



Learning ^{the} **Ins and Outs** of **Tweeting**

How Your Deathcare Firm Can Take Advantage of Twitter

by Welton Hong

TWITTER might not be the most popular social media platform in the United States, but it does have a user base that shows up regularly. Funeral service marketers looking to expand social media presence might want to consider claiming a Twitter handle and connecting with users on the platform. This guide includes everything you need to know to get started.

Anatomy of a Twitter Post

At the risk of stating the obvious, Twitter posts (aka *tweets*) are short status updates that show up on your profile on the platform. They also show up in the Twitter feed of anyone who follows your account.

Here's a quick rundown of the parts of a Twitter post:

- **Text.** Most tweets contain at least a bit of text. It might provide information or entertainment, ask a question, or comment on or introduce a link, image, or video.
- **Media.** As on any social platform, posts that contain media tend to get more engagement than text-only posts. You can add static images, animated GIFs, and short videos to tweets.
- **Hashtags.** Tags help catalog content so people can find posts relevant to certain topics. You add a hashtag to a tweet by typing “#” followed by the tag. Like this: #funeralhomemarketing #howtotweet.
- **Links.** You can add a link to tweets, which is handy

for redirecting people to your funeral home website or blog. You might also want to build trust with your audience by sharing helpful content from other sites.

Tweets can be up to 280 characters long. That includes hashtags and links, and some emojis and special glyphs count as more than one character.

Most tweets don't approach the maximum character count, in part because less is more on this platform. Tweets that are 71 to 100 characters long get 17% more engagement than shorter or longer posts.

Don't fret if you can't get every message into that narrow window. If you're providing quality content that resonates with your target audience, they'll forgive a varying character count.

Other Functions and Components on Twitter

A **retweet** occurs when you share a tweet written by someone else. It causes the other person's tweet to

show up on your profile and in your followers' feeds—even if they don't follow the person who wrote the tweet originally.

Funeral service social media marketers might retweet posts from others that are relevant to their audience, such as tips for estate planning (which goes hand-in-hand with pre-planning final arrangements) or an update on a local event for the community.

A **“quote tweet”** is a retweet that lets you add your own commentary. Generally, this is better than a retweet because it lets you point out why the shared content is relevant, or you can make a clarification or addition that helps position your firm as knowledgeable or helpful.

A **thread** is a series of related tweets made by a single user. This is how people get around the limited character count of tweets when they have more to say. You create a thread by posting the first tweet and then responding to it. Continue responding to your tweets for as many as it takes to complete the thought.



When marketing on a social media platform—or considering it—you need information about the overall user base of the site. That helps you understand if it's a good match for your ideal audience and how to position marketing messages if you decide to use it.

Funeral service marketers can use tweet threads to provide education about pre-planning, tips for planning funerals, definitions of deathcare terms, or other information that needs more than a sentence or two for clarity.

Twitter polls are tweets that let you ask a question and have people respond via a vote. Polls are good for engagement on almost any platform, as they don't require commitment and are easy for people to participate in.

Replies are comments on another person's tweets. Remember that replies might show up for your

followers, so you never want to engage in discussions on Twitter with your funeral home account that aren't professional or relevant to your business.

Twitter users can also **like** (heart) any post or **share** posts to other social media networks or via **DMs**. DMs are direct messages, which work on Twitter mostly as they do on other social media networks.

Following Other Accounts

Like all social media platforms, Twitter is a community collaboration. Funeral homes that engage with others on the platform might experience more success on Twitter than those that do not.

Start by following accounts that are relevant to your business. This is helpful because it clues in Twitter and its users to what you're interested in and what type of account you run. It also lets you see updates from organizations that you might be interested in knowing about.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (@ICCF)
- The Crematory Association of North America (@CremationAssoc)
- National Funeral Directors Association (@NFDA)
- Resources in your community, including news organizations and chambers of commerce
- Noncompeting local firms in your industry, such as local cemeteries if you're a funeral home
- Local hospice care centers, death doulas, and others who are engaged in different aspects of end-of-life and deathcare

Once you follow some other accounts, you'll start seeing their posts in your feed. You can also retweet or quote tweet their content.

Who Is on Twitter?

When marketing on a social media platform—or considering it—you need information about the overall user base of the site. That helps you understand if it's a good match for your ideal audience and how to position marketing messages if you decide to use it. Start with the facts and stats below to determine whether Twitter might be a good place for marketing your funeral home.

About 187 million people use Twitter daily, and more than half turn to the social media network as a regular source of news.

Demographics-wise, Twitter is most used by younger millennials. Younger GenXers and older GenZers round out much of the rest of the audience. The exact breakdown by age as of late 2021 was:

- 13– to 17-year-olds: 6.6%
- 18– to 24-year-olds: 17.1%
- 25– to 34-year-olds: 38.5%

- 35– to 49-year-olds: 20.7%
- 50 and older: 17.1%

Men outnumber women on the platform, comprising about 70% of the user base.

Twitter users tend to have above-average educations, with more than 40% of U.S. users holding college degrees. The user base skews more liberal than conservative, with about 65% leaning toward Democrat or identifying strongly as Democrats.

Tips for Tweeting as a Deathcare Business

Knowing what to tweet and when can be daunting for those who are just getting started on Twitter. The platform is fast-paced, and you're competing with a lot of other posts. Posting quality content at a consistent cadence is the best way to build a following and increase your engagement.

According to Hootsuite data, it's best to post one or two times a day and no more than around five times a day. If you post a thread, it counts as one time a day, assuming you posted it all at once.

For busy deathcare professionals, tweeting a couple times every day can be impossible without a bit of automation. Instead of trying to remember to log in and come up with a tweet a few times a day, use a content batching process to make Twitter marketing much easier.

Start by setting aside a few hours to write tweets. Come up with as many tweets as you can during that time. Then use a tool such as Hootsuite to schedule posts for a week or even a month ahead of time. Hootsuite and similar tools publish your tweets automatically according to a schedule you set.

If you're not sure what to tweet, here are some ideas:

- Share a link to blog posts or other content on your funeral firm's website. Include a short teaser or call to action to tell people why they should click the link to read more.
- Create polls related to your services. Would you want a family member to sing at your funeral, have you pre-planned your final arrangements, and have you ever written a eulogy are just a few examples.
- Use polls to engage the local or regional community and build local relevance for your firm.
- Share photos of your location to highlight amenities and service options.
- Upload short video messages from the funeral director.
- Post the occasional meme or light-hearted (but tasteful) content to humanize your business.



- Share links to content that's not yours but might be helpful to your audience. Include a short text introduction to the link that relates it to your services or your audience.

You can also choose to outsource social media content creation, including tweets, to freelancers or agencies.

Using Twitter for Your Funeral Home

Whether or not spending marketing resources on Twitter is a good business decision depends on your funeral home's needs and your target audience.

If you want to target younger audiences or expand reach to more male consumers, Twitter might be a great place to start. And given that creating an account and posting are free, you can test the waters before you make a final decision about marketing your funeral home on Twitter. ☑

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing and the author of *Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes*.