

Technology

By Patti Martin Bartsche

A hand in a dark suit jacket and white shirt is pointing upwards with the index finger. The hand is positioned over a glowing digital node in a network diagram. The diagram consists of several white circular nodes connected by dashed white lines. The node being pointed at is the largest and most prominent, with a bright white glow. Other nodes are smaller and less prominent, scattered around the central node. The background is dark and out of focus, showing the hand and suit.

Technology Touch Points

Utilizing Technology to Move Your Business Forward

With so many technological offerings at our fingertips, life is definitely easier ... and, at times, more confusing. What will work best for you?

Each month, some of the industry's top technology experts provide the answers to your most common technology questions, concerns and problems as part of Technology Touch Points.

Have a technology question or concern you want answered?

Visit www.katesboylston.com/technology to submit your technology questions, and look for answers in future issues of **American Funeral Director**.

To learn more about our **KB Tech Partners**, visit www.katesboylston.com/techpartners

Q “Are there ways I can use technology to better tell the story of our funeral home and the people who work here?”

A **Curtis Funk, founder, Tukios**

Social media is probably the most obvious place online for this type of storytelling. Pictures are great, videos are better. Put together a video that tells a brief history of your location, and more importantly, what sets you apart from the competition.

Then I would recommend using Facebook and Instagram to push that video out to your market. Facebook’s advertising platform is incredible! Unlike some of the other social networks, Facebook gathers all kinds of information about your potential clients. Their interests, their contact information, occupational data, etc. This information can then be targeted within their advertising tool so you can make sure that when you promote your video online that it only displays to your potential clients. This way you’re not paying for clicks from people that you don’t want clicks from.

If it were me, I would probably target everybody over 50 years old who lives within the counties my funeral home serves. That would be a good place to start, and then as you create more content, you can get more specific with different campaigns.

We do this at Tukios. Our ads only display to people who work at funeral homes. We were able to break that down in the Facebook ad manager. We also have our ads show up on the Facebook ad network, which means they can be seen in other apps that are partnered with Facebook. We get a lot of clicks from funeral directors playing games on their phones.

There are lots of other social networks you can post on, but right now they’re a little more difficult to prove you’re getting a return on your investment.

Q “How can I make sure that I am using the full potential of the technology we have to improve my business’s performance?”

A **Paul White, vice president of client development and marketing, Funeral Services Inc.**

Technology has been the greatest driving force of growth over the past 20 years. It has impacted how we think and interact, but it’s also changed consumers’ expectations and how they make decisions.

Whether you run a local mom-and-pop shop or a large business with hundreds of clients, several tech-focused tactics exist that can enhance your offerings and help you meet consumers on their turf, while maximizing the performance and growth of your business.

Store Records Digitally to Increase Efficiency

The first step to improving any aspect of your business is to identify how you can create more efficiency for you and your staff. One of the best ways you can accomplish this is by storing records digitally. As long as you have a few computers and either a company server or hard drive, you should have the capacity to store all of your records on a digital platform.

In the long term, converting your paperwork into digital documents and placing your business on the cloud is the best practice, but if that transition is too steep in the short term, you can easily scan forms and upload them to your digital database. With any of these approaches, you’re less likely to misplace important documents, and it’s easier to find information you need, especially under a deadline.

You know the saying: Time is money. Once you get past the initial transition period, this strategy will enable you to invest more time in what matters most – growing your business.

Automate Tasks to Streamline Processes

Ask yourself: What regular tasks do I do over and over again that could be automated? Whether it be billing clients, manually inputting details of a preneed contract, distributing trust earnings, or another task, automation is key in today’s business environment ... especially with the limitless options of technology at your disposal.

Several software platforms offer these capabilities, so finding the best and most appropriate vehicle to automate tasks can take a lot of responsibilities off your hands.

Enhance Your Online Presence to Build Your Clientele

In today’s world, many consumers use the internet to find or confirm the best vendor for their specific needs. Even if they receive a referral from a peer, it’s likely that they will review that company’s website, reviews and perhaps even their social media channels before picking up the phone.

First impressions are everything. And, in many cases, your online presence serves as the initial handshake between you and your potential clients. At the very least, your website and supporting channels should be well-branded and up to date. •