

Are you state compliant?



American Mortuary
COOLERS & EQUIPMENT
mymortuarycooler.com

Order Your Favorite Animal Today!



www.nomispublishings.com
or 1-800-321-7479

The Ideal “Low-Key” Marketing Tool for You!

High-Quality Pre-Planning Booklets to Promote Your Firm in the Community

- Inexpensive • Imprinted • Valuable for Families

This simple booklet lets family members create a written record of personal & financial info along with their funeral wishes. Perfect to pass out at any event. Leave copies out during visitations, too. The imprint reminds them who to call for pre-arrangement or at-need.

Current Pricing (includes FREE Imprinting):

125 copies - \$1.79 each	500 copies - \$1.59 each
250 copies - \$1.69 each	1000 copies - \$1.49 each

See website for pricing on other quantities. Shipping charges will be added.

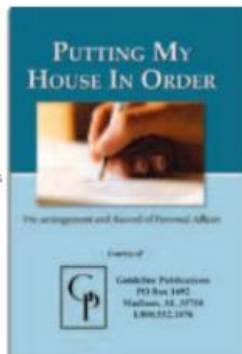
Call to Order or Request FREE Samples of This Booklet or Any of The Other Titles on Our Website!



1-800-552-1076 • sales@guidelinepub.com

GUIDELINE PUBLICATIONS

Spanish Version Available!



24 pages
8 1/2" x 5 1/2"

Visit: www.guidelinepub.com

Review Gating: Why You Can't Do It (and Steps to Take Instead)

Yes, reviews are important for your online reputation and help you show up in the right searches. And with more than 90 percent of consumers checking online reviews before deciding on a company or service, funeral homes and deathcare companies can't afford to ignore them.

But you also can't afford to entirely control them.

Controlling your online reviews in an attempt to absolutely prohibit negative reviews is called review gating, and Google doesn't stand for it. Unlike many statements made about Google's stance on various marketing tactics, this isn't conjecture drawn from experience or the internet giant's vague posturing. In April 2018, Google came right out and said its policy was prohibitive of review gating practices.

Google's policy update said, "Don't discourage or prohibit negative reviews or selectively solicit positive reviews from customers."

Okay, you're probably wondering why anyone would ever solicit negative reviews, but that's not what this language

means. Google is pretty much saying you can't direct clientele on what to say in reviews, and you certainly can't integrate technology to ensure only good reviews are hitting the books.

Prior to this update, some companies were leveraging technology to prequalify reviews. For example, they might send an email to customers asking if they would like to leave a review and providing a link to do so. The customer was then asked to indicate a star rating for the review; if customers indicated a positive

rating, they were shuttled through to Google to complete the process. If they indicated a negative rating, their review was sent to a private site or inbox. This is review gating, and you shouldn't be doing it.

First, Google will penalize you if it catches you gating reviews. That could mean removing all of your reviews or even banning you from the search engine results.

Both are very bad news for your online marketing efforts. More than half of all traffic on webpage's comes from organic searches (and Google is the top contender in that arena), so getting blacklisted is bad news for traffic, conversions, and revenue.

Second, gating your reviews is simply inauthentic, and if consumers find out you're doing it, it mars your brand. You become less trustworthy in general, which is bad for any company but can be especially disastrous for funeral homes and other deathcare businesses where the differentiator is often your honest, compassionate dealings with families in need or those looking to preplan final arrangements.

If you can't be trusted to deal fairly with consumers looking to leave a review, someone might be less likely to trust you with prepaid funeral or cremation arrangements or the final memorial for a loved one.

But with reviews critical to funeral home online marketing, you may wonder what you can do to protect your online reputation. While you can't gate reviews, you can take action in different ways.

Start by providing the kind of service that translates to positive reviews. This may seem obvious, but it's the first step in

By *Welton Hong*



Welton Hong

CONTINUED ON PAGE A23

Review Gating

Continued from Page A22

creating positive word-of-mouth (digitally and otherwise).

Next, create processes that let clientele know that reviews are appreciated and help your business succeed. Depending on the type of services or goods you provide, you may not want to ask for a review at the time of service; it's not tactful to press grieving families to log into their mobile phone or a kiosk in your funeral home, for example. These are tactics that are better left to restaurants or retail establishments.

But deathcare companies can still ask for reviews in a number of ways:









- If clientele seek you out to offer praise or positive feedback, mention that an online review is very helpful for your company and other individuals who may be looking for similar services. Let them know that one of the best places to leave this type of review is on your Google My Business profile.
- Place a discreet note on your website letting visitors know how grateful you are to be able to serve at-need families and others and that you are also appreciative of any feedback they might provide. You might link to your GMB page so individuals can leave reviews.
- Periodically post tactful reminders on your social media pages that reviews are helpful and important to local businesses and that you appreciate feedback from former clientele. Keep this light and tasteful and don't overdo the requests, or it might cause your profiles to seem too self-serving.
- Incorporate review asks into follow-up contacts with clientele. You might include a short written call to action (CTA) about reviews on thank-you materials or invoices you mail out or send a follow-up email ensuring the family doesn't need anything else from you and include a link to leave a review. You also could make a follow-up call to check in on the family (and mention the review process if the vibe during the call is positive about your services).

You can't entirely control the review process, but you can take action to encourage reviews from individuals who seem likely to leave positive ones. And more (mostly positive) reviews helps boost your performance in search engines and inspire trust in potential clientele.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes. For more information, visit www.FuneralHomeProfits.com.

ProfessionalMortuaryEquipment.com

SUMMER 2020

<p>CREMATORY SCISSOR LIFT</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Hydraulic Foot Pump</td><td>\$3995</td></tr> <tr><td>Steel/Battery</td><td>\$5395</td></tr> <tr><td>Steel/Battery/Scale</td><td>\$5945</td></tr> <tr><td>Aluminum/Battery</td><td>\$6895</td></tr> <tr><td>Aluminum/Battery/Scale</td><td>\$7445</td></tr> </table> 	Hydraulic Foot Pump	\$3995	Steel/Battery	\$5395	Steel/Battery/Scale	\$5945	Aluminum/Battery	\$6895	Aluminum/Battery/Scale	\$7445	 <p>CASKET FLAG BANDS (5) \$39.95 SINGLE CASKET FLAG BAND \$9.95</p>	<p>DISASTER BODY BAG 5 PACK \$150</p>  <p>STANDARD BODY BAG 10 PACK \$73</p> 
Hydraulic Foot Pump	\$3995											
Steel/Battery	\$5395											
Steel/Battery/Scale	\$5945											
Aluminum/Battery	\$6895											
Aluminum/Battery/Scale	\$7445											
<p>LAMINATED BODY STORAGE BOARD \$199</p> 	 <p>IMS Flag Bands Sold On Amazon</p> 	<p>SLIDER BOARD \$99 OVERSIZED \$119</p>  										
<p>MORTUARY STRETCHER \$895 OVERSIZED STRETCHER \$1495</p> 	<p>HYDRAULIC EMBALMING TABLE \$3495</p> 	<p>CHURCH TRUCKS \$425</p> 										

International Mortuary Shipping

1-800-604-9576