# UP AND RUNNING
# PARTNERS WITH PASSARE

## BRINGING A NEW CONSUMER FOCUS TO THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Professionals can work with families and survivors in a fully interactive online environment, accessible on any Internet-connected device.

"Up and Running is our outsourced software team, and we continue to develop. They've helped us build something better than the rest of the industry, and we are not stopping now," proudly declared Jay Thomas, CEO of Passare, a software as a service (SaaS) company that helps funeral professionals redefine the funeral experience by offering the industry's only cloud-based collaboration system with integrated case management. Professionals can work with families and survivors in a fully interactive online environment, accessible on any Internet-connected device.

## The Funeral Industry Trades the Pencil and Paper for the Smartphone

The funeral profession is evolving in response to the new generations seeking its services. As baby boomers become the primary market, planning services for their parents or themselves, past traditions are giving way to a demand for choice, customization, and a process that fits the time and travel constraints of busy professionals whose family members may be geographically distributed.

A 2011 study commissioned by a group of industry leaders discovered that the majority of consumers were dissatisfied with the way funeral professionals interacted with them, and in nearly half the cases consumers were dissatisfied with the funeral service they received for their loved one.

Passare (Italian for *passages*) addresses this issue through a funeral arrangement platform where family members can collaborate with one another and their funeral director at any time or place, from any Internet-connected device thanks to the power of the cloud. Thomas, who has a background in the tech startup ecosystem, joined the organization in 2014 shortly after it was launched that year, and took the reins as CEO in mid-2015. He points to the evolution of the Passare concept from the original product—essentially a search engine for funeral service providers—to the robust back-end, consumer-facing, multilayered database that it has become.

"Passare is addressing the complete marketplace," Thomas wrote in an August 2015 press release. "We are helping to make communication and collaboration simple and easy—for funeral directors, families, and even beyond to the community. Passare is addressing the communication needs for everyone who is involved in the funeral process."



At the heart of the software is the collaboration center, allowing families to begin basic planning by selecting services and entering essential information remotely from any location during that trying time. These planning activities can be done prior to meeting with the funeral director, making the experience more convenient for the grieving family while greatly increasing efficiency for the service providers.

"Families no longer have to physically travel to a common location a week in advance to plan a service," Thomas explained, noting the value of the collaboration center. "They can communicate in a virtual setting, make their plans, and meet and converse with their funeral director from wherever they may be, whenever their circumstances allow or demand."

Expecting to touch the lives of more than one hundred thousand families in 2017, Passare is greatly improving the consumer experience. At the same time, funeral directors offer testimony of a nearly thirty percent increase in efficiency and enhanced customer service, often measured in the industry's chosen metric: hugs from the surviving family members.

# The Up and Running Contribution

"The great thing about Up and Running is that they have been very price-competitive, they are very open and a good team to work with, and they have been responsive and have worked with us to maintain quality throughout."

Thomas, who has over twenty years of experience leading teams in the global technology market for large, national, and global corporations, and startup companies and startups within companies, provides a unique perspective on the UAR partnership, as he inherited the relationship when he joined Passare.

"Whenever you take over a company, you look at the vendor relationships you inherited, and I certainly did that with our development team," he said, emphasizing that he is located in the San Francisco Bay Area—literally surrounded by development talent. "The great thing about Up and Running is that they have been very price-competitive, they are very open and a good team to work with, and they have been responsive and have worked with us to maintain quality throughout."

Thomas is quick to point out that, like all startups, Passare is evolving, which means continuous development of new functionalities that must be seamlessly integrated into the existing platform, a challenge that the UAR team takes very seriously. With hundreds of funeral director users and thousands of consumers engaged in interactions at any one time, a hiccup in the system caused by an integration is simply not acceptable. Likewise, the evolving nature of the business demands flexibility among the vendors. Up and Running, with considerable experience in the entrepreneurial sector, delivers that flexibility without a loss of responsiveness.

# CORE COMPETENCIES
# BEYOND DEVELOPMENT

"There are a lot of companies out there, but I would honestly recommend Up and Running to other startups. They have served us well."

While the UAR team's technical competency clearly drives its success, Thomas's comments highlight several less obvious but nevertheless core strengths. Fully aware that company culture impacts deliverables, Up and Running operates in a paradigm that attracts the very best developers and allows them to focus exclusively on the client's needs during the development process. In doing so, UAR fosters a collaborative atmosphere while minimizing overhead costs, which contributes to the oft-cited favorable pricing structure.

To manage this far-flung workforce and provide a multilevel quality assurance regimen, UAR employs its own version of the Scrum Master, the Software Development Architect (SDA). The SDA serves as a liaison between the developers and the client contact. More than a project manager, the SDA can become a utility player at the code level, filling in for any role when time constraints or circumstances require. Clients like this role because specifications don't need to flow through one to three layers of roles before getting developed; they can speak to someone who can directly develop, which increases efficiency and produces more certain results faster.

"Being in the Bay Area, I've obviously got options," Thomas reiterated in response to a question about his willingness to recommend the UAR team. "There are a lot of companies out there, but I would honestly recommend Up and Running to other startups. They have served us well."

# About Up and Running

We partner with clients to solve important technical problems by building, implementing, and servicing complex software solutions for customers of any size in any industry.

Started in 1995 while founder Pete Hanson was a sophomore in high school, Up and Running Software began as a technical services firm and evolved into a developer of custom software solutions. Customer happiness and open communication have been the focus since day one, plain and simple, resulting in long-term relationships with any type of client, from non-profits to startups to the Fortune 10. Thanks to this mindset, Up and Running is fortunate to have served an impressive array of clients, including giants such as General Electric (GE), Henry Schein, Sanofi, and Hearst, as well as venture-backed startups at every phase, from formation to growth.

Its over two decades of custom software development, legacy system support, and migrations drive the engines of solutions that thousands of businesses and millions of people rely on daily. That experience has resulted in hands-on depth in most software development stacks, from the command line systems in the back office to ones that gracefully handle any screen size worldwide. A commitment to QA and process improvement drives scalable results, producing long-term software assets with high ROI. Up and Running's work passes FDA & DEA audits, rolls up global treasury data, manages nuclear assets and railroads, delivers vaccines, and enables neuroscientists and researchers.

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