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MEMORIAL GARDENS: POISED FOR SUCCESS

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Memorial gardens, featuring small, designed burial grounds for cremated remains, are growing in popularity. Their success is really no mystery. The innate characteristics of memorial gardens, established for communities, churches and other nonprofit organizations, allow these organizations to successfully establish a burial ground, a proposition traditionally deemed difficult. These characteristics offer advantages to the organizations which establish memorial gardens as well as the individuals who plan to use them.

- **Rising demand for cremation:** Memorial gardens exclusively service interment of cremated remains. The rate of cremation, as of 2008, in the US is about 28% and growing each year. While traditional cemeteries have begun to offer provisions for cremation burials, it is still less common.
- **Minimal regulation:** Since cremated remains pose no biological threat, memorial gardens have far less regulation. And religious organizations offering interment of cremated remains typically have little to no regulation.
- **Low start-up and operating costs:** Memorial gardens are typically built by non-profit organizations with a strong membership base. Benefactors within the organization often provide funds to establish a memorial garden. Volunteers from the community often perform functions like marketing, administration and maintenance.
- **Minimal infrastructure:** Memorial gardens make very efficient use of limited space, especially when they use existing walls and vertical columbarium construction. At most, memorial gardens need a wall, a columbarium, pavement and landscaping.
- **Minimal maintenance:** Most maintenance issues arise from infrastructure. Being compact and simple in nature minimizes these issues for memorial gardens. Memorial gardens also tend to be in a secure environment, which lessens the risk of damage due to vandalism. Furthermore, memorial gardens require no equipment for burial which requires maintenance and can cause damage to existing structures.
- **Source of buyers:** Many non-profit organizations, by nature, have a built-in market: their members. They know who their members are and how to reach

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them. The members, in turn, are provided with the opportunity for a unique and frequented resting place.

- **Style:** Memorial gardens have certain traits that make them very special. Indeed, no two memorial gardens are the same. They are frequently designed by architects to be visually pleasing. Due to their design and size, memorial gardens are very intimate and comforting.
- **Offerings:** Memorial gardens can offer related paid products and services like cemeteries do. Offerings can include personalized services, burial related items like urns, and commemorative events. Non-profit organizations are also in a position to offer very personal death care counseling and support to members.
- **Belonging:** The fact that memorial gardens are part of a distinct community imbues meaning and belonging to each burial. Individuals in a community's memorial garden belonged and contributed to that community. In turn, the community cares for their resting place and honors their memory.
- **Perpetual care:** Memorial gardens are located within vibrant communities with dedicated facilities. This removes concerns about insolvency, abandonment or redevelopment.

Finally, one of the most important aspects of memorial gardens is their purpose. While memorial gardens can generate a positive cash flow, they ultimately exist to serve and strengthen the membership base of an organization. And that translates into to memorial garden success.

