

# THE CREMATIONIST OF NORTH AMERICA

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# Add This Powerhouse Format to Your Cremation Marketing

By Welron Hong



Photo by Andy Holmes on Unsplash

Some of you might remember when MTV first premiered, way back in 1981. For those who don't, you also might be shocked to know that all the channel did for many years was to show music videos!

The very first video ever shown on MTV, appropriately enough, was an alternative pop song, recorded in 1979 by the Buggles, called "Video Killed the Radio Star."

In truth, video didn't kill radio stars—for most, it only made them more popular. Nor did it kill radio itself. Music videos simply offered consumers a new way to listen to music.

In fact, more than four decades after the Buggles' catchy anthem, radio still exists and is important. And video is far from the alpha-omega of the music scene; radio evolved too, offering internet options and morphing into numerous on-demand and streaming services.

So what does this jaunt down music memory lane have to do with a powerhouse format for marketing your crematory or deathcare firm?

Simple: The powerhouse format I'm going to talk about is video. But even though I'm about to provide many compelling reasons you should add video to your marketing efforts, I also want you to remember that diversity is important. Multichannel marketing—which includes content, social media, SEO, and other proven approaches—is a must for most funeral industry businesses.

Video is powerful—as you're about to see—but it hasn't killed other forms of marketing. Instead, it's become a champion that

pairs with your existing online marketing army to help ensure success.

## Proving the Power of Video Marketing

Almost 100 percent of marketers who were using video in 2019 said they would continue investing in this channel in 2020. And 95 percent said they were going to *increase* how much they spent on video.

Video's popularity grows annually, and it's not surprising. Close to 90 percent of marketers say video drives positive ROI for their companies or clients. That's up from just over 30 percent who could say the same thing in 2015.

But *why* is video generating so much ROI? It turns out that many of today's consumers—yes, even many people in the deathcare demographic—prefer to receive information in this fashion.

The average American engages with almost seven hours of online video content every week, according to recent studies, and those were conducted before the coronavirus crisis. With so many people shut in at home for a good portion of 2020, you can expect that number to go up for this year.

In fact, it's a safe bet that video marketing is going to increase continuously in future years. More than half of consumers said they want to see more video content from businesses, and, on average, it's consumers' favorite form of content to see on social media.

By 2022, several analysts believe, video will account for 82 percent of all internet traffic. Which means if you're not investing in video *now*, you stand to lose a great deal in the near future.



## Do People Really Want Videos About Cremation?

I've heard all kinds of reasons for clients not using video marketing. They range from concerns about budget and equipment (honestly, you can start video marketing with just your smartphone) to fears of not having content people want. After all, surely people aren't searching the internet for video content about cremation?

Except *they are*.

The web browser bar is often the first place that people turn to when they want information. And that's what families with immediate needs or those considering preplanning want: information to help them make a good decision about an important life matter.

Not everyone wants to browse through 2,000 words of text about a complex (and sometimes anxiety-inducing) topic such as deathcare. And for some people, video is more than just a preference. They're visual or auditory learners who engage with information better when it's presented in formats that go beyond text on the page.

As many as 65 percent of people are visual learners. So if you're only spending on text-based content, you're probably missing the mark with cremation marketing.

## How to Employ Video for Your Marketing

You can't just film some videos, slap them on YouTube and consider it done. Like all marketing efforts, video content requires strategy and some regular tending.

Here are some quick tips for successfully integrating videos into your crematory or deathcare marketing efforts online:

### Tell stories or provide information instead of pushing sales.

Video marketing isn't the same thing as a television spot, and you're not making an ad. (Unless you are—there's a time and place online for video advertisements, but that's not the type of video I'm talking about here.)

Outside of a "straight ad," know that you have to provide something of value to the viewer: entertainment or helpful information. Create videos that explain fundamentals of cremation, why it's a great choice, who might want to consider it, and someone can preplan for it. Tell stories about your staff, why they're great at their jobs, and how you treat your clientele.

### Don't forget search engine optimization.

Many clients I speak with don't realize that video can help with SEO. First, good content of *any* kind keeps people on your pages longer, helps persuade them to click to other pages on your site, and reduces bounce rates. These are all behavioral metrics that can increase your RankBrain score, which is used in Google's page rank algorithm.

Second, video provides additional areas for placing keyword-rich content. The video title, description, filename, and tags can all house keywords that help the search engines know what your

content is about. You can also place a text-based transcript of the video on your page—chances are it's filled with semantically related keywords that increase the SEO value of your content.

### Share your videos across channels.

Host your video on YouTube for the best chance at connecting with your audience: YouTube has an enormous user base and is second only to Google as a *search engine*. That's right: Many people actually *start on YouTube* when they're looking for answers about something.

YouTube also makes it easy to share your content to other channels. Share links to your social pages and embed YouTube video content on your own site. Just make sure that every YouTube video description includes a link back to your site; it does no good to drive all that traffic to YouTube if consumers can't easily find your site when they're ready to connect.

### Don't forget about micro videos.

Not every video you make for marketing purposes must be YouTube-worthy. Social media sites, including Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, make it easy to create short video snippets to include in your feed or stories. IGTV, an option on Instagram, lets you post even longer videos.

Consider creating a mix of humanizing and helpful videos for these channels. All you need is a smartphone and a few minutes to check in with followers, introduce a new crematory manager, or show off a new line of urns. You can also humanize your staffers by showing them attending local events or enjoying a bite to eat at a favorite neighborhood restaurant.

What you do with video marketing depends on your audience, your business mission and messaging, and your marketing goals. But what you *can't* do is ignore video altogether.

Video didn't kill the radio star. But ignoring video marketing *could* eventually kill your cremation business. 



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