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Transportation & Shipping
in the Funeral Industry

LOOK INSIDE TO SEE
OUR NEW LOOK

GMB GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

THE 10-MINUTE FIX TO MANY INTERNET
MARKETING WOES

BY WELTON HONG

If I said you could substantially improve your death care business's online marketing by taking 10 minutes out of your day—not every day, just one time, something you could do right now—would you do it?

It's both so important and so simple that I'm tempted to tell you to stop reading this article right now to do it, but I suppose it would help if I told you what it is first. After that, if you like, you can stop reading.

I mean, there's lots of good information to follow, so I hope you'll come back. But if you don't, that's okay. I'll have achieved my goal: helping your death care business with a 10-minute fix.

So, let's not waste any more time. Here's what you need to do: Go to your Google My Business (GMB) page. If you're not sure where it is, just Google "Google My Business" (appropriately enough) or punch in this link: <https://www.google.com/business/>.

Click Sign In, find your business, and make sure you've

claimed it (if you haven't already). Then make sure all the information there is accurate and complete. If it isn't, you get the idea: Fill in everything. Make sure it's all correct, particularly the business's name, address and phone number: what we call the NAP for short.

And...that's it.

Seriously.

So please go ahead and do that now. And if you'd like, come back to this article to find out more about why your Google My Business listing is so important and how you can do more to take advantage of it.

All set? Great. Welcome back!

For many of you, congratulations on handling the one thing you really need to do to ensure you're getting the most out of any digital marketing you do.

I say many because, obviously, not everyone reading these

words stopped everything to claim and/or update their GMB listing.

Maybe you already have a perfectly up-to-date listing. If so, that's wonderful. Or maybe you want to know a little more about GMB before moving forward. That's okay too.

Finally, a few of you might not care about whether your online marketing is getting the job done. If so, it's a little weird that you're still reading this, but that's fine too. Hopefully I can change your mind.

So whichever camp you're in, here's the deal on GMB: Quite simply, it's your free Google business listing. It helps you promote your funeral home (or other death care business). In the digital age, it's as critical to your business as having a phone number; it's time to treat your GMB listings as one of your absolute essentials.

Now, you'll note that I referred to ensuring your GMB is "complete." I meant that you want to be sure all the basic info is filled in, correct, and up to date. But that doesn't mean you've entirely fulfilled the potential of your listing. For example, photos of your business are very important. The more relevant high-resolution photos you include, the better. They need to be in JPG or PNG format and at least 720 x 720, but you can (and should) go for higher resolutions if possible.

Remember that consumers' devices have higher resolution screens these days, so they expect photos (and videos) to show lots of details, and low-res images look especially bad on newer devices.

Google claims that GMB listings with photos get 35 percent more clicks to their website than those without. They also get 42 percent more requests for driving directions in Google Maps than those without. In other words, for your GMB listing to be truly optimized, you need to add some photos.

The image you choose for your cover photo is especially important, because that gets front-and-center display on your listing. Make sure this one looks great and paints your firm in its best light.

I know it might sound strange to suggest a funeral home image could be "enticing" to searchers, but that really is what you're looking to accomplish. Find something that looks professional, reverent and even somewhat modern, if possible.

It's also important to choose a good profile photo. This is the icon people will see whenever you (in the role of your business) upload new content or respond to Google reviews. Obviously, this also should look professional. Your funeral home's logo makes the most sense here, but again, make

sure it looks sharp. Don't use a fuzzy screenshot for this.

You also can include a video about your business. If you don't have one already, let me strongly encourage you to have one made. It's not expensive, and it's a perfect addition to your website's "About Us" page, in addition to great marketing on your GMB listing.

Families want to see your facility and your staff. That engenders feelings of trustworthiness. Don't miss out on a great opportunity to communicate directly through video. Google says you should "use a video to tell the story of your business and what makes it unique." That's exactly right. It's one of the best types of marketing you can do in this digital age.

Note that videos you add to Google My Business must have at least 720p resolution, be no larger than 100 MB and no longer than 30 seconds.

That last number might sound strange but believe me: Even 30 seconds is a long time in this digital age, where people's attention begins to wander very quickly. (Attention spans are not at all what they used to be.)

If you want to show more about your funeral home's services than 30 seconds allows, just do a series of videos. A good videographer can help you budget the time well.

Additionally, you can view Google reviews of your funeral home on your GMB listing. One of the best ways to improve your local search optimization and get more clicks to your website is to generate lots of positive Google reviews.

When someone does review your business, be sure to respond! If the review is positive, take a minute to thank the reviewer in a thoughtful, personal way.

While you hopefully won't get many negative reviews, if you do get one, responding is also a good way to mitigate the damage. You're showing other families that you can handle criticism and will work to fix whatever problem exists.

And if it's a "fake" review (from someone who never actually interacted with your business), you also can make that clear in your response—but always be professional and positive in your tone. The worst thing you can do is respond defensively or angrily.

One last thing: You can promote your business even more on GMB with Google Posts. This feature lets you publish short blog posts about the funeral home. You don't have to write much, and the posts go live very quickly, usually in less than a minute. Take advantage of this free option to market your firm to local families. **FBA**

Welton Hong is the founder and marketing director of Ring Ring Marketing (FuneralHomeProfits.com), which specializes in helping funeral homes convert leads from online directly to the phone line. Welton also is a speaker at funeral home conferences and the author of Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes. Reach him by email at info@ringringmarketing.com or call toll-free at 888/383-2848.