

## How to market a funeral home?

“*You only get one chance to make a last impression*“. - A funeral parlour slogan

Most funeral homes are reluctant to advertise their services, as they believe that the public may find these types of advertisements too disturbing or even offensive. Therefore, many funeral homes seek alternative means of presenting their business to the general public, such as websites. Websites are generally considered the first port of call for an organisation's digital marketing mix. Almost all digital marketing is designed to lead users to a website where they convert into customers. An effective website is therefore at the centre of an organisation's online marketing activities.

A study was undertaken by a team of researchers, including [Dr Tania Maree](#) (staff member in the [Department of Marketing Management](#)), to investigate the challenges faced by marketers of funeral services. A quantitative content analysis of the twenty existing websites of members of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) of South Africa was conducted to collect the relevant data for this study.

A funeral service does not form part of a consumer's regular consumption patterns; in fact, a consumer only acquires the services of a funeral home once a loved one has passed away. The funeral director therefore literally has only a few days to complete the entire transaction – from first contact with the client until completion of the funeral activities. It is within this short span of time where the funeral director has to deliver services at high impact based on the desires and needs of a client who is in a delicate emotional state – a factor which further complicates the process for both parties. It is therefore important for the funeral home to create the correct first impression on the prospective consumer via the website.

The findings from this research study indicate that overall, funeral homes seem to have designed their websites to include the elements that are considered to facilitate ease-of-use. The analysed websites performed well in terms of accessibility and visibility, which indicates that the website owners (and/or their web designers) are conscious of the importance of visibility through the Google Chrome Search Engine. Funeral home owners should, however, attempt to improve aspects such as ensuring that their website's URL is clearly displayed under the name. Additionally, providing a contact form that allows the user to add their details in order for the funeral home to contact them could also increase the ease-of-use for the consumer.

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