

BEWARE OF COMMUNAL ADVERTISING

The word "Communal" just has a dirty feel to it doesn't it?

*Google defines COMMUNAL:
Shared by all members of a
community; for common use.*

Communal restrooms, communal showers, communal laundry. Now maybe in our younger days, when we were residing at college dorms or backpacking and staying in hostels, communal facilities could be put up with. But you never really knew how clean these facilities were.

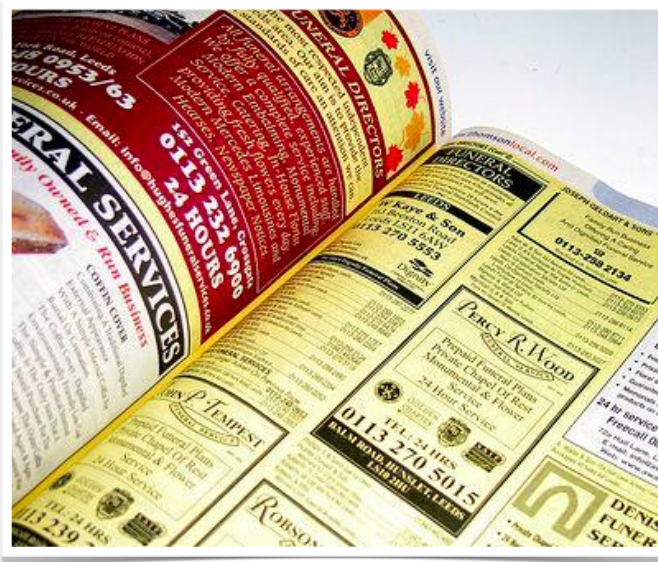


Those facilities were only as clean as the dirtiest member of that community. I apologize if your skin is crawling a little, but that is why we now appreciate our own, private facilities. The peace of mind we have staying at a nice hotel, is knowing that everything has been cleaned just for us, and that we don't have to share them with anyone.

It comes down to this: You Get What You Pay For. Dirty & shared = cheap or free, and clean & private = more costs.

So why I am talking about dirty, communal facilities and how does it relate to funeral home advertising?

Recently, my clients have been forwarding advertising offers to me that really just don't pass the smell test. They are all forms of communal advertising - and they STINK!



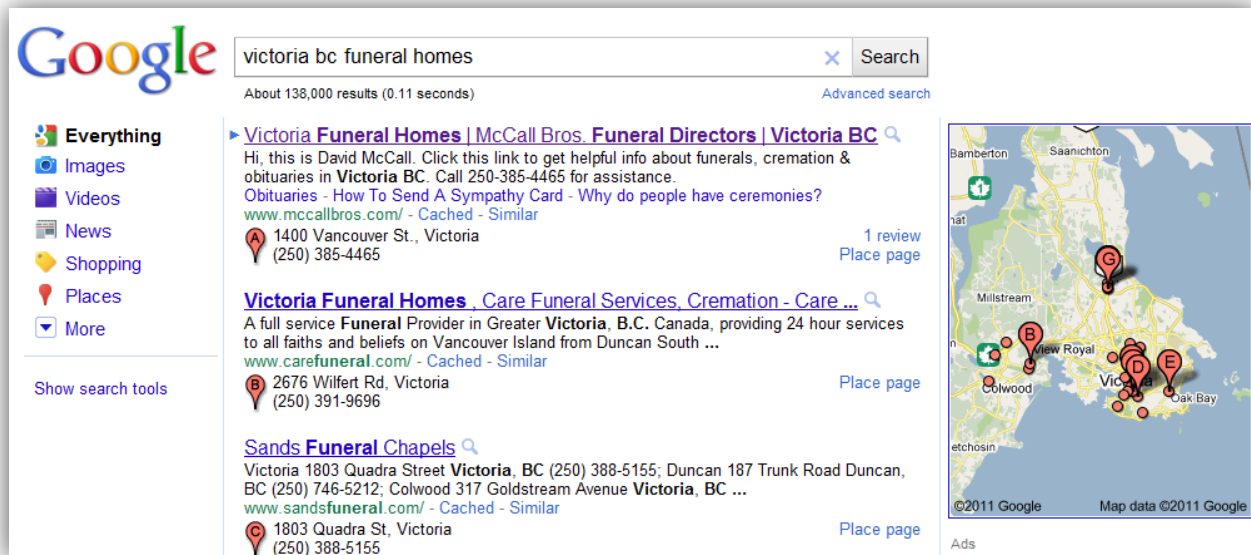
“What is communal advertising?” you ask.

Simply, it is where you pay to be listed with others - your (somewhat smelly) competition - and you all share the same advertising space.

The longest running example of communal advertising would be the Yellow Pages.

You pay to be listed alongside all of your competitors. One of the premium benefits of a yellow page listing *used* to be that it was delivered to every household and business in your community. Now I don't have to tell you that the Internet has leveled

the playing field for advertising, since more people - 97% according to BIA/Kelsey - say that their buying process is shop / research online, then buy offline. In case you were wondering, this *does* include checking out funeral homes online.



The reason for this article is not to debate the merits of advertising in the physical Yellow Pages. A proper ad in the physical book can still yield a great ROI for some businesses. The purpose of me writing this for you, is that I wanted to ALERT you to the *online version* of communal advertising - otherwise known as paid online directory listings!


I'm not saying *all* online directory listings are bad. But I highly recommend that you avoid the ones that make you pay to be listed, either with money or even back links to their website from yours. Now free listings, just like our cheap hostel example, would likely provide a lower quality of exposure. But this is to be expected since it was free. On the other hand, *paying* to be listed where all your competitors are also appearing, is just wrong.

You see, you have your own listing online. Your website and all of your other online properties that make up your virtual marketing platform, form your own listing or web footprint. So unlike the physical yellow pages in the past that offered something that you *didn't* have (representation in someone's kitchen for example) you now have every ability to promote your business online in a way that is much more effective than what these paid directories do. They bring nothing extra to your potential client family other than Introducing Them to Your Competitors! On the other hand, how you handle your own virtual marketing platform can set you apart from your competitors in a way that is both unique AND highly effective.

The biggest culprit of selling "dirty" online advertising is the Yellow Pages online package. They will charge you hundreds of dollars per month just have a "featured" listing or even run a Google AdWords campaign on your behalf (sort of).

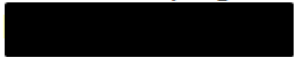

The problem is that you will get way more bang for your buck if you had your own Google

AdWords campaign, and directed that traffic to *your* site instead of to where all of the competitors are in their communal directory.

[Find Local Funeral Homes in Toronto, ON | YellowPages.ca™](#) 
Locate and compare Funeral Homes in Toronto, ON, Yellow Pages Local Listings. Find useful information, the address and the phone number of the local ...
www.yellowpages.ca/search/si/.../Funeral+Homes/Toronto,+ON - Cached - Similar

There are also funeral industry online directories that make you pay \$200 to \$300 per month just to be listed ...near your competition. They also place Google AdWords ads for your area to drive traffic to *their* site. What you probably don't realize is that their ads are driving up the price of your cost per click if you have your own PPC campaign. In essence, funeral homes that pay these online directories are actually paying to have higher costs per click, and that really smells (just like that communal restroom on a weekend morning during frosh week).

Other online directories are a little sneakier around how they get you to pay them. Their currency is a very valuable back link from your website to theirs. One directory actually calls this a free listing - but being made to link back to them is everything BUT free. To buy a link like that would cost you \$150 - \$300. Not a very good deal on your part is it? Nope - but it gets worse... they actually ask you to link to the city page for your town (not your own listing).

Please note: The Verification Seal is connected to your city listing, not an individual page. We created this structure to enhance directory visibility for your listing, reaching consumers who search for services in your city and state. Except for determining placement, modifying the proprietary Verification Seal code may nullify your  Listing (TM). Authorization requires specific markers to be present in the code. For any questions, contact support@ 

Note: The red underlines are the BS they are trying to pull on you!

This really STINKS because the reason why they want you to link to the city page is so it will rank higher when some searches for "[your city] funeral homes" - basically you are helping them out rank you in Google! Do they think we are STUPID?!

Another quick point about directories is that Google is now giving them less relevance in the rankings for local searches to the specific local businesses like yours. Google's goal is to get the searcher to their destination in the least amount of clicks so making the searcher jump through an extra hoop is against what Google is trying to achieve.

So you can probably see why I have turned up the heat in this article because none of them have your best interests at heart. But wait, there's more... I have only outlined their short term goals above. I believe they are also positioning themselves to eventually get in the way between you and the client family searching for you. Then they will attempt to be a gatekeeper of that CALL! I have a better name for them besides gatekeeper. I call them Call Poachers! You have to be aware of them too.

So what can you do to protect yourself from these dirty online marketers?

1. Make sure that any advertising online drives people back to your website - not a listing. Never link from your website to an online directory (linking to your state, provincial, or national association is ok).
2. Consider your own Google AdWords campaigns that drive searchers to your own website and not a listing.
3. Always track all online advertising with tracking links. Great website statistics are available through programs like Google Analytics. This makes third party advertisers accountable for telling you that they will drive traffic to your site.

So going forward, I want to make sure that you don't get sucked into advertising schemes that are not in your 100% favor! Just follow the 3 steps above.

If you would like me to take a look at your online presence and an online competitive situation for your area, take advantage of our 21 Point Virtual Market Analysis & Video Online Review. For the next few days, I'm offering this service for only \$6. The reason why I need to charge the six bucks, is to know that you are serious about wanting this information and I know you are not one of those "communal funeral directors" just looking for freebies.



If you are interested, just go to FuneralFuturist.com/beware-communal to book your analysis. If not, no worries, just make sure THEY (the Stinky Communal Advertisers) don't try to trick you the next time they call, visit or email you.

...Hepp