

HAVE F.U.N. with Your Marketing

Generally speaking, when someone tells you to “have fun,” one cannot help but wonder if that is a genuine expression or some type of passive-aggressive warning. Think of when a woman says it to her boyfriend or spouse when he wants to have a “guy’s night” or a day of golf with his buddies. Yes, ladies, we have all been there!

But I am here to tell you wholeheartedly that when it comes to marketing your funeral home or cemetery business, I want you to have F.U.N.— Functional, Unique, and Neat marketing elements.

F for Functional Marketing

Every business, regardless of its industry and vertical, needs a cohesive marketing strategy to engage with its audience enough so that they will buy the product or services offered. This is where functional marketing comes into play.

Functional marketing is the process of creating and implementing practical marketing strategies into your business plan as opposed to strategies that are overly gimmicky and borderline hokey. Having this plan in place allows you to focus on marketing initiatives that will effectively promote your funeral and cemetery business to achieve results.

Now, I know you may be thinking, “Well, that just sounds boring and not really fun at all.” But in actuality, a crisp and functional marketing plan is truly vital in this current landscape. For the past three years, our Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Studies have been showing us that consumers are embracing completely new ways of doing things and they have no intention of going back to the old ways. They have totally evolved and we must follow suit.

When crafting your functional marketing strategy, identify specific goals first, such as “being more active in your community” or “execute 10 new pre-need contracts per month,” and then develop the plan for implementing those goals.

by Nicole Vullo

NEAT

*Get Cohesive,
Get Practical,
Get Going!*

UNIQUE

FUNCTIONAL



Brand consistency and cohesiveness not only create brand recognition, they build trust with consumers and a loyalty that can lead to your desired goals and return on investment.

Your strategy should hit all the different marketing channels and functions and connect them to overall goals. It is best to have as much exposure to your audience whether through social media campaigns, Google AdWords and Display Ads, or even traditional mailers. The more reach you have, the better! Especially when it is done right and executed properly.

U for Unique Marketing

We know that no two funeral and cemetery businesses are alike. And quite frankly, that is one of the things that make our profession so great! We have businesses

that can cater to every type of service and needs that our client families have when paying tribute to their loved ones. This should also ring true with your marketing efforts.

When defining your marketing initiatives, do what works for you and your business. Yes, it is fine to be mindful of your competitors, but please do not let that dictate and define what you do. You have your voice and narrative and it is best to stick to it.

A unique marketing plan is one that matches the mission and core values of your business. According to a recent study from KPMG titled “Customer experience in the new reality,” 80% of customers prefer engaging and spending with brands that have values that align with theirs. If you connect your marketing strategy to your core values and mission, you have a far better chance of reaching your customers.

In a November 2021 *Memento Mori* article of mine, “*Mise en place a la* Death-care Marketing,” I referenced that having an effective pre-need strategy is the “secret sauce” for an effective marketing strategy. That statement holds true almost one year later.

A solid pre-need program is one of the ways for you as a funeral and cemetery owner to reinforce your businesses

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awareness and uniqueness. Pre-need programs when done properly can push the success of your business over the top.

The past three years have caused us all to evaluate our own mortality regardless of age and health. In fact, over the Easter holiday weekend, I had that very conversation with my father. A conversation we as children never want to have with our parents but one that is needed. Long story short, my father is looking to be proactive now rather than having his three children be reactive in the future.

This awareness, the same awareness that my father and many other consumers have, allows for a massive opportunity for pre-need sales. Through the findings from our Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study, we have noticed pre-need sales hit levels we have never seen before. When talking to consumers, 75% have a desire to pre-plan their funeral and cemetery arrangements. The demand to pre-plan is even higher if someone has experienced a death.

To stay ahead of these changing times and to strengthen your business, you need to accept and embrace the pre-planning trend. To do this, listen and be flexible with your client families. Your success will be measured by how you are able to adjust your business model to achieve a more customer-centric mindset.

N for Neat Marketing

Not only should your marketing be functional, it also should be neat. This relates to branding. Your brand strategy is what sets the tone for your business. Branding is the first impression for potential client families, whether they are on your website, following you on social media, or receiving that mailer I mentioned above. It is incredibly important that your business comes across as professional and consistent no matter which path your client families take to engage with you and your business.

Brand consistency and cohesiveness not only create brand recognition, they build trust with consumers and a loyalty that can lead to your desired goals and return on investment. When defining your brand, do what works for you and your business. Continue to be unique, as your brand is your voice and not your competitors.

Marketing strategies are a slow burn and they can often take weeks or months to see results. We know that you as owners and operators of funeral homes and cemeteries are busy with the day-to-day operations of running your businesses and being with your client families. If you do not have the time or the resources,

please ask for help. We know this profession is not easy, but it is important to note that there are many creative and marketing agencies and suppliers that can help you meet your marketing goals. In fact, when done properly, they seamlessly serve as an extension of your business and result in both your

short-term and long-term success. 

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