



## Changing Dynamics

Funeral service remains a relatively traditional industry. Funeral services, burials and even cremation have been around as concepts almost as long as the history of humans.

**B**ut that doesn't mean death-care firms shouldn't evolve with the times. Changing cultural and family dynamics can cause a need to shift service options and the way you market them to meet the demands of clientele.

From green burials to younger decision makers, funeral homes should be aware of all factors that could impact the efficacy of their marketing while ensuring services and brand messaging don't alienate target audiences. Let's take a look at some factors to consider in 2021 and what they might mean for funeral home marketing:

### Half of Young Adults Live With Their Parents

As of July 2020, more than 50% of adults ages 18 to 29 lived with their parents. That number was the highest it had been to that point since the Great Depression and was driven by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other economic forces that made it difficult for young adults to afford their own homes.

For funeral home marketing, this potentially means another voice in the decision process. Adult children who are living at home might have opinions about their parents' preplanning choices. Depending on the relationships

within each family, they might even be consulted by their parents.

Funeral homes marketing to target audiences that potentially have children in this age range may want to keep that in mind, creating content that addresses the benefits for the entire family and helps adult children understand the services (and related benefits) being offered to their parents.

Honest communication and experience-based service options may do well here. Younger adults are somewhat skeptical and may be wary about scams targeting their parents, so it's important to ensure your preplanning options are as transparent as possible.

## More Adults Are Becoming Caregivers

According to AARP, about 14% (or 35.2 million) of adults in the United States were providing some level of care for a loved one aged 50 or older. As of 2020, that number had risen to close to 17% (or around 41.8 million).

There's a definite gap when it comes to planning for future care and needs among these families, though. AARP reports that only 44% of the people receiving care have long-term plans in place for health care, living or final arrangements. Among caregivers themselves, who may also be adults over the age of 50, only 45% have any plans in place.

For funeral homes, there's an opportunity to provide education about the benefits of preplanning. Caregivers might not have plans in place for a variety of reasons, including:

- They simply haven't considered it.
- They don't think they have the ability or time to make plans.
- They're afraid of the topic because it seems depressing or scary.

Funeral homes that can create content demonstrating the importance of preplanning can show potential clientele in this audience segment why it's worth considering no matter how busy or overwhelmed they might be. Marketing that demonstrates your expertise, offers easy-to-understand content about preplanning, and positions preplanning with you as easy and convenient can help persuade caregivers to go ahead and take those steps on behalf of their loved one or themselves.

## Record Numbers of Americans Identify as LGBTQ+

In a Gallup poll that asked whether someone identified as "LGBT," about 5.6% of Americans said "yes." That's about 18 million people. The poll didn't take into account the more comprehensive "LGBTQ+" designations, but it's probably a safe bet to assume those numbers are also high compared to historic data.

Even among those who don't identify as LGBTQ+, recent cultural changes mean many people are concerned with LGBTQ+ issues and using desired pronouns when speaking about someone else.

For businesses in the funeral industry, marketing specifically with these types of cultural dynamics in mind can be a challenge. For example, should you write a blog post about how your funeral home works to respect the use of desired pronouns when preparing for and holding services?

This is a business decision funeral professionals must weigh carefully, considering their brand values and target audience. That's true for any new cultural issue you might want to address. Whatever you decide, it's important to note that cultural norms are evolving rapidly, and funeral homes aren't completely immune to these changes and the impact they can have on businesses.

## A Growing Number of People in America Are Atheists

Pew Research reported in 2019 that 4% of Americans identified as atheist and 5% as agnostic.

Those numbers are up by 2% to 3% from the previous decade, so that's only a modest jump. However, Pew Research's American Trends Panel uses a variety of data to determine how "religious" Americans are as a whole. That includes answers to questions about beliefs as well as how often people engage in activities such as attending worship.

The ATP's conclusion in recent years has consistently been that Americans are less religious overall than they have been in the past.

For funeral homes, this can mean a slowly evolving landscape where target audiences are less likely to believe in traditional religious concepts or want traditional religious funeral ceremonies.

Again, this is an area where you must take carefully considered marketing steps that are appropriate for your business. If you're a neighborhood funeral home serving the needs of any clientele in the city, you may want to ensure that people know you have packages and services to support all beliefs.

Religion provides a great example of why death-care providers must be informed about cultural evolutions as well as the needs and desires of their target audiences.

## Sustainability Is a Growing Concern for Many Americans

Southern Cross University conducted a survey to find out how Americans and Australians thought about the environment and sustainability. More than 90% of survey participants reported that they had a general concern for the environment. More than 80% said they were already making

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