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Who Should Be Handling Your Funeral Home Marketing?

By Welton Hong

A century ago, family-driven funerals were the norm. Today, however, most people wouldn't, couldn't, or shouldn't prepare their own loved ones for burial or cremation. Regulations, expertise, and technical processes all come into play to make this far less likely than it was historically.

But that doesn't mean families can't do a lot themselves. Many deathcare providers make a point of providing flexible services, including home funerals, natural or green burials, and life celebrations that put loved ones at the helm of the effort.

Online marketing is similar. Historically, many businesses—small and large—managed marketing and advertising with in-house teams. Today's digital landscape requires knowledge, tools, and scalability that doesn't always work in-house, though, which is why many deathcare firms turn to outside resources.

As with anything related to online marketing, what works for one firm might not work for you.

Here's a look at several options for handling your funeral home marketing, along with some pros and cons of each, to help you discern which strategy might be best for you:

Keep Everything In-House

The first option is to handle all your funeral home marketing with in-house staff. Some of the things you'll need to do to help support success include:

- Define your target audiences
- Create strategic marketing and advertising plans that work together to connect with those audiences
- Create and manage an online presence on your own website as well as Google My Business and social media pages
- Conduct keyword research to inform SEO content and ad campaigns
- Create and publish content, including blog and social posts, videos, and images
- Write ad copy and manage PPC ad bidding campaigns

The biggest benefit of keeping your online marketing 100 percent in-house is that you maintain complete control.

But as you can see, the list of work required is long, and you need certain skills and tools to accomplish these tasks. Also, a DIY approach probably won't necessarily save you money, because you'll need to hire marketing staff or pay extra hours for existing staff to handle this workload on top of their own.

Outsource the Entire Process to One Company

Alternatively, you can outsource the entire marketing process to one company. In effect, you hand over the reins to a business partner and let them deal with the day-to-day work of marketing while you deal with running your deathcare firm.

The biggest downside here is that you potentially give up a

lot of control. For example, this could involve "handing" your ad budget over to the business partner to spend as they feel appropriate.

The benefit is that you can save a lot of time and money if you work with a reputable agency. You simply provide overall instructions and guidance for the big picture, and you don't have to worry about marketing much during a regular workday or week. An experienced provider can also typically provide more ROI for your spend because they already know how to engage in proven marketing practices.

If this sounds like an option for you, make sure you choose a marketing firm with transparent practices and strong reporting. That way, you're always in the know regarding your marketing spend.

Choose Several Partners with Niche Experience

If you can't find one marketing partner that does everything you need, you can work with several businesses. You might work with a PPC ad company, freelancers to create content, a web developer to create and maintain your site, and social media marketers to build up your Facebook or Instagram presence.

A benefit of this approach is that you can pick and choose companies that offer exactly what you need in each arena. The downside is that you may need to play communication traffic cop between all those partners, and if you're not careful, you might find that vendors are overlapping each other or that necessary marketing tasks are falling through the cracks.

Use a Hybrid Approach of Outsourcing and In-House Staff

One way to get the benefits of multiple vendors without so much of the confusion is to create a process that uses both in-house staff and external marketing experts.

For example, you might have someone on staff that's great with social media. They may be able to post regular, brand-appropriate content that connects fully with your audience, so you only need a marketing firm to handle website marketing and PPC ads.

Alternatively, perhaps you have an employee who writes well and wants to generate blog posts for the firm. You can then hand off that copy off to an SEO company to add in keywords, meta tags, and other components before publishing the posts on your site.

How you manage your online marketing is up to you, and every option has pros and cons. But one thing is true no matter what: You must make a decision and stick with it a while to test whether it works for your firm.

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.



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