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NACG Opens Registration for 25th National Symposium

LUBBOCK, TX— The National Alliance for Children's Grief has announced that registration is open for the 25th National Symposium on Children's Grief taking place in person June 29 - July 1, 2022, in Orlando. The Annual NACG Symposium offers participants

the opportunity to learn of the latest research and clinical developments in working with grieving children and teens; enhance skills and knowledge to deliver state-of-the-art services to grieving children and adolescents; engage in dialogue with colleagues, clinicians, researchers, and healthcare professional to exchange ideas information, and clinical expertise.

The symposium offers varied workshops on topics important to children's



grief issues, program development, non-profit administration, activities, fundraising, and grief support models, to name a few. The NACG is committed to ensuring a safe and engaging environment for the 2022

symposium. These will include limits in session rooms and hand sanitizing stations.

"In marking the 25th symposium, we honor the spark started by those who came together in Oberlin, OH. That event started a conversation that has continued for a quarter of a century and led to the founding of the organization we know today as the National Alliance for Children's Grief. The symposium has adapted and changed over time, but the essence of connection and support through education and community remains the same," stated CEO Vicki Jay.

To learn more about NACG or to register for the symposium, visit www.childgrieve.org.

GRISSOM-MARTIN FUNERAL HOME



Columbia, KY- David Martin (R) and Cathy Martin (L) of Grissom-Martin Funeral Home, Inc are shown taking delivery of their new 1st Call Van which was converted by John Muster (C) of Muster Coaches.

Muster Coaches 1-800-274-3619 Calhoun, KY



Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

How WordPress Can Benefit Funeral Service Firms

WordPress is the number-one content management system in the world, comprising 60 percent of the market. Even individuals and businesses that don't use it for hosting still choose it for site management, because you don't have to be a developer or understand code to create a user-friendly, visually pleasing site with WordPress tools.

Deathcare firms researching options for a new website might want to consider WordPress as a top contender for these reasons. Here's what to know about WordPress for deathcare firms:

1. It Powers More Than a Third of the Web

WordPress isn't just a popular content management system. It's estimated that 35 percent of websites around the world are hosted on WordPress.

Why does that matter for deathcare firms? Small funeral homes and other firms in the niche typically don't have in-house marketing departments and may outsource everything from website development and content creation to campaign management. Because WordPress is so common, it's easier to find contractors or agencies that are familiar with it.

2. It's Not Just for Individuals or Small Businesses

You don't have to be a small business (or remain one) to use WordPress. The customizable platform lets you integrate plugins, templates, and even your own development, making it extremely flexible. Large brands such as PlayStation, TechCrunch, Time Magazine, Wired, and Angry Birds all use WordPress to some degree. Which means deathcare firms can rely on this platform to grow with them in the future.

3. You Can Easily Take Payments on a WordPress.com Site

WordPress and partners such as WooCommerce make it easy to add ecommerce functionality to your website or take payments.

For example, WordPress offers a "Pay With PayPal" block. If you're building blog posts or pages with the WordPress block editor, you can add a payment block in just a few minutes.

The block editor is a way to create pages and posts in WordPress by dragging and dropping elements. You can

insert text, manage headers, add images, and incorporate other features without any coding.

Funeral homes that want an effortless way to set up payment plans for services or allow people to make prepayments on final arrangements can use options such as WooCommerce's Subscriptions. This addition to WordPress does cost \$199 per year, but it lets you set up weekly, monthly, or annual payments via credit cards and other payment methods.

4. WordPress Users Have Access to More than 50,000 Plugins

The WordPress platform includes access to tens of thousands of plugins. For anyone unfamiliar, plugins are coded bits of technology that let you quickly add features to your site; those features might help you manage your site and content or provide helpful functionality for site visitors.

Some popular plugins include:

- **WPForms:** This plugin helps you add forms to your site with drag-and-drop functionality. You can use this plugin for free to build contact or subscriber forms. Funeral homes that want to add more complex forms, such as multipage forms to capture preplanning wishes, can upgrade to a premium version of WPForms.
- **WooCommerce:** This is a leading ecommerce integration for WordPress. More than a million businesses use it to manage product and service pages, payments, and delivery methods. Deathcare firms that want to sell products or services online might be interested in this plugin. Its core functions are free to use, making it an ideal choice for small businesses. You can opt for add-on services, such as Subscriptions, for a cost.
- **Yoast SEO:** This one takes some of the guesswork out of optimizing your pages. Features of this plugin include guides for meta data and analysis of content to help you create user-friendly posts that perform better.
- **Smush:** It automatically optimizes images on your pages, compressing them so they don't slow down page load times. All it takes is a couple of seconds before people start clicking away from your pages—page load times of three seconds rather than one can result in 32 percent higher bounce rates. Optimizing all your images manually can take a lot of time and may not be something funeral home staff know how to do, but Smush takes the work out of the task.

- **Akismet:** This plugin cuts down on spam comments on your pages and suspicious activity in your contact forms. The automatic plugin runs in the background, quarantining suspicious comments so you can moderate them. Deathcare firms that choose WordPress may want to consider this plugin to keep inappropriate or dangerous comments off their sites—not managing such comments can make your business look neglectful or unprofessional, which doesn't inspire confidence in potential clientele.

5. Businesses and Site Owners Don't Keep Up With Versions.

Many businesses don't keep up with security and version downloads for software and apps they use. That's as true with WordPress as anything else. Estimates indicate that about 30 percent of WordPress sites aren't updated.

Deathcare firms that opt for WordPress should make it a point to keep their version updated. This is a tip that's true for any software, app, or tech you use: The most up-to-date version is typically the most secure. Outdated versions may not even be supported, which can mean you're out of luck if anything goes wrong.

Choose the Right Platform for Your Website

Is WordPress the right choice for every deathcare firm? No. You might opt for funeral home software that includes a website or look at options such as Wix or Weebly, which also offer easy website-building tools.

When you're choosing a platform for your funeral home website, think about how you want it to look, who will work on it (and what skills they have), and whether the site can grow with you in the future.

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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