2025 Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study

Report on consumer attitudes, opinions and behaviors about the funeral and cemetery profession.

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FCCBS Year 6

2025 FCCBS, now in its sixth year, is the Profession's premier approach to capturing the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of consumers regarding the funeral, cemetery, and cremation business.

- More than 5,000 consumers participated in this year's study, providing insights into how perceptions of the death care industry have changed.
- Additionally, for the second consecutive year, we have measured the perceptions of industry insiders to get a better understanding of the gaps between our perception compared to actual consumer experience. This year, almost 500 industry members shared their feedback.

New topics explored in this year's study include:

- What do funeral and cemetery customers WISH they could have done online while researching-and-making their arrangements?
- Do consumers care WHERE they read online reviews?
- Exactly how are funeral homes and cemeteries making online pricing information available?
- Are funeral homes and cemeteries prompting their customers to leave reviews, and if so, how?

When

Survey invitations emailed in Nov, 2024.

Responses accepted through Jan, 2025.

How

Respondents were emailed an invitation to complete an online survey.

Who

US-consumers, ages 35+

A Wide Range of Industry Professionals

How Many

5,075 consumers

483 Professionals

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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Our Profession and Our People

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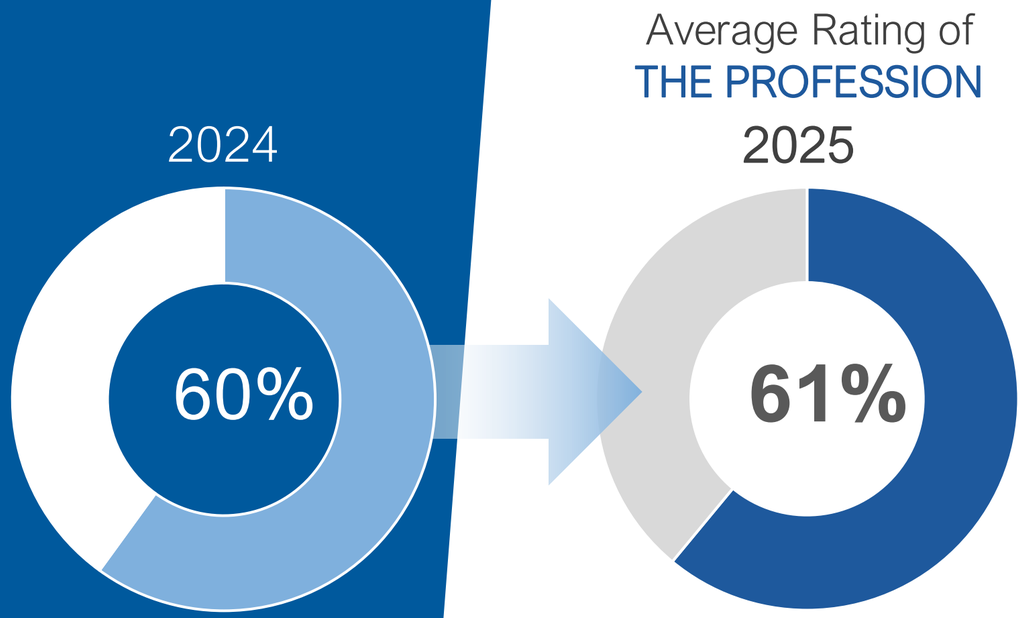
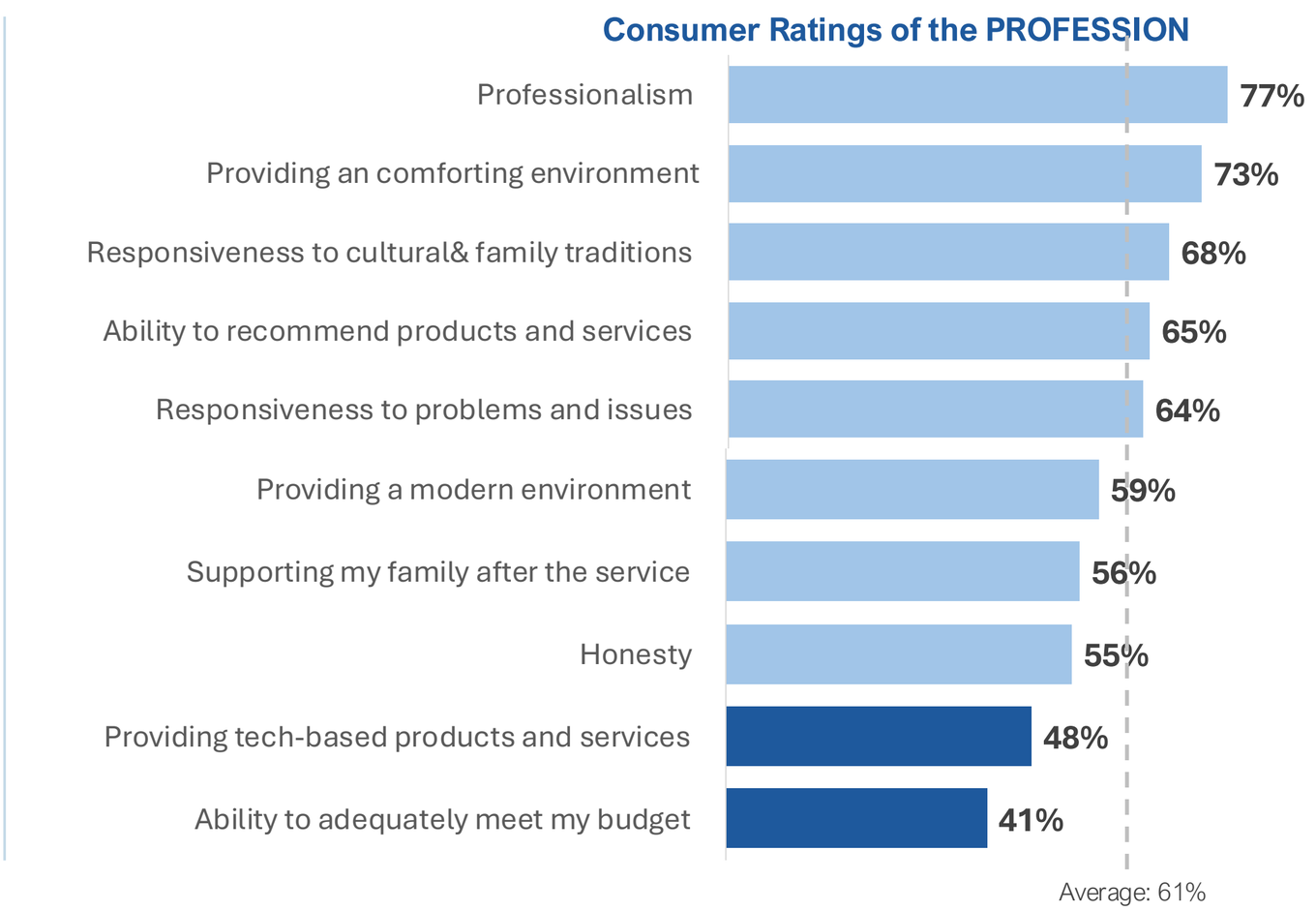
CONSUMER RATINGS OF THE PROFESSION ARE STAGNANT FOR 2025

After ticking up slightly last year, consumer ratings of the Profession are essentially flat this year, with no significant change in the average rating. None of the 10 attributes we ask consumers about changed significantly compared to the 2024 results. Providing Technology-Based Solutions and Meeting Consumer Budgets remain the Profession's most glaring issues, a fact that is unchanged based on last year's results.





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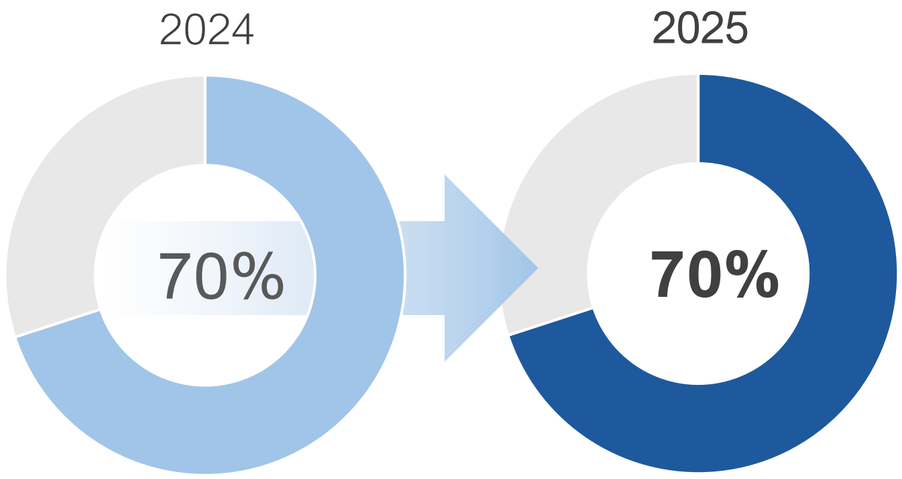
THE STORY IS THE SAME FOR THE CONSUMER'S RATINGS OF OUR PEOPLE

As is the case with ratings for the PROFESSION, there are no significant changes in the individual ratings for our People. While concerns about budgets and technology-based solutions are still challenges, perhaps the more significant concern is lack of any progress in changing how consumers view our Profession and our People.

Average Rating of THE PROFESSIONALS



Consumer Ratings of our PROFESSIONALS

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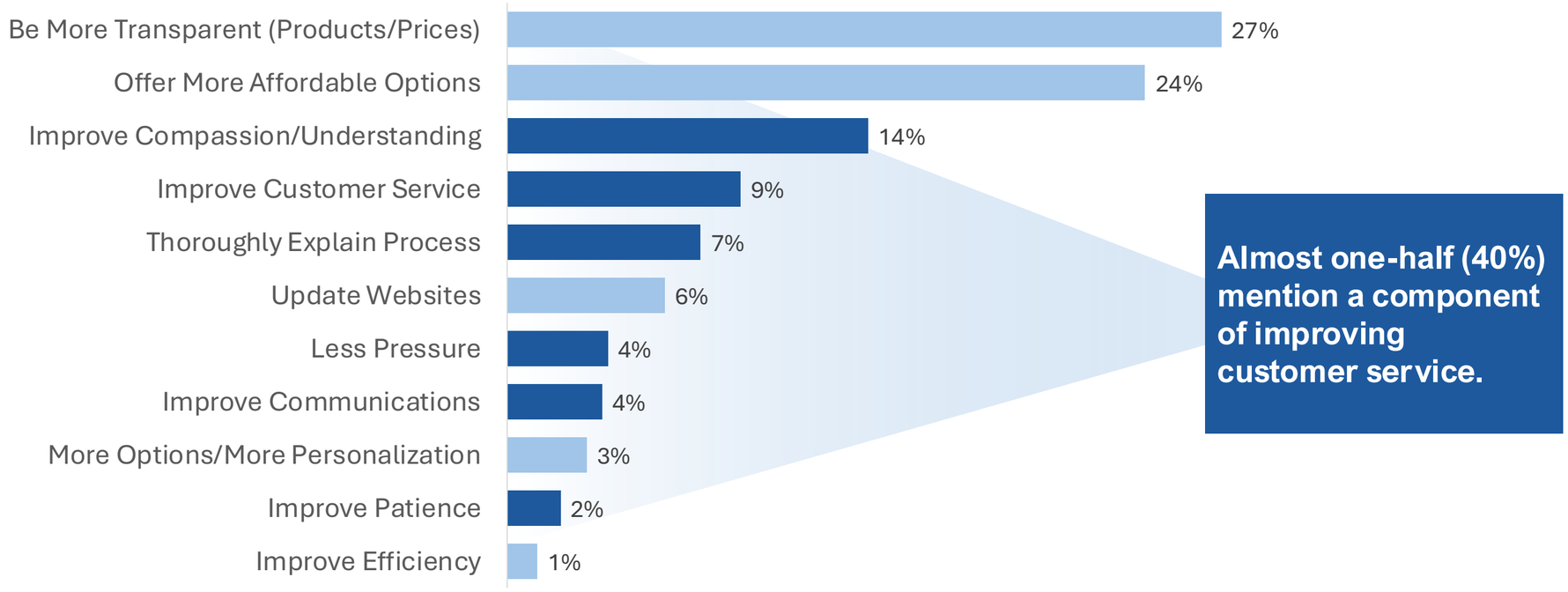
CALLS FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY PERSIST, ALONG WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

When consumers were asked to describe, in their own words, how the Profession can deliver a better experience, the two most common answers focused on Increased Transparency and Improved Affordability. Both topics have been common themes throughout the history of the FCCBS Study.

In addition, almost one-half of consumers also mentioned something related to improving customer service in general. More compassion, more patience, and less pressure of some of the suggestions that consumers offer to the Profession.

What can the industry do to deliver a better experience?



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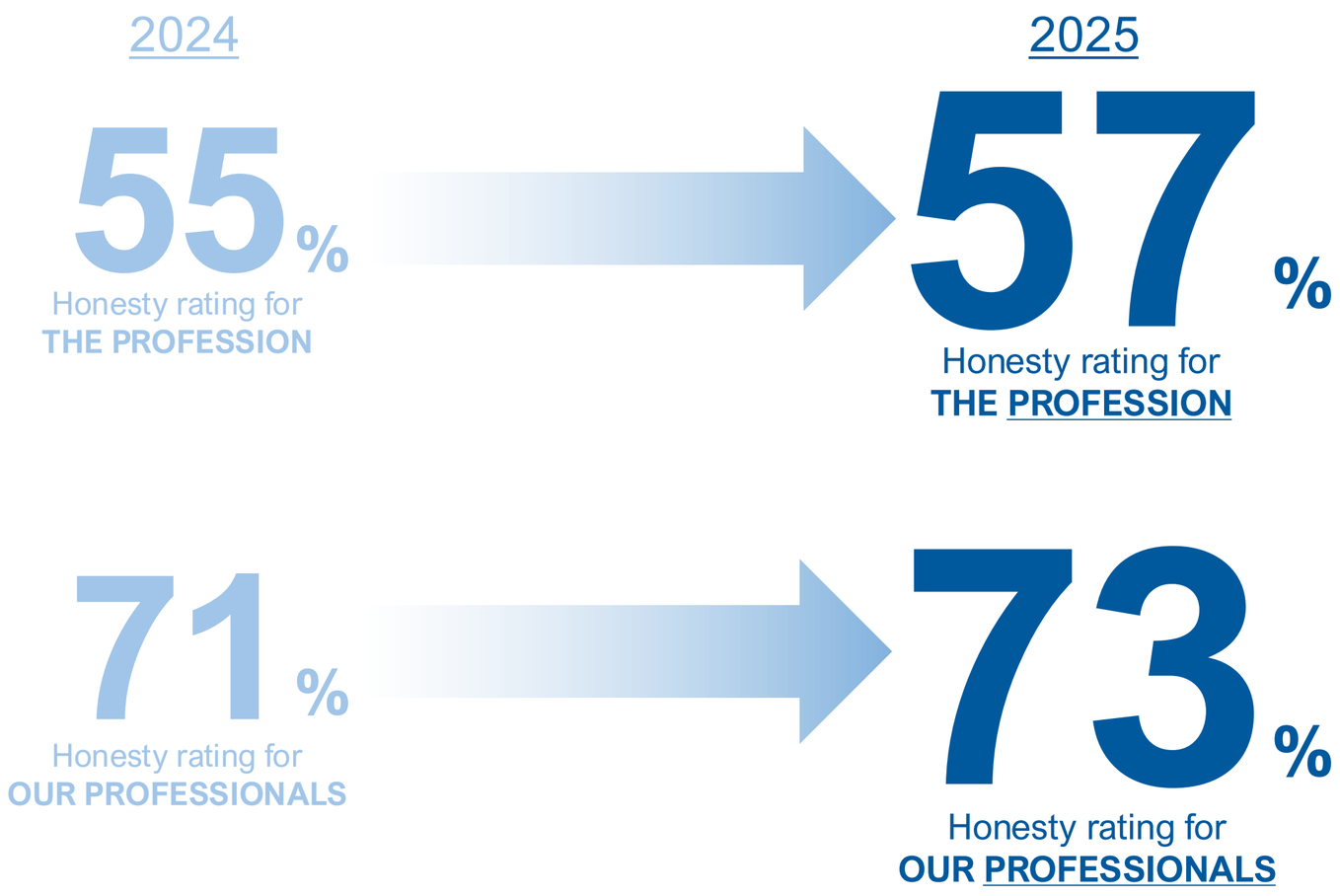

CONSUMERS VIEW OUR PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY THAN THEY VIEW OUR PROFESSION

Results from previous FCCBS studies have consistently shown that In simple terms, consumers have a more favorable impression of our Professionals than they do of our Profession overall.

This year's results are no different as our people are rated higher overall than our Profession.

As an industry that serves consumers at a time of great need, perceptions of Honesty remain a particularly thorny issue. While this year's ratings are not identical to those from 2024, the situation has not changed: Consumers trust our people more than they trust the Profession.

At noted on the previous page, consumer perceptions that the Profession lacks transparency are almost certainly a part of this problem.

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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Online Presence

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THE DIGITAL AVALANCHE OF CONSUMERS WE PREDICTED IN 2024 HAS BEGUN

The results of past studies consistently suggested that more and more consumers want to deal with our Profession online, just as they do with many other industries. This year's results indicate that this prediction is coming true.

We asked consumers who HAVE made arrangements if the did research online. We also asked consumers who HAVE NOT made arrangements what they would do if they need to make arrangements in the future.

Recent customers, those who made arrangements in the last 24 months, are twice-as-likely to have done so compared to customers who made arrangements in the the more distant past: 60% vs. 32%.

And that's just the beginning. Almost 8-in-10 of future customers plan to conduct online research if they ever need to make arrangements, up from 71% last year and a strong indication of where things are going.

In addition, consumers tell us that their research will focus on just 2 locations: Google and your website. The importance of both online reviews AND your website cannot be overstated.

78%

Of FUTURE Customers PLAN to conduct research online

60%

Of RECENT customers conducted online research

32%

Of PAST customers conducted online research

*Past customers defined as those who made arrangements more than 2 years ago; Recent customers defined as those who made arrangements during the past 2 years.

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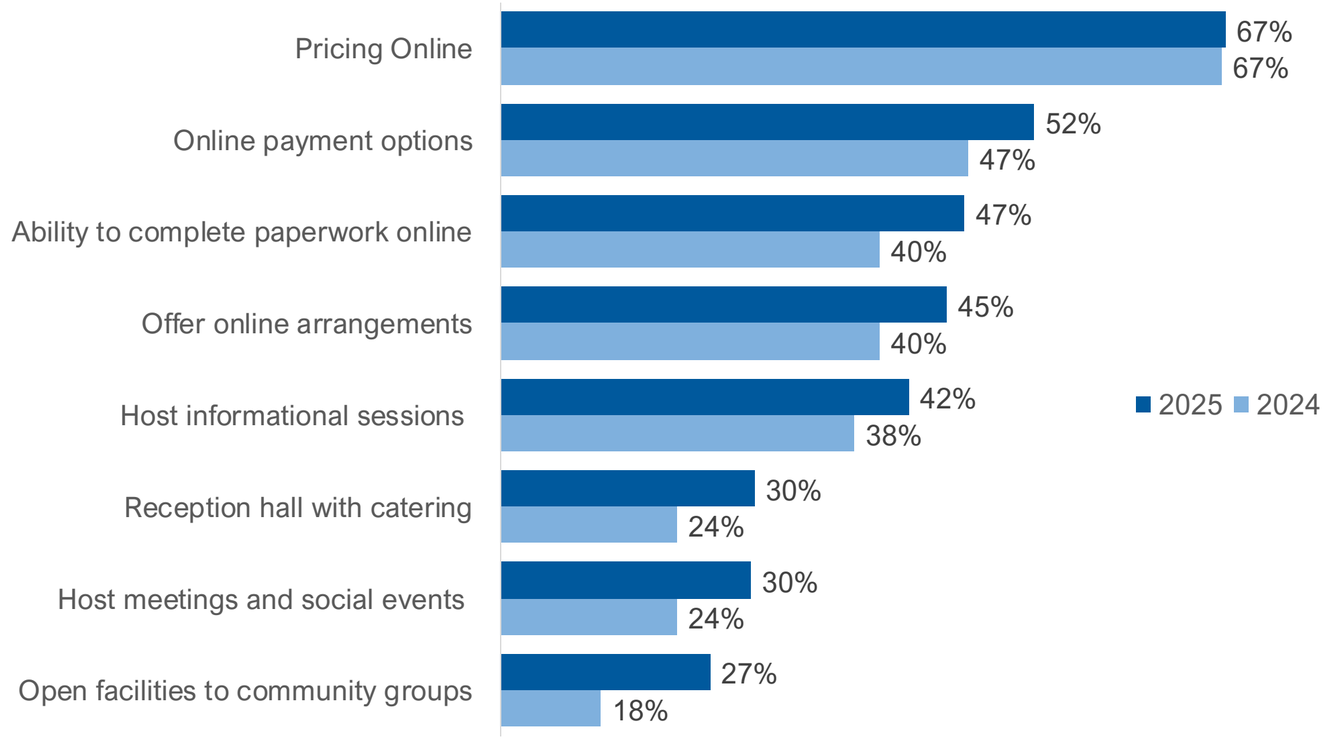
CONSUMER DEMAND FOR ONLINE, DIGITAL SOLUTIONS CONTINUE RISE

Consumers were also asked how important various services are. The results make it very clear that online solutions that allow them to do more online are much more important than more traditional, offline services such as hosting meetings and community groups: all of the items with highest importance are online solutions.

Not only that, consumers in 2025 consider these online services even more important than they did in 2024. These demands are not going away.

How important is it that the funeral home and cemeteries offer the following products and services?



HOWEVER, YOUR PHYSICAL LOCATION STILL MATTERS

Virtually everyone visits the location they end up using. In addition, more than 1/3 of them ALSO physically shop OTHER locations.

87% Physically visited the location they selected

36% Physically visited OTHER locations

3 Average # of locations visited

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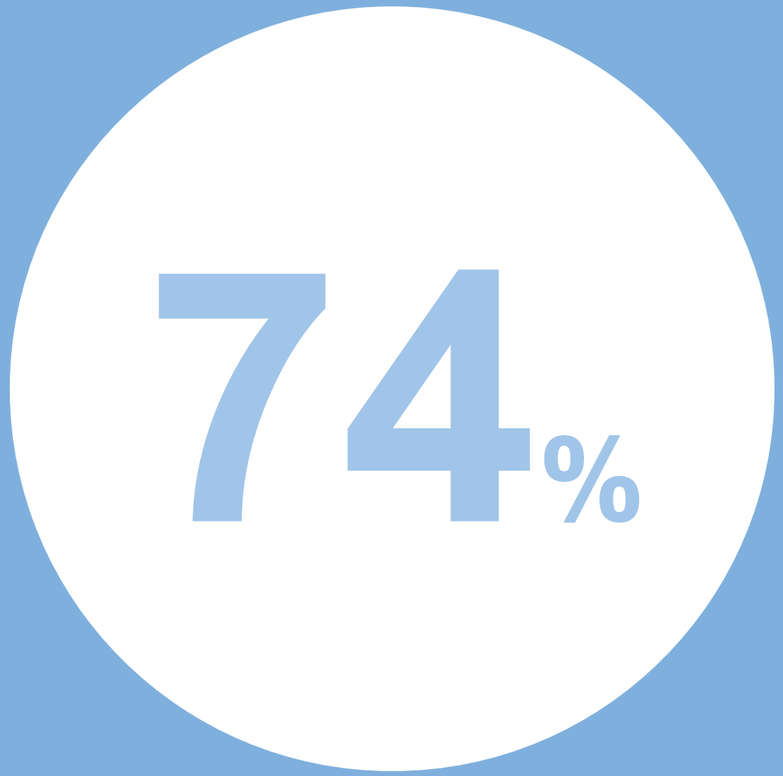
POSITIVE REVIEWS ARE CRITICAL TO CONSUMER DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Reviews of both businesses and products are a key part of increasing a consumer's comfort with their purchase decision. Past FCCBS results have shown this to certainly be true for the funeral and cemetery profession, where consumers often don't know a lot about their options.

But a positive review alone isn't enough. It's also important WHERE consumers read those positive reviews. Simply put, a review is more effective with consumers when found on an independent site like Google or Yelp than when it is posted only on a business's website.



Of consumers say reviews increase trust in a company

52%

Agree that they Trust reviews on sites like Google & Yelp more than reviews on a business's site

Only **29%**

Agree that they Trust reviews from a BUSINESS'S SITE more than from sites like Google & Yelp

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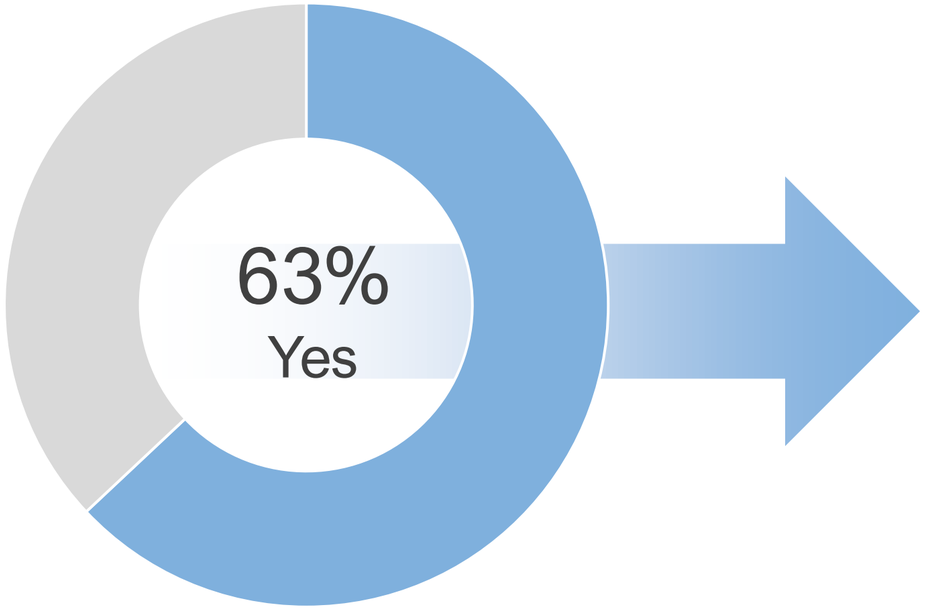
TOO MANY LOCATIONS AREN'T PROMPTING CONSUMERS TO LEAVE REVIEWS

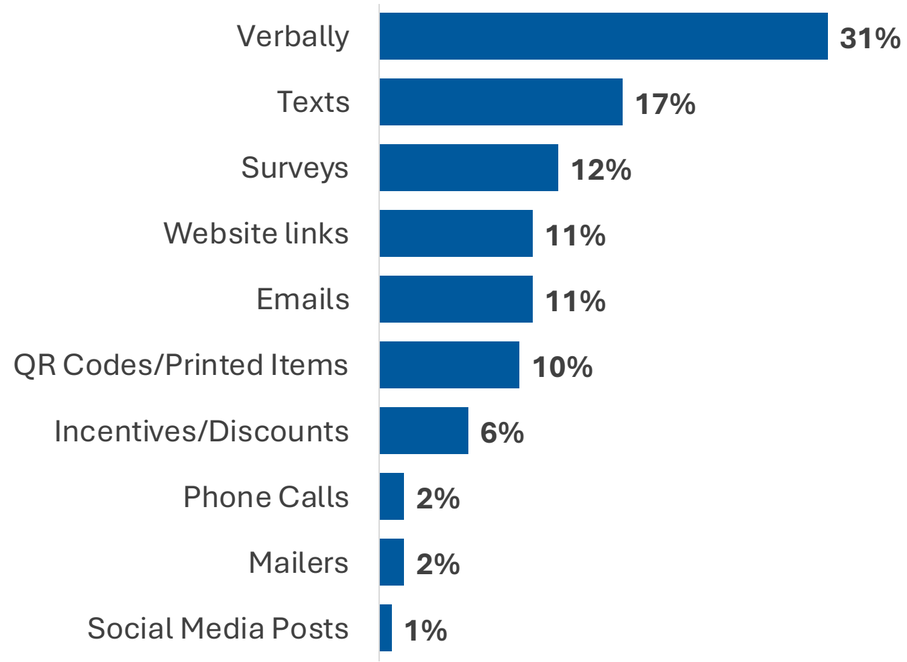
Despite all the evidence that online reviews are crucial for the customer, only about 6-in-10 locations are actively prompting their customers for a positive review.

When they do, too many locations are not systematic in their approach.

Do you Prompt your customers to leave a review?



How?



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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Education

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CUSTOMES AREN'T GETTING THE EDUCATION THEY NEED, AND THAT THE PROFESSION THINKS IT IS PROVIDING

Most consumers have little, if any, experience with funeral and cemetery arrangements and they need help understanding their options. Just as with the 2024 results, this looks like a big missed opportunity. Professionals think they are providing education to most consumers, but most consumers don't see it. The largest gaps are for education about Pre-Planned Arrangements and Resting Place Options for Cremated Remains…potentially big misses in revenue opportunities.

76%

of PROFESSIONALS say
EDUCATION WAS OFFERED

VS.

37%

of CONSUMERS say
EDUCATION WAS RECEIVED

Education about Pre-planned Arrangements

Education about Resting Place Options for Cremated Remains

Education about Different Urn Options

Education about Keepsake and Memorial Products

Education about Different Burial Options

Education about Different Casket Options

Education about Different Cremation Options

Education about Cremation Scattering Services

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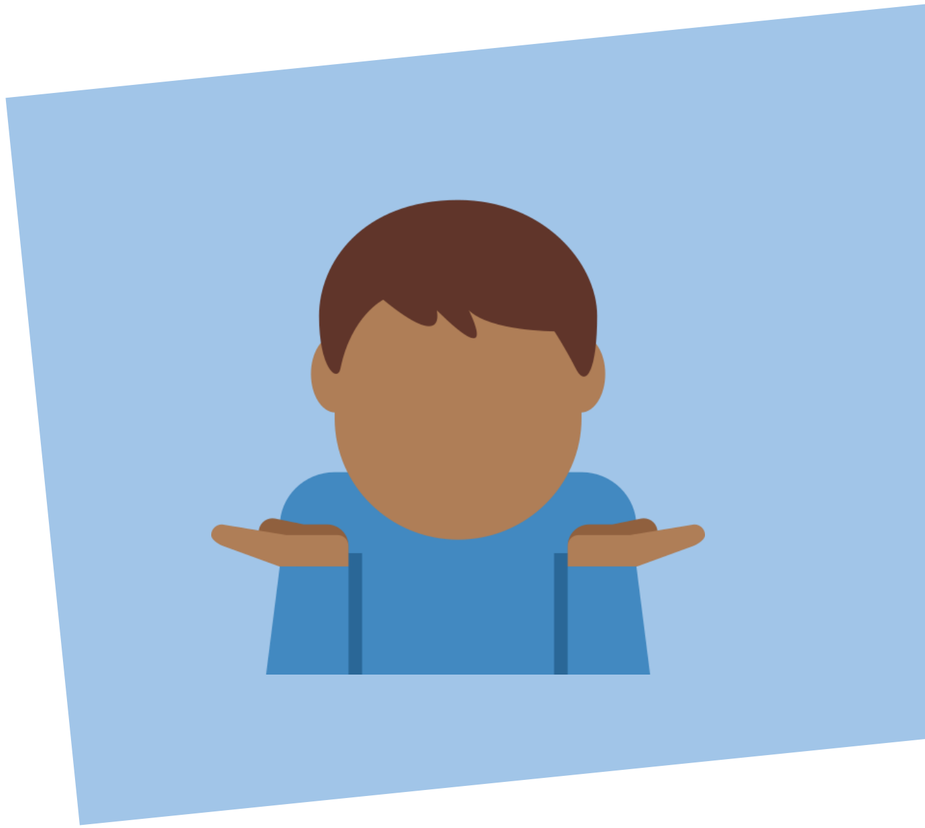
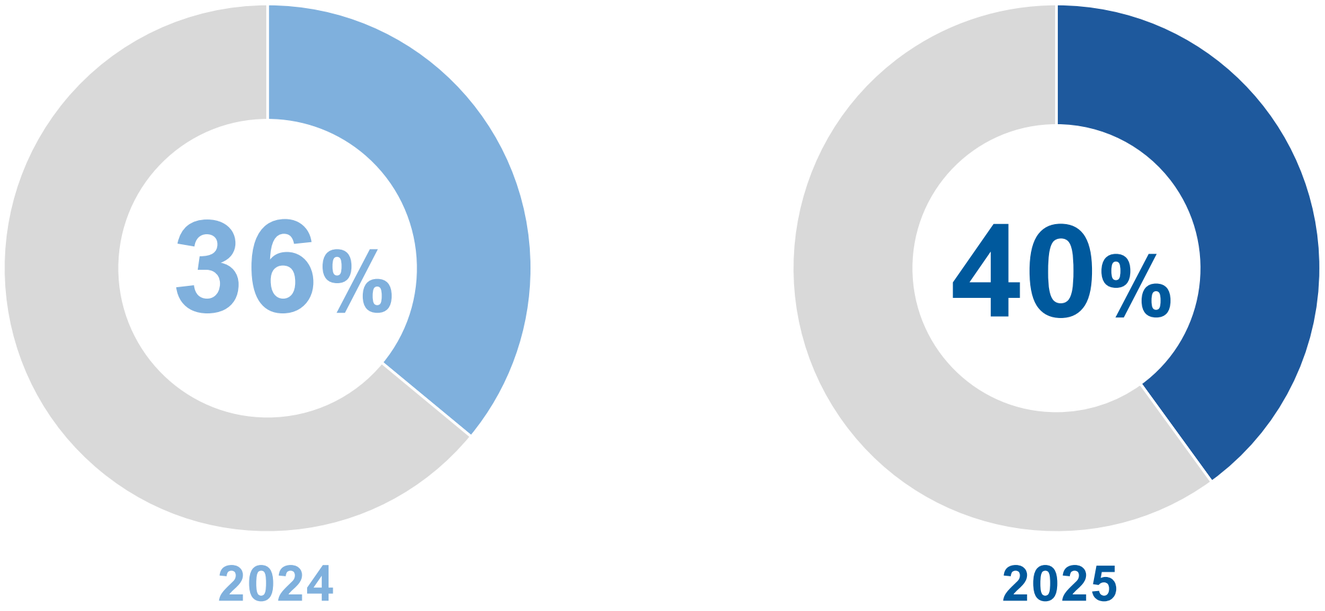
MORE CONSUMERS AREN'T CONFIDENT THEY CAN MAKE A GOOD DECISION

The lack of education represents more than just lost revenue opportunities. Because consumers aren't sufficiently informed about their options, they feel uneasy about making the important decisions that are inherent in funeral, cemetery and memorialization arrangements. Their uncertainty can then magnify any perceptions they might have about a lack of transparency, a lack of patience, or the feeling of being pressured.



Don't Know Enough about

Funeral Home + Cemetery Products & Services



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CONSUMERS ARE NOT AS AWARE OF PRODUCT & SERVICE OPTIONS AS THE PROFESSION THINKS THEY ARE

Again this year, there is a massive gap in the consumer's awareness of products and services compared to what our Professionals believe. This goes hand-in-hand with the Profession's in ability to provide the education consumers need and another missed opportunity. Some of the largest gaps include Online Cremation Arrangements and Cremation Memorialization…both areas of high revenue potential.

	The Profession Believes Consumer Awareness is…	Actual Consumer Awareness is…	Awareness Gap
Average Awareness Across All Items	**61%**	**29%**	**32%**
Online Cremation Arrangements	78%	18%	60%
Eco-friendly Burials	75%	29%	46%
Natural Burial	75%	32%	43%
Cremation Memorialization	90%	49%	42%
Memorial/Tribute Blankets	60%	23%	37%
Water Cremation	45%	10%	35%
Memory/Keepsake Stones or Jewels	81%	49%	32%
3D Memorial Photo/Crystal Picture	44%	15%	29%
Home Funerals	49%	25%	24%
Destination Scattering Services	49%	28%	20%
Human Composting/Recomposition	43%	24%	20%
Tree Burial	42%	25%	17%
Sea Burial	61%	46%	16%

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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Cremation

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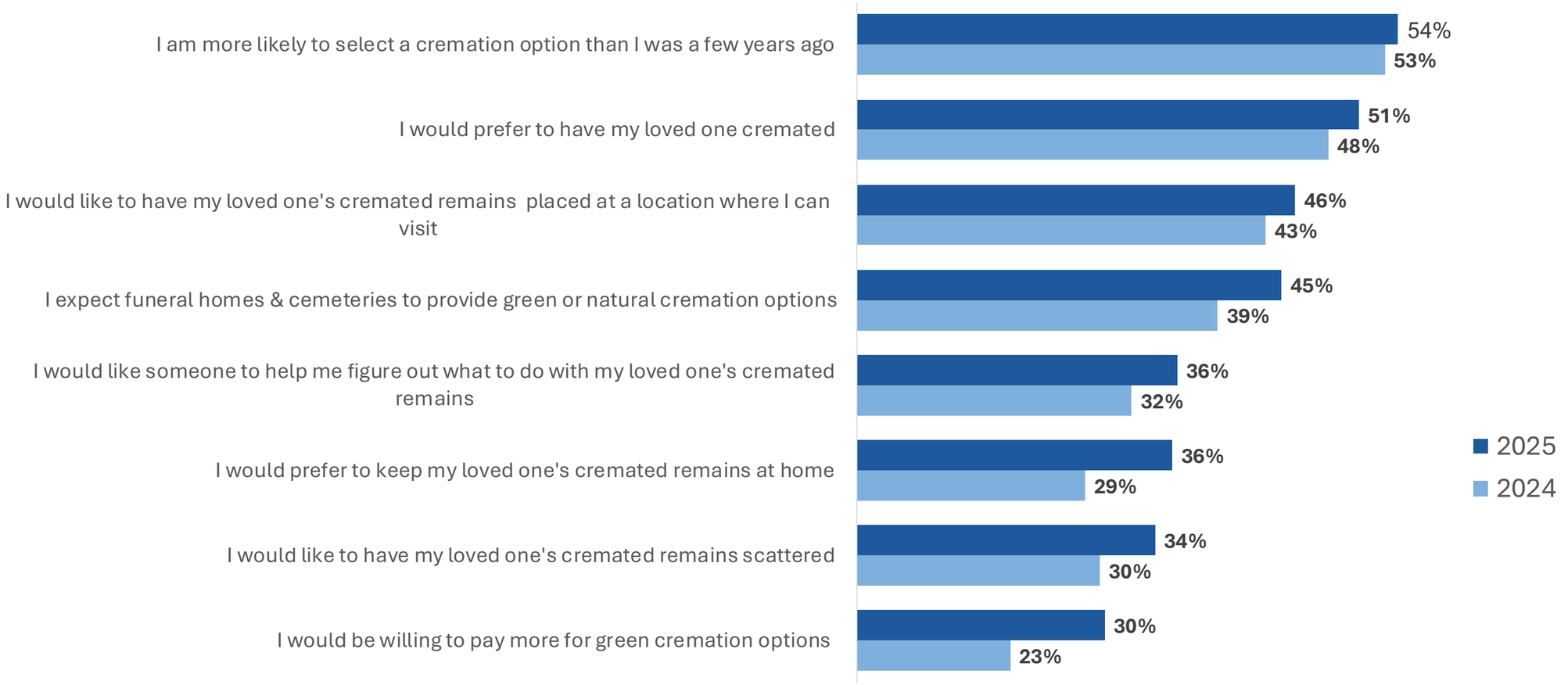
NOT SUPRISINGLY, INTEREST IN CREMATION CONTINUES TO RISE

Consumers acceptance for cremation is continuing to increase, albeit slowly. This year's results also show significant uptick in interest for green cremation options, although interest in green options continue to lag traditional cremation. The results do reveal a few areas of risk, including the fact that more people prefer to keep cremated remains at home vs. last year. This is yet another reason that consumers need more education about their options.

Cremation Preferences



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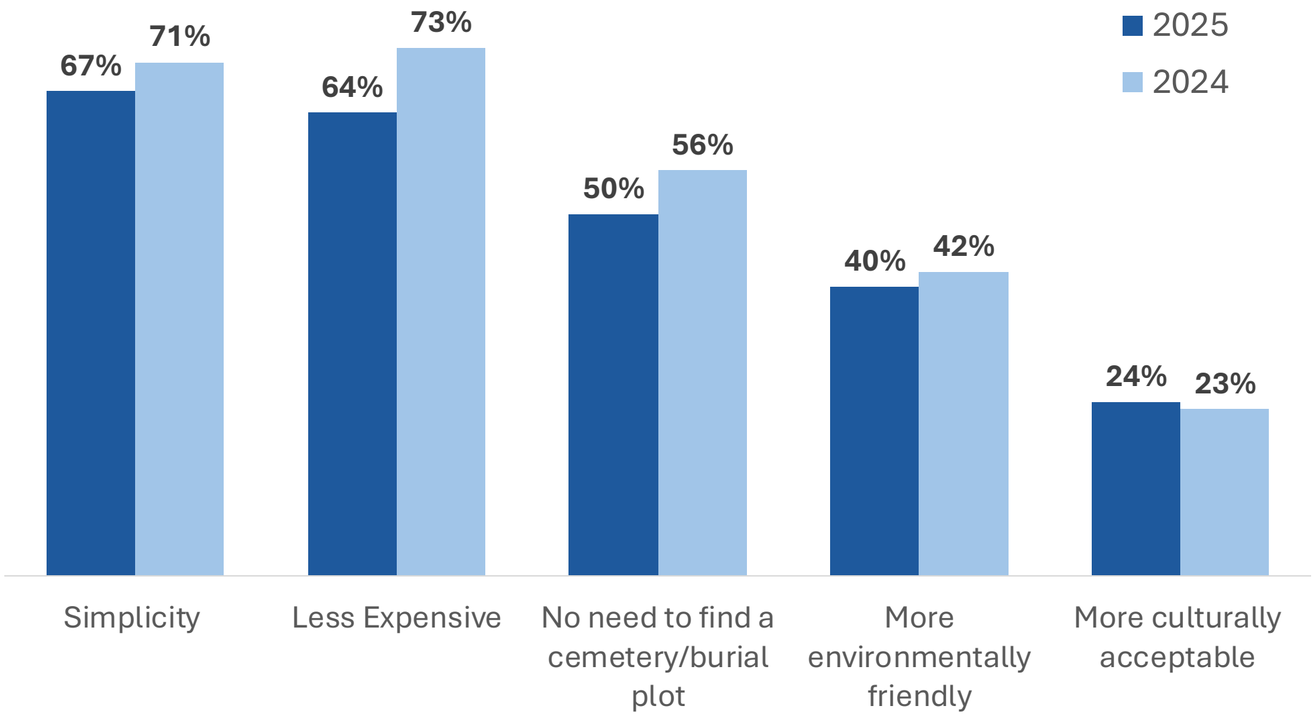
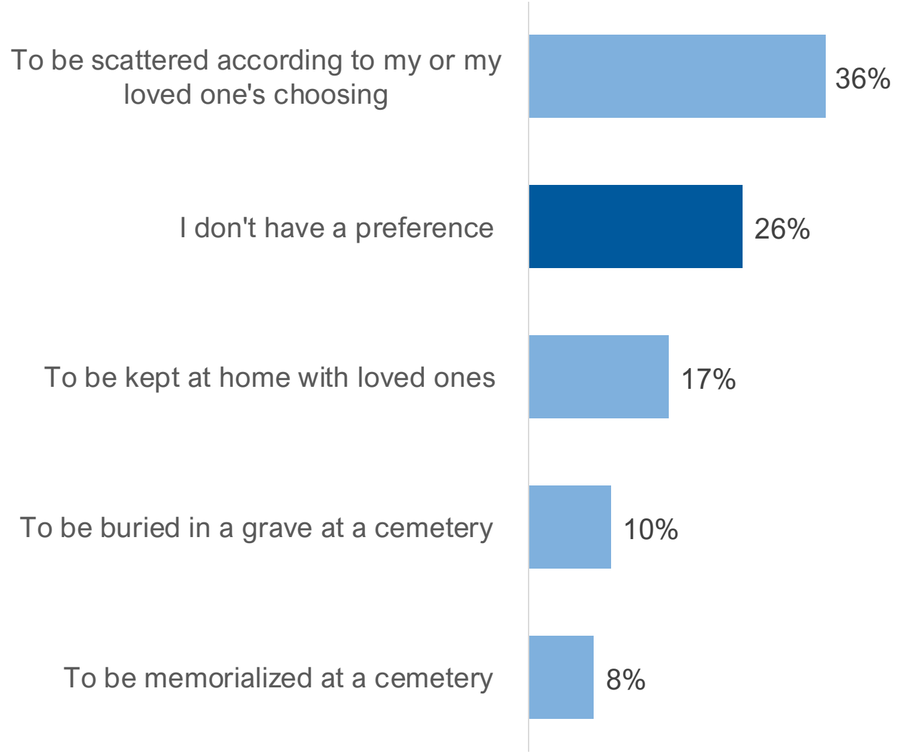
SIMPLICITY AND AFFORDABILITY CONTINUE TO CREMATION BUT MANY ARE STILL UNDECIDED ON HOW TO MEMORIALIZE

The reasons consumers prefer cremation haven't changed, with Simplicity and Less Expensive the most common reasons by a significant margin. Fully one-half of consumers also associate cremation with being free from having to worry about finding a resting place. When asked about preferences for cremated remains, more than a quarter say they don't have a preference, another area in which education about memorialization options could pay off.

Top Reasons for Preferring Cremation



Preference for Cremated Remains
(Among those that prefer cremation)



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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Technology

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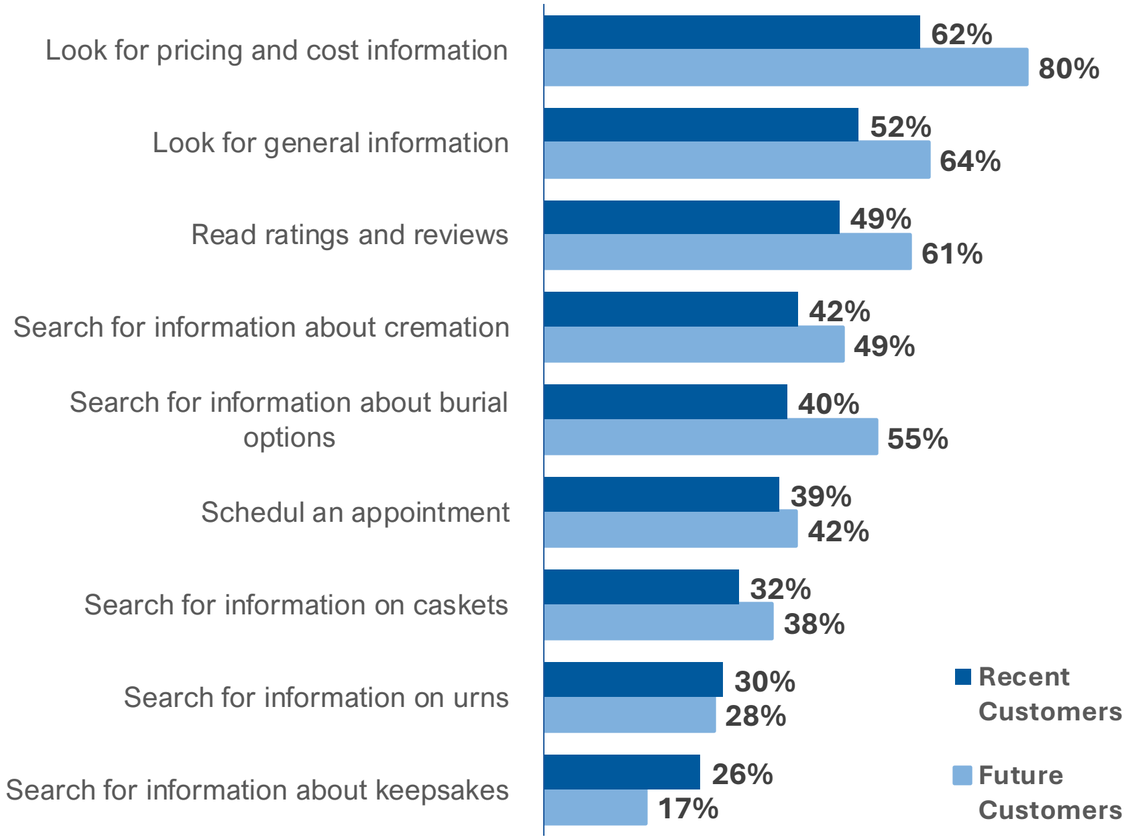
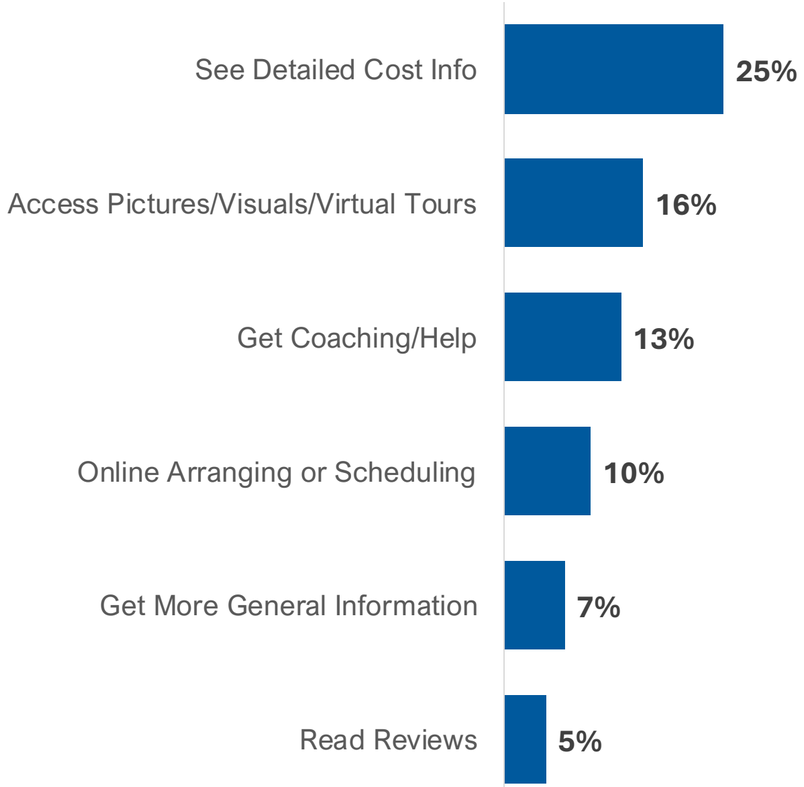
EXPECTATIONS FOR ONLINE RESOURCES ARE ONLY GOING TO INCREASE

A comparison of current customer behavior vs. future customer intentions makes it clear that digital demands will keep rising. Customers need to be able to accomplish the same things with this Profession that they have grown accustomed to with other industries. Today, even something as simple as accessing easy-to-use pricing information is still too difficult for many customers.

What "DID You Do / WILL You" Do When Conducting Online Research?



Was there anything you wanted to do online but were unable to do?



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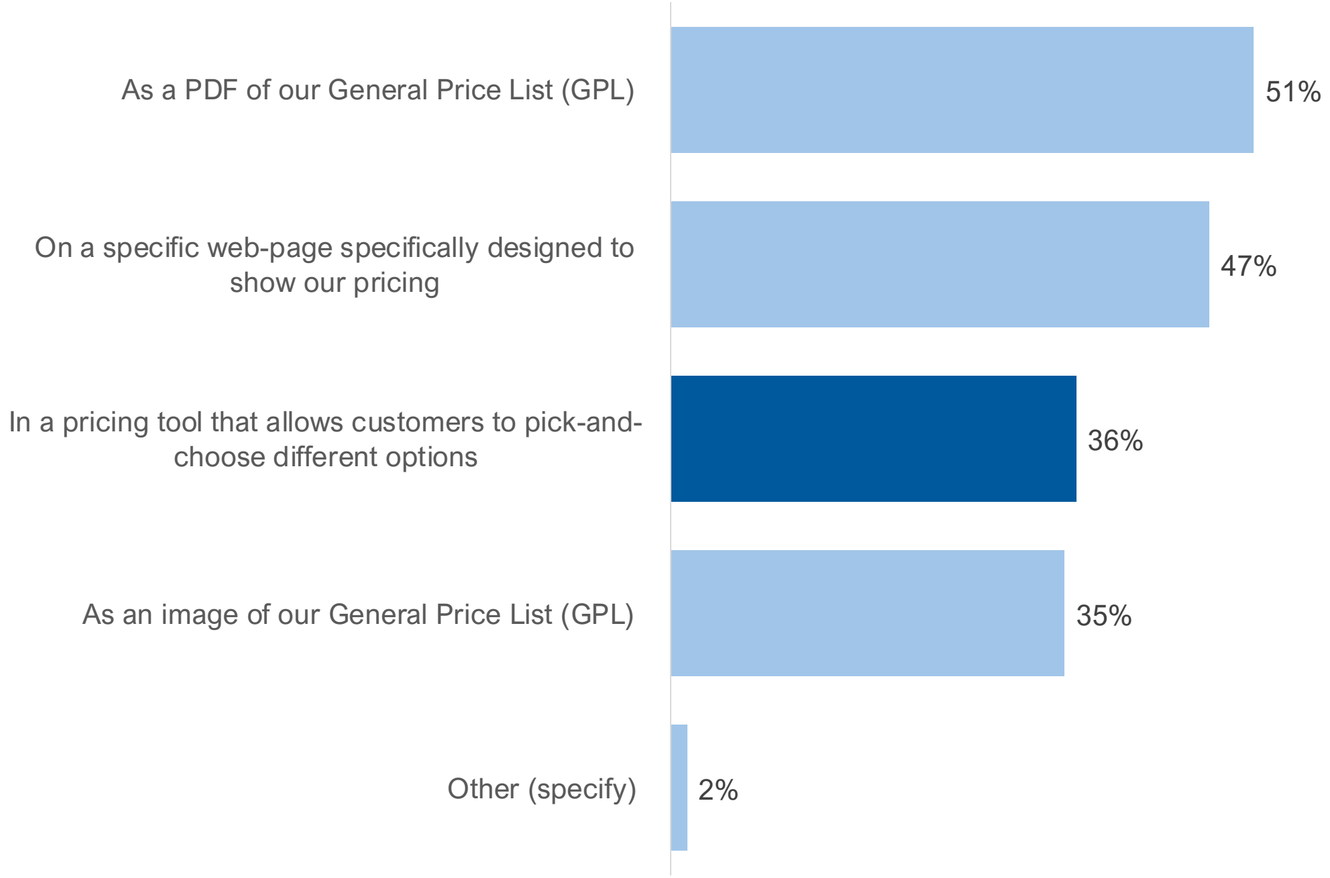
LESS THAN 40% OF LOCATIONS PROVIDE DYNAMIC PRICING INFORMATION

When we asked industry professionals HOW their location provides online pricing information, most indicated that it was through a static option like a PDF or image of the price list. Only 36% provide the kind of dynamic, customizable price tool that is commonplace in many other industries.

How is Pricing information provided online?



Customers can search and transact online in other industries, but they struggle to behave the same way with us.

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Our Profession's Perspective:

Workplace Engagement

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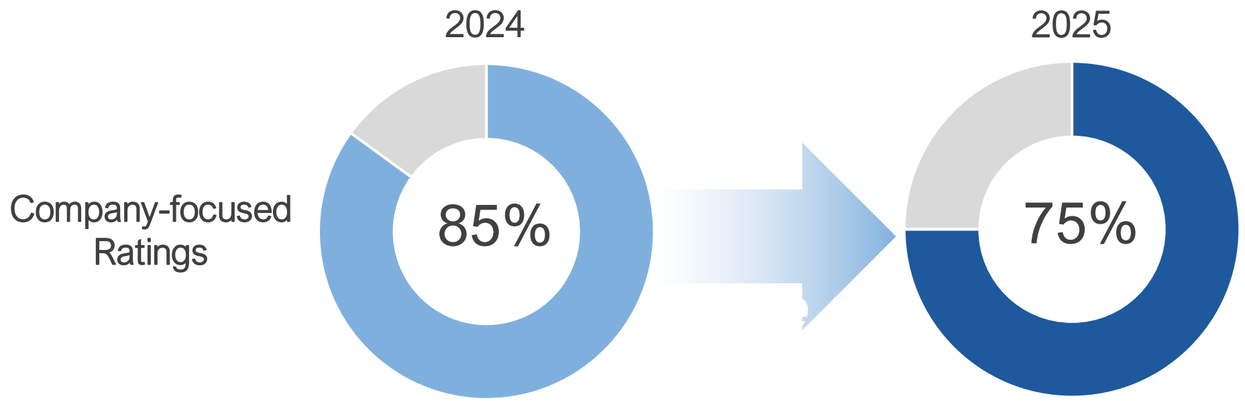
INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS REMAIN MORE UPBEAT ABOUT THE COMPANY THAN ABOUT THEIR PLACE IN IT

Industry professionals were first asked about workplace engagement in 2024. This year's results are similar in that industry professionals give higher ratings on the questions that are related to their company but give lower ratings overall on those questions that are more focused on their situation. This year's results are notably different in that overall engagement is significantly lower across the board.

Overall Workplace Engagement Ratings



My organization is valued by the communities it serves

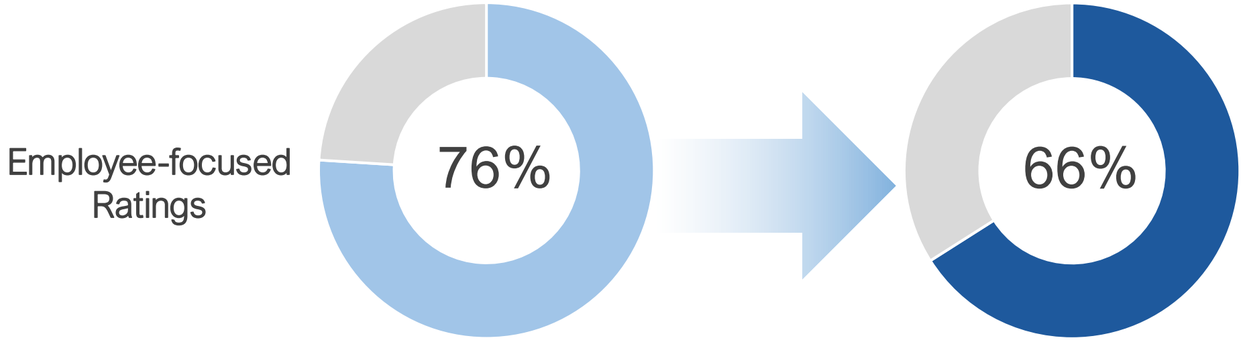
My organization values its role in the greater community

My organization is offering the products & services people want

I believe the services we provide are superior to our competition

New ideas and approaches are welcomed and encouraged

My organization does a good job of keeping up with new innovations



My employer values me as an employee

I believe I will work for this organization for a long time

I feel engaged in the overall strategy of our company

Morale at my organization is high

My organization gives me the training and support I need

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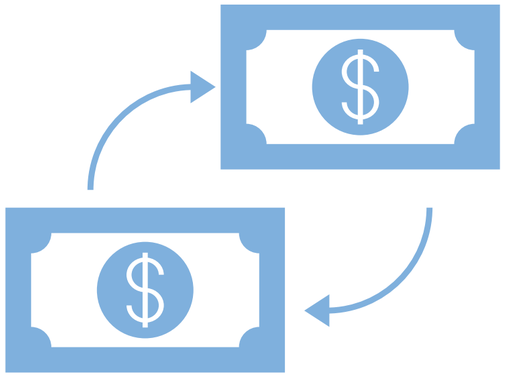
FINANCIAL CONCERNS ARE UP THIS YEAR, GREATLY IMPACTING HOW PROFESSIONALS VIEW THEIR WORLD

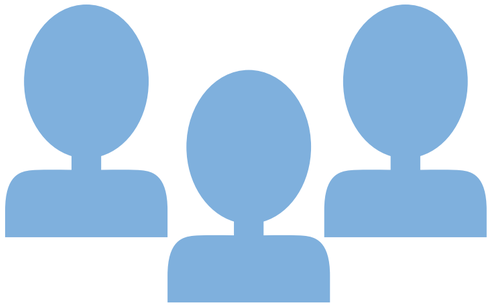
The Top 3 concerns are unchanged this year: Financial Pressures, Not Adapting, and Staffing Challenges. However, industry professionals are more concerned about Financial Pressures this year as it ranks as the #1 concern. Financial concerns are likely driving at least part of the lower engagement ratings overall.

Biggest Threats to funeral service in the future



Financial Pressures

Not Adapting to Consumer Change



Staffing Challenges

Rank this year	1st	2nd	3rd
Rank last year	3rd	1st	2nd

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Our Profession's Perspective:

Staffing and Recruiting

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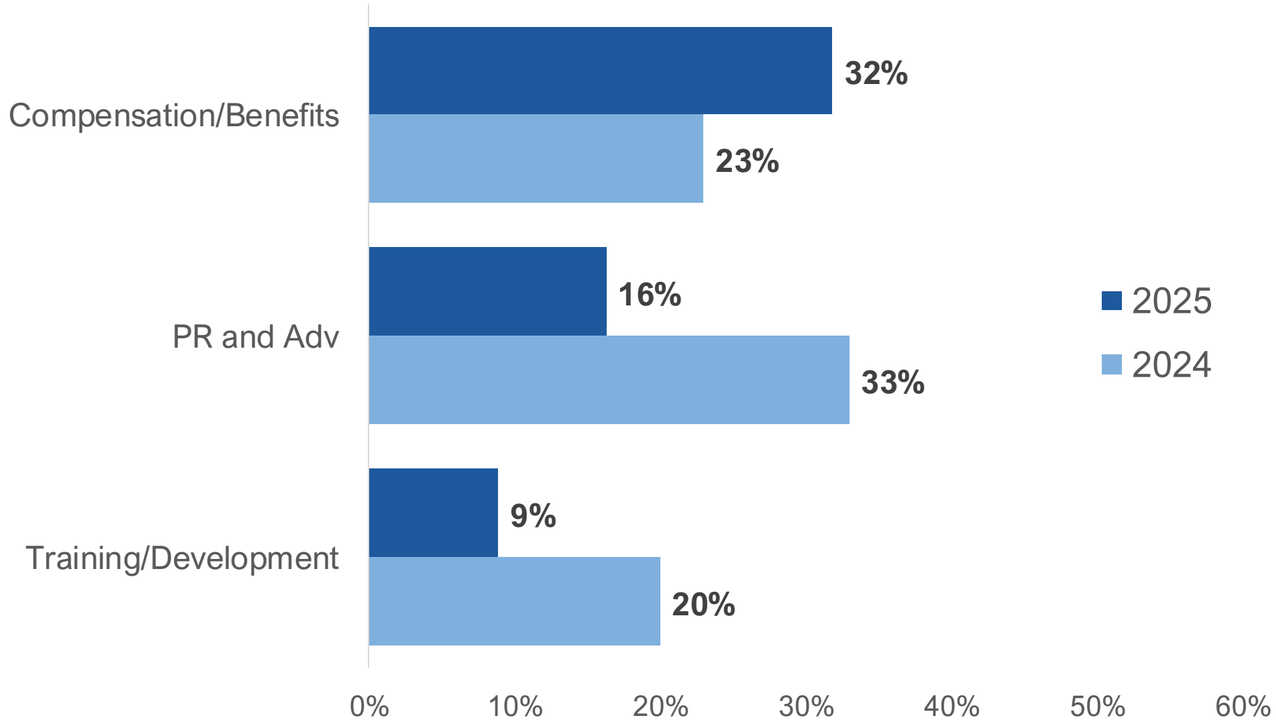
IMPROVING COMPENSATION HAS SURPASSED PR EFFORTS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO IMPROVE RECRUITING

Compensation, PR, and Training continue to be the 3 biggest issues professionals cite as ways to improve recruiting, but the level of importance has changed year over year. Whereas last year, PR issues were the biggest concern, compensation tops the list this year.

While training is lower on this year's list, our teams continue to ask for ongoing professional development in understanding blocking and tackling business aspects of the business. Specifically, they're asking about training about the industry, operations, and service arrangements. Ultimately, they want to know more about how the Profession works so they can be more successful in it.

What is one thing the Profession could do to improve recruiting?
(Top 3 Mentions)



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The Consumer’s Perspective:

Wrapping it Up

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CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROFESSION ARE ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED THIS YEAR, WITH MOSTLY OF THE SAME ISSUES THAT NEED ADDRESSING

As a profession, we haven't made much progress on issues consumers see as critical. While consumers continue to ask for transparency, technology, and more information and education, we continue to whistle past the graveyard, hoping consumers will change their tune. We also continue to suffer critical blind spots in how we see the world compared to the consumer. Our reputation is damaged in the consumer's mind. Whether deserved or not, addressing consumer perception will require a Profession-wide effort.

	Rating of the PROFESSION	Rating of our PROFESSIONALS	Consumer Rating for HONESTY of our PEOPLE	Consumer Rating for HONESTY of our Profession
2025	61%	70%	57%	73%
2024	60%	70%	55%	71%

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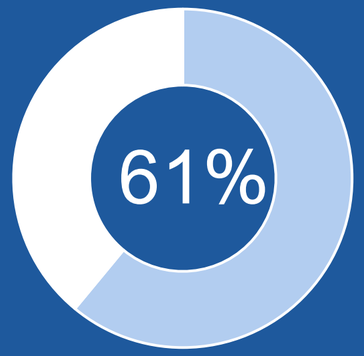
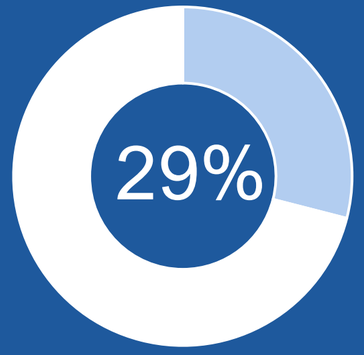
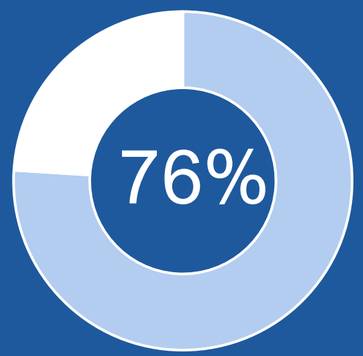
The **Industry** Believes Awareness is…



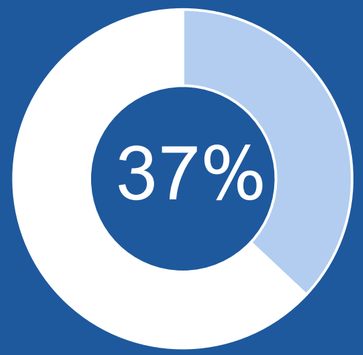
Actual **Consumer** Awareness is…



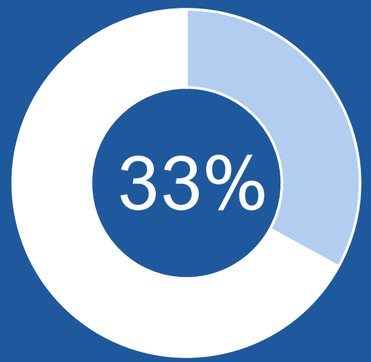
The **Industry** Says Education was Offered



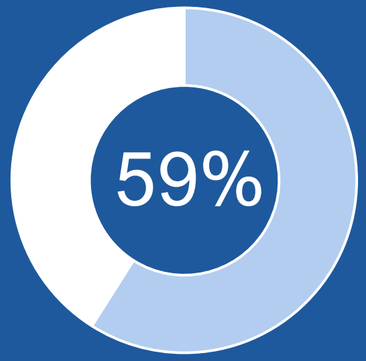
The **Consumer** Says Education was Received



Professional Rating for Pressure to Spend More



The Consumer Rating for Pressure to Spend More



OUR BLIND SPOTS SOMETIMES MAKE US OUR OWN WORST ENEMY.

Awareness of our most critical products are less than half what you believe they are. Some ff our biggest threats include:

- Assuming consumers know more than they do
- Not educating them on their options
- A perceptions of dishonesty and to much sales pressure

Our customer-facing teams continue to believe they are adequately delivering messaging around key products, while consumers are singing a different tune.

These disconnects are causing us to miss out on key revenue opportunities, including Cremation Memorialization and Pre-Arrangements.

Our businesses need to continue to reinforce pre-need and memorialization messaging before and after serving the families.

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THE WAVE OF ONLINE CONSUMERISM IS LARGER THAN YOU THINK, AND IT'S STILL JUST GETTING STARTED.

The digital behaviors of your current customers are shifting toward they way they interact with other businesses. The sea change is coming with the next generation of customers, who are digitally savvy and expect to find all the information they need online. Ignore those consumers at your own peril.

	Conducted/Plan to Conduct Online Research	Looked for/Will Look for Pricing Online	Read/Will Read Online Reviews	Searched for Information On Burial Options
Current Customers	41%	62%	49%	40%
Future Customers	78%	80%	61%	55%

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YOUR DIGITAL STOREFRONT WILL BE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT WITH THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE.

Is your website up to the challenge? Is it easy to navigate. Does it answer the most common questions consumers have – including transparency about price in an easy digestible format? Increasingly, consumers want to go beyond shopping, desiring the ability to transact online. Consumers still desire a comforting experience, but you need to meet them where they're at.

- Engaging and consumer friendly
- Comprehensive yet easy-to-understand pricing
- Online paperwork options
- Online payment options
- Online arrangement options
- Interactive options for communication, questions and follow-up

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Our people's opinions about the Profession are down this year and they remain most worried about three key issues: Adapting, Staffing, and Financials.

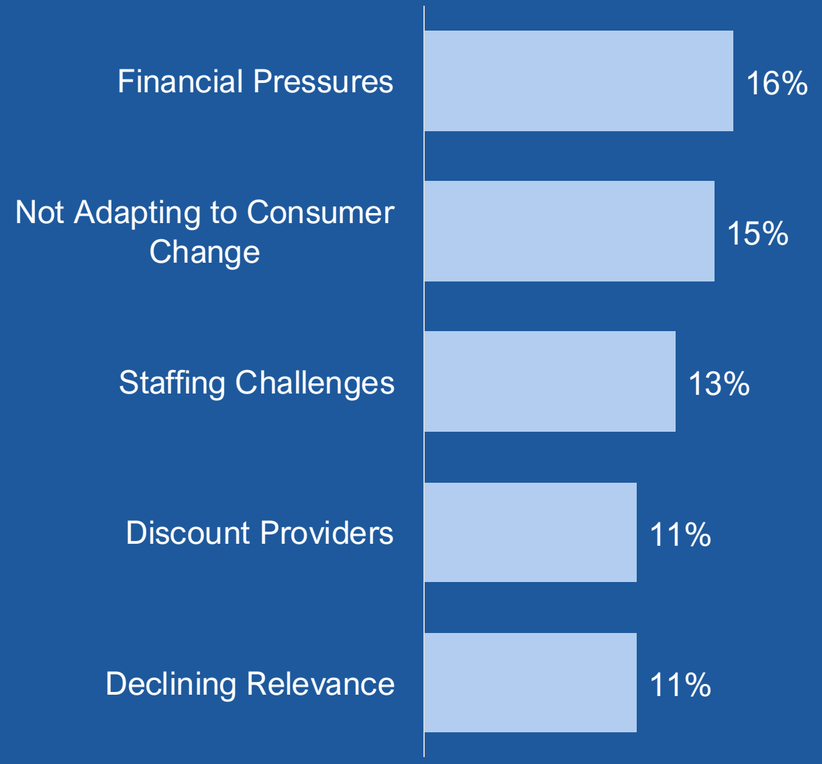
Employees are less engaged, more concerned about financial pressures, and feeling anxious about the Profession's ability to adapt to the changing consumer.

Overall Employee Engagement Rating

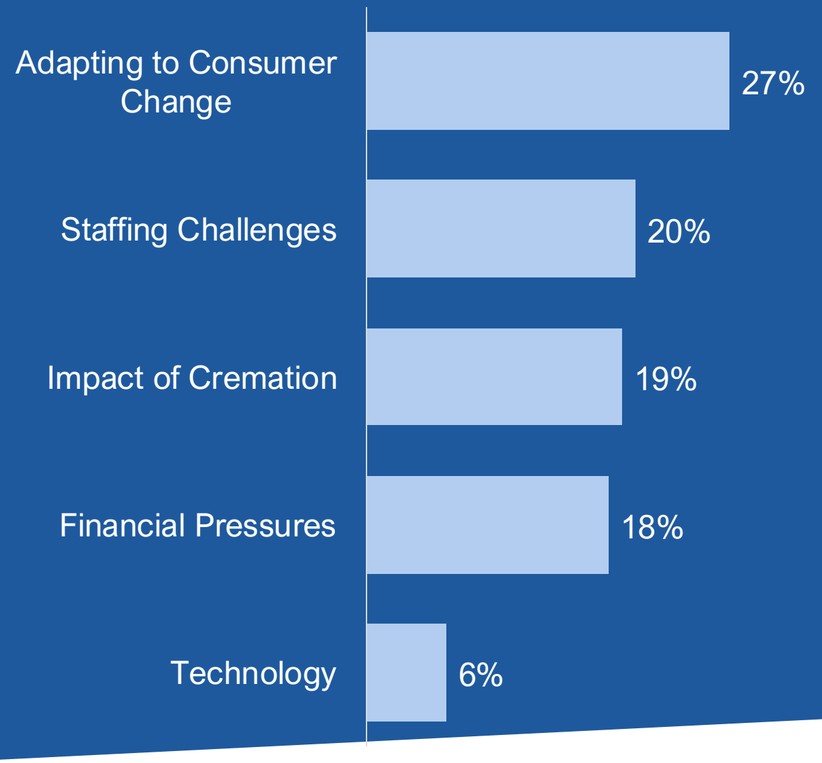
2024 **81%**

2025 **71%**

Biggest Threats to funeral service in the future.



Most Critical Issues facing the Profession in the next 3-5 years.



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2025 Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study

About The Foresight Companies

At **The Foresight Companies**, we are passionate about the funeral and cemetery profession. As funeral home and cemetery consultants, we have one singular focus: our client's success. Our mission is to deliver exceptional solutions for the funeral and cemetery profession. We strive to exceed expectations, build meaningful relationships, and create value for every client we serve.

Our formula includes the knowledge gained from our Partners who have over 100 years of combined experience. We have the insight and experience to make a difference for you.

About Fortitude Research and Marketing

Fortitude Research and Marketing is dedicated to supporting the Profession with data-driven solutions that create measurable results. From a team steeped in both funeral and cemetery service and understanding the voice of the customer, our Customer Experience Platform (CXP) and Cremation Qualified Leads (CQL) programs are built to measure consumer feedback and drive pre-need revenue.

Fortitude partners with The Foresight Companies each year to publish the Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study (FCCBS), tracking and forecasting attitudes, opinions, and behaviors about the funeral and cemetery profession.

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