

BATESVILLE CASKET COMPANY: BUILDING A WORLD WIDE WEBSITE

Batesville Casket Company, a subsidiary of Hillenbrand Industries, Inc, is located in Batesville, Indiana, and is the world's largest producer of metal and hardwood burial caskets. In 1996, James J. Kuisel, head of the sales and marketing information technology group, proposed that Batesville Casket create a website. He hoped the website would provide a resource for funeral homes, and offer the public information about Batesville Casket Company's products. Additionally, he hoped that the site would help combat recent negative news reports about the funeral industry.

Batesville Casket researched available services, and chose to outsource the layout and design of the site to a Cincinnati advertising firm, and chose Indianapolis-based I-Quest to host the website. Batesville Casket Company developed the content, structure, and tone for the site. The initial release of the site revealed some problems that Batesville needed to address, but once these issues were resolved, the site logged nearly 2,000 visitors daily.

As Batesville Casket moves forward, they need to consider how to keep the tone of the site appropriate, while leveraging their leading place in the industry, and using their relationships with other funerary service providers. Additionally, Batesville should expand the site to include new services for both their vendors and the public. Batesville Casket Company should:

- Continue to focus its website strategy towards informing customers about the funerary process, and building relationships with other funerary services.
- Use its website as a primary source of information for customers and funerary industry partners.
- Continue its relationship with I-Quest for hosting.
- Stop outsourcing web development, and begin to develop the site with internal employees.
- Build B2B and B2C relationships by offering web-enabled services on the website.