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Foundation Partners Group Reports Record Growth in 2021, Sharpens Focus on Cremation Consumers

ORLANDO, FL— Foundation Partners Group has announced record growth in 2021. Led by acquisitions, including the acquisition of **Baldwin Brothers Funeral & Cremation Society** of Florida, the company grew by 50 percent year-over-year. The company now serves more than 115,000 families annually and operates 215 locations.

Leading Foundation Partners' charge to shape the future of funeral service is president **Kent Robertson**, who called 2021 "a pivotal year" for the company. "We grew by reaching families in new ways, increasing services in existing markets and expanding into new ones by partnering with great firms," Robertson said. "We could not have achieved this success without the hard work of our dedicated team members, who continue to serve families during their most difficult times.

"We are committed to creating enduring partnerships with successful and innovative business owners who share our vision of the future of deathcare. And while the pandemic continues to disrupt the country and alter the deathcare landscape, it has not slowed down Foundation Partners growth. It has increased the number of like-minded firms looking to partner with us to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of today's consumers," Robertson added.

In December 2021, Foundation Partners completed its acquisition of

Baldwin Brothers, which has been serving the needs of Florida families for more than 10 years. With some 20 locations serving cremation consumers throughout Central and Southwest Florida, Baldwin Brothers was founded by industry veterans **Jerry Pullins** and **Rick Baldwin** and is led by **Skip Knopke**.

"Baldwin Brothers is an example of the kind of firm that complements our network," said Robertson. "We set out to create the deepest and broadest cremation-focused firm in the United States and have achieved that goal through the strength of our partners. This mission resonates in 2022 and beyond, and we're excited for the future."

Foundation Partners Group is one of the industry's most innovative providers of funeral services and the second largest funeral home group in the country based on number of families served. Foundation Partners owns and operates a network of more than 200 funeral homes, cremation centers and cemeteries across 21 states. Their deep understanding of technology and our ShareLife® customer experience-centered approach allows them to deliver truly innovative and compassionate care to the families they serve. Visit www.foundationpartners.com to learn more.

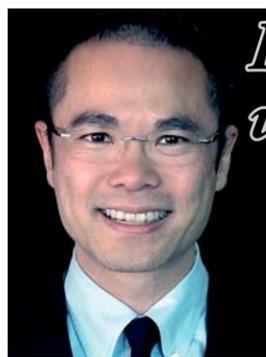
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Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

Tips for Retargeting in 2022 and Beyond

More than 90 percent of the people who arrive on your funeral care website for the first time won't contact you for an appointment, set up preplanning services, or even reach out for help with an at-need situation.

That doesn't mean your website isn't doing its job. It's a reflection of how people use the internet: Most consumers start with Google and other online research when they first realize they might have a need for any good or service. Those first arrivals on your deathcare site may not convert because they're not ready. They're just looking—researching and metaphorically window browsing.

For deathcare firms, the goal is to remain within each person's thought process as they continue to research. That way, when the consumer is finally ready to sign up, set up an appointment, or make a purchase, your firm is the business they think of first.

One important tool for achieving that result is *retargeting* (also called *remarketing*).

What Is Retargeting?

Retargeting refers to efforts to get back in front of consumers that have visited your website or shown interest in your services. One of the most common forms of remarketing involves using cookies to ensure your ads show up when specific people are browsing other areas of the internet.

This effort involves some code and technology, but the basic idea works like this:

- **Someone comes to your website via any method.** They might have clicked on a social media link, for example, or chose your link from Google results after searching for a relevant keyword.
- **Some information about this visitor is captured, often by a third party.** The information is referred to as *cookies* and includes the user's IP address. This is a series of numbers that identifies the computer or device and tracks it as a person uses it to inter-

act online. In some cases, the person's login, and not the device, may be tracked. This can be the case when someone is signed into a Google account.

- **An ad network uses that information to "target" the user.** Armed with the information that a certain user showed interest in your services, the ad network can ensure ads for your business show up as the user visits other sites.

Why Is Retargeting Important for Deathcare Firms?

You may have heard about the magic seven touchpoints in marketing. The theory is that people must experience seven touchpoints with a business, brand, or product before they make a purchase.

In reality, there's no magic number. But *most* people don't buy on the first touchpoint. The larger or more serious the purchase, the more touchpoints consumers may need before making a decision.

Retargeting helps you connect with potential clientele repeatedly. It ensures your firm's name remains relevant and can help remind them that you had services they were interested in. Since preplanning and other deathcare services are often considered both large and serious purchases, these touchpoints can make a huge difference in whether potential clientele becomes actual clientele in the near future.

The Challenge of Retargeting in 2022 and Beyond

The not-so-distant future is throwing a wrench in retargeting efforts, though. Firefox and Safari browsers don't allow third-party cookies and haven't for a while. And Google's Chrome is doing away with them by the end of 2023.

Chrome has a whopping 70 percent share of search traffic, which means sites are going to lose a lot of retargeting power.

Third-party cookies have been historically important because they work across many sites. That lets third-party networks make data-backed assumptions about the interests and behaviors of users. So, for example, someone who has searched preplanning in your region but hasn't

actually visited your site yet might be targeted with an ad for your services anyway.

Easy access to this level of data-backed retargeting may go away by the end of 2023.

Tips for Retargeting

The end of third-party cookies doesn't mean the end of all remarketing efforts. Here are some ways deathcare firms can continue to retarget consumers who have shown interest in their services:

- **Use first-party cookies.** First-party cookies aren't currently in danger. Any information you gather about your audience can be used to remarket. You may be able to import your own data into ad tools to drive some of the same type of retargeting that third-party cookies allow.
- **Retarget via email.** If someone downloads a preplanning resource, follow up with an email drip campaign. You could send information such as links to other helpful resources on your site, tips for preplanning, stats about the benefits of planning ahead, and an individual invite to a webinar or lunch-and-learn event.
- **Remarket on social media.** Facebook and other social media sites have their own data-gathering tools, and these are not considered third-party cookies when used for targeting on the platforms they own. Deathcare firms can target social media ads by factors that include what people are interested in, age, and location.

You'll also want to pay attention to news about cookies and retargeting tools in the next year or two. While privacy is becoming increasingly important in online spaces, digital advertising and marketing remains a critical tool for all types of businesses. And there are companies constantly developing tools and resources to make those efforts easier.

Chances are, someone will come up with options to replace third-party cookies, and deathcare firms that are poised to use those options first may have a competitive edge.

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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