

Marketing

By Welton Hong

Increase Case Counts with

Mobile Marketing

Two things are worth noting right from the start when we get into the topic of mobile marketing.

One: My time working with funeral home clients at Ring Ring Marketing has helped me understand just what a transition it is for many such businesses to wade into the waters of online marketing in the first place. However, when they've seen how many benefits there are to promoting their businesses over the internet, they've quickly become true believers.

Two: As powerful as internet marketing is in general, one particular aspect has proved to be exceptionally beneficial in driving case counts, particularly among at-need clients. And that aspect, as you already know from the headline, is mobile marketing.

If you haven't heard of mobile marketing before, don't worry, I get it. It's still not widely understood, much less used, by many traditional brick-and-mortar local businesses.

But that's also part of what makes it so useful: Most of your competitors likely are not employing this tactic yet, so you can take advantage of that fact and get a head start – which is a massive advantage with any kind of online marketing.

If you are already familiar with the concept of mobile marketing – and if you're actually putting it to use in some way – congratulations! You're already well ahead of the curve, and you likely can skip the next part. But I hope you'll check out the rest of this article, because it does have some information of value to anyone marketing death-care services.

For everyone else, let's start with the basics ...

What Is Mobile Marketing?

The simple answer is that mobile marketing is any type of campaign that's specifically intended to reach mobile users. That mostly refers to smartphones, but it can include tablets as well – and lately, even

smartwatches fit the bill. The key is that you're reaching users who have a highly portable, handheld (or worn) device that's connected 24/7 to the internet.

This is how a growing number of Americans access the internet. Desktop computers still have their place (for now, at least), but the convenience of handheld internet is reminiscent of the difference between using a cellphone versus a landline: If you can do everything you need on a device that's not physically locked to one location, why wouldn't you choose the mobile option?

Recent surveys show that almost 25 percent of consumers ages 18-34 access the internet exclusively on a mobile device, not using a desktop at all. Close to 15 percent of consumers ages 35-54 do the same. While the number is lower (about 10 percent) among those aged 55 and up, adoption continues to grow quickly as older users become more accustomed to mobile devices.

How Mobile Marketing Increases At-Need Case Counts

The nature of at-need death-care services lends itself to mobile marketing. For example, if you're at a hospital and a loved one has died, it's natural to go to your smartphone or tablet to determine how to proceed. Your desktop or laptop computer simply isn't available.

One core aspect of mobile marketing is *geotargeting*. You can create a campaign that reaches out selectively to people within a given geographic area. At-need clientele will often seek out a funeral home that's nearby, so you can target such individuals purely based on their proximity to you.

There's also a method commonly referred to as *geofencing*. This lets you build a "virtual fence" around a particular location to send advertisement messages specifically within that area. A hospital in the area your funeral home serves would be a perfect location to utilize this tool.

These methods take advantage of the fact that mobile devices upload specific location data in real time to show where they are. This information is invaluable when you're creating a mobile marketing campaign. It helps you connect specifically with people in need of your services, providing a benefit for all parties.

You can also create advertisements on search engines such as Google to target specific locations. When someone in the target area simply searches for "funeral services," "cremation," "burial" or similar terms, your ad will be positioned to immediately catch the searcher's eyes.

Additional Aspects of Mobile Marketing

Since mobile marketing ads are most often viewed on a smartphone, you can leverage the

device's most basic technology – it's a phone, after all – to make contacting you convenient.

No one wants to go through a complex process to reach any business, and this is especially true, obviously, for a grieving family member immediately following a death.

Much in the same way pay-per-click advertising lets an individual go straight to a business' website with a single click, mobile marketing click-to-call ads lets them call your business with a single touch on their phones.

A single touch converts a potential client from online to a live phone conversation, letting you provide answers and explain how you can help this person in a time of need. It's a clear benefit to the caller and a powerful way to capture their business right away.

Mobile marketing is also extremely beneficial because it's one of the easiest marketing methods to track. When you receive a phone call, a click-thru or a website visit through mobile marketing, analytics provide you all the information on how that contact originated.

You'll know all the details: the when and the where, which of your advertisements attracted the contact, etc. This helps you improve your marketing campaigns and ensure substantial return on investment.

But If You Do Nothing Else ...

Before I mention what that is, I profoundly hope you will do something else with mobile marketing. If you work with a highly-qualified online marketing expert to develop a thoughtful, professional mobile marketing campaign, you have an exceptional likelihood of seeing excellent results.

But beyond that, if you do nothing else, *make sure your business' website is mobile-friendly*.

I truly can't stress this part enough.

Far too many commercial websites in 2016 still display poorly, if at all, on mobile devices. They were designed years ago to look OK on desktop computers, but that doesn't mean they work on mobile devices. And this is often especially true for traditional businesses such as local funeral homes. *Don't make this mistake.*

As I noted earlier, far more people are researching services and products on mobile devices now. If the old-school desktop version of your site is all they get when they pull it up on a smartphone, the vast majority of visitors will exit immediately. They'll never give you a chance to make a case for your business.

A website that's optimized for mobile devices is clear and easy to navigate on small screens. It will take advantage of mobile technology, such as the click-to-call function I mentioned previously.

Additionally, Google punishes the rankings of websites that are not optimized for mobile viewing, and that's been true for more than a year now. Your placement in organic search results will significantly suffer if your site does not render well and make navigation easy on mobile.

There are a few ways to remedy this issue, such as having a website with responsive design, which makes the site easily viewable on a variety of screen sizes, or even creating a separate site specifically for mobile devices. (Some businesses even create separate mobile apps to be especially user-friendly.)

Whichever route you go, you truly must test your site on a variety of screen types (smartphone, tablet, desktop) and on different device types – Android phones and iPhones can render sites differently. If your site doesn't provide a clear, easily navigable experience on mobile devices, you're missing out on a lot of potential revenue. •