



Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

Per Google, Outsourcing Content Doesn't Impact SEO

Google puts a lot of emphasis on high-quality, expert content – and authorship does matter. Excellent content that answers the intent of a searcher's query and comes with a byline from someone with relevant credentials can be good for SEO.

But it turns out that Google doesn't care that much about the *writers* behind the content, ensuring that outsourcing remains an option for funeral service businesses.

Long story short: Busy funeral directors and other deathcare staff don't have to pen their own blog posts. Instead, they can hire out the writing and editing (and even content brainstorming and planning, if they want).

As long as quality remains high, Google doesn't know who actually strung the sentences together. And currently, the search engine giant doesn't think it matters.

Google's Stance on Outsourced Content

John Mueller, Google's Senior Webmaster Trends Analyst, often acts as the search engine's mouthpiece on SEO and content marketing topics. In a Google SEO office-hours hangout on April 1, someone asked Mueller whether outsourced content impacted SEO performance.

According to Mueller, Google wouldn't differentiate content that's written by outside sources versus in-house staff. He added, "It's more about the quality of the content, overall."

In fact, Mueller and others on the call agreed that Google would have no way of knowing that content was outsourced. The takeaway is that how you create your deathcare marketing content is your own business, and Google only cares about the end result.

How Does Authorship Work for SEO?

Google's laissez-faire attitude toward outsourcing doesn't mean authorship doesn't matter *at all*. The right bylines can help build trust with your audience and positively impact SEO.

Authorship refers to the process of associating specific authors with your content via the following steps:

- Adding a byline to the content. Bylines might look something like this: "By: Eva Smith, funeral director."
- Creating an author page for each person with a byline.
- Adding a headshot, short bio, and a LinkedIn link for the person to the author page.
- Linking to the author page each time you use the byline.

Google has repeatedly stated that authorship isn't a *direct* ranking factor. That means you don't score direct points with the search engine algorithms that might bump your pages up in the search results. However, Mueller is on record as saying, "[If] you're providing information that you want people to trust, this certainly makes sense."

Adding a name and face to your content puts humanity behind it. It also lets people know that the information is coming from someone with professional experience and expertise on the topic. That enhanced trust can lead to positive behavioral metrics such as:

- Increased likelihood people will share the content on social media or other sites
- More traffic to the page
- Increased time on page, as people are more likely to spend time with content they trust
- Better click-through because visitors want to learn more

Here's where authorship's indirect impact on SEO comes in. All those behavioral metrics mentioned above impact something called a RankBrain score, which is part of the Google algorithm.

It gets complicated, but the relevant fact here is that positive behavioral metrics that indicate people are engaging with, interested in, and trusting your content can help your page rank higher in search results.

Ghostwriting and Authorship

Now we come full circle back to the topic of outsourcing content. If you're going to put your name (or the name of

someone on your staff) on a piece of content, is it okay to outsource the writing?

Ghostwriting can be a contentious subject, but in the case of deathcare marketing, it's completely acceptable and even expected within certain parameters.

Most people realize that the professionals who are skilled at providing deathcare services may not have honed marketing and writing skills, and they know there's help going on behind the scenes.

When using ghostwriters for content you plan to run with a byline, two factors become extremely important:

- **Quality of the content.** This should be a top concern no matter what content you're working on or who writes it. Ensure anything you post is well-written and has no grammatical errors, typos, or spelling issues. Posts and landing pages should also answer the *intent* of the search and follow through on the promise of the title. A page titled "Average costs of funeral services" and filled with the keyword "funeral costs" must provide helpful, actionable, and specific content about funeral service costs.
- **Review of the content.** Whoever is putting their name on the content should review it for accuracy. After all, a funeral director doesn't want content with bad information about deathcare showing up under his or her name – that's bad for the firm and for the individual's professional reputation.

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.

FUNERAL HOME & CEMETERY NEWS
Monthly Columns online at
www.NomisPublications.com