

Online Obituary Promotion

Why Promote Online Obits?

If you do, you will...

- Generate more traffic to your website
- Increase online floral orders
- Receive more condolences for your families
- Experience higher website rankings

The 3 Obit Promotion Strategies

1. After Arrangement Email
2. Email to Church & Groups
3. Show how to add Obit to Facebook

Templates

Here are the exact templates that I have used with many clients to increase the traffic to their websites.

1. After Arrangement Email - Send immediately to family once obit is approved

Subject: Obituary for [First Name] [Last Name]

Dear [Family Member],

I have uploaded your [Dad's] obituary notice to our website at
<http://www.yourfuneralchapel.com/john-doe>

Feel free to forward this email to friends and family as we have found that it is an easy way to let a lot of people know about service times - especially on such short notice. Let me know if you need help with anything else.

Sincerely,
[Funeral Director]

2. Email to Church & Groups - Send immediately after email is sent to family

Subject: Obituary for [First Name] [Last Name]

Dear [Church / Group Name],

We are sorry to advise you that your member, [Deceased's Name] has passed away (or died) and his / her family has asked us to let you and your membership know of [Mr / Mrs Last Name]'s upcoming funeral service.

The complete obituary and service details can be found on our website at:
<http://www.yourfuneralchapel.com/john-doe>

Feel free to forward this email to your membership as we have found that it is an easy way to let a lot of people know about services times - especially on such short notice. Let me know if you have questions or need help with anything else.

Sincerely,
[Funeral Director]

3. Show Families how to add obit to Facebook page

Print the following on letterhead and explain and give to family in arrangement conference

There are 5 simple steps to add an Obituary Link to Facebook:

1. Go to the page where the obituary is for your loved one or friend
2. Copy the web page URL (address) from the Address Bar in the top of the Browser
 - Select the address and then Copy it "Ctrl + C"
 - This is an example of what the address looks like:
 - <http://www.YourFuneralChapel.com/john-doe>
3. Log into Facebook
4. Paste the link into the Update Status area where it says, "What's on your mind?"
5. Select the appropriate picture, add a comment (optional), tag people (optional) and click "Post"

EXAMPLE: <http://www.nashvillecremationcenter.com/how-to-share-an-obituary-on-facebook/>

Checklist of other items to help drive funeral home website traffic

- ✓ Email Signature
- ✓ Social Icons on Obit
- ✓ TAF (Tell A Friend) - Share Obituary
- ~~✓ Automated Posting to Facebook~~
- ✓ Automated Posting to Twitter
- ✓ In the newspaper, "Condolences may be offered for the family at www.YourFuneralChapel.com."
- ✓ Video tribute on website page with note in memorial folder
- ✓ QR Codes on individual Obituary pages

Implementation process at funeral home

1. Chose a staff member (champion) who will be responsible for this strategy? _____
2. Have that person copy the scripts to all of the admin computers
3. Have your "arrangers" ask all family members for their email addresses
4. Let the client families know that you will email the obit to them as soon as it is published online
5. Sent out the emails immediately after the obit is posted to your website

Positive Online Reviews

Why Generate Positive Online Reviews?

If you do, you will...

- Increase your online reputation
- Influence potential client families via social proof
- Create a network of raving fans that will drown out any haters

7 Steps to Generate More Reviews

1. Claim & optimize your Google My Business listing
2. Claim Bing Places & Yahoo Local
3. Register with Yelp and other online directories
4. Solicit online reviews on your website
5. Survey client families – use Post-It Note
6. Solicit online reviews from happy client families – especially those with Gmail accounts
7. Implement basic After Care if you don't have one

EXAMPLE: <http://www.classiccremation.ca/share-feedback/>

Post Service Survey process

To get the greatest amount of feedback possible, follow this 2 step Hardcopy & Email survey process.

1. End of the service / at graveside

- Present hard copy version of survey to family
 - include the link to the online survey on the paper version
- Have the survey separate from the guestbook and show it briefly to the family.
- Survey package:
 - Yellow sticky on survey envelope (or on survey if no #10 envelope):
 - *Dear Simpson family, I would appreciate your feedback about our services - thanks. Rob H.*
 - #10 Envelope: Client Family Survey Enclosed
 - Survey - trifold
 - #9 Envelope: (Addressed to the Funeral Home)

2. 3 days after service

- Send "Thank You" (Survey) email send

Subject: Thank you

This is just a short email to say thank you for entrusting the [Firm Name] family and staff to look after the services for your loved one.

To help us maintain and improve the level of service that we provide to families like yours, we would appreciate it if you were able to complete a short survey - it should only take 4 minutes.

This survey will help us recognize the efforts of the individuals who served you and address any concerns you might have.

To complete this survey, visit: <http://www.yourfuneralchapel.com/client-family-survey/>

Thank you again for entrusting [Firm Name] during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
[Funeral Director]

EXAMPLE 1: <http://www.lakeshorefuneralhome.com/family-follow-up-survey/>

EXAMPLE 2: <http://www.andersonmcqueen.com/resources/client-family-survey-form>

EXAMPLE 3: Make use of OGR's free family feedback program Family Contact.

Visit <http://www.ogr.org/family-contact> to sign up for this exclusive member benefit.

DIY After Care Program

- 0 days: Survey client family after service
- 3 days: Email follow-up for all family members
- 7 days: Set After Care appointment
- 30 days: Reminder of 90 Day "Courtesy Discount" Certificate
- 80 days: 10 Day reminder for 90 Day Discount Certificate
- 160 days: Touching base, "Do you need anything" letter
- 350 days: 1 Year Anniversary (Warning) – What to expect

Implementation process at funeral home

1. Chose a staff member (champion) who will be responsible for this strategy? _____
2. Have that person go through the "Website Audit" and claim all possible local directory listings including Google, Bing and Yelp
3. Contact your web developer to implement a "Review Us" funnel for your website
4. Implement Post Service Survey process
5. Check past thank you cards / emails, look for those who have Gmail accounts and contact them requesting an online review

First Call Ice Breaker Email

Why Email Immediately After 1st Call?

If you do, you will...

- Make your client family more prepared for the arrangement conference
- Have a better opportunity of having them choose better service offerings
- Increase the sales of new services & merchandise
- Enjoy a better overall arrangement process

Create Web Page: Information to Review Prior To Our Meeting

Thank you for the confidence that you have placed in [Firm Name].

We like to let families know ahead of time the various items that will need to be discussed during the arrangements. We have categorized them into four groups:

Information You Need

- Statistical information
- Social Security Number
- Cemetery information
- Family Contact Information

Also if you haven't already seen our If A Death Has Occurred checklist, you can review it here ([link to page on your website](#)).

Things You Need To Bring In

- Clothing (including any special instructions) – Clothing Guidelines
- Photos for the video collage (Video DVD Tribute) – see sample here
- Veteran Discharge papers if applicable

Decisions You Will Have To Make

- Burial or cremation
- Location of service
- Choosing a clergy or celebrant
- Location of reception

Introduction To New Services

- Complimentary Online Obituary – see current obituaries here
- Video DVD Tributes – see sample here
- Catering and Beverage Service – more details here
- Memorialization & Cremation Jewelry

Note: The content of this page should be edited to fit the offerings of your funeral home. The key thing is to get this page up and running as soon as possible so that you can implement this strategy right away. You can always add to it or edit it in the future.

Suggested New Offerings

- Free Online Obituary
- Memorial Video Tribute DVD
- Catering Package
- Reception Room Usage
- Cremation Jewelry
- Fingerprint Jewelry
- Memorial Blanket
- Tribute Portraits
- Executors Toolkit
- Stuffed animals
- Picture frames
- Memorial candles

Email to send to Client Families

Subject: Information to review prior to our meeting

Dear ###,

Thank you for confirming your appointment with us to discuss the services that you want to have for your ###.

We like to let families know ahead of time the various items that will need to be discussed during the arrangements. We have created a web page specifically for client families like yours so that you have some insights into the process of funeral and / or cremation arrangements. You can access that web page here: [LINK TO YOUR PAGE]

Included on this page are a list of information and items that you may need to bring with you, some discussion on some of the various decisions that you will need to make, and a listing of some of the newer service offerings that we have available that you may not be aware of.

Also at any time - now or during the arrangements or after - we are always available to answer questions that you may have.

Sincerely,
[Funeral Director]

Implementation process at funeral home

1. Chose a staff member (champion) who will be responsible for this strategy? _____
2. Create a page (this page should be a hidden page on your website if possible) called "Information To Review Prior To Our Meeting"
3. For every 1st Call, ask for their email address during the initial call
4. Send the following email to the family / next of kin / person making arrangement immediately after receiving the 1st Call

Small Group Discussion

Questions to Discuss

Which strategy would be your top choice?

Why, who & what would be the earning potential?

What will your timeline be?

How will you introduce it? Staff meeting? Trial?

Why is it important to staff?

Why is it beneficial to client families?

Score 1 to 10	Do you like the strategy	Acceptance by Staff	Benefit to Family	Earning Potential	TOTAL
Obit Promotion					
Online Reviews					
1st Call Email					