

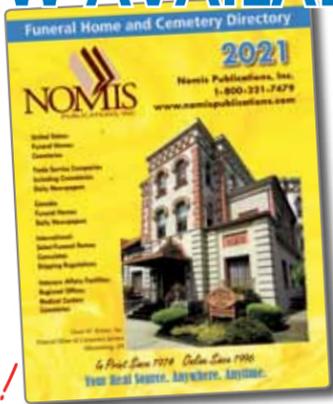


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## What You Need to Know from the Performance Tracker 2020 COVID-19 Impact Report

SCOTTSDALE, AZ— **Johnson Consulting Group** has analyzed more than 100,000 sales records and 20,000 surveys for a specially commissioned, in-depth report on COVID-19's impact on the funeral profession.

"COVID-19 has affected our world in so many different ways," said **Jake Johnson**, president and CEO of Johnson Consulting Group. "And it's affected the funeral profession in ways we need to make sense of as we navigate the future. This report helps us do that."

The Performance Tracker Trends and Insights: 2020 COVID-19 Impact presents results received as of September 30, 2020 from the 2020 Performance Tracker sales and family satisfaction survey. The analysis contextualizes the effects of COVID-19 pandemic within the funeral service profession and the ways clients are reacting to restrictions on funeral services.

- Key findings include:
- As the pandemic continued through the summer and into fall, families were less likely to recommend their funeral home to others, often citing a comparison such as "it wasn't as good as previous experience" with a focus on or problem with costs, or the way services were handled as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.
    - Families indicated lower levels of satisfaction than in 2019 across every attribute for burials, most notably with the initial contact and with staff.
    - "Despite the circumstances" became a popular refrain as family satisfaction ratings fell in 2020.
    - In the second quarter of 2020, families reported much lower levels of satisfaction, in particular, for traditional at-need cremations.
    - Family satisfaction levels for pre-need, graveside or immediate burial arrangements, already lower in 2019 than traditional burials, dropped and remained well below previous ratings.
  - Families that were unable to have the services they wanted often opted for lower cost direct or immediate alternatives.
  - The average sale per case at \$4,079 in April 2020 is 16 percent lower than the \$4,881 average in 2019.

- In the 3rd quarter, families paid approximately \$500 more for monuments, regardless of whether their service was a burial or cremation. Casket and cemetery sales were higher for both case types, as were alternative containers for burials.
- Discounts in 2020 were lower overall than were reported in 2019; however, reported discount amounts increased as the year progressed.
- The limitations of a provider's technology became a point of dissatisfaction as a single negative experience with a single staff member or even one element not working as intended was often enough to generate a reaction: "Everything was perfect, except my experience with [some technology failure]."
  - Issues with technology, live streams, recordings, music, displays and other features often added to an "already stressful experience of trying to coordinate a funeral during a pandemic."

**Lori Salberg**, Director of Technology at Johnson Consulting Group's sister company, **J3Tech Solutions** states, "COVID-19 presented particular challenges for businesses behind the technology curve. Technology, such as live streaming, was suddenly much more front and center, and limitations became much more glaring."

The full report is published on the Johnson Consulting Group website at [www.johnsonconsulting.com](http://www.johnsonconsulting.com).

Johnson Consulting Group is committed to providing intelligent business solutions that meet business owners wherever they are in their business life cycle. Whether you want to grow your business and enterprise value or plan your exit strategy, JCG can assist. With over two decades of creating personalized partnerships and growing revenue with funeral and cemetery business owners, managers and staff, JCG has the expertise and dedication to assist funeral home and cemetery businesses grow in their current operations, start their succession planning, or take their business to market.



## Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

### The Goals of Your Funeral Services Website's Content

You know your staff is doing a good job when families are satisfied and your firm consistently generates calls. Financial reports, sales numbers, and reviews from families you served are all common ways to measure the success of your business.

Here's the trickier part: How do you know if your funeral firm's website content is doing its job?

Most marketers look at these metrics to determine whether their on-page content is succeeding:

- About 75 percent look at organic traffic—the number of page views that come from organic links on search engine results pages (SERPs).
- More than 60 percent look at the number of leads they get related to content—how many people who visit your site also sign up to learn more or make an appointment?
- Approximately 60 percent look at engagement statistics—metrics for how long people stay on pages and whether they click through to other areas of the site.
- Just under 50 percent look at conversion rates—the number of people who come to your site and eventually contact you for at-need or preneed services.

Each metric is useful in isolation, but you really need to consider them all together. Take a similarly comprehensive approach to evaluating your website content marketing efforts. Here's what to do:

#### Perform Better in Search Results

The first task of your website content is to help your firm show up in search results. Specifically, you want to rank on page one of results for the relevant keywords—even better if you can rank in one of the top three organic spots on the page.

It's true that Google has muddied the waters with answer boxes, map results, and other on-page properties. But the first five organic links still get the bulk of the clicks—something like 68 percent of them.

Position one, which is the first organic link, gets over 30 percent of the clicks, and positions two and three garner close to 25 percent of the clicks on average.

If you're not showing up in one of these spots, you're not connecting with the vast majority of people who begin looking for deathcare services via the search engines.

Do keyword research to understand what potential clientele is searching for. Then create high-quality content that includes those keywords and also answers the intent of the search.

#### Attract Backlinks

Backlinks occur when a page that isn't on your domain links to one of your pages. That can include links from blog posts, industry association pages, and social media.

They're important for two reasons. First, they provide a path for potential clientele to discover your website. Second, high-quality backlinks can help increase your page's performance in SERPs.

That's because Google considers your page more likely to be authoritative if other high-quality pages are linking to it. Think of it like this: A backlink is like the digital version of a recommendation.

The best way to garner high-quality, organic backlinks is by creating helpful, informative copy that people, organizations, and businesses are likely to link to.

#### Engage Website Visitors

Engaged visitors stay on your site longer. They read more of your content, click through to other pages, and are more likely to sign up for newsletters or contact you for additional information.

The more someone engages with your funeral home online, the greater the chance they'll think of you during their family's time of need. Plus, content that keeps them reading has a greater chance of persuading them that preplanning is a good idea.

You also want to ensure your content addresses searcher intent for the keywords. If your page promises one thing in search results and doesn't deliver that when the person clicks through, they'll bounce quickly.

#### Encourage Trust

Content that demonstrates authority and expertise helps generate trust in site visitors. Other elements that drive trust include transparency, integrity, and compassion.

People need to feel able to trust in your firm and staff before they can decide to place their own final arrangements or those of a loved one in your hands.

Some tips for creating authoritative content include interviewing experts on your staff, creating video content that demonstrates your knowledge, and linking to reputable organizations or pages to back up any statistics or facts you state.

#### Show the Path for Next Steps

Once you capture visitor attention, let them know what the next steps are in a clear call to action (CTA).

Adding just one CTA to a marketing email can increase click-through by as much as 370 percent. Using CTA language with anchor text links can increase on-page conversions by more than 120 percent.

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](http://www.FuneralHomeProfits.com).

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