



Video Tribute DVDs: Powerful Revenue Generation Secrets

Let's face it: tribute videos are the foundation – the bedrock – of personalization in funeral service. Thousands of funeral homes across the country offer the service to their client families, and I'd have to say that 98% of them leave money on the table every time.

Here's the usual scenario: a client family sits down for the arrangement conference, and the funeral director offers a tribute video for a fee – let's just say \$150. Some funeral homes I've spoken with come in lower on that, and a few come in higher – but that's a nice average.

What I'm hearing from many directors is that there's only a 15% – 20% chance that the family will agree to the purchase. So, 80%-85% of the time, there's absolutely no revenue generated there.

If the family *does* agree, then the funeral home has made that \$150, minus the time spent in creating the video, and any fees involved in doing so – maybe we're talking \$110 in profit for the funeral home. End of story.

The simple truth is this: things need to be done differently for funeral homes to make any *real* money off of tribute video sales. When I speak to funeral home owners and operators about this fact they look rather startled, as if they're saying to themselves, "what do you mean, 'different'?"

Here's What I Mean

Think 'service' first, 'profit' later.

Let's go back to our funeral director, sitting down with that same client family. Instead of selling the tribute video, he offers to do the video as his gift to them. He asks them to bring in any number of photographs, and he'll create a stunning video tribute in honor of their loved one. That service is absolutely free. And, he says, if they like it, they can buy a copy for a significantly smaller number than before – let's say \$25.00. You can see that he's thinking 'service' first.

Naturally, that \$25 dollars, given they do purchase the tribute DVD; can hardly be considered 'profit.' So where do the 'big bucks' come in?

In direct marketing we call it 'back-end' sales. Our savvy funeral director is going to play that tribute video during the visitation, and during the service. It's going to catch the eye, and pull the heart-strings of everyone attending – and therein lies the means to generate more revenue.

He's going to make this DVD available to friends and family members, at this same low cost - \$25.00. He does it with strategically-placed informational order forms during the gatherings. He does it by word-of-mouth within the scope of the

service and reception.

Now, even if the family doesn't want to purchase the video – which would be surprising, I know – the market has gotten just that much larger. No longer are sales limited to the family, but all attendees become potential buyers of your tribute video – and without any 'hard sell' tactics. After all, the beauty and emotive qualities of a well-crafted tribute video speak loudly enough – you don't have to do, or say, much of anything to generate these 'back-end' sales.

When I asked Walker Posey, of *Posey Funeral Directors* in South Carolina, how this strategy was working for him, he said: "I was skeptical at first, but we tried this method for 30 days. Where we were getting only 15% of our families purchasing the tribute video service – at an upfront cost of \$200, we're now getting 95% of our families using the service, and our related revenues went up 400%."

Not too shabby. But, it gets even better.

And Now, There's Even More Room for Profit

With the advent of DVD encryption, where every single tribute video you create is copy-protected, there's so much more money to be made. You and I both know that copying CDs and DVDs is commonplace – and the hidden costs of even benign copying are staggering. I copy audio CDs for my own use – so I don't have to take the original 'store-bought' CDs into the rather dirty environment of my car. Just think how much revenue the music vendors are losing by this 'in-home' pirating! Somehow I feel justified in doing this – because I'm not giving the CDs away, or selling them.

Many client families have bought just one copy of a tribute video, and then made their own 'in-home' copies to share with family and friends. Until now, there wasn't a thing you could do about it. Technology is making it possible to position your firm as the *only* source for copies of tribute videos; encryption means that homemade copies won't work – they *have* to come to you to get duplicates – and you charge them for each one. So, if protecting your video from duplication is important then there's a word to the wise: consider selecting tribute creation software that allows you to encrypt the contents.

Bring Tribute Videos to Your Families - Profitably!

It all begins with the value of the tribute video itself; everyone in the field who creates these homage collages set to music knows just how meaningful they are to their client families. And tribute videos are a great way to raise the chances of making an emotional connection with the family, and the friends of the loved one – and those connections are worth their weight in gold (literally).

A wide distribution of the tribute videos to the survivors and their guests provides your firm with consistent marketing; the more

copies you distribute, the more word-of-mouth advertising you get. So, stop thinking “just one” and start thinking... “every one”!

How Do You Get Started?

If you’re already doing tribute videos, then you’re one step ahead. Take my advice for 30 days – like Walker did. I’m *sure* you’ll see a growth in the numbers. Not only that, you’ll feel less like a salesman, and more like the caregivers you are: tribute videos are just one more way you can serve your client families.

But, if you’ve not started doing tribute videos – may I say that it’s high time you did! There are a lot of ways to go – many software vendors are vying for your business. How do you choose the best one to work with?

- Make sure you are working with a reputable company. You don’t want to worry about anything – the company you work with has to be reliable, and available should you need tech support.

- It’s got to be cost-effective, in that the fees charged for each tribute you create have to be affordable. (And the quality high!)

- It has to be easy-to-do. You simply can’t spend 4 hours of your valuable time creating a tribute video! And, it’s got to be so simple that anyone in your firm can do it; if someone is ill, or on vacation, the remaining staff members need to be able to create tribute videos – without headache. (You and I both know that the inherent timeline that you’re usually working with – that time between the first call and the service means you simply can’t outsource your tribute video productions. Not to mention the cost involved in doing so; your tribute videos have to be created in-house.)

- Some companies do offer free trials. You may choose this option if you wish to test the software first. That way, you really get to know the system, and the people you’re depending on, should challenges arise.

- Finally, if protecting your video tributes is important, you should consider a program where you’ve got DVD encryption, because without it, you could be losing money.

So – How Much More CAN You Make?

By adding cost-effective tribute video services to those offered by your firm, and by using the simple method I outlined, you can generate thousands more dollars in annual revenue. When a 100-call firm does it the “old way,” selling single DVDs to client families for \$150 dollars, and only 15%-25% of their clients buy the DVD service; they’ll bring in \$2,250-\$3750 a year from sales. But, for that same firm, using the innovative way I’ve shared here, they can earn as much as \$15,000 (based on a 95% acceptance rate, and 5-6 DVDs sold for each arrangement). Certainly your numbers can be even higher. Check out this online calculator to ‘run the numbers’ for your firm: <http://www.onlinetributecalculator.com>. **FBA**

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