

Technology

By Welton Hong

How Google

Decides the Quality of a Page



Even as new and different techniques emerge every year for marketing your funeral home online, one foundational aspect remains as critical as ever: You absolutely need your funeral home's website to rank highly with Google.

Let me take a moment to be more specific about what I mean. Sure, you'd like your site to rank highly on a variety of search engines, but Google remains the leader in search by a massive degree, commanding about *75 percent* of the market share. Google is always the top priority when optimizing your site for high rankings.

Additionally, when I talk about "ranking highly," I'm specifically referring to local search. That means where someone is searching for the services you provide (e.g., burial, cremation, funeral services) in your specific geographic area.

The searcher might not even need to add the area to their search,

because Google will usually know their location already. (Today's technology essentially does that by default, unless the searcher takes specific steps to hide their location.)

In other words, if you have a funeral home in Fort Collins, Colorado, you very much want your funeral home to be among the top businesses listed when someone in Fort Collins searches for terms such as funeral, burial, cremation, etc.

These days, if you're among the top three-or-so businesses listed, you're in pretty good shape. If you're in the four-to-10 range, it's not optimal, but you might see some traffic (less as you get lower on the results page, of course).

And if you don't make the first page of results, you're essentially invisible. That's bad news.

So it remains incredibly important to rank as highly as possible. To do so, you must be sure your site is as SEO-friendly as it can be. (SEO, of course, stands for *search engine optimization*.)

Now, I realize that few people reading this article are concerning themselves directly with improving their site's SEO. That's a task best suited for a qualified webmaster or internet marketing specialist.

But it's good to understand what is important when Google ranks individual pages on your site, so you can direct your website specialist knowl-

edgably – and know you’re getting everything you’re paying for.

You’ll note that I specified individual pages above. That’s because Google doesn’t just look at your funeral home site as a whole. It ranks individual pages, and those ranks go toward how your entire site eventually ranks in searches. So by adding high-quality pages or deleting (or fixing) low-quality ones (in Google’s eyes), you can see great improvement in your site’s ranking.

I’ll try not to get too technical, but here are some of the ways Google decides whether a given page on your funeral home website is high quality:

Lots of unique content. While this might seem a touch trickier for funeral home sites than other business sites, it really isn’t. Just make sure the content that covers the basics is all original, not copied from other sites. You can also create lots

of original content for an About Us page, telling your story and profiling your staff, and even create a blog for original content about industry trends, preplanning, end-of-life care and related subjects.

Internal and external links to other high-quality pages. That means both links to and from other strong pages within your site and to and from strong pages on other sites. Look to build links with sites related to death care, particularly good ones, and particularly ones where you can link to and from high-quality pages (not just a long list of links).

High-quality accessibility on all types of devices. This means your pages provide an intuitive user experience and design on any device that accesses your site: desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device. Google now places a high premium on the mobile experience, so be sure your pages are as easy to use on a smartphone as

they are on an old-school desktop computer. This is extremely important.

Text content is grammatical and spelled correctly. Yes, Google’s technology is now sophisticated enough that it can differentiate between well-written text (aka “clean copy”) and ungrammatical, misspelled muck. In addition to making your page rank better with Google, clean copy is important for establishing trust with your site’s human visitors. Potential clientele want to know you’re detail-oriented, obviously.

Have text alternatives for non-text content. *Simple version:* If you have images and videos on your pages (and you should), be sure they’re coded in such a way that the content is described in text as well. This can be done through a tool called the “alt” attribute, along with endeavors such as providing a written transcript for videos. •



MAXXimum Independence

Ferno's 24-miniMAXX® allows you to safely remove bodies up to **1000 lbs** with just **one person** giving you MAXXimum Independence.

For more than 55 years, Ferno has been a family-run business dedicated to delivering innovative, quality products to make your job easier so you can focus on what matters most.

Ferno delivers the quality you deserve with integrity you can believe in.



Scan to gain your independence at www.FernoMortuary.com or call 800. 733. 3766



This article originally appeared in the December 2018 issue of American Funeral Director, published by Kates-Boylston Publications, and is being shared with permission. Visit www.americanfuneraldirector.com to subscribe.