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ing number of your families start making arrangements online and the use of livestreaming of services increases, just how important is all that information on your comfortable arrangement offices, your relaxing lounge, your spacious rooms for visitations and your parking lot that offers more than 100 spaces? Instead, make sure that the website showcases your staff and the new state-of-the-art technology platforms and innovative services you offer in addition to your facilities.

As the COVID-19 pandemic passes, the need for technology is here to stay. It never can – nor should – replace the relationships you have with your families. But technology can be a connection, joining you when physical contact is difficult or impossible, helping to make sure that you can continue providing comfort and peace of mind to families no matter what the future holds.

That began to change when the pandemic hit, as many funeral directors and cemeterians pivoted quickly and started to embrace digital technologies so they could safely and securely interact with families in their communities.

Consumer and business use of digital solutions – from videoconferencing platforms to cloud-based applications – will continue to increase in the future as the pandemic has changed purchasing behavior. Here are three important lessons industry leaders can expect to see impact their funeral home or cemetery in the new year:

Cybercriminals are Getting Better at Hacking Websites

Your funeral home or cemetery is under threat whether you know it or not. Data security experts VMware Carbon Black found that 91% of businesses were victims of a cyberattack since the beginning of pandemic.

That’s the bad news. The good news is that mitigating cyber threats is not as challenging as it may appear. Technology companies now offer a wide variety of affordable, robust software platforms to safeguard your firm’s data.

Death-care professionals can also educate employees to take simple steps – such as changing passwords regularly and double-checking email addresses before opening or sending email, for example – to protect confidential data and thwart phishing scams.

Digital Technology to Engage with Families Is the “New Normal”

The “on again, off again” local and statewide work-from-home and shelter-in-place mandates forced the industry to find new ways to interact safely with clients and share confidential information securely. It also exposed gaps in technology to achieve both objectives.

Funeral directors and cemeterians are now leveraging technology to interact with families on a regular basis – whether it’s by video conference (Zoom or a similar application) or by using new software to securely complete preneed and at-need contracts. Those methods of engagement are here to stay. While face-to-face communication will always be at the heart of serving families, death-care professionals will have to provide the same quality of personalized service in a virtual environment as more families make purchases online, including end-of-life planning.

More Families Will Purchase Preneed Services

In addition to changing online behavior, the pandemic has also affected the way consumers are thinking about advance funeral arrangement purchases. In its “2020 Funeral and Cemetery Consumer Behavior Study,” The Foresight Companies found that in an eight-week span – from pre-COVID-19 to the height of the pandemic – consumer belief in the importance of having funeral arrangements made in advance went up from 57% to 73% – an increase of 16%. Additionally, the same study revealed 75% of consumers seek pricing transparency, pointing to a need to publish your pricing online or having it readily available.

To meet the expectations of clients and the increasing demand for advance arrangements, funeral homes should utilize digital tools to make preneed offerings more accessible and easier to preview and purchase services. •

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The economic crisis brought on by the coronavirus pandemic has forced the death-care industry to search for better ways to manage operations while continuing to care for families during their time of need.

Before COVID-19, the death-care industry had been slow to leverage the power of new technologies.



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