background.

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What have your first impressions been of Dignity? Very positive and welcoming. Clearly I've come in at a critical moment! But, encouragingly I believe we have the solid foundations on which to develop our future IT strategy and

ecosystem which is essential to support the Company through the transformation programme and beyond.

There's an awful lot of dependency on IT to deliver successful projects as we go from Good to Great. What are your first priorities?

Technology is involved in every aspect of Good to Great but IT only works if it does a good job and makes a difference. Maintaining the current level of service in the immediate future is essential - I want to ensure we get the IT basics right and then move forward as a team with the business.

Specifically we will be supporting projects including tools for Operations, Pricing and more and more delivery for our Internet Solutions as we move to operating in the digital era.

You name it, IT is in it but I see this as more about evolution not revolution and at the end of the day we need to be mindful of the fact we're a funeral business, not IBM or Microsoft!

Can you tell us a little about the taskforce projects IT are involved with?

IT and Transformation are utterly interlinked – we can't deliver our new agenda without the appropriate technology in place.

It's still early days for me, and there is a lot to get up to speed on, but the three key things identified so far are a new project control system so we can better organise ourselves in IT, improving the way that we work so we can deliver projects more effectively - and the big ticket one, delivering new functionality to our core operating systems, both out in the branches and online.

Fundamentally, our role in transformation is about maintaining the right support to the core businesses, whilst adopting the right new technology platforms and ensuring that our existing and new systems are able to handle the future business demands.

So is it fair to say IT is critical to the success of the Good to Great transformation? Absolutely!

Crikey, you're going to be busy! Can you tell us about any quick wins colleagues can expect to see? A week in, I'm a little wary of promising anything until I understand exactly where the current challenges are. That said, I actively encourage a collaborative approach and would love you to work with us and tell us what you believe needs to be done. You know, those everyday frustrations that drive you up the wall? I want to know about them!

As an example, I'm aware that in a previous newsletter we spoke about a fix that IT had released that's now saving the fleet teams 'five' plus hours a week.

So, please tell me what's bugging you and I'll take a look. I can't promise they'll be quick wins, but I do need to know what issues need sorting, so you'd 'Better call Paul' – drop me a line at bettercallPaul@dignityuk.co.uk

How do you see the future of IT in Dignity?

Exciting! We need to prepare and position ourselves to enable us to leverage new technology to support the transformational business plans.

The way we will work in IT in the future will aim to use technology effectively, bringing fantastic, user-friendly functionality to the business. We need to deliver my ideas for improved ways of working whilst ensuring the IT team is agile enough to support and implement new technologies in the right way.

For example, we're already working on improved internal communications platforms to modernise the way we communicate internally. We'll be supporting the adoption of hand-held devices across the business and making sure we have fully functional

systems to support our core operations. The digital on-line agenda is already moving, we just need to find ways of moving faster!

Ultimately, my vision for the future sees us using tried and tested, leading-edge technology behind the scenes to support business operations.

We can still deliver a traditional funeral with a horse and carriage, but it doesn't mean we should be using a quill and ink in the office!

How would you sum up your job in one sentence? Providing support and guidance at all levels to deliver a successful and effective adoption of technology.

My job isn't all about hardware, networks and software applications, it's about making sure we focus on the practical but effective adoption of technology - lowering our sights but raising our aim to ensure we are agile enough to leverage what future technology platforms offer. (OK, that was two sentences...!)

And what is your recipe for success?

Regularly having the right conversations at the right level to deliver with confidence and direction.

What frustrates you?

When people pontificate! I like to drive things forward and avoid unnecessary confusion and distraction from key goals and objectives!

What do you value most in work?

Professionally seeing things through to completion with the right amount of pace and engagement. I want people to be focussed, honest and straight forward and most of all enjoy themselves.

Finally, what do you enjoy outside of work?

Sports, family and friends! I'm a big rugby fan and love running, cycling, swimming – anything sporty. I am lucky to have worked all over the world but I was born in Sutton Coldfield and still live here so now its great to at last be based in my home town without the need to catch a plane for the commute!

Thanks Paul!

Simplifying our prices

New prices and new marketing literature come into effect from 1st April as we work to reduce the complexity behind our pricing.

As well as getting our prices online, the team have been busy preparing to make updates to our funeral pricing, effective from 1st April.

Historically, we've had a fairly complex way of doing things. But with our commitment to make things easier, we've been working hard over the last eight months to make sure there's one version of the truth for our online pricing, printed price lists, invoicing and CSC systems.

So what are the changes people will see from 1st April?

- Everyone's price lists will be driven from COMPASS, rather than our print supplier
- Everyone will have new-look marketing material
- For those of you included in the Full Service Funeral packages, the core prices will now be £3,395 (plus the cost of the chosen coffin.)

We're sending new price lists, client packs and coffin brochures featuring new, consistent coffin names, to all our branches very soon.

These improvements mean we will have much greater capability for future price changes. As you can imagine, this has been a lot of hard work and we couldn't have done it without all the



work branches have done to check accuracy – so thank you!

Are you testing the new Tailored Funeral Service?

If you're in a region that's testing the new Tailored Funeral Service (previously known as the Configurator) then look out for the next trial version. The updates will see:

- Coffin no longer included in the price (base coffin price increased from £150 to £190), so clients can choose whatever they want from our range
- Removal of our charge for arranging third party services (£95)
- Increase of £60 to the for 'Our Service To You' cost, so the Tailored Funeral Service cost is now £2805 (plus the cost of the chosen coffin.)



60 Seconds with... Jamie Hawke



Name:

Jamie Hawke

Role:

Regional Manager for the South West and Wales & the West Regions and I'm also Business Lead for the Operations Organisation Taskforce

Where are you based?

My office is in Bodmin, Cornwall but I spend most of my time out and about the regions or at head office.

How long have you worked for Dignity?

I worked for an independent company for five years before it was acquired by Dignity in 2007, so therefore 16 years.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I can't really say there is a typical day in my life as since becoming a Regional Manager in November 2017 my feet haven't touched the ground. I try to get out and about the regions as much as possible and obviously I have to spend a lot of time at head office for meetings. I also occasionally arrange and conduct funerals for families that ask for me locally.

How would you explain your job to a three-year-old?

I help people to help others when someone has died.

What's the most unusual/most eventful thing that's ever happened to you at work?

I arranged and conducted the first funeral ever to take place at the Eden Project in Cornwall.

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

The amount of travelling I have to do. It's lovely to see different places and meet people but I hope our advances in technology will help reduce the amount of travelling.

What song/piece of music would you choose for your own funeral?

As a funeral director in Cornwall I have listened to James Last – A morning in Cornwall more times that I can count so as a proud Cornishman I would have to choose it for my funeral.

What would your top tip be to take Dignity from Good to Great?

Be open minded and accepting of the changes that we need to make but also be ever mindful that we exist to serve our clients and the deceased people we have the privilege of caring for.



Jargonbuster

Don't know your BAU from your ROI?
Then we're here to help!

Resource Management

You've probably heard the phrase 'resource management' more in the last few months than in your whole life – but what exactly does this mean? In a nutshell, it's about putting in systems to manage our resources (such as fleet, people, equipment) as efficiently as possible. It's about making sure we have the right things in the right place at the right time so we don't have too much or too little of what we need, when we need them.

DILO

We've had Silo, but what about DILO? As the transformation team get out and about, you may well come across this acronym, which stands for 'Day In the Life Of.' This is where we understand peoples' roles and how they spend their time in their working day so we can understand the impacts of processes and decisions across the business.

Got a phrase that has you bamboozled?
Let us know at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk

The Rumour Mill: True or False?

I've heard that there are planning applications in some areas for Dignity premises, and I am worried about what this means for me and my branch.



Yes, you may well see some planning applications locally, but this is nothing to worry about. As we design the shape of our future networks, we're exploring lots of potential opportunities for growth, refurbishments or even relocations as we make sure we have the right premises in the right places to deliver great care. No decisions have been made yet. We will always aim to let you know if a planning application is being made in your area rather than you seeing such news externally first.

FREE CHOCS!

Santa's Elves ordered a few too many Dignity Christmas chocolate tins, which means we have lots to give away on a first come, first served basis. If you'd like to have one, please send your name and delivery details to goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk and we'll get it posted to you.



Listen to our new March update!

If you want to hear about transformation in more detail, why not listen in to our Good to Great dial in? Simply call free on **0800 0086371** to hear Transformation Director Paul Turner and Programme Manager, Sima Tudor speak – don't forget leave your question or feedback at the end (10mins).



Get in Touch 

If you have a question about transformation, heard something on the jungle drums, have some feedback or a suggestion for the next newsletter, then drop us an email at goodtogreat@dignityuk.co.uk