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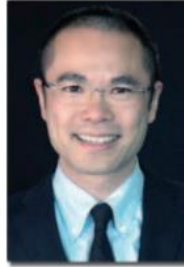
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Voice Search: How to Capture This Growing Traffic

By Welton Hong

If you're not optimizing content with voice search in mind, you're already behind the times. Your online funeral home or cemetery marketing efforts will fall exponentially further behind if you don't learn about and keep up with this new trend in SEO and internet use.



Welton Hong

What Is Voice Search?

Voice search occurs when someone uses a voice-activated device to make a spoken search engine query. When you ask Apple's Siri or Samsung's Bixby, "Where can I order pizza near me?" That's a voice search. When someone asks an Alexa home device, "Alexa, what's the capital of Wyoming?" That's also a voice search.

Voice search is currently possible through voice assistants on smartphones, tablets, and home devices such as smart speakers.

Why Is Voice Search Important for Deathcare Marketing?

Experts predict that by 2020, half of all online searches will be performed via voice and around 30 percent of web browsing might not even occur on a screen at all.

Year-over-year growth for quarter three of 2018 showed a 200 percent rise in smart speaker shipments worldwide. As of late 2018, about 7 percent of households reported owning a smart speaker, which equated to about 40 million Americans. Trends indicate that 55 percent of households will be equipped with this tech in just three years.

If you're relying solely on mobile or desktop searches to drive organic traffic to your site, you'll be missing out on close to one-third of the market within two years.

How Can You Optimize for Voice Search?

According to Google, a fifth of searches now have "voice intent," and with voice search on the rise, that number will increase. Here are four ways funeral homes can optimize their websites and online presences to show up for voice searches:

1. *Create content that matches common voice search intent.* Voice searches don't yet factor well into long sales cycles, but they're important for immediate needs and informational searches.

At this point, it's unlikely a family in need would turn to Alexa for a funeral home recommendation as they would for lists of local ice cream shops, but with screens giving way to smart speakers at increasing rates, that's actually not an impossible scenario.

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Let's Chat

By Kristan Dean

Happy Thanksgiving! Two words that invite us to feel the joy that comes with gratitude. A space to come together, remember, and express what we are thankful for. I wonder if you know that I am grateful for *you*. I am. You give me a place in your world every time you read this column. Thank you. Writing it reminds me that I get to set aside time every month to be with myself, my thoughts, and my feelings in a way that opens my life.

You allow me to write in a way that expands my curiosity and lets me explore the possibility that all things serve a purpose. Even when I am writing about my mistakes, things I want to do better, or feelings that are painful, you give me space to feel them and wonder what they bring to my life. I put them into words and you make time in your day to see what those words bring to you. I appreciate you and the time that you give me. It is far more than the minutes that you set aside to read this column. Thank you.

"Happy Thanksgiving!" is more than the fourth Thursday in November. It is more than the meal, football games, and get togethers. It is an invitation to experience the joy that comes from gratitude. I imagine sitting at our family's dining room table and listening to what each of us is thankful for and I remember what love feels like when we put it into words. I am grateful for how each of them loves me and how much I love each of them. I am in awe of who they are and how they inspire me to be better.

My memory lets me spend a moment with my late husband. I remember everyone around the table raising their glass, one after the other, to toast what each person at the table means to us and why we are grateful to have them in our lives. In my mind I see my dad. He is there telling each of us how much he loves us. In my heart and in my memories those that I love and those

that love me are never "past tense". Death does not make me stop loving my dad, husband, and all who mean something to me. They are an active part of my life. I can sit with them, ask for their presence, guidance, help, and love and I can miss them. They are a part of me and I am a part of them.

Thank you for giving me moments to remember, imagine, and be with everyone that I love. You are someone that I am grateful for. I pray that all of us remember to take time every day to feel the joy of one thing, one person, one moment, one memory that we are grateful for and that it inspires us to express it. May today be a day that opens our hearts to all that we love and all who love us. Happy Thanksgiving!

In 2000 Kristan Dean began working with her family to bring Merry Christmas From Heaven® to all who need the gifts' message of Comfort, Love, and Faith. Today she is the Vice President of Marketing and one of the primary members of her family's Bereavement Ministry.

Thanks, in great part, to the thousands of funeral directors and retailers nationwide who make Merry Christmas From Heaven® a part of their communities, countless numbers of families reach out to their family every year. Their bereavement ministry helps families realize that those in Heaven live forever in our hearts. Their love is with us always.

Prior to Mooney FunCo, Inc. Kristan worked with companies nationwide helping them build revenues by creating greater sales opportunities through the use of sales intelligence and marketing alignment.

Blogs Funeral Home & Cemetery News
Contributors share insights and exchange ideas.
www.nomispublications.com

For funeral homes, the bigger wins right now relate to information. It's much more likely someone will say, "Alexa, what is cremation?" or ask their phone-based voice assistant about veterans' burial benefits, memorial ideas, or where ashes can be scattered. Publishing blog posts or articles on your site that answer these queries helps you draw in voice traffic.

2. *Aim for the featured snippet and understand trigger words.*
The featured snippet, aka Google's answer box, is also called "position zero" because it appears above the number one spot in organic search results. Often, the featured snippet even appears before paid results, so in this case, zero is the hero.

Funeral homes can take a crack at winning a spot as the featured snippet by asking and answering relevant questions within their content. And because these snippets typically answer a query within a concise 25 to 40 words, they're a favorite for voice devices, which read back the short answers to the searcher.

Enhance your chance of earning the Google answer box with the right trigger words. "How" voice searches trigger about 8 percent of featured snippets, and 25 common trigger words account for around 20 percent of the total featured snippets that show up on Google. Other top words in that list include "what," "best," "is," "where," "easy," and "can."

3. *Beef up your local SEO efforts.*

Three out of four voice search device owners use spoken searches to discover local business information at least one time every week. Leverage both on-page and off-page SEO tactics to boost your local SEO rankings.

Individuals might use voice search to get a list of funeral homes in a certain city or find the specific address of or directions to your funeral home. Increase the chance of appearing in these searches by including accurate NAP (name, address, and phone number) data on your website, in your social profiles, and on your Google My Business page.

4. *Keep voice keywords in mind.*

Think about how people speak so you can frame keyword phrases with voice in mind. Someone looking for funeral homes in Sacramento via desktop or mobile might type "funeral homes Sacramento." But voice searches are more organic; someone might say "What are some funeral homes near me?" or "What are the best funeral homes in Sacramento?"

Voice search might be a wave that comes in slowly for funeral homes, but the water is rising. Make sure you're prepared with digital marketing efforts that keep voice search in mind.

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.