

Saluting Our Nation's Fallen with 24 Notes

Inside:

- Pre-need Sales
- Strategic Marketing
- Creative Lead Generation

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by **Welton Hong**



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Three Ways to Supercharge Your Firm's Credibility

All businesses need a high level of credibility to secure a potential client's trust, and that's probably truer for funeral homes and other deathcare service providers than in any other industry. But just like respect, credibility must be earned.

All of your marketing should reflect an openness that makes families want to talk to you. As a part of that communication, it is important to involve your audience so you can (1) secure feedback and (2) secure great testimonials that will help build your credibility over time.

Generate More Online Reviews

Reviews are part of any business, even in deathcare. They are posted on search engines and websites, as well as in testimonials you post to your own website. Families rely on these reviews to make decisions about whether to use your funeral home, cremation service, or cemetery for their needs.

More than half of American adults under age 50 use reviews to make purchasing decisions. When people search for your firm online, online reviews become even more important.

Your ability to dominate local online searches matters because review websites aggregate information based on search keywords and categories that should be reflected on your website. HubSpot reported a 10 percent increase in clicks simply by adding a review schema to its product pages.

So what does that mean for you?

You need more online reviews. They both create traffic to your website and increase the likelihood of conversions, which is the bottom line for your deathcare business. Across all industries, conversion rates increase nearly 60 percent when potential clients have the opportunity to interact with reviews.

A few simple tips to secure more online reviews:

- Start an email campaign
- Ask satisfied clients to review your firm
- Run a retargeting campaign
- Post on social media
- Ask website visitors to review you

Funeral directors and other deathcare professionals shouldn't feel nervous about asking for reviews. Just be as thoughtful and considerate in this process as you are in everything else you do. Be tactful with your families and help them understand the importance of leaving a good review.

Increase Online Citations of Your Firm

Ranking locally in Google organic traffic is very important, so pay attention to local SEO. A large piece of that puzzle is the generation of local citations.

Citations are to local search-engine optimization (SEO) as backlinks are to traditional website rankings. If your SEO rankings are not where you want them to be, it might be time to work on securing more targeted citations.

What do I mean by citation? A citation occurs



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when your deathcare business is mentioned on another website. This differs from a backlink because citations do not link back to your website. They simply mention your business.

Citations come in two types: (1) structured (mentions found in business directories) and (2) unstructured (mentions found in blogs, on websites, etc.). A proper citation includes your business's name, address, contact number, and other relevant details.

Citations help improve your local search rankings by demonstrating authenticity and credibility in your local area. Businesses that regularly appear in the top three of local searches have at least 85 local citations.

However, that number might not reflect what your funeral home, cemetery, or cremation provider needs to rank in your local area; it will be based on the competition for local search rankings.

How do you select a business directory to generate more local citations, thereby boosting your local search ranking? Let's look at a some ways:

- **Use Google Search.** Begin by searching popular local business listings, such as Yelp, Yellow Pages, Foursquare, and Manta. Then search local business listings for your city and state. Finally, search for competitors' listings.
- **Leverage core structured citations.** When building citations, certain business directories are most beneficial for you to rank locally. These include Yelp, Yellow

Pages, Foursquare, Bing, Facebook, Localize, Factual, Superpages, Acxiom, Apple Maps, CityGrid, Manta, and Yahoo Local.

- **Use industry-specific platforms.** As a deathcare business, it's important to appear anywhere funeral homes and related businesses are listed in your local area.
- **Guest post on authoritative blogs.** Writing guest posts exposes your deathcare business to new potential clients. It also helps you secure citations and backlinks in the process.
- **Improve your on-page SEO.** Making sure your website has good SEO helps you increase credibility, authenticity, and trust in your funeral home. The best ways to accomplish this: have your NAP (name, address, phone number) clearly displayed throughout your website; create quality content regularly; and make sure your website is responsive (mobile-friendly).

Publicize Your Community Involvement

Being part of your community and giving back is vital. Regardless of the size of your deathcare business, communities benefit from your involvement. It is important to share your community involvement through social media, any community publications, and the mainstream media. There are a number of ways to accomplish this; here are a few worth leveraging:

- **Share your time.** Reach out to local nonprofits and see what they need. Some organizations might need volunteers, while others could use monetary support.

- **Learn about environmental causes.** Create a green initiative in your funeral home or cemetery, or assist with local initiatives meant to improve your local community. While cutting carbon emissions might be too lofty a goal for your deathcare business, you can increase your visibility by leaning into causes that matter to you.
- **Budget for donations.** The unfortunate reality is that most nonprofits are under-budgeted. They need more money than they can reasonably collect to achieve their goals. You can donate to local causes or work with other businesses and associations on donation-matching.
- **Sponsor events.** Engaging in local events as well as sponsoring them is a great way to increase local brand recognition, especially if your funeral home is relatively unknown. There's no reason a deathcare business can't sponsor a recreational softball or soccer team.

While online reviews, local citations, and community involvement are incredibly important for building credibility, securing testimonials from satisfied families can showcase all the elements of your business that make it attractive to future potential clients.

In the end, credibility is all about authenticity. When thinking about supercharging your funeral home's credibility, you can't forget how important authenticity is to your potential client. Be authentic in the care you take with loved ones and in your communication. □



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