



Cemetery Marketing 101

The Definitive Guide to Best Practice in The Modern World

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Cemetery Marketing 101: The Definitive Guide to Best Practice in The Modern World

This eBook will take you through:

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"The action comes from tension, desire and fear. Action is the hard part."

Introduction

For some, getting the word out is the holy grail of marketing - if only more people knew what you knew. If only they were aware of what you have to offer, aware of your work.

Perhaps you could get more people to read your Facebook, to be aware of your new property, or to see your ads in the papers. But, we know awareness isn't an action.

We're all aware that Brazil is a country, but that doesn't mean you've visited recently, or it doesn't mean that you plan to go any time soon. We're all aware that carrots are a vegetable, but that doesn't mean that you're going to have them for dinner. Awareness is important, but it's insufficient on its own. The action comes from tension, desire and fear. Action is the hard part.

With all the modern tools and technology that we have, we're going to try and make sense of how to initiate the action that you seek from the communities you serve.



“Today, buying processes are typically 50-70% complete before the buyer will reach out to sales”

The Changing Buyer

To help frame this, take a look at your buyers; meet Sceptical Steve and Resourceful Rebecca. Steve represents the old world and Rebecca represents the new world. Together, they represent the vast contrast in buyer behaviour. And because their behaviour is so different, your behaviour must be different too, to win their business.



"RESOURCEFUL REBECCA"

- Does her own product research online, via social media, etc.
- In control of the buying process
- Expects salespeople to help her, not sell to her



"SKEPTICAL STEVE"

- Beholden to salespeople for information
- Needs procurement to help him buy stuff
- Naturally skeptical of salespeople

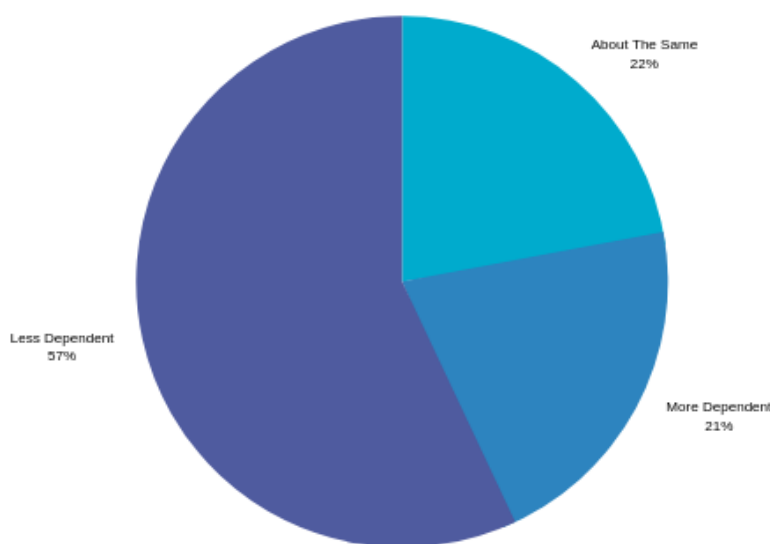
It's a well-known but sobering fact that in the modern world, buying processes are typically **50-70% complete** before the buyer will reach out to sales! That's not news, but it means that we need to be acting and behaving differently to find ourselves in those buying processes.

The Changing Buyer (cont'd)

Each of our businesses are in buying processes right now, and we're not aware of it. So what can we do to exploit this knowledge?

And to further confirm that power has shifted towards the buyer, here's some interesting research.

Undertaken by HubSpot, this research asked 3,000 salespeople, *'Are buyers more or less dependent on salespeople during the sales process?'*



A whopping **57%** said that buyers are **less dependent** than they were 3 years ago. The trend clearly shows the buyer is more empowered, and they need salespeople less than they used to, in order to get things done.



The Changing Salesperson

So let's now look at our salespeople:



"MANIPULATIVE MARCUS"

- He's trained in how to persuade and spin, bordering on manipulation
- Lone wolf mentality "Just leave me alone to hit my number"
- He's resistant to change and is hyper competitive with peers



"HELPFUL HAYDEN"

- Wants real-time feedback and coaching
- He embraces technology and often pushes managers to use more
- Knows that competition is about collaboration
- Challenges, teaches and advises customers

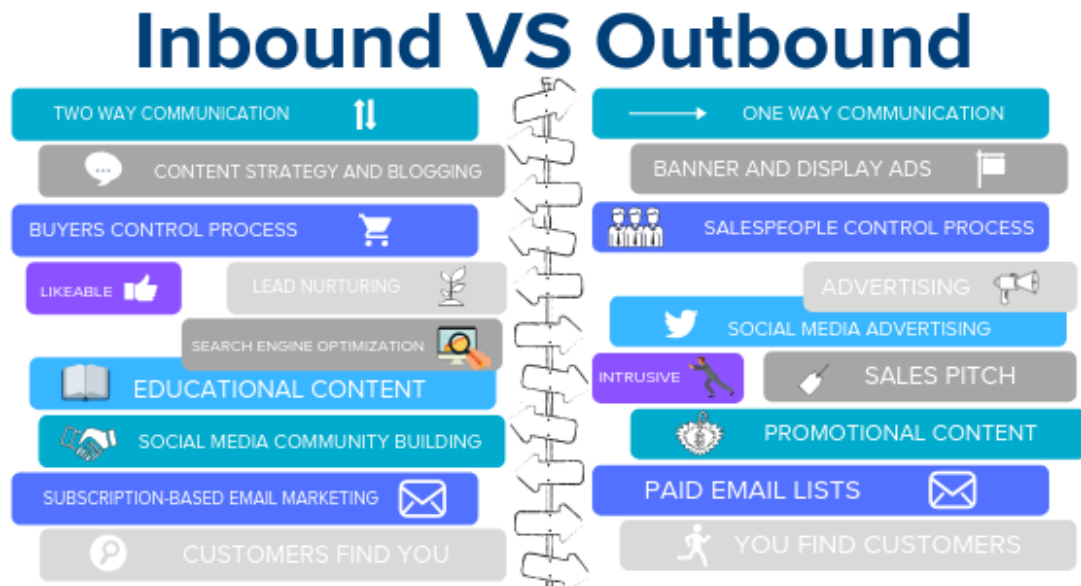
So what are the implications?

We know sales has changed given that the buyer has changed, what do organizations need to be doing differently with their marketing and the way they communicate with their communities?



Inbound VS Outbound

At the moment, most cemeteries are probably geared towards outbound marketing. i.e. one-way communication from you to them.



Examples are:

- Display ads
- Billboards
- Press ads
- TV ads
- Radio
- Social media advertising

These are

- Intrusive
- A breach of their space
- Pitch-oriented
- Salespeople are in control
- Promotion-led
- You chase the customer

In the end though, the biggest budget always wins.

Inbound

The good news is that with *inbound*, there's an opportunity.

But why?

Remember that the customer has changed.

They're enabled to search through technology and learn without even speaking to you. But you have to connect that buyer to your business.

So what do you need to do?

First, acknowledge that the buyer is in control, offer more two-way communication, generate content and most importantly, distribute that content in the right places online.

Done right, your blog will be a key pillar for your success and your communication online.

You need to be able to nurture your leads online, and you need to optimize your website through SEO.

You need to produce that educational content that Rebecca is seeking. Remember, she wants to learn and come to her decision herself (well, almost). She doesn't want to be told what's right from the seller.

In essence, you're helping customers find you instead of you chasing them. These guys are searching online, so you need to help them find you.

The truth is, you need both, as inbound and outbound both have their place. Here at PlotBox, we do both. We have to. We're big on inbound, but on its own, it's not enough.

We believe there's a gap in cemetery marketing on the inbound side.



Traditional Cemetery Marketing

Let's now take a look at some typical cemetery marketing, very kindly made available to us from the fantastic team at the Tribute Companies:

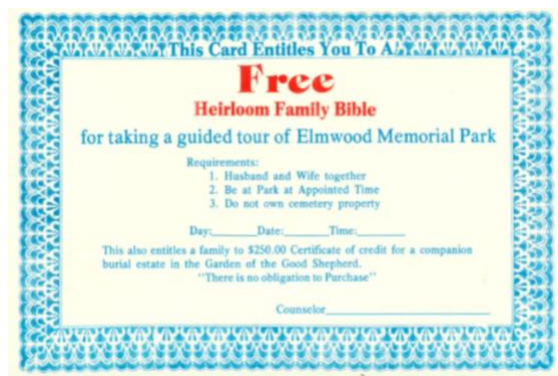
Example 1



- We're asking the customer to *listen to our important message*.
- 'We promise no high-pressure sales' - why do we feel the need to put this front and centre of our ad? Are customers expecting 'Marcus' when they come to visit our cemetery?
- 'We'd like to show you a selection of our new property'.

There's nothing wrong with anything that's here, we just need to reframe the message, and put it more on the buyer's terms.

Example 2



- This is a mailer that went out offering a free family bible for taking a tour of the cemetery - this seems like a great offer, but what your customer will probably expect is a tour around the cemetery with 'Manipulative Marcus' pitching at them the whole time they're walking around the cemetery, when all they want is that free bible!
- Incentives are great and have their place, but in the modern world where we're so time-poor, this type of promotion is unlikely to work.

Traditional Cemetery Marketing (cont'd)

Example 3



- Although this is a controversial message by today's standards, it's clever in that it's trying to help the customer avoid emotional overspending, and is creating that tension that we're trying to seek.
- The idea behind this ad is good, we'd just need to change the message to work for today's audience.

Example 4

- Again, this wouldn't work today - all today's wife has to do is enable location services on her husband's smartphone and she'll know everything(!)
- But in all seriousness, while the language used wouldn't work today, what this ad is good at doing is creating tension.

Traditional Cemetery Marketing (cont'd)

Example 5



- So how will your kids know what you want for your final resting place?
- This is a good ad as it's humorous and makes a clear point people can easily identify with.

Example 6



- A mailer - an education piece on the associated implications of cremation.
- The cemetery manager says that this piece didn't do well in terms of generating enquiries.
- In contrast, similar activity in the past has generated \$100k in revenue.

With huge thanks to Christie at Tribute Companies for allowing us access to their archives.

The common theme throughout these ads is that they were all outbound, intrusive ads. They were pitching and trying to grab attention instead of helping the buyer through the journey.

While there's nothing wrong with this method, a gap exists.

What we need to do is find a more two-way communication, which is where inbound comes in.

How To 'Do' Inbound

So how to do that?

- Content strategy and blogging - will be fundamental when done right. You'll know your personas, their challenges and aspirations
- Nurture leads online
- Recognise that the buyer is in control of a buying process that you don't even know you're in
- SEO for your site through educational content

If there's one thing for you to do, it's to invest in a proper CRM system!

Because:

- It's a contact management system that doesn't walk out the door when your salespeople do
- Good for pipeline development
- Revenue prediction
- Will in time allow for the integration of inbound marketing activities with sales activities

Examples of CRM systems include HubSpot, Marketo, Insightly, Microsoft Dynamics, Pipedrive, Oracle, Salesforce, Zoho and PlotBox.

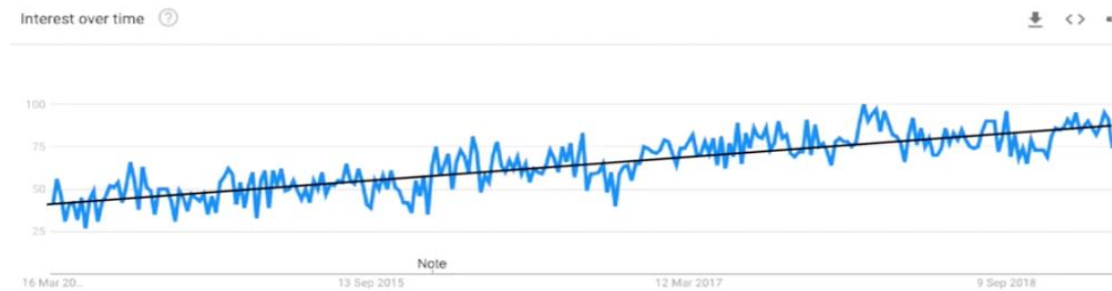
While these are all great CRM systems, PlotBox is the only one on the market which is configured specifically for use in cemeteries, and is pre-configured to your needs, and flows automatically to sales and contracts for your cemetery.



Desire, Fear and Tension

Now we'll take a look at the practicalities of getting the customer to be persuaded through desire, fear and tension.

Let's take a look at Google Trends. Using the search term 'cremation services' as an example, we can see that the 5-year trend is increasing.



Going back to the earlier example of the cremation mailer that generated very few enquiries, versus this increasing trend for the search term, suggests that there's a disconnect between the perception and the reality of cremation with the consumer.

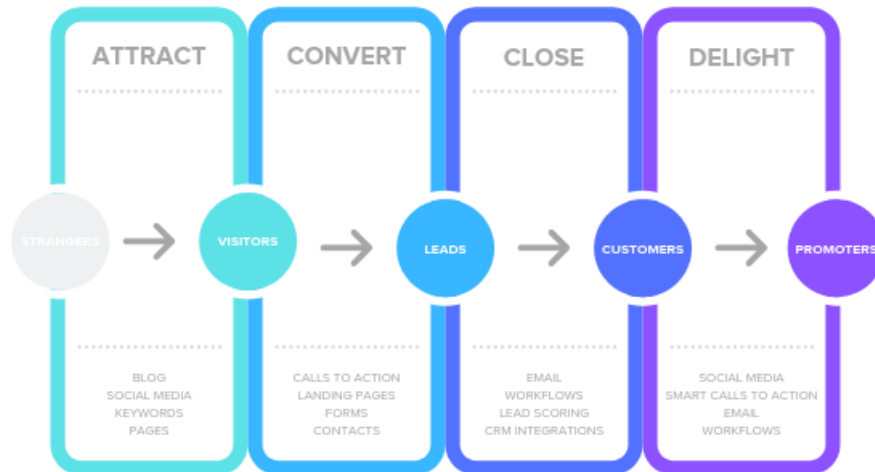
You, as the cemetery professional, hold all the knowledge and all the answers that the consumer is looking for!

Here's a chance for marketing to educate and cause the action that you need via inbound marketing.



The Modern Buying Cycle

Now let's look at the modern buying cycle as defined by HubSpot.



We'll use the example of cremation vs burial to demonstrate how we might bring a prospect through this buying process. HubSpot identifies 4 stages:

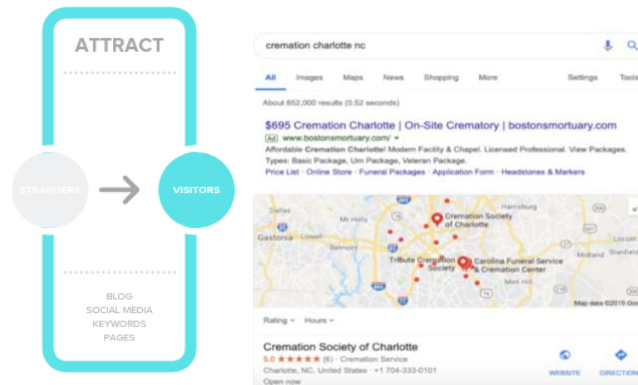
- Attract
- Convert
- Close
- Delight

These prospects will turn from strangers to visitors, to leads, to customers and then to promoters. Next, we'll look at the marketing activity that's required to help the customer move through the process on their terms.



The Modern Buying Cycle (cont'd)

Attract



- Keywords

The very early stage where prospects are strangers to your business. At this stage, a prospect is likely to Google something like **'Cremation Charlotte NC'**.

In this example, the first result is a paid ad from Boston's Mortuary. Below that is a map serviced by Google of local companies that they believe are cremation oriented. Next, is the 'Cremation Society of Charlotte' which is a 'Google My Business' profile.

Top tip: 'Google My Business' is a free service that gives the customer so much information on your business, including a link to website, directions, reviews, opening hours, contact details. If you haven't already done so, make it a priority to claim your 'Google My Business' profile! Only you can ensure that it's populated properly with the correct information for your business so that others don't try and populate it for you (which they can do!). By not claiming yours, you're losing out on leads and potential sales.

- Enquiry terms

Another search type is an enquiry term. This customer hasn't decided yet, they're not sure if they want to be buried or cremated, so they're asking Google a question. In this example we'll ask, **'Should I be buried or cremated?'**.

Although this has the same keywords as the previous search, Google recognizes that it's advice that the customer wants.

In this example, Fee and Sons appear first in the search results with an excellent blog post entitled, 'Cremation vs Burial - How to Decide Which is Best?'. This is high value content geared to the needs of the searcher, great work from Fee and Sons.

The user will be put through to Fee and Sons website because Google can see that this information is helpful to them.

The Modern Buying Cycle (cont'd)

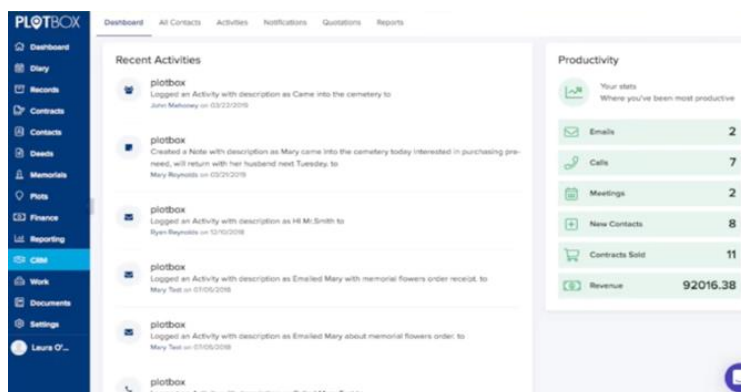
Convert



At this stage, the customer has already found their way to your website through a blog post of yours. At the bottom of the page, they're greeted by a super-helpful download on the complete guide to cremation. So, the blog has given them a teaser, and now they have an opportunity to get their hands on some extra really helpful info.

Here's where the content is 'gated', where the provider asks for some information from the customer in return for the download. This comes in the form of a very simple data capture form for them to fill out (name and email address in the case of this example).

Depending on how you decide to capture leads, they will somehow make their way into your CRM system, an example of which can be seen here.



At this point, they can be handed over to sales or marketing to be 'nurtured'.

Using a CRM system, you can see a salesperson's number of emails, calls, meetings, new contacts, sales and revenue. There's nowhere to hide.

The Modern Buying Cycle (cont'd)

Close



So if a lead is someone that we have contact details for, how are we going to go about turning them into a customer?

Say, for example, you know a lead has visited a few pages on your website. They're probably not ready to be sold to yet.

This is where lead nurturing comes in. Think about how you could educate them further, and 'warm them up' before inviting them to take action.

An example of how to do that might be with a series of emails over the course of a month:

- Email 1: '5 Things You Didn't Know About Direct Cremation'
- Email 2: 'Is Cremation Really As Cheap As It Sounds?'
- Email 3: 'Ceremony and Memorialization With Cremation? Yes, Really!'
- Email 4: 'Burial and Cremation. Let Us Help You Get Both Right. Come To Our Open Day!'

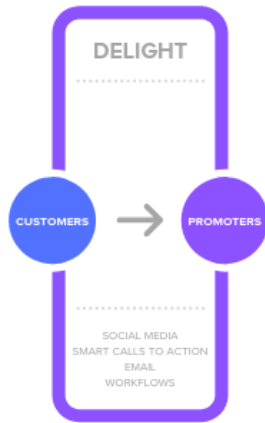
Each email will have a link to the website and when they reach the website, there are lots of calls to action.

So every time, the lead has the opportunity to reach out to the business, whether that's to book a tour, to speak to a salesperson, or just to request more information.

They don't have to stay in the lead nurturing phase forever, but it's on their terms.

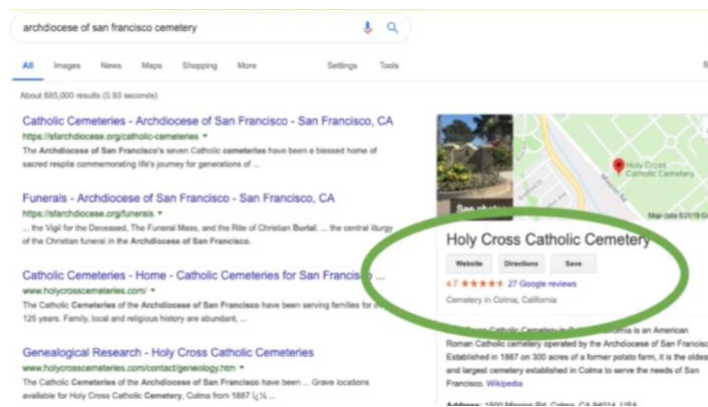
The Modern Buying Cycle (cont'd)

Delight



When you close that customer, the opportunity doesn't stop after the financial transaction.

Let's demonstrate how:



- Use your 'Google My Business' profile, where you can get customer reviews which will help to validate the customer's decision.
- Use your Facebook page to gather customer reviews too. Interact with reviews to further enhance the customer's experience. This process also helps to spread awareness.

Three Takeaways

If you take nothing else away from today, make sure you're doing the following in your cemetery:

Digitize your CRM process

- Use a cemetery-specific CRM
- Will give you good information for where to spend in the future

Use chatbots

- Will allow someone to be available 24/7
- Customers will get responded to straight away

Sales enablement

- Use live digital inventory data - whether in-home, in-office or on the field. This will drastically remove the friction from the sales process





To finish, if your sales teams are doing the right things: the right time on calls, effective prospecting, etc. you can't ask them for 'more sales' after all, there are only so many hours in the day for these activities to take place.

Our bet is that more prospects (and sales) will come through marketing from the **lead nurturing process** to your existing team - so make sure you're taking the opportunity and responding to a changing customer!

PlotBox cemetery management software includes a [CRM module](#) to help take your cemetery's sales and marketing, and lead tracking efforts to the next level! To find out more, contact us now to [speak to one of our PlotBox experts](#).

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