

# THE CREMATIONIST OF NORTH AMERICA

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ILLUMINATING THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS  
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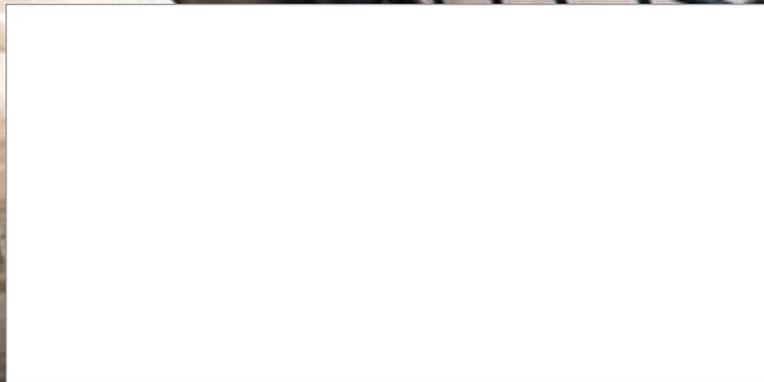
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# The One Word to Know Is **CONVERSION**

By Welton Hong



**S**earch engine optimization. Pay-per-click advertising. Reputation monitoring. Content generation. Traffic generation. Mobile marketing. Retargeting. Credibility.

When it comes to promoting your cremation business on the internet, these are terms you'll hear all the time. And if you haven't heard all of them yet, you should have—they're tools and practices (and in certain cases, philosophies) I employ all the time for death care businesses that comprise my client base.

They all work, and they all work well.

But here's the point I want to get across right now: If you're missing one critical aspect from your online marketing, none of the things I've mentioned above will help you at all. You could put all your effort into mastering the elements I listed, but your phone won't ring. You won't attract the cremation cases you need to drive revenue and dominate your local competition.

It's as simple as this:

You need a high-converting website.

The problem, right from the get-go, is that about half of the cremation professionals reading this article probably don't know exactly what I mean by "a high-converting website." I know this

from my interactions with the industry over the past few years.

On the topic of website conversion, there's a lot of confusion. And that's a huge problem, because it's the foundation from which everything else springs.

Website doesn't convert? The phone doesn't ring.

Website doesn't convert? Any money you're spending on generating website traffic is going right down the drain.

Website doesn't convert? All of your digital advertising is essentially pointless. Don't bother coming up with enticing copy and images to lure at-need and preneed clientele. You're only creating window shoppers. They'll visit your site, sure—and then "bounce out" shortly thereafter, ending up with one of your competitors.

Everything I listed at the top of this article is important, but again, you honestly can forget about all of it if you're not dedicated to creating a high-converting website for your business.

So let's talk about how to make that happen.

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## What do we mean when we talk about “conversion?”

Some of you already know this, of course. But even if you think you’re familiar with the concept, I recommend reviewing this as a useful refresher.

Essentially, a high-converting website is highly effective at “converting” the people who visit it into clientele. That doesn’t mean 100 percent of visitors become clientele, of course. But a high-converting site is significantly better than the average at creating conversions.

The concept of conversion is well understood in a number of other industries, particularly ones in digital fields, but it remains somewhat mysterious in brick-and-mortar trades, particularly death care. I’ll try to clear up that confusion now.

Regardless of the industry, a “conversion” doesn’t necessarily entail making a sale. In fact, a conversion can be whatever action you want it to be, but it’s always something the visitor does to get closer to becoming a client.

That could be (and often is) filling out a contact form with a phone number and/or an email address.

It could be choosing to download information about a service you provide, such as a cremation society membership or related preplanning mechanism.

It could be actually calling your business for information about preneed or at-need services, or engaging with an online “chatbot” about services and/or prices.

Again, you define what a conversion is to you, based upon what you want to happen when someone visits your site. This definition can change based upon your needs and expectations.

The percentage of all visitors who convert, naturally, is your conversion rate, which is how you know how well your website is achieving what you want it to do.

You should know your conversion rate right now. If you don’t, it’s imperative you find out immediately. Of course, you need to have already defined what counts as a conversion for your cremation business.

Then you’ll actually know whether you have a high-converting website. Or a website that only converts moderately. Or occasionally. Or (shiver) hardly at all.

If that’s the case, it’s hardly worth having a website at all.

You see, a website isn’t just a digital version of your physical business. It’s not just a place to list your services and prices. It’s not just a spot to note (if this is the case) that you own your own crematory—although that’s certainly important to state, along with the standard “your loved one never leaves our care.” (That might not be a groundbreaking maxim, but it exists for a reason: it works.)

A website can be all of those things, but first and foremost, it’s a marketing tool. That might sound crass to some, but we’re being honest here. Your website must market your business. On every page, you must be giving the visitor a reason to choose you over your local competitors.



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Everything from the content you include to the actual design of the site must be crafted to convert that visitor. That's the goal. That's how you drive new business.

If your website isn't designed to convert, it's essentially just taking up space. You might get business from other avenues, such as referrals or offline advertising, but it won't be coming from online traffic.

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It makes no sense to spend tons of effort and money on generating traffic to your website if it isn't built to convert. You could get lots of online traffic, but that's pointless if it's married to a poor conversion rate.

Look at it this way: Would you rather have 300 visitors in a given week and convert 5 percent of them, or 120 visitors and convert 30 percent? The latter gives you 36 conversions. The former gives you triple the traffic...but only 15 conversions.

What you really want is the best of both worlds: A high-converting website that also generates plenty of targeted traffic. If you're getting 300 visitors and converting 30 percent, that's 90 conversions. But it all starts with the website.

### Creating a high-converting website

This is, admittedly, where things can get a bit complex. That's because there's no "magic wand," no single tool that universally ensures your website becomes a conversion machine. That's largely because conversion is defined different ways for different businesses.

However, some general principles tend to be very effective for producing high conversions regardless of the specific goal. Here are a few big ones to keep in mind:

■ **A clear call to action (CTA) on every page.** Every high-converting website has a well-defined, unambiguous CTA prominently displayed on every page of the site.

Once you know exactly what a conversion means to your business (that's the first step, obviously), you must design a CTA that induces that action from the visitor.

Subtlety can be beneficial in death care messaging, of course, but this is one area where you don't want to be subtle. Craft a great CTA and put it on every page.

That last part is very important. You don't necessarily know where the visitor will be on the site when he or she decides to download a digital brochure, fill out a contact form or contact

you by phone or email (for example). Don't miss a single chance to make that happen.

■ **Easy-to-use navigation.** If your website design is too complicated or confusing, you won't get conversions. You want a simple, straightforward process that clearly tells visitors where to go to get the information they need—and again, provides them the opportunity (through the CTA) to convert whenever they wish.

Audit your site for anything that could throw someone off. Ask people who don't work for you to visit the site and note anything they find puzzling. You might be surprised by what you hear. What might seem obvious to you could be unclear to others.

■ **Your site must be mobile-friendly.** This is a whole other can of worms, but the short version is that more people now research services on mobile devices than they do on desktop computers. And yes, that includes death care services such as cremation.

I can't tell you how many businesses I've worked with that came to me with websites that were close to unreadable and virtually unusable on a smartphone or even a tablet. What works perfectly fine on a desktop computer can be a complete mess on a mobile device.

With mobile adoption growing exponentially year after year, there are now hundreds of thousands of websites missing out on conversions simply because mobile users can't navigate them. You don't want your site to be one of them.

■ **Optimize for mobile now.** Not only will you get more conversions, but with Google (the dominant market leader in search) now prioritizing mobile experience over desktop, you'll rank better against your competitors in searchers and this will generate far more traffic as well. 



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