

Fifty Pets a Day?

Get Future-Ready & Cutting-Edge in Pet Cremation

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IMAGINE THIS: The business you lovingly created to help families with the death of their beloved pets has grown exactly like you predicted. You're now handling more pet families with their losses than you are human families.

But one thing has been missing: The process needed to answer the questions from families of “how do I know this is my pet and my pet only?”

Pet deathcare operations have matured over the years, and it's become not only imperative but a sure-fire marketing competitive advantage to ensure that your loving pet parents know that their pets are being treated with the same dignity, respect, and safety in the chain-of-custody as you are giving to your human families.

Software is one component to help with chain-of-custody and has become an essential component of business in today's technology-driven market. Check out these seven different organizational areas to consider when you make the decision to add pet cremations to your existing human funeral business.

Let's also discuss important elements regarding what software functions might be helpful to you, as there are some really unique elements when servicing pets compared with humans.

1. Increased Volume, Cremation Types

Being prepared to handle the increased pet volume sooner rather than later just makes good business sense. How will your “human-care” services accommodate the shift?

It is important to consider the changes in internal systems and processes you'll need to make in order to accurately track each pet throughout the cremation process.

Crematory operators should keep in mind that a higher-volume service requires increased organizational flow to improve efficiency and prevent unfortunate mistakes. For example, tracking bodies into and out of cold storage; cremation units; and the crematory itself must all be carefully orchestrated. On top of that, getting the ashes returned to pet owners and veterinary clinics must be considered in a successful pet cremation operation.

What types of cremation will you offer? There are three main kinds of cremations: communal, partitioned, and private. Animals cremated as a group are called *communal*, animals completely separated from one another into compartments that are in the same machine are called *partitioned*, and one animal cremated by itself is called *private*.

As you contemplate your pet cremation types, always remember what it is you do as a caring professional handling human loved ones, and mimic that type of service for your pet families.

Furthermore, much like you do with your human families, having a solid Pet Cremation Authorization form will allow you to define and outline your processes, thus helping to provide the greatest transparency with your pet families.

2. Offering Cremation, Pricing Tips

As you expand into pet aftercare, you have options regarding who you provide your services to.

- Will you offer services to veterinary clinics, directly to pet owners, or both?
- Will your software easily allow you to offer services to both?

Working with veterinary clinics often means increased volume. Most veterinary clinics already have established pet crematory service relationships, some of which they are very loyal to, so consider specific actions you might take in order to be so extraordinary that they will switch to your services.

Additionally, if you can speak with the manager or owner, ask for a copy of a most recent bill from a current crematory to see if you can match or improve pricing in some way! This can provide tremendous information and can allow you to have a chance to create a package that might be attractive to them.

It is common for aftercare providers to have a set retail price they charge for direct-to-consumer transactions, and a separate, often reduced, price for direct-to-vet transactions. You may end up negotiating



different pricing for different veterinary clinics that you work with.

It's important to choose software that allows you the ability to easily assign different fees for different veterinary clinics, including the ability to have bundle pricing without it being overly confusing.

Offering services directly to pet owners allows you to provide that extra cherry on top, something that can really create a sense of loyalty to your funeral home organization overall. This will then help spread the word in your community.

What will draw pet owners to you? Some ideas to consider are:

- offering ink nose prints;
- color ink paw prints;
- funeral or visitation services to honor pets;
- hosting a pet honoring or pet passing party for hospice or the recently deceased pet;
- hosting a grief counselor's support group in your facility; or
- creating pet memorial art workshops for families utilizing some of the pet's cremains.

Carefully curated aftercare products can be so helpful—from a Border Collie necklace that can hold a small amount of ashes, to creating an actual diamond out of ashes, to beautiful hand-blown glass orbs using part of the cremains—there are many options that most pet parents have never considered and would be so thankful to have as a memorial to their pet.

Pets are family to many people, and the beautiful care provided by your funeral home can really help enhance interpersonal relationships with pet parents, creating loyalty to your services.

3. Where Did That Pet Go?

When considering which software is right for your firm, think about the workflow model from the start of the cremation process beginning with how you will be notified when there is a pet needing your services.

With so many pickups, will you want to receive a text message for each and every pickup call? Is there a way to assign higher-volume services, such as emergency clinics and mobile euthanasia providers, to a weekly pickup schedule within your software?

Once you have them at your facility, there are additional items to track such as:

- organizing body inventory in cold storage;
- keeping track of pre-cremation items, such as clay paw prints and fur clippings to make sure they are being completed prior to processing the pet;
- assigning stainless steel tags to stay with each pet during their cremation process; and
- making sure your software has features to help you out with all of this!

Ask yourself this: Does my current system provide the checks and balances needed to assure that all pets in the crematory are being attended to in a timely fashion so that no details are missed?

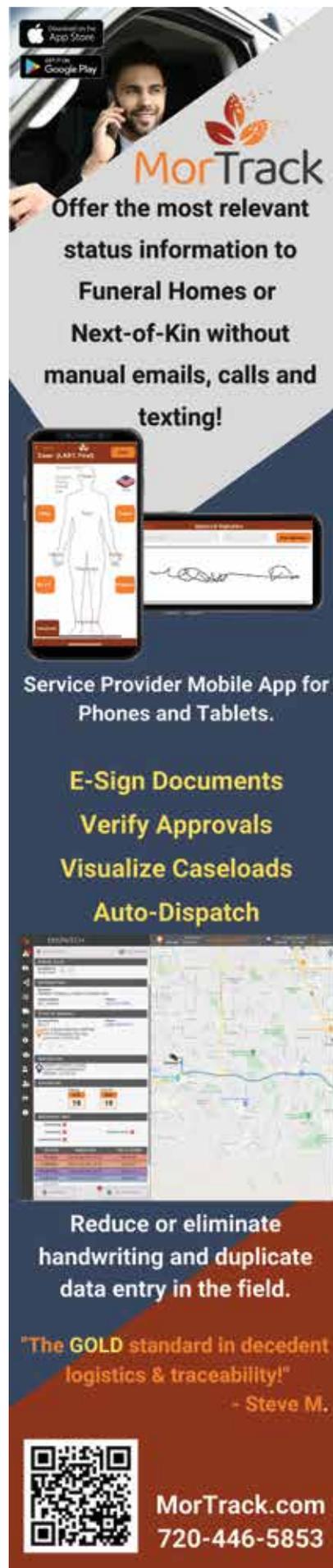
Your software should alert you, or an organizational system needs to be in place, if any pet (think of tiny pocket pets and birds) in your facility hasn't had a cremation completed within your promised return timeframe.

Sometimes pet owners need their pet's cremation to be paused for a period of time. Perhaps their spouse is offline for a month and out of the country, or they need a little time to consider pre-cremation items.

What if this is the case for 20 different pet families within a month? Being able to notate this about all of these different pets, and to track them, is essential for any pet software system.

If you have multiple machines, you need to know the names of which pets are inside of which machines when it comes to unloading them.

In a pet aquamation facility, the bones often need one to three days in a drying room. How will the team know where the pet is located in the facility?



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It is important to create systems for locational points for each pet within the cremation process. When selecting software, it helps to have the additional insight to allow for tracking of the pet, not just into and out of your facility, but to easily create an individualized internal workflow for your specific crematory for monitoring each and every pet.

Is your human software a good long-term solution for all of this? It is something to think about as you proceed with plans for a quality operation or even expansion.

4. Sticky Notes, a Spreadsheet?

Many humans feel closer and more bonded to their pet than they do most other humans. Imagine having a single human cremation with all the attention to detail and special requests by the family.

Now, multiply that by 50 each day as you transition to providing pet cremations. While the number of cremations per day may increase, the attention to detail by your crematory team must remain as diligent as with a single human cremation.

How can this be accomplished? Sticky notes and a spreadsheet? Much like every other part of your operation, moving beyond paper-tracking systems into a more sophisticated system will certainly bring you and your team the peace of mind in the safety of the processes—not to mention the ability to handle any client special requests.

This will help you provide the superior services that you have historically been able to do with humans. This also means that if the veterinary clinic is responsible for the initial intake, it must be able to easily enter client special requests directly into the software that can be viewed by you and your team as part of the pet's record.

5. Next Level Customer Care

People. Want. To Know. If you can order and track a pizza delivery from the restaurant to your home, why can't we do the same with the cremation of someone's beloved pet?

You have promised pet owners they will have their own pet back in a prescribed amount of time, so it's imperative for your brand reputation to do what you promise to do.

You have a beautiful opportunity to create that trust with a pet family, much like you would do with a human family. Finding software that provides a separate pet owner portal is "next level" in terms of caring for your customers and is becoming the norm.

It is essential for pet owners of today to not only have access to track where their companion is in the cremation process, but also the option to purchase curated pet memorial items online, post a pet memorial in memory of their beloved pet, and access pet loss resources to assist them through their grief journey.

In order to address many pet owners' concerns about whether the ashes truly belong to their pet, having a place in your software system to enter a pet's stainless steel tag number, and attach it to the profile of the pet for easy retrieval brings the added security and peace of mind pet parents are demanding for the care of their beloved pet.

It is surprising how many times pet owners will call with multiple bags of ashes containing stainless steel tag numbers, wondering which pet is which!

When a stainless steel tag is paired with a pet throughout its cremation process, it provides the crematory a simple, hands-on technique for pet owners to see how their pet's information is paired with the ashes. Once clients understand this process, it generates incredibly deep trust by assuring them it truly is their pet being returned.

6. Phone Calls!

One of the largest inefficiencies within the pet cremation industry is the time and resources spent managing phone calls, specifically with anxious owners, or with veterinary hospitals calling on behalf of the owners.

Finding software that has the transparency for both the veterinary clinic and pet owner to see the status of the pet is essential for the peace of mind in the chain of custody process, as well as in prioritizing and streamlining your staff's time.

Additionally, allowing the veterinary clinic to make changes to any special requests or spelling of the pet's name up to when the pet is placed in cremation means they don't even have to call you. They can just do it themselves.

This feature is a huge time saver for the crematory and reduces the likelihood of

errors. It is an efficient way to get it right the first time, which illustrates to owners how much you care for their pet.

7. Returning Cremains

When the process of cremation is complete, common return options are: delivering the cremains back to the veterinary clinic; home delivery; mailing cremains to the home; or for the pet owner to pick up the ashes at the funeral home.

How will pet owners be notified when the cremation is complete? With so many pet cremations per day, will your team call every single person regarding their pet?

This can be an opportunity for you to connect with these beautiful clients, reminisce about what their beloved pet meant to them, and to further open that door so that you are able to become their complete family care provider.

Consider looking for software that will automatically notify pet owners by email upon completion of the pet whose ashes will be returned.

The time is now to take your pet death-care services to the next level! Pet parents want the safety and security in this process, and they are demanding it. Pets ARE their family! This is your opportunity to consider incorporating these processes as a competitive edge for your families.

After all, it is THEIR beloved pet, and it's what THEY deserve. ☑



Dr. Deborah Rotman and **Dr. Christie Cornelius**, two veterinarians, are the cofounders of

Beloved Pet Software. Both doctors are respected experts with 20+ years of combined experience exclusively in the field of veterinary hospice, in-home pet euthanasia, and pet crematory ownership. Dr. Rotman previously owned a successful primary care veterinary practice, allowing her to more fully understand the value this software brings to traditional practices. Dr. Cornelius is a certified pet hospice veterinarian and owned a successful end-of-life practice that included pet hospice, in-home euthanasia, and a pet crematory. Visit www.Belovedpetsoftware.com or email belovedpetsoftware@gmail.com for more information.