

Greetings:

As funeral home owners, we know this to be the time of year when we receive the customary price increases from our casket suppliers. As a former sales representative for a major casket company I disliked this time of year because no one wanted to see me coming. Now that I am on the other side of the desk I hate price increases because it just makes funerals that much more expensive.

With the changes that have taken place in the casket marketplace in the past couple of years I started reconsidering my options and paying attention to ads in the trade journals. At the ICCFA Convention I spent a few minutes in the Sich Casket booth and briefly spoke with Sirius Chan, President of Sich. Our brief conversation caused me to begin considering the possibility of utilizing import casket, an idea I had been adamantly opposed to heretofore.

The reasons to consider changing started to outnumber the reasons not to. Here are my top ten reasons to make a change.

Ten Reasons I Am Switching to Sich

1. I'm ready for a simpler way of doing business.
 - a. I want the price I see on the price list to be the price I pay. If they want to give me a discount for paying up front, that would be great.
 - b. I don't want to have to use a spreadsheet to figure out what a casket cost.
2. Chinese caskets aren't what they once were.
 - a. I remember seeing some of the first import caskets and they were bad.
 - b. Bad finishes on the outside and smelly on the inside.
 - c. The Sich units I now have in stock have great finishes and are fully finished on the inside without the import smell.
3. Quality that stacks up to or exceeds other imports and domestic units.
 - a. Over time we have all seen corners being cut by domestic casket companies. They cut corners but raise prices.
 - b. There is much less padding and much more cardboard in caskets from American companies these days.
 - c. Other imports I have seen do not have the fine finish I see on Sich units.
4. Value.
 - a. I can offer my clientele great looking caskets at a lesser cost.
 - b. I can make more while saving my families money.
 - c. In a competitive market with more and more price shoppers, I can offer more for less.
5. Mexican or Chinese, if I must choose one or the other, why not the get the better for less.
 - a. In 2016, there were over twice as many imports from Mexico (261,031) than from China (103,187). Who is doing the importing? Domestic companies.
 - b. If my other suppliers are going to offer imports from Mexico at the price of American made, why not get a much better price from Sich.
6. Most of the public does not care where something is made these days.
 - a. If they do, I can still get them a higher priced American made unit.
 - b. Very few things we buy these days are labeled, Made in the USA.
 - c. Our cell phones and other electronics are great examples.
 - d. Most of the furniture sold in America is produced in China.

7. Great looking wood caskets.
 - a. Domestic wood caskets have gotten very expensive
 - b. Many are made of engineered wood.
 - c. Sich offers very good-looking wood caskets at a fraction of the cost
 - d. Unique designs are available
8. Backed by a huge product liability policy
 - a. Heaven forbid that anything should ever go wrong with a casket but if it does, Sich carries liability protection of \$5 million on the caskets they manufacture.
9. Not locked in to a long-term commitment or quota I must meet to get an artificially large discount.
 - a. No waiting on a rebate check.
10. I will not be offering the same caskets that the local cemetery is selling.

Another reason I am switching to Sich is an opportunity to collaborate with other funeral directors to form a cooperative distributorship to supply Sich caskets in Kentucky. I have been in talks with Jeff Tyler the national sales director for Sich for a few months now. He and Sich President, Sirius Chan have visited me to discuss getting this off the ground. More details are coming as we develop this plan.

If I have peaked your interest in participating in this venture, I invite you to give me a call to further discuss this opportunity.

Best wishes,

Daryl Berry