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EDB feature: Delanoy Funeral Services marks two years in business

Oct 21, 2022 | Business



It's just over two years since John Delanoy and Julie Stout launched their partnership, Delanoy Funeral Services and opened in Peterlee.

Their mission was to change the way funerals are conducted, to give people the send off they want and deserve.
EDB editor Leanne Fawcett finds out more...

A little over two years ago, John Delanoy was introduced to marketing professional Julie Stout by a mutual friend who thought they'd work well together.

While from very different backgrounds, John having been in his family's funeral business since leaving school and Julie a respected entrepreneur running her own company, Just Out Marketing, the pair quickly realised they shared a lot of the same thoughts and ideas. And so, Delanoy Funeral Services was born.

Julie said: "What a remarkable two years it has been. "When we launched, we were determined to change the way funerals are conducted, to give people the send off they want and deserve and for loved ones, a treasured goodbye that would stay with them in a positive way forever. No-one likes funerals but done in the right way, they can be beautiful and a personal and fitting tribute to the life lived.

"So, we introduced a number of new elements, such as really personalising every funeral, creating videos of the send-off which can be a lasting memory for loved ones and enabling dogs to be part of the final journey, whilst still retaining many of the traditional elements that John's family business had been built on.

"I'm proud to say we've made a difference to hundreds of people, particularly during Covid times when people were unable to attend funerals; initially because many churches were closed and then, due to the strict social distancing rules that were in place.

"Our videos were a godsend at this time, because it meant people could be part of the funeral even if they couldn't physically be there.

"And because every video is bespoke, it's something the family can cherish forever."

As well as conducting hundreds of funerals, John and Julie were also nominated for a top community award – made all the more special because it was the people from the communities in and around East Durham who voted for them.

John said: "It was a real honour to be nominated for the Northern Echo's Public Service Awards, especially as we were the only funeral company in County Durham to make the finals,

"For me, it's testament to the way we run our business and the fact our number one priority is always giving people the a send off they'd want and be proud of and giving loved ones a lasting memory of their loved one's final journey.

"Julie definitely takes a lot of the credit for this, she has been a real breath of fresh air to work with.

"With her fresh ideas and my experience within my family's business, we've been able to create a new partnership which really does change our industry for the better."

When they launched, Julie and John pledged to put any profits made back into the business, and that's something they're proud to say they've achieved.

They've used the money to create a beautiful base on Oakerside Park in Peterlee and invest in a new Jaguar hearse, a limousine and a new private ambulance.

So, as they move into year three, what does the future hold for Delanoy Funeral Services?

Julie added: "We have just taken on another two members of staff, expanding our team to four, which enhances the service we're able to offer.

"John and I will always be the ones the families deal – our new employees free up our time to focus completely on them and giving their loved ones the best possible send-off.

"We are both excited about what the future holds for us, we love what we do and that makes all the difference – families see that, and I think that really does help them.

"We genuinely do care about the families, and I believe that's why so many people are happy to recommend us."