



Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

Google Reviews: Two Keys to Coming Out on Top

This isn't the first time I've addressed Google Reviews in this space, and it certainly won't be the last, because frankly, there's no more critical aspect in marketing your funeral home. Whatever else you do, start with Google reviews!

With that in mind, here are two important aspects of Google reviews that can help you make the most of them:

1. Here's the secret to appearing in "best" or "top" searches

Hopefully it goes without saying that you want your funeral home to show up when potential clients execute a Google search that includes the terms "best" or "top."

Well, there's one incredibly simple metric Google uses to determine whether a firm is eligible to appear in the three-pack's default view for those "best" or "top" results or is excluded. Here it is:

If your firm has an average Google review score of 4.0 or better, your firm can appear in the three-pack for those searches targeting "superior" funeral homes.

Of course, you're not necessarily guaranteed to appear in the three-pack every time (or at all, technically), based on a variety of factors, including local competitors who also have strong reviews. But if you don't have at least a 4.0 average grade, you'll definitely not appear at all.

So make sure you're generating lots of strong reviews and keeping that average review score above 4.0—I personally recommend doing everything you can to have it above 4.5, given how discriminating families can be these days.

2. Ask especially satisfied families to add a photo to their review

Like the previous tip, this one relates to the "default view" potential clients receive based on Google's algorithm. When someone is checking out your reviews, the default is "most relevant," which means the first reviews they see are the ones Google considers most relevant.

Of course, the potential clients can then change that view to something such as "most recent," which some savvier consumers do to ensure your latest reviews aren't substandard by comparison. But most people are satisfied with whatever Google gives them first: "most relevant."

Here's the interesting part: Analysis shows that Google views reviews with images as particularly relevant, and those stay at the top of the "most relevant" view longer than other reviews.

Don't feel bad if you didn't know a reviewer could add an image to a Google review—I'm pretty sure most reviewers don't realize this, and that's true of many businesses as well! But that's a good thing, because you can leverage this knowledge to gain an advantage over your competitors!

So if you identify a family who was especially satisfied with your services (and with whom you've established an excellent rapport), don't simply ask for a review—ask whether they can include an image with it! It's a way of supercharging the review, which presumably will be five stars, and ensuring it stays in the "most relevant" display longer.

I realize it's a little bit trickier to request a review image in the

funeral profession than it is in others, but it's certainly doable. You can offer to provide an appropriate image from a floral arrangement or celebration of life, or the family might want to celebrate their loved one with a picture of the decedent.

Again, this all depends on the particular family's preferences and sensibilities, so the key is clear communication about what works for them.

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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