



# GREEN

## IS THE New Black

## TALKING ABOUT GREEN DISPOSITION IN YOUR MARKETING.

BY CAITLIN BRAY

It's time to toot your own (sustainable) horn! A recent report found that more than 90% of consumers want eco-friendly choices. If your funeral home offers green burial or cremation, you're in the minority at a time when more and more people are looking for such options, which places you in an ideal position.

### Why Market Eco-Friendly Disposition?

Consider the fact that there are

more than 15,700 funeral homes in the United States, but only 179 of them have been certified by the Green Burial Council (GBC), which sets standards for green disposition in the United States. This disparity demonstrates that green disposition is an impactful way to stand out from your competition. If you're certified by the GBC, consider calling it out in your marketing, especially now, when the interest in green disposition is on the rise.

As of 2024, 68% of Americans said they were interested in ex-

ploring more eco-friendly funeral and final disposition options, up 12.3% from 2021. You can cater to this growing demographic by using your marketing channels to talk about the green funeral and the disposition options you offer.

### How to Talk About Green Cremation/Burial

Before you begin marketing your green cremation and burial options, a good place to start is to consider why more and more people are opting for these ser-





vices. The most prominent reason is their belief that it's more environmentally friendly. Consider aligning your marketing messaging with this belief.

Why you chose to include green services for your firm can be a great jumping-off point for your messaging. How are your offerings in alignment with families' desire to be more eco-friendly? Talk about how what you provide is different from traditional burial and cremation and why it has a positive environmental impact.

Consider also speaking with the families you've already served through your green cremation and burial options. Why did they choose this option? How did it support their beliefs and provide them with the eco-friendly services they desired? These tes-

timonials can give you a better idea not only of why people in general choose green disposition but, more specifically, why the families in the region you serve opt for it. Plus, you can use these testimonials themselves in your marketing.

It's worth noting that even if someone opts out of green burial or cremation, using eco-conscious messaging in your marketing can still be a boon to your business. A growing number of Americans are choosing to support businesses that claim to be sustainable and eco-friendly.

Companies that make well-supported environmental, social and governance (ESG) claims experienced 8% higher growth between 2018 and 2023 than companies without them. It's es-

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sential, however, to toe a careful line between celebrating green burials and cremations and accidentally diminishing the benefits of your other offerings. When you talk about green cremation and burial, and traditional cremation and burial, stick to the facts and try not to add any non-neutral opinions. You already know how important it is to be a friendly guide to the families you serve without making it seem like you

have a preference for either type of disposition. Your guidance helps families feel informed to make the decision that's best for them, which may or may not be green disposition.

Just as you lead with neutrality when speaking with families in your care, focusing on education instead of influence, let your marketing be education-forward. Educate families on why others have chosen green burial or cremation, with a focus on why they chose what they did rather than why they did not choose the other options. You might also consider having your marketing direct families to places where they can receive more in-depth information, such as a video on your website, a downloadable brochure or a speaking engagement you're planning with an expert on green disposition.

### **Where to Talk About Green**

Because green burial and cremation are still very new to most people, many families may not feel educated enough to decide on these options in at-need situations if they have not heard of green disposition before. Therefore, preplanning is a critical time to educate families on green disposition, which is why it can be helpful to include preplanning verbiage in your green marketing, such as encouraging someone interested in a green cremation to come in to preplan and learn about their options.

In addition, consider also getting out into your community to find your right audience. Many people are likely to find green disposition interesting and may not have heard about it before. If you have places in the community that are focused on being eco-friendly, such as a sustainable clothing shop or a restaurant that focuses on sustainable dining, you might consider asking if

you can share some literature on green burial and cremation there. Or ask if they have any events you can get involved in.

As far as digital marketing channels, social media is a good place to be because studies have found that people who use social media frequently are more environmentally conscious, having been more exposed to environmental awareness online.

In addition to potentially running social media ads, you might also consider running "over the top" (OTT) ads on streaming services. The generations that have the most streaming services are Gen-Xers and millennials. Gen-Xers are finding themselves in a situation where they may be planning their own arrangements or planning for their parents, which makes them an ideal audience for your marketing. It's a common misconception that the concern for the planet is more of a concern for younger generations, but a whopping 78% of Gen-Xers say they're worried about the future of the planet and nearly 40% actively seek out eco-friendly products and services.

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However, don't discount the importance of addressing millennials on green funeral services and disposition. They are considered the "death positive" generation and are the most likely to preplan their own services. More than 70% of millennials, more

than any other generation, say that the environment should be top priority to ensure a sustainable planet for future generations. Putting these two facts together shows that millennials would be a prime audience for preplanning green burials or cremations.

Now, not everyone may be thinking about green disposition. You know from all the families you have served that people come with many different beliefs, ideas and traditions, and some of these may preclude them from a green burial or cremation. But there is a growing number of people who are considering these options and they'll look to you to learn more and plan for their green future.

While being certified by the Green Burial Council is certainly something to share with interested parties, you don't have to be certified to talk about your green disposition options. Consider also sharing other ways in which you've gone green, such as supporting sustainability-focused organizations or events. With more and more people looking to support sustainable businesses, talking about how you're making an effort to be more environmentally friendly may resonate with many of them, which could lead to you getting more calls for green burials and cremations. ☰

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