MORTL™

— MMXXVI —

BRAND BOOK

Volume One

YOU'RE GOING TO DIE. LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

MORTL STRATEGIC BRAND PYRAMID

ESTABLISH

Make it unmistakable who's talking. The wordmark, one color nobody else in the category uses, and a tagline that says the word.

ORIENT

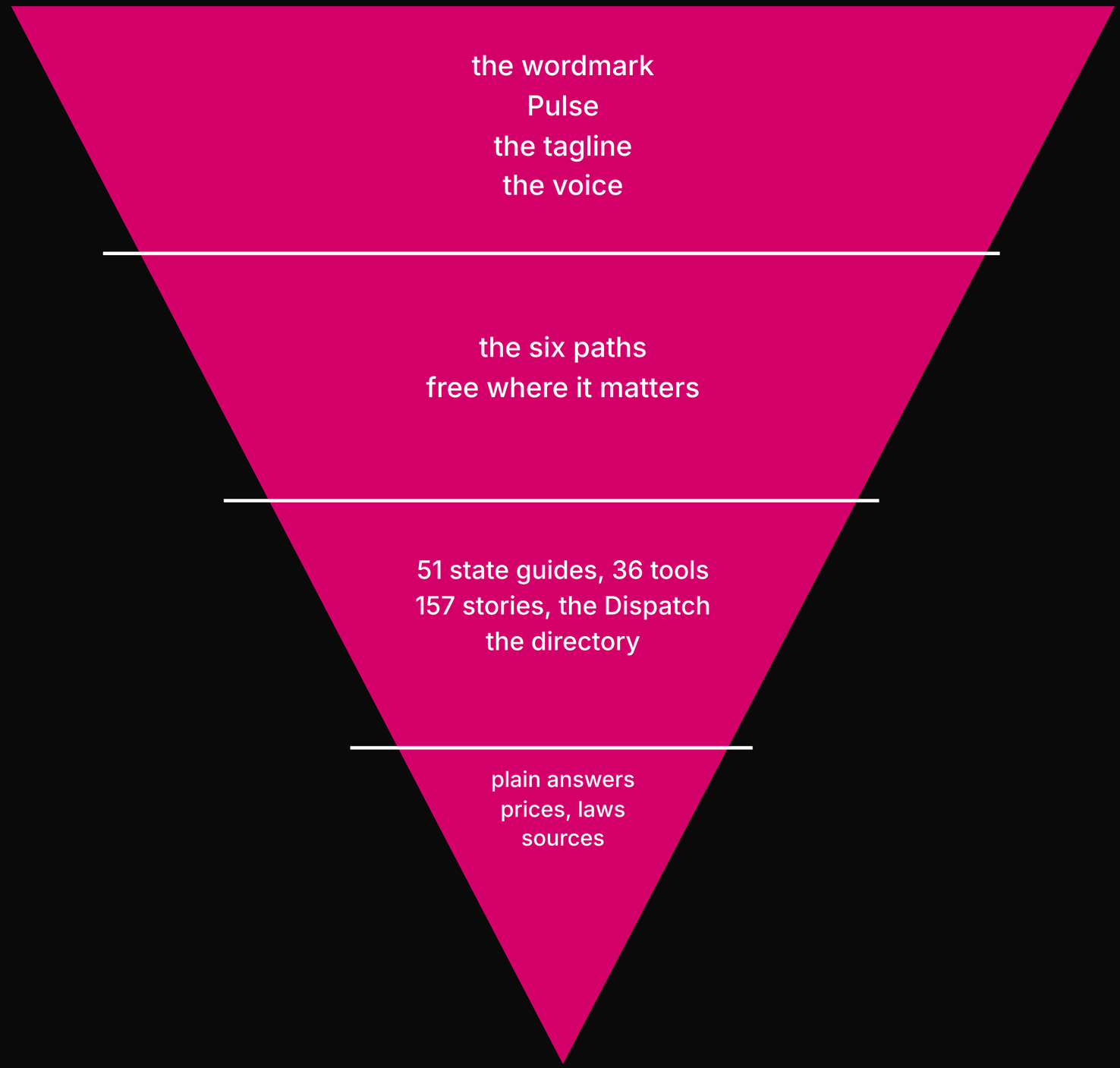
Ask the one question that matters first. Where are you right now? Then take the person to the path that fits.

DELIVER

Put the useful thing in their hands. The checklist, their state's rules, the tools, the providers, the answers. Then let them leave.

DESCRIBE

Explain each thing plainly, with the number, the law and the source. Never a recommendation. Never a euphemism.



STRATEGY

This book orients anyone who touches MORTL in the story, the context and the opportunity in making death a subject people handle instead of avoid. The cultural backdrop, the consumer insight, the brand tenets and the personality are in one place, so MORTL, its partners, and anyone who writes or designs in its name work from the same page.

1.0 OUR VISION
2.0 OUR FOUNDATION
3.0 OUR ESSENCE
4.0 OUR REASONS TO BELIEVE
5.0 OUR PERSONALITY

MANIFESTO

This book is MORTL's spirit, story and brand world in one expression, for people new to the brand and people who built it. It's where the strategy and the creative meet, and it's written to be read out loud.

1.0 OUR BRAND WORLD

2.0 OUR MANIFESTO

STYLE GUIDE

This book is the first volume of MORTL's identity, look, feel and tone. It's built from the official brand assets on mortl.com/press, the site's own design rules, the Death Dispatch and the brand's social presence, and it sets the rules for every execution and channel that follows.

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STRATEGY OVERVIEW

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OUR VISION

OUR FOUNDATION

- CULTURAL BACKDROP
- CONSUMER INSIGHT
- BRAND TENETS

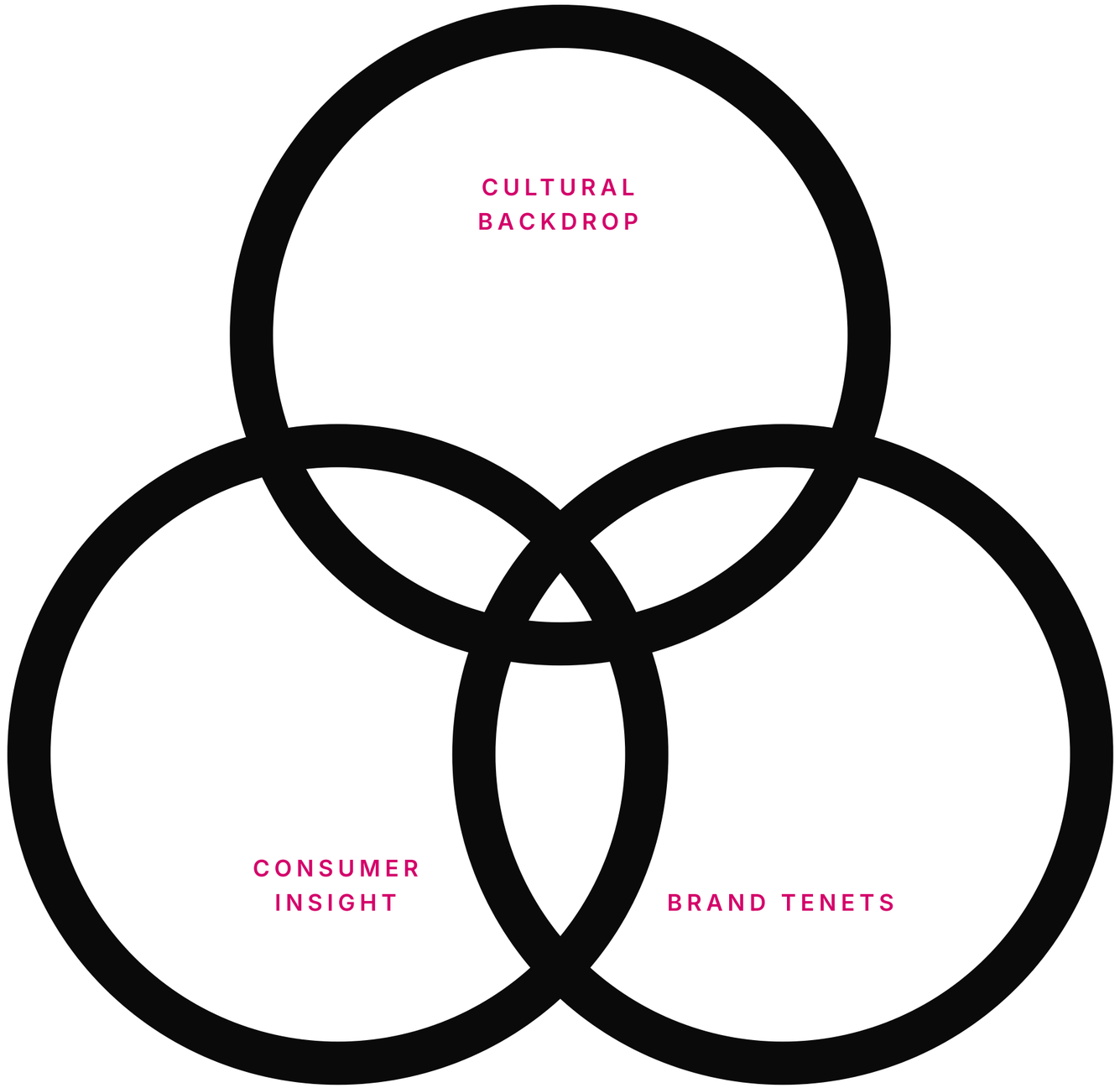
OUR ESSENCE

OUR REASONS TO BELIEVE

- WHY MORTL EXISTS
- BY THE NUMBERS
- THE TOOLS
- THE YEAR

OUR PERSONALITY

TO MAKE THE WHOLE WORLD READY FOR THE ONE THING IT WON'T TALK ABOUT.


CULTURAL
BACKDROP
CONSUMER
INSIGHT
BRAND TENETS

DEATH IS THE LAST SUBJECT A GENERATION THAT TALKS ABOUT EVERYTHING STILL WON'T TOUCH.

AVOIDANCE IS THE DEFAULT

69% of surveyed U.S. adults aged 45 and up said death is a topic people generally avoid (AARP, 2023).

PLANNING IS RARE

24% of surveyed U.S. adults reported having a will in 2025 (Caring.com).

THE BILL IS REAL

$8,300 was the 2023 national median cost of a funeral with viewing and burial (NFDA).

THE LAW IS LOCAL

What happens after a death is set state by state. Fifty states and Washington, DC, each with their own rules, forms and deadlines.

THE INCUMBENTS SELL TO INSTITUTIONS

The funded players in end-of-life planning sell through insurers, employers and health systems. Nobody is talking to the person at 2am.

THE AUDIENCE EXISTS

A generation raised online already talks about money, therapy and sex in public. Death is next, and the first brand to say it plainly gets to lead.

WHEN DEATH SHOWS UP, PEOPLE WANT A PLAIN ANSWER. WHAT THEY GET IS A BROCHURE.

OVERWHELMED AT THE WORST MOMENT

The decisions arrive in the first days, while the person is in shock. Nobody is at their best, and the system assumes they are.

NO IDEA WHO TO TRUST

Every provider says they care. There's no plain way to see who's licensed, who's nearby, and what it costs.

THE RULES CHANGE AT THE STATE LINE

Who can sign, who gets to decide, how long you have. It's different in Colorado than in Texas, and nobody says so until it's a problem.

PLANNING FEELS MORBID, SO IT GETS SKIPPED

Most people have thought about it. Few have written anything down. The task feels enormous because nobody has shown them it isn't.

THEY WANT IT HANDLED

Handle it once, handle it right, go live their life. Then forget the site exists until they need it again.

THE BEST FRIEND AT 2AM WHO ALREADY READ THE LAW.

PLAIN

We say die. We say the number. We answer the question that was asked, in the words a person would use.

INDEPENDENT

One owner. Built from primary sources. Monitored every 30 days. Sources, corrections, provider standards and the revenue model are public.

UNFLINCHING

We don't soften death to sell it. The coffin is in the photo. The price is on the page.

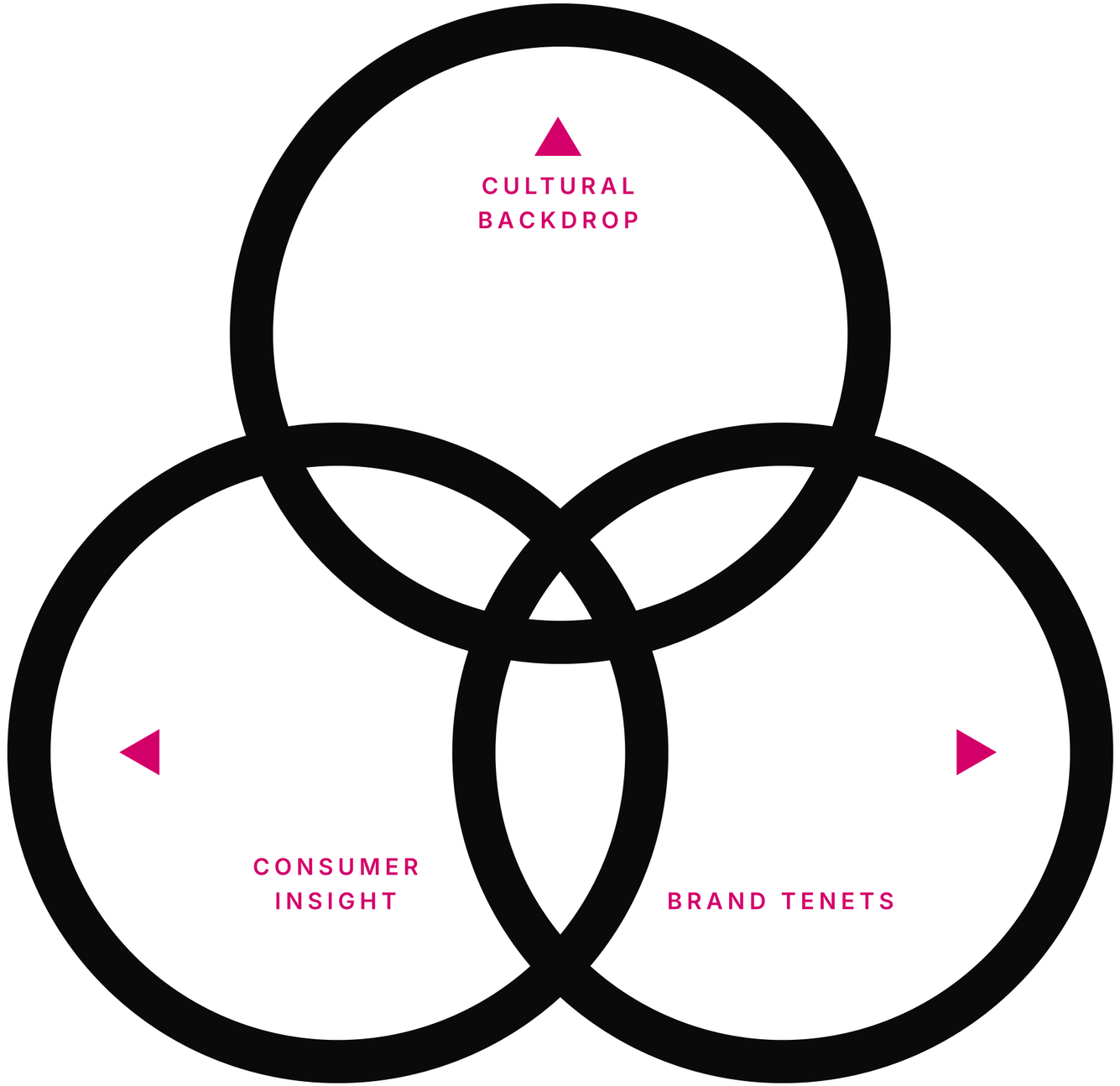
FREE WHERE IT MATTERS

If someone just died, everything you need is free. Forever. No account, no ad, no upsell. The person who's dying gets Premium free, with no expiry.

USEFUL

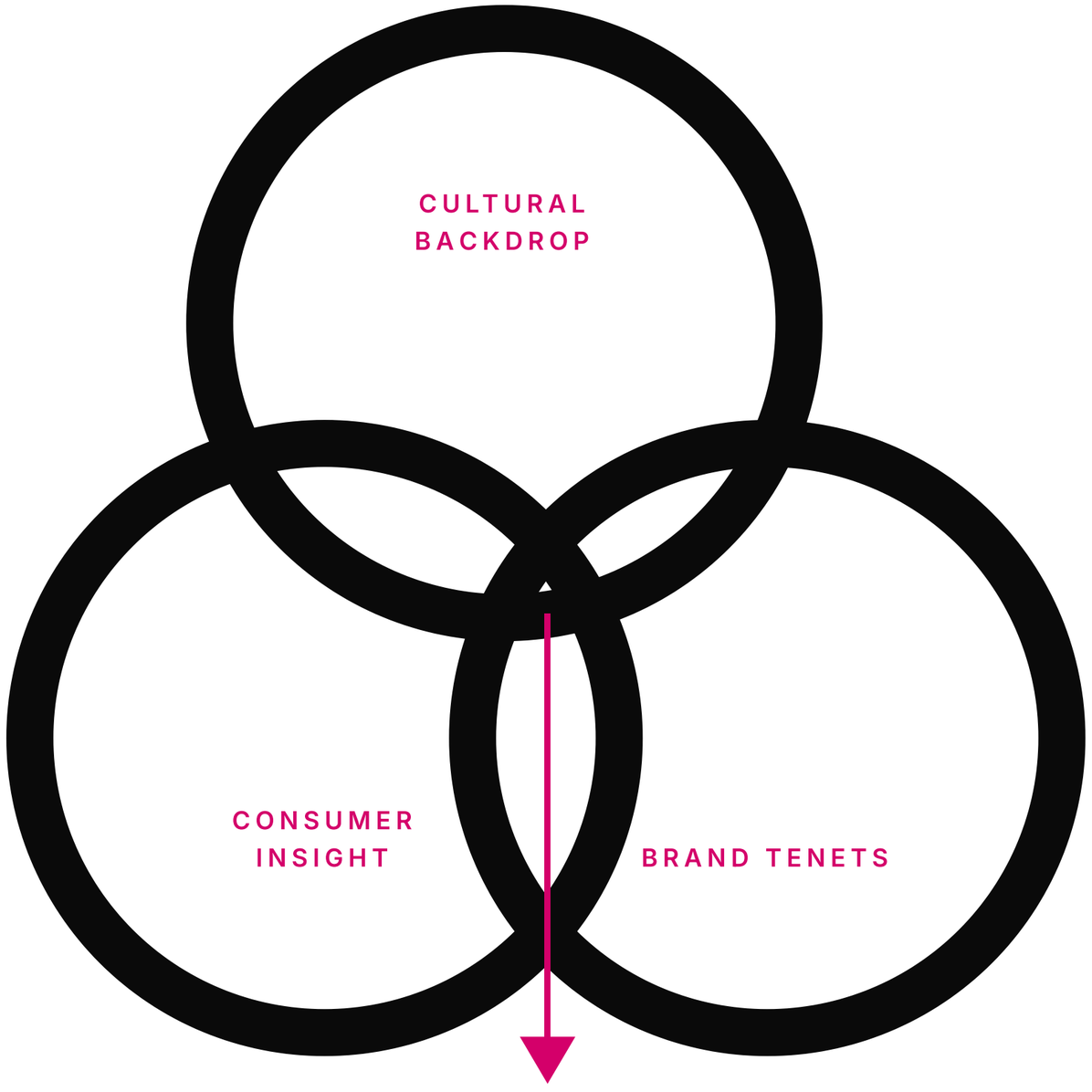
The checklist, your state's rules, the tools, the providers, the answers. Then you leave and get on with it.

DEATH IS THE LAST SUBJECT A GENERATION THAT TALKS ABOUT EVERYTHING STILL WON'T TOUCH.



WHEN DEATH SHOWS UP, PEOPLE WANT A PLAIN ANSWER. WHAT THEY GET IS A BROCHURE.

THE BEST FRIEND AT 2AM WHO ALREADY READ THE LAW.



DEATH, *HANDLED.*

DEATH, *HANDLED.*

MORTL covers all fifty states and Washington, DC, with a cited guide for each one.

MORTL has published 157 original stories and 36 planning tools, 22 of them free, since launching on July 31, 2026.

MORTL is built from primary sources: statutes, regulators and federal rules. Every claim is read against its source, and the stamp is the claim.

MORTL is independent. One owner. Its sources, corrections, provider standards, revenue model and commercial relationships are public at mortl.com/sources, /editorial-policy, /provider-review-policy and /how-we-make-money.

MORTL is free for the people who need it most. The Someone Just Died path never costs money, never asks for an account and never carries an ad. The person who's dying gets Premium free, always.

MORTL was founded in 2026 by Stephanie Werner after her father died of brain cancer. It's built in honor of Joby Horn.







MY DAD DIED, *SO I BUILT MORTL.*

"I started MORTL in honor of my dad, Joby Horn, who died of brain cancer on February 5, 2022."

"I created MORTL for my mom, who managed his entire illness from a spiral notebook. Every appointment. Every medication. Every bill. Every decision. Every document. Every phone call. Every next step."

"It's the place I wish my family had. So I built it for you."

Stephanie Werner, mortl.com/about. The launch film is titled the same way: "My dad died, so I built MORTL."

Joby Horn, September 20, 1960 to February 5, 2022. Photographs as published on mortl.com/about: his portrait; walking Stephanie down the aisle; with the family on a hike.

51

STATE GUIDES

Fifty states and Washington, DC. Statutes cited, with dated change logs.

157

ORIGINAL STORIES

Every story cites its sources, and the citations are checked before the site builds.

36

PLANNING TOOLS

22 free, 14 Premium. Builders are free to use and download; Premium syncs the finished documents and shares them with family.

6

PATHS

One question first: where are you right now? Someone Just Died is always first and always free.

$0

TO ACCESS THE CORE CONTENT

All state guides, all stories and the Someone Just Died path, with no account.

30

DAYS BETWEEN CHECKS

Every guide is monitored on a 30-day cycle. A law moves, the guide and its change log move with it.

$8,300

THE NUMBER WE SAY OUT LOUD

2023 national median cost of a funeral with viewing and burial. NFDA.

1

OWNER

Independent. Sources, corrections, provider standards and the revenue model are public.

GRIEF	PLANNING	LAW & POLICY	END-OF-LIFE CARE	CULTURE	AGING	DIGITAL LEGACY
36	31	31	29	16	8	6

Counts from mortl.com and the site's own source on October 25, 2026. The bottom row is the 157 stories by section. The numbers change; the site counts them live so the copy never drifts from the catalogue.

36 TOOLS. *22 OF THEM FREE.*

Builders are free to use and download. Premium syncs the finished documents and shares them with family.

The person who's dying gets every Premium tool free, permanently. The Someone Just Died path never asks for money.

The catalogue at mortl.com/tools on October 25, 2026. Free and Premium are told apart by their labels and by weight, never by a color.

The Weeks You Have Left — FREE	Will Template Hub — FREE	Living Will Builder — FREE
Healthcare Power of Attorney — FREE	Advance Directive Hub — FREE	Financial Power of Attorney — FREE
Planning Checklist — FREE	Funeral Cost Planner — FREE	Obituary Maker — FREE
Write Your Own Obituary — FREE	Funeral Program — FREE	Eulogy Builder — FREE
What to Say — FREE	Thank-You Notes — FREE	Who to Notify Tracker — FREE
Executor Checklist — FREE	Do I Need Probate? — FREE	Debt Responsibility Checker — FREE
What's This Document? — FREE	Pet Obituary — FREE	Pet Quality of Life Scale — FREE
Pet Cremation Cost — FREE	The Folder — PREMIUM	Letter of Instruction — PREMIUM
Legacy Letters — PREMIUM	Estate Inventory & Net Worth — PREMIUM	Beneficiary Audit — PREMIUM
Digital Legacy Planner — PREMIUM	Probate Cost & Timeline Estimator — PREMIUM	Estate Tax Calculator — PREMIUM
Estate Settlement Letters — PREMIUM	The Executor Kit — PREMIUM	Your Plan vs. The Law — PREMIUM
The Move Check — PREMIUM	The Rehearsal — PREMIUM	On My Terms — PREMIUM

MMXXVI

THE FIRST YEAR, SO FAR

JUNE 17

INCORPORATED

MORTL, Inc. is formed as a Delaware C corporation, in honor of Joby Horn.

JULY 31

LAUNCH

mortl.com goes public from Denver with the 51 state guides, the paths, the tools and the launch film.

AUGUST 24

THE FIRST REPORT

The MORTL Report shows AI search still recommending Cake and Lantern, both shut down. The Living Will Builder launches the same day.

OCTOBER 1

THE DATA NOTE

Maryland becomes the 35th jurisdiction to allow transfer-on-death deeds. MORTL publishes the verified count and updates the guide the day the law takes effect.

OCTOBER 25

THIS BOOK

Brand Book, Volume One. The strategy, the manifesto and the style guide, written down so the brand holds as it grows.

Dates from the mortl.com newsroom and company records. Not on this line: 157 stories, nine share visuals and six downloadable reports, all shipped in the same twelve weeks.

WE ARE

DIRECT
We say die. We say what the law says. We say the price. If there's a plain word for it, that's the word we use.

WARM
The best friend at 2am. Awake, calm, and not surprised by anything you say.

FUNNY
Death is absurd and we're allowed to say so, in plain words. The joke is never on the person who's grieving.

INFORMED
Primary sources, every state, checked every 30 days. We did the reading so you don't have to.

INDEPENDENT
One owner. No endorsements. A listing is a listing, and we say so on the page.

USEFUL
Every page ends with something you can do. If it doesn't, it isn't finished.

WE AREN'T

EUPHEMISTIC
Nobody passed away, was lost, or departed. They died. We use the word, every time.

PASTEL
No lilies, no doves, no soft focus, no rosy filter. Nothing that could run on a funeral home's brochure.

ADVISORS
We inform. We never tell you what you should do, and we never practice law or sell a plan.

SALESPEOPLE
Nothing on the grief path is for sale. We don't recommend providers. We show you who's there.

CRUEL
Dark humor, yes. A joke at a grieving person's expense, never. Not once.

CORPORATE
No buzzwords, no "solutions," no "journey," no metaphors. We talk like a person.

MANIFESTO

MORTL · MMXXVI

YOU'RE GOING *TO DIE.*

SO IS EVERYONE YOU LOVE.

NOBODY
TAUGHT
YOU *WHAT*
TO DO
ABOUT IT.

THEY
TAUGHT
YOU NOT
TO BRING
IT UP.

THEN IT HAPPENS.

A BROCHURE
WITH A
LILY ON
THE FRONT.

AND A BILL FOR

$8,300

2023 national median cost of a funeral with viewing and burial. National Funeral Directors Association.

WE'RE NOT *DOING THAT.*

WE SAY DIE.

WE READ THE LAW IN YOUR STATE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO
CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID
IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA
ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS
MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ
NM	NY	NC	ND	OH	OK
OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN
TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV
WI	WY	DC			

Fifty states and Washington, DC. A cited guide for each, built from primary sources and monitored every 30 days.

IF SOMEONE JUST DIED,

THIS PART IS FREE. FOREVER.

NO ACCOUNT. NO AD. NO UPSELL.

HANDLE IT
ONCE.
HANDLE IT
RIGHT.

THEN GO
LIVE
YOUR LIFE.

You're going to die. So is everyone you love.

Nobody taught you what to do about it. They taught you not to bring it up. Then it happens, and you get a brochure with a lily on the front and a bill for $8,300.

We're not doing that.

We say die. We say the number. We read the law in your state so you don't have to. If someone just died, this part is free. Forever. No account.

If you're planning ahead, good. Handle it once. Handle it right. Then go live your life.

Made for the living. Built for the inevitable.

MORTL™

— MMXXVI —

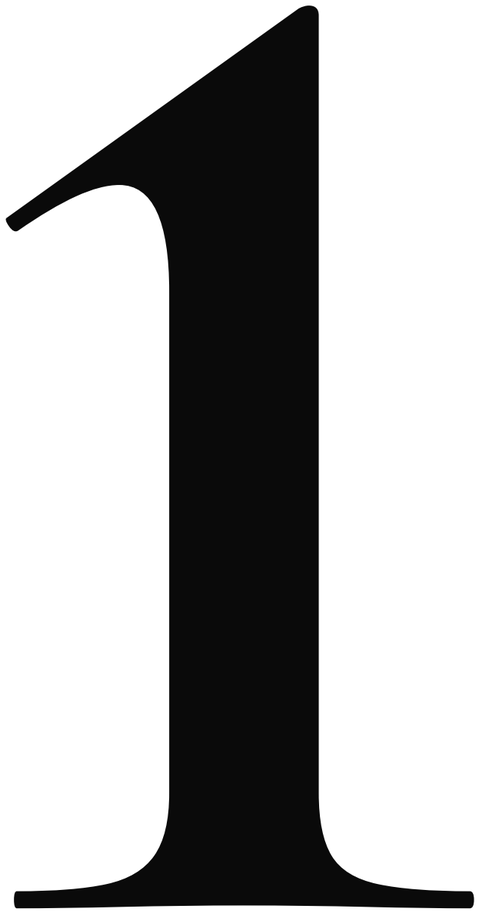
DEATH,
HANDLED.

STYLE GUIDE

This book is more than a set of rules on a wordmark, colors and type. It breaks down the visual and verbal system that makes MORTL recognizable in a category that has looked the same for a hundred years.

Vol. 1 walks anyone making MORTL through the official assets, the core brand elements, the imagery as it ships, the paths, the tone of voice and the layouts that carry them. The aim is to help you make work that's unmistakably MORTL without asking permission for every decision, inside a system built carefully enough to hold.

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LOGOS

INTRODUCTION

The wordmark is the signature on everything MORTL makes: MORTL in Cormorant Garamond Bold, with the ™ and the MMXXVI dateline. It exists as six official files, and those files are the mark.

The wordmark is never typed. In a document, a design, a social tile or a generated PDF, it's one of the files on these pages, embedded at its true proportions. A text form exists only as a runtime fallback on the site when an image fails to load.

SECTIONS

1.1 THE WORDMARK
1.2 OFFICIAL VARIANTS
1.3 CLEARSPACE AND SIZE
1.4 MISUSE



THE LETTERS

MORTL, set in Cormorant Garamond Bold, capitals, spaced by hand for the file. The spacing in the file is the spacing. Nothing is re-set from the font.

THE ™

Part of the mark. It sits at the cap height of the L and it ships on every variant. MORTL is a trademark of MORTL, Inc., application pending.

THE DATELINE

MMXXVI between two rules, centered under the letters. It's the founding year, 2026, and it's part of the mark. The compact variants drop it; nothing else changes.

THE PROPORTIONS

1474 × 387 with the dateline, 1474 × 305 without. Every placement keeps the ratio. A box wider than the ratio parks the mark at the left and leaves dead space, so size by height and let the width follow.

Pulse. The primary mark, for white and light backgrounds.

Pulse on Ink. Dark mode and press. Same file, dark ground.



White. Dark and photographic backgrounds.

Ink. Print and single-color work.

The M. The favicon and app icon: the M from the wordmark, Pulse on Ink. It's the only place a single letter stands for the brand.

Three screen sizes. 64 px in the footer, 42 px on the dashboard and onboarding, 28 px in the nav.

Top row: with the dateline. Bottom row: compact, without. Eight approved placements, from the six official PNG files on mortl.com/press.



CLEARSPACE

The unit is M: the height of the M in the mark at the size it's placed. Keep one M clear on every side. Nothing enters the zone, including photography, type, other marks and the edge of the page.

MINIMUM SIZE ON SCREEN

28 px high with the dateline, the nav size. Below that, use the compact variant and never go under 20 px.

MINIMUM SIZE IN PRINT

10 mm high with the dateline, 7 mm compact. Proposed here; confirm on the first press proof.

SIZE BY HEIGHT

The files are wide. Set the height and let the width follow the file's ratio, so the mark never lands off-center in a box that's wider than it is.



Don't stretch or condense



Don't add shadows or effects



Don't recolor it or use off-palette color



Don't type it. The wordmark is a file, never text



Don't put it on pastel or soft-focus grounds



Don't rotate, outline or animate it

If the mark needs help to be noticed, the layout is the problem. Fix the layout. Usage questions go to press@mortl.com.

2.

TYPOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Two faces carry the whole brand. Cormorant Garamond, bold weight only, for every headline, the wordmark and display text. Inter, regular and light, for body copy, captions, labels and UI, with semibold reserved for the small tracked eyebrows.

Both are free on Google Fonts, so there's never a reason to substitute.

SECTIONS

2.1 TYPEFACES
2.2 TYPOGRAPHY IN USE

CORMORANT GARAMOND BOLD : CHRISTIAN THALMANN

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890,.!?#$/%&

CORMORANT GARAMOND BOLD ITALIC : CHRISTIAN THALMANN

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890,.!?#$/%&

WEIGHTS, AND WHERE THEY GO

Cormorant Garamond: 700 only, roman and italic. Inter: 400 for body and UI, 300 for hero subheads and captions, 600 only for the 11 px eyebrows with 0.2em tracking. No other weights ship.

INTER REGULAR : RASMUS ANDERSSON

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890,.!?#$/%&

INTER LIGHT : RASMUS ANDERSSON

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890,.!?#$/%&

INTER SEMIBOLD, EYEBROWS ONLY

MORTL · MMXXVI

WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?

FROM THE MORTL EDIT

THE DEATH DISPATCH



CHECKLISTS, STATE LAW, PROVIDER DIRECTORIES, THE DEATH DISPATCH & THE ANSWERS.

Cormorant Garamond Bold, uppercase. The display face for the one sentence on the page that matters. Tracking is tight, leading is tighter. Capitals at this size; mixed case belongs to headlines.

MORTL · MMXXVI

You're Going to Die. *Let's Talk About It.*

Plain answers for overwhelmed people, state-specific law guides, and checklists for before and after a death.

Someone just died | I'm planning ahead

The homepage hero as it ships. The mixed-case headline with the italic turn is the one place Cormorant appears in mixed case at display size.

THE RULE

Every headline on an Ink hero splits in two. The opening line or lines are White. The closing phrase is Pulse italic. Every time. A single all-white headline on a dark hero is a defect.

THE EYEBROW

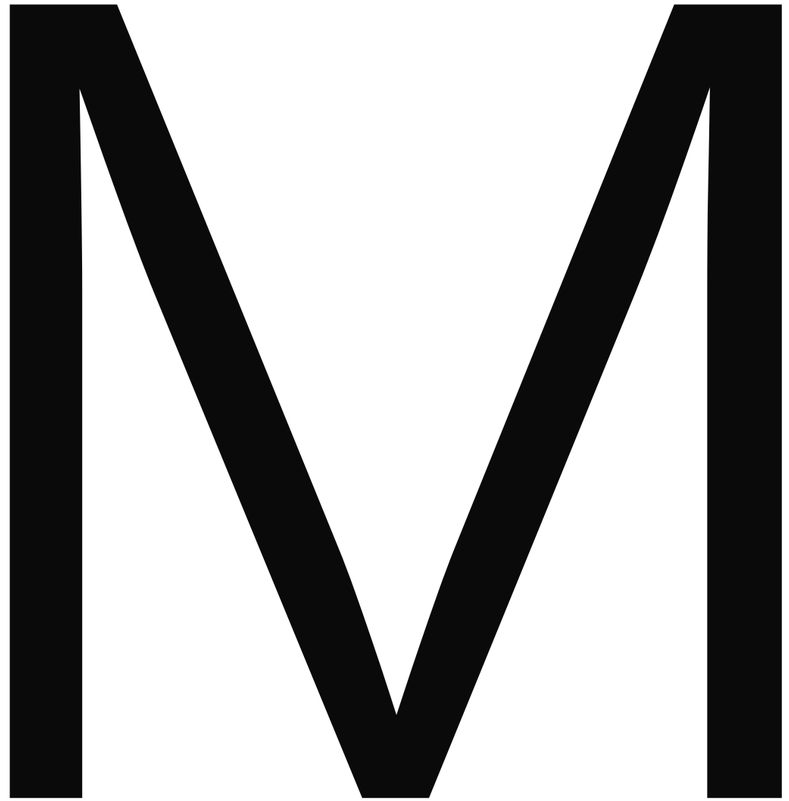
Inter Semibold, 11 px, 0.2em tracking, uppercase. On Ink it's set in Pulse Tint, because full Pulse at that size fails contrast on dark.

THE SUBHEAD

Inter Light at White 80%. One or two sentences, 520 px wide at most.

THE BUTTONS

Primary is Pulse fill with White text. Ghost is a White outline at 60%. Pulse Deep (#B5005A) on hover.



Inter does the work. Line length stays near 65 characters, sentences stay short, and the second person stays on. Bold is never used for emphasis in running text; if a phrase needs weight, it needs a shorter sentence.

BODY · INTER REGULAR 18 / 1.6

Plain answers for overwhelmed people, state-specific law guides, and checklists for before and after a death. Start where you are. If someone just died, that path is free forever and you don't need an account. If you're planning ahead, you'll handle it once and handle it right. The rules for your state are already written down here, in order, with the source next to each one.

SUBHEADS AND CAPTIONS · INTER LIGHT

Death, in your inbox, every Sunday. Practical reporting on death, money, and grief. One owner. Built from primary sources. Monitored every 30 days.

EYEBROWS · INTER SEMIBOLD 11, 0.2EM, UPPERCASE

WHAT YOU CAN DO ON MORTL

FREE ACCOUNT

QUICK ANSWERS

SOURCES · INTER REGULAR 13, ASH

National Funeral Directors Association, 2023 General Price List Study. Retrieved October 2026.

51

state guides. Every state and Washington, DC, cited and monitored.

157

original stories on grief, aging, end-of-life care, estate law, funeral costs and death culture.

36

planning tools. 22 free, 14 Premium.

$8,300

2023 national median cost of a funeral with viewing and burial. NFDA.

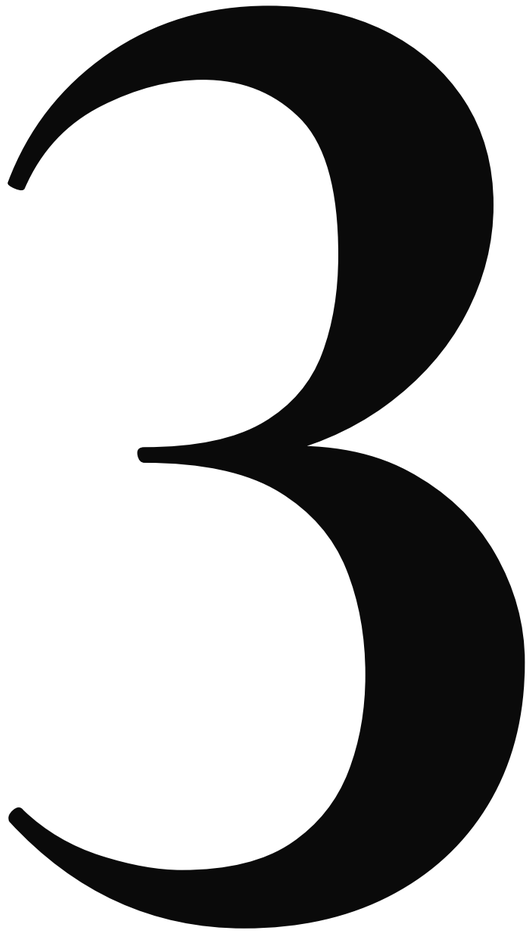
24%

of surveyed U.S. adults reported having a will in 2025. Caring.com / YouGov.

100%

of people will die.

Numbers are set in Cormorant Garamond Bold, lining and tabular, with the symbol in Pulse and a Pulse rule beneath. Every number carries its source and its year. A number without a source doesn't ship.



COLOR

INTRODUCTION

Five colors, and every color on every MORTL surface comes from them, including the admin console. Pulse is the accent: CTAs, highlights, the one thing on the page that matters most. Ink is text and dark backgrounds. Linen is the warm light ground. Ash is secondary text. White is reversed text and logos.

Tints, shades and opacities of the five are allowed. Foreign hues are not. There is no green for done and no red for error anywhere; states get their meaning from labels and from Pulse against Ink.

SECTIONS

3.1 BRAND COLOR RATIO
3.2 CORE PALETTE
3.3 EXTENDED PALETTE
3.4 COLOR LOGIC
3.5 PAIRINGS

55% INK

35% LINEN

with White as its working surface

10% PULSE

The ratio holds across brand communications. Ink leads. Linen and White carry anything meant to be read for more than a minute. Pulse goes on the one thing you want the reader to see, do or buy, and on nothing else. Ash is a text color and never a surface.

PULSE

Primary accent. CTAs, highlights, alerts.

HEX #D4006A
RGB 212 0 106
CMYK 0 100 50 17

INK

Primary text and dark backgrounds.

HEX #0A0A0A
RGB 10 10 10
CMYK 0 0 0 96

LINEN

Warm off-white backgrounds.

HEX #F5F0E8
RGB 245 240 232
CMYK 0 2 5 4

ASH

Secondary text on light backgrounds.

HEX #6B6560
RGB 107 101 96
CMYK 0 6 10 58

WHITE

Reversed text and logos.

HEX #FFFFFF
RGB 255 255 255
CMYK 0 0 0 0

Names, hex and RGB values and uses as published in the press kit. CMYK values are conversions from the digital originals: match them on press against a proof and record the approved values here once they exist.

PULSE TINT

Pulse for text on Ink, and only on Ink. Full Pulse is 3.8:1 on Ink; the tint is 10.7:1. On White or Linen it reads at under 2:1, so there the text is Pulse itself.

HEX #F2A9CC
RGB 242 169 204

PULSE DEEP

Hover and pressed states on Pulse buttons.

HEX #B5005A
RGB 181 0 90

BORDER

Hairlines, dividers and card edges on light grounds. Never for text.

HEX #D0CAC0
RGB 208 202 192

WHITE 72

Subheads and captions on Ink.

RGBA 255 255 255 at 0.72

INK 56

Quiet text and metadata on Linen.

RGBA 10 10 10 at 0.56

Tints, shades and opacities of the core five. Never new hues. Pulse Tint lives on Ink and nowhere else; a tint label on a white or Linen card is a defect. If a design needs a color that isn't on this page or the last one, the design is wrong.

WHITE

READ

The story, the article, the explanation. Anything meant to be read start to finish sits on White.

PULSE OUTLINE

DO

The one thing to do. One per page, one per issue. If there are two, pick.

INK

NUMBERS

Statistics, prices, deadlines, counts. Numbers live on Ink with their source beneath them.

LINEN

TALK

Conversation. Reader questions, Dying to Ask, the founder's note, anything in the first person.

PULSE FILL

BUY

Premium tools and anything with a price. Pulse fill means money is involved, so the reader always knows.

Established in the Death Dispatch weekly template and applied everywhere. Every color has a reason, so a reader learns the system in one issue. A Linen card means someone's talking. A Pulse fill means something costs money.

INK ON LINEN

17.5:1

All sizes. The default.

WHITE ON INK

19.8:1

All sizes. The dark default.

WHITE ON PULSE

5.2:1

All sizes. The only text color on Pulse.

TINT ON INK

10.7:1

All sizes. Pulse text on dark, including eyebrows and labels.

PULSE ON LINEN

4.6:1

All sizes. Links, labels and emphasis on White or Linen.

ASH ON LINEN

5.1:1

All sizes. Captions and sources.

PULSE ON INK

3.8:1

Display only: the hero's italic phrase and the wordmark. Never body copy or a label.

INK ON PULSE

3.8:1

Never. Text on Pulse is White, every time, at every size.

TINT ON LINEN

1.6:1

Never, and never on White (1.9:1). On a light ground the text is Pulse.

ASH ON INK

3.5:1

Never. On Ink, use White 72 instead.

Contrast ratios are WCAG 2 relative luminance, computed from the hex values. Two rules carry the most weight: Pulse Tint is for Ink only, and the only text color on a Pulse ground is White. Pulse never sits on Ash, Ash never sits on Pulse, Linen and White are never paired as figure and ground, and Border is never a text color.

4

IMAGERY

INTRODUCTION

The category's imagery is lilies, doves, a sunset, two hands holding. MORTL shows the real thing, in real light, with a real person reacting to it.

Death applies to everyone, and the pictures have to show that: a mix of women and men and a mix of ethnicities across ages, on every page. No page's imagery shows only one kind of person.

SECTIONS

4.1 THE HERO
4.2 PRINCIPLES
4.3 GRAPHIC ELEMENTS
4.4 IMAGERY IN USE

4.1 · THE HERO

THE HOMEPAGE HERO. *IT DOESN'T CHANGE.*

A woman beside a coffin, laughing, crying and screaming at once. It's what death does to people. Owner's standing decision: the image is never swapped, and nobody proposes replacing it. It's the standard every other image on the site is held to.

THE COFFIN IS IN THE PHOTO. *SO IS THE PERSON'S FACE.*

REAL REACTIONS

People as they are in the moment: laughing, crying, furious, numb, all four at once. Never posed grief. Never a model looking out a window.

THE OBJECT IN FRAME

Coffins, urns, death certificates, the folder of paperwork, the phone at 2am. Shown plainly, lit plainly, named plainly.

EVERYONE

Women and men. Black, white, Indian, Asian, Hispanic and more. Young, old and in between. Every page, every set of images.

NO FUNERAL-HOME STOCK

No lilies, doves, sunsets, candles, hands on hands, or soft focus. If it could run on a funeral home's brochure, it can't run here.

TRUE COLOR OR NONE

Natural light and honest color. No rosy grade, no pastel filter, no haze. Black and white is always allowed. When color is added, it's Pulse, on one element.

WHERE IT HAPPENS

Kitchen tables, parked cars, hospital corridors, the couch with the laptop open, the church with the coffin in it.

THE LINE

A single horizontal rule in Pulse. It sits under headings, between sections, at the foot of the OG card, and around the one thing to do. Always horizontal, always Pulse, never thicker than 4 px.

MORTL · MMXXVI

THE DATELINE

The founding year in Roman numerals. It's inside the wordmark between two rules, and it's the eyebrow above every hero. It dates the brand without a digit.

Death · Money · Grief

THE INTERPUNCT

Separators are an interpunct, in Pulse at display size. Never a pipe, never a slash, never a bullet with a space. Page titles end "| MORTL" in the browser tab and nowhere else.



51

THE M AND THE NUMBER

The M stands for the brand only as the favicon and app icon. The Number is a big figure in Cormorant with the line beneath and the source in Ash. It's the brand's proof, so it's set like the brand's headline.

REAL ROOMS. *REAL PEOPLE.*

Six of the 157 story images, as they ship on mortl.com. Black and white by default, in the places death happens: the chapel, the kitchen table, the bedside, the crematory.

When color is used, it's Pulse, on one thing. The pink shirt at the crematory is the whole system in a photograph.













Left to right, top to bottom: Black Funeral Homes; Death Cafes and Death Salons; What to Say to Someone Who Is Dying; How Much Does Cremation Cost?; Death Doulas: What They Do; Grief After Losing a Sibling.

5

THE PATHS

INTRODUCTION

MORTL asks one question first: where are you right now? The six paths are the front door, the navigation and the promise. They appear in the same order every time, written in the first person, so the reader finds themselves in one sentence and goes.

Someone Just Died is always first. It's free forever and it never carries an ad. It's the reason the company exists.

SECTIONS

5.1 WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?
5.2 PATH RULES

PATH 01 · FREE FOREVER

Someone just died

"I need to know what to do right now."

PATH 02 · PREMIUM FREE, ALWAYS

I'm the one who's dying

"I want things in order while I still can."

PATH 03

I'm planning ahead

"I want to get things in order before I have to."

PATH 04

I'm trying to understand all of this

"I am not in crisis. I want clear answers."

PATH 05

I'm grieving or supporting someone

"I need a useful place to start."

PATH 06

I need a professional

"Find the right kind of help in your state."

The six paths as they appear on mortl.com. The label is the situation. The line beneath is what the reader is thinking. Both are written in their voice.

ASK WHERE THEY ARE RIGHT NOW.

FIRST PERSON, ALWAYS

"I'm planning ahead," never "Planning." The reader should be able to read a path out loud and have it be true.

SOMEONE JUST DIED GOES FIRST

In every list, every menu, every email. It's free forever, it needs no account, and nothing on it is for sale. It never carries an ad, an upsell, a newsletter prompt or a download gate.

THE DYING PERSON'S PATH IS NEVER HIDDEN

"I'm the one who's dying" stays in the second position. Anyone on that path gets every Premium feature free, permanently, with no expiry and no upsell.

QUIET ON GRIEF

Grief, pet-death, crisis and dying pages carry no newsletter popup, no gate and no promotional band. Ever.

SIX, IN ORDER

The set and the sequence don't change by channel or campaign. If a path is ever added, it's added to the site first and to this book second.

ONE PATH, ONE PAGE

A reader who picks a path never has to pick again. Everything the path promises is on the path.

6

TONE OF VOICE

INTRODUCTION

MORTL talks to people on the worst day of their life and on an ordinary Tuesday when they finally decide to write a will. The voice has to work for both, and it does, because it's the same voice: the best friend at 2am who already read the law. Awake, calm, funny when it helps, and never surprised.

Every word is written the way the founder writes: plain, direct, specific, confident. The test for every line is whether a sharp human would say it.

SECTIONS

6.1 TONALITY
6.2 THE RULES
6.3 WRITING ABOUT SUICIDE
6.4 SAY THIS, NOT THAT
6.5 BRAND LANGUAGE

We talk like a person. Second person, short sentences, contractions, plain words. We say die. We say the number. We treat the reader as an adult who can handle the truth and a friend who shouldn't have to go looking for it. When something is funny, we say so, in plain words. When someone is grieving, the joke waits.

DIRECT
+ KIND

FUNNY
+ CAREFUL

INFORMED
+ PLAIN

The voice in six words, as three pairs. Each word keeps the other honest.

WE SAY DIE

Never passed away, lost, departed, gone, or at rest. Died. Dead. Death. The word is the point.

SECOND PERSON, CONTRACTIONS, SHORT SENTENCES

You, your, you're. Don't, can't, won't, it's. One idea per sentence. Formal, contraction-free English is the most common machine tell, so it never ships.

INFORM, DON'T ADVISE

We say what the law says and what things cost. We never tell you what you should do, and we never practice law.

NO RECOMMENDATIONS

A listing is a listing. We never "recommend," "endorse," "trust" or "love" a provider. We show you who's there.

NO METAPHORS, NO SIMILES

Say the literal thing. Dark humor is allowed only when it's clear and lands in plain language, and never at a grieving person's expense.

NO GAGS, PUNS OR CLEVER HEADLINES

A headline informs. If it decorates instead, it's cut.

NO "NOT X, IT'S Y"

Delete the negated half and state the claim on its own. "It's a date," never "It's not a reset. It's a date."

NO EM DASHES

Anywhere. Ever. Social captions, email, code comments in user-facing copy. Use a period, a comma or a colon.

NO EMOJIS, NO HASHTAGS

Not in the newsletter, not on social, not in a subject line. The words carry the tone.

NO HEDGING, NO FILLER, NO EMPTY INTENSIFIERS

No "arguably," "we believe," "it's worth noting," "at the end of the day," "gut-punch," "meaningful," "seamless," "journey."

NO SHOCK PROFANITY

Not as a stand-in for edge. The founder cusses on the podcast; the copy doesn't.

NO PASTEL-FUNERAL TONE, NO BRITISH PHRASING

No "arrangements," no "final resting place," no "whilst," no "organise." American, plain, awake.

FINGERPRINT PHRASES, ONCE EACH

"Nobody tells you," "what actually happens," "the truth about," "no jargon," and "actually" as an intensifier. Each earns its place once across the site. Before shipping one, search for it.

BANNED OUTRIGHT

"I wanted to reach out," "circle back," "leverage," "synergy," "that said," "kindly."

THESE RULES OVERRIDE THE VOICE RULES WHEREVER THE TWO CONFLICT.

Anything MORTL publishes that touches suicide follows AFSP and WHO safe messaging exactly. Before it ships, it's audited against every line here, not only the part that was reported.

NEVER STATE WHY SOMEONE DIED

Not a choice, not a decision, not a diagnosis, not any single cause. A suicide is never the result of one thing. Then stop.

NEVER SPECULATE ABOUT STATE OF MIND

What they were thinking, what they wanted anyone to feel, what a note meant. None of it.

NEVER DESCRIBE METHOD, MEANS OR LOCATION

Ever, in any detail.

SAY "DIED BY SUICIDE"

Never "committed." Never a "successful" or "failed" attempt.

EVERY PAGE THAT TOUCHES SUICIDE CARRIES 988

The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, worded so that reaching out reads as reasonable. The pages written for suicide-loss survivors need it most.

NEVER FRAME IT AS RELIEF, ESCAPE, PEACE OR A SOLUTION

Including in quoted platitudes, unless the piece is naming them as things not to say.

MEDICAL AID IN DYING IS NOT SUICIDE

No crisis lines on MAID content and no suicide language for it. Most states exclude MAID from the legal definition.

NOT THAT	SAY THIS
~~She passed away peacefully.~~	She died.
~~We lost Dad last spring.~~	Dad died last spring.
~~He committed suicide.~~	He died by suicide.
~~Your loved one's final resting place~~	The grave. The burial. The urn.
~~We recommend these trusted providers~~	Here are the providers in your state
~~You should set up a trust.~~	Here's what a trust does, and what it costs.
~~Probate is a beast with sharper teeth.~~	Probate takes nine months in Colorado.
~~It is acceptable to say you do not know.~~	It's okay to say you don't know.
~~September is not a reset. It is a date.~~	September is a date.

When a reader uses a euphemism, we don't correct them. We just don't repeat it. The next sentence says died, and the conversation moves on. The probate figure is an example of the form, not a published claim.

HANDLE IT ONCE.

HANDLE IT RIGHT.

Brand language comes in two parts. The first half states the fact. The second half, in Pulse italic, is the turn: the promise or the reason. Set in Cormorant, in capitals, never more than nine words, and never a metaphor.

MADE FOR THE LIVING.

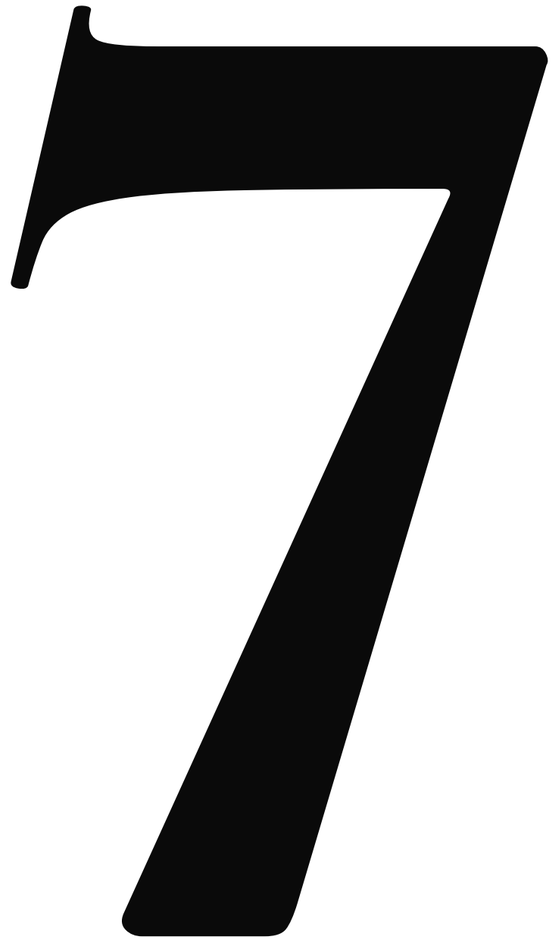
BUILT FOR THE INEVITABLE.

YOU'RE GOING TO DIE.
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

DEATH, IN YOUR INBOX.
EVERY SUNDAY.

PLAIN ANSWERS.
YOUR STATE'S RULES.

DEATH, HANDLED.
THEN GO LIVE YOUR LIFE.



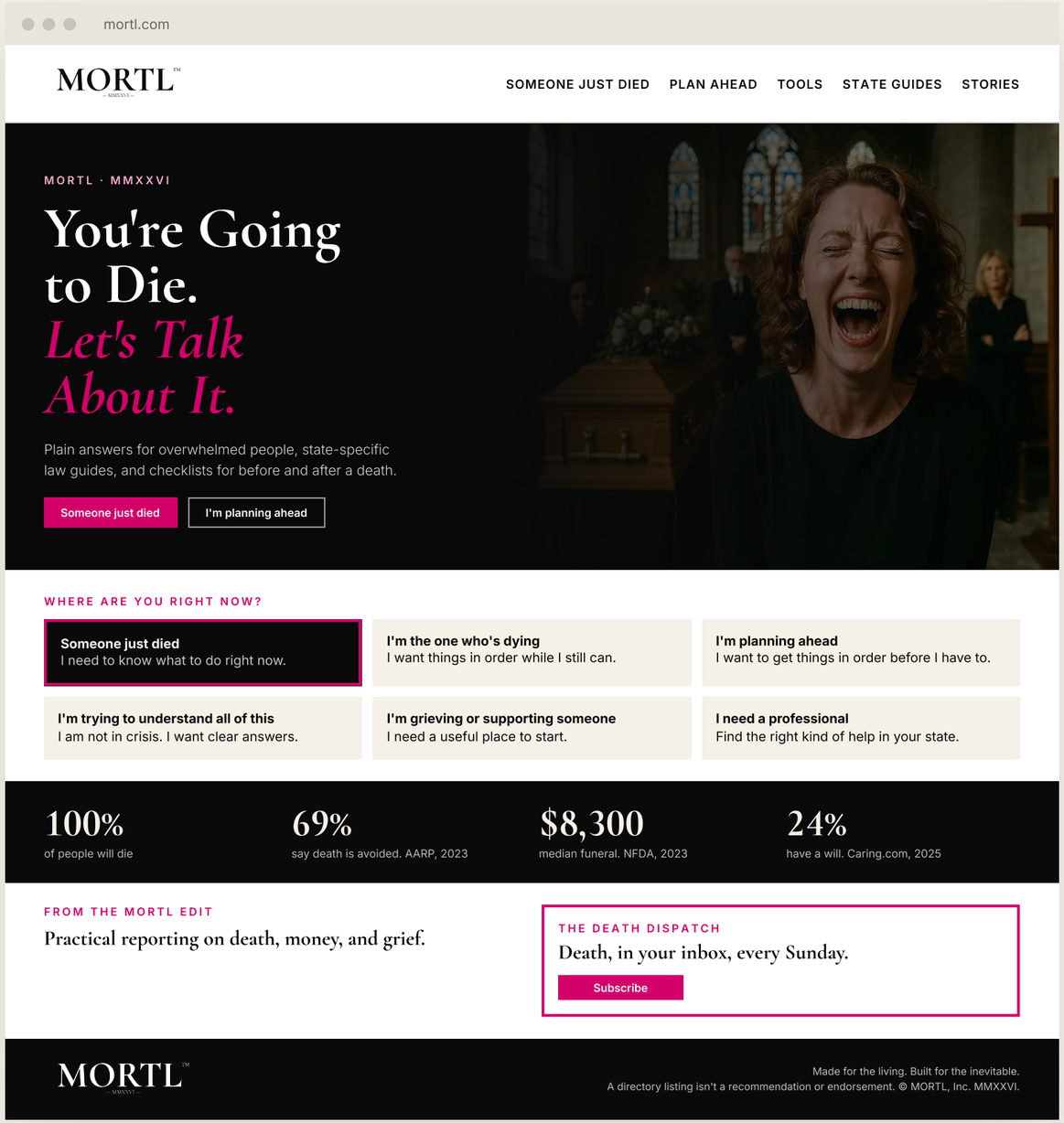
LAYOUT & APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

This is where the elements come together. Every MORTL layout is built to be recognized at a glance and read without effort: the wordmark, the line, one color in the right place and a sentence that says the thing. Each element carries one job, so no single piece has to do the heavy lifting alone.

SECTIONS

7.1 HOMEPAGE ANATOMY
7.2 THE DEATH DISPATCH
7.3 SOCIAL COMPOSITION
7.4 DIRECTORY AND DISCLOSURE
7.5 THE DASHBOARD
7.6 SHARE VISUALS



NAV

The Ink wordmark with the dateline at 28 px, top left on White. Navigation is the paths plus Tools, State Guides and Stories.

HERO

Ink, with the hero image. Eyebrow in Pulse Tint, headline White with the closing phrase in Pulse italic, subhead in Inter Light, Pulse button and ghost button.

THE PATHS

Six, in order, first person. Someone Just Died is Ink with a Pulse outline because it's the one thing to do. The others sit on Linen.

NUMBERS

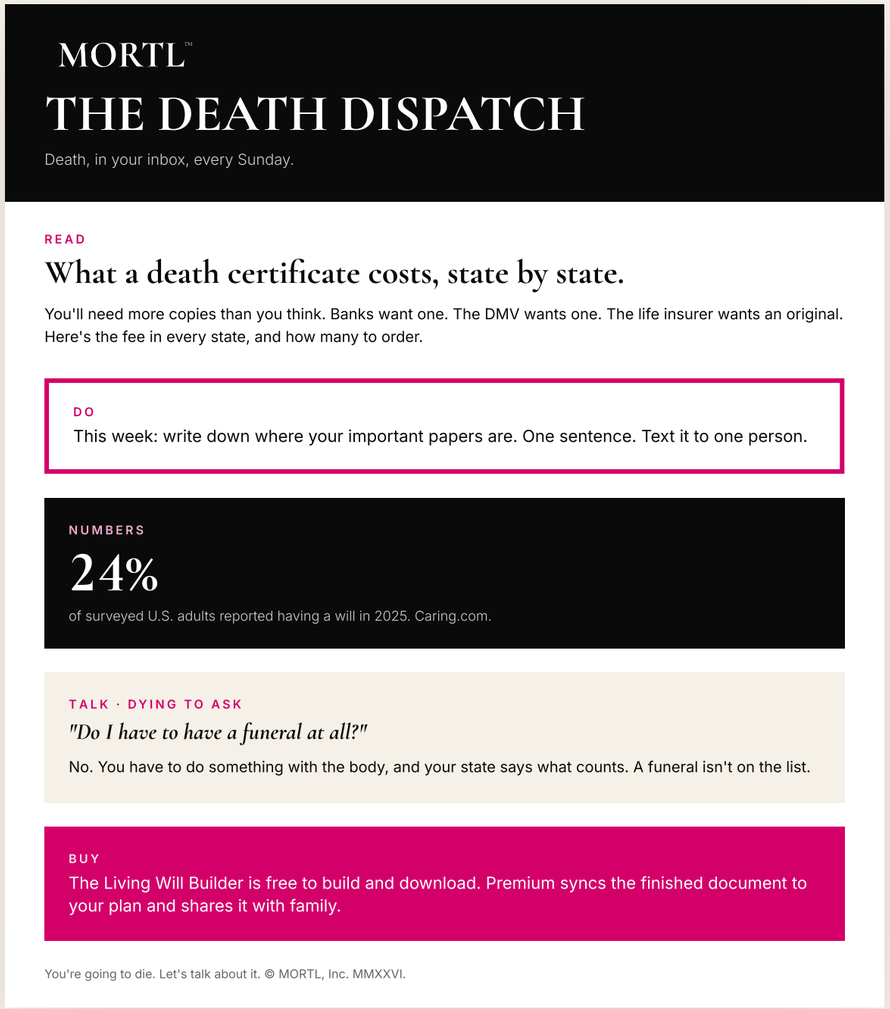
Statistics on Ink, Cormorant, source and year beneath each one. Numbers never appear without a source.

THE DISPATCH

Pulse outline, because subscribing is the one thing to do on the page. The button is Pulse fill: the only solid Pulse on the homepage below the hero.

FOOTER

The White wordmark at 64 px, the brand language, the directory disclaimer and the copyright with the Roman year. On every page.



MASTHEAD

Ink. The White compact wordmark, the title in Cormorant capitals, the tagline on one line. It fits on one line or it gets rewritten.

READ · WHITE

The lead story. Headline in Cormorant, body in Inter. Always carries a visual: a photo, a chart or a number.

DO · PULSE OUTLINE

The one thing to do this week. One block, one action, one sentence. Never two.

NUMBERS · INK

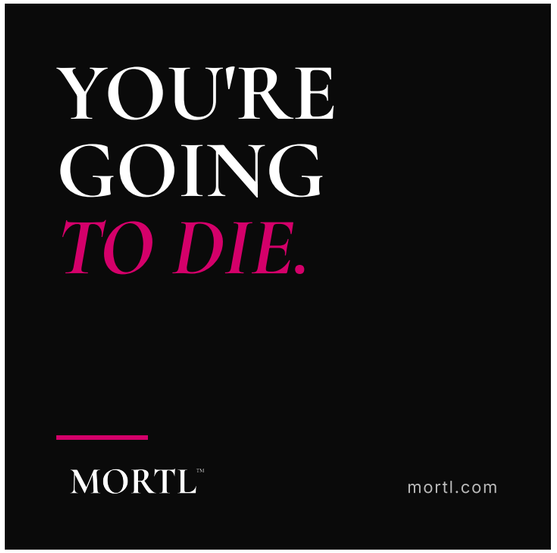
One statistic, big, with its source. The reader learns something they can repeat at dinner.

TALK · LINEN

A reader's question and a plain answer. Dying to Ask lives here, in the newsletter and on the podcast.

BUY · PULSE FILL

Premium tools and anything with a price. Solid Pulse tells the reader money is involved, every time, without a footnote.







Left to right: 1:1, 4:5 and 9:16. The 1080 × 1350 copy becomes a story's social image. One publisher per channel, under @mortl_inc on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, X, Threads and Pinterest, mortl.inc on Facebook, u/mortl_inc on Reddit and mortl-inc.bsky.social on Bluesky.

THE HEADLINE IS THE POST

One sentence in Cormorant, big enough to read in a feed. On Ink it follows the hero rule: White, then Pulse italic.

THREE GROUNDS, ONE ACCENT

Ink, Linen or Pulse. Never a gradient. Text over a photograph only with a solid field behind it.

THE LINE, THE WORDMARK, THE ADDRESS

A short Pulse rule, the compact wordmark file bottom left, and the story's address bottom right. A share visual always carries both.

THE CAPTION

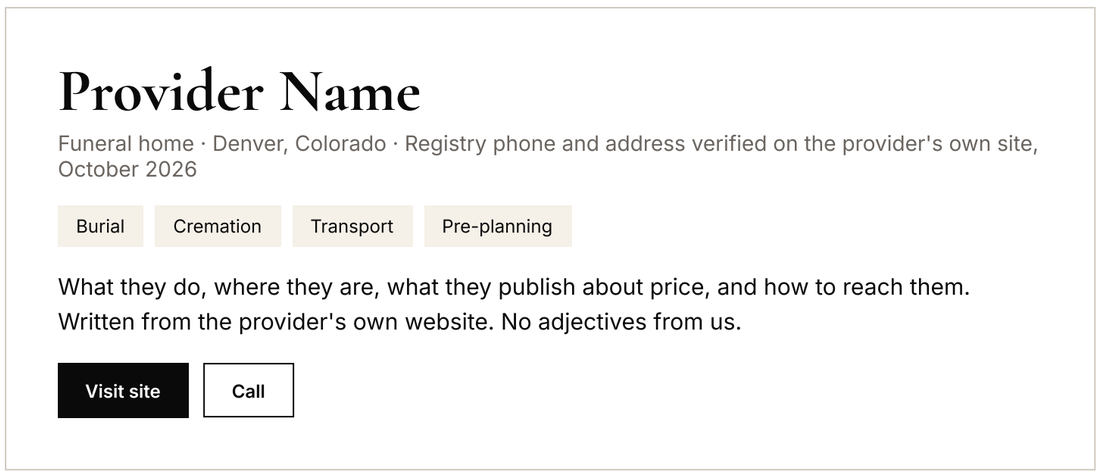
Line one is a complete sentence that makes the point. A blank line between paragraphs. The link alone on the last line. No closing question, no hashtags, no emojis.

QUIET STORIES GET NONE

Suicide, End-of-Life Care and pet-death stories get no share visual and no video.

THE VOICE IS A PERSON'S

Audio and video are the founder's own voice. No synthetic voice reads MORTL content.



A directory listing is not a recommendation or endorsement. MORTL shows you who's there. You decide.

VERIFIED PROVIDERS ONLY

A provider is listed when its registry phone and address are proven on its own website. Descriptions are written from the provider's own site, never from NPI data.

DESCRIBE, NEVER ENDORSE

No stars from us, no "trusted," no "top-rated." Reviews, if shown, are attributed to the people who wrote them.

NO PAID-PLACEMENT LANGUAGE UNTIL REAL PARTNERS EXIST

Nothing on the site says sponsored, featured or paid placement today. When real partners exist, every paid listing is labeled, on the listing itself, in a Pulse outline.

THE DISCLAIMER IS ALWAYS IN VIEW

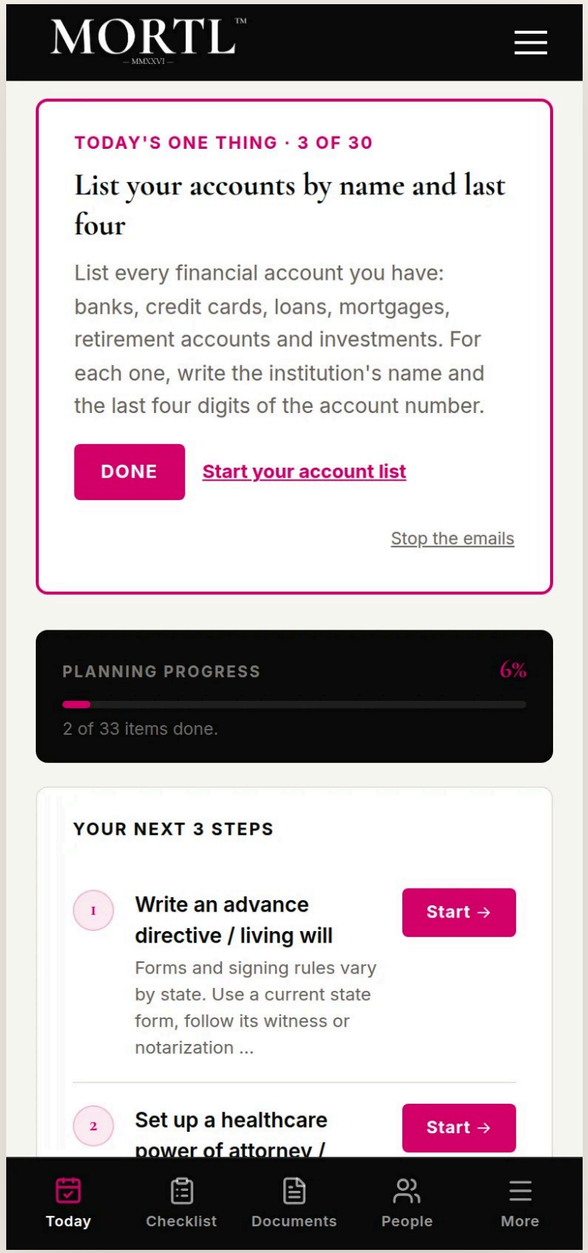
"A directory listing is not a recommendation or endorsement" appears on every directory page and in the site footer.

THE GRIEF PATH IS NEVER A STOREFRONT

Paid placements, once they exist, appear in Find Help and in the Buy block of the Dispatch. They never appear on the Someone Just Died path.

EMPTY PAGES DON'T INDEX

A state or category with no verified provider stays out of search and out of the sitemap until a listing clears. Death Doula isn't a browsable category, because there's no verifiable registry.



THE FREE ACCOUNT

THREE LINES. *EVERYWHERE. THE SAME.*

01 Keeps your checklist ticked on every device.

02 One thing to do each morning, by email, if you want it.

03 Your state's rules on the items that depend on them.

ONE SOURCE FOR THE LINES

The homepage planning section, /plan-ahead, /checklist, the download gate, the sign-up modal and the printable all read the same three lines from one file. Nobody rewrites them for a page.

A REAL SCREENSHOT, ALWAYS

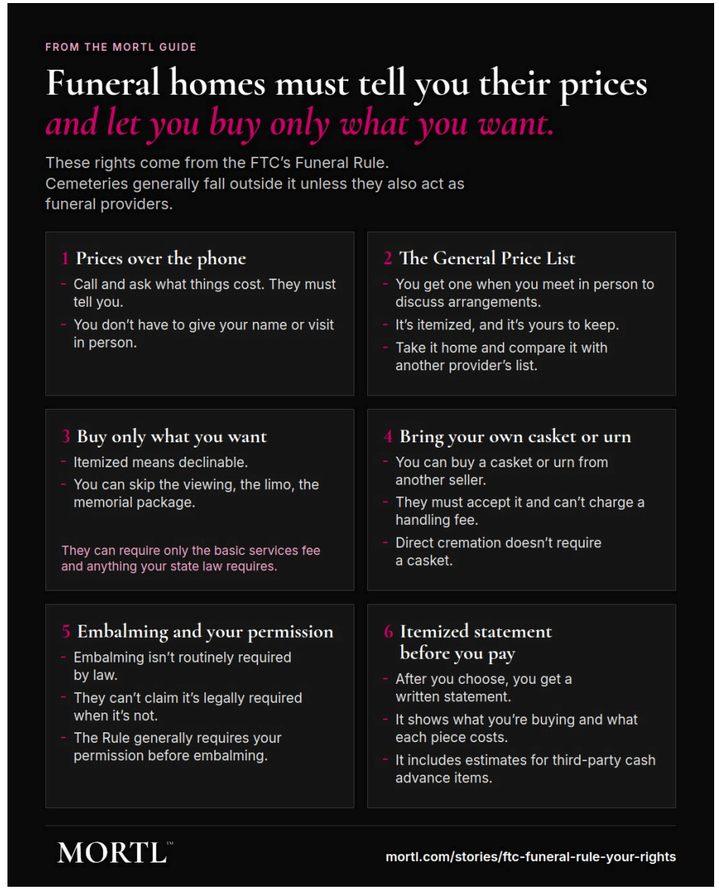
Beside the lines sits a phone-size screenshot of the dashboard itself, taken from a test account. When the overview changes, retake it. Never mock it up.

ONE PILL IN THE HEADER

On a phone the header carries one button: Create account, or My plan when signed in. Search lives in the drawer.







ONE IMAGE, THE WHOLE STORY

A story's structure as a single picture: the steps, the rights, the order. It sits inside the story and it's built to be shared. Every line on it comes from the story.

ALWAYS SIGNED

The wordmark and the story's address are on every one. Someone who sees it on a feed can find the page without the caption.

RENDERED TO EVERY SIZE

One source, every size. The 1080 × 1350 copy becomes the story's social image, so the post and the page match.

QUIET STORIES GET NONE

Suicide, End-of-Life Care and pet-death stories never get a share visual. Nine exist today, all on planning and law.

Three of the nine share visuals as published: Probate Explained; How to Arrange a Funeral; The FTC Funeral Rule. Ink ground, White headline, Pulse italic second line, the line, the wordmark, the address.

8

PRESS

INTRODUCTION

Everything a journalist, a partner or a vendor needs to describe MORTL correctly is on mortl.com/press: the newsroom, the boilerplate, the founder, the logo files and the contact. This section carries the parts that get quoted.

The boilerplate is used as written. Custom descriptions go through press@mortl.com.

SECTIONS

8.1 BOILERPLATE
8.2 FOUNDER AND CONTACT

SHORT · 50 WORDS

MORTL helps people figure out what to do before and after a death. Built for adults who don’t know where to start, it publishes plain answers, 51 cited jurisdiction guides, ordered checklists, practical tools, and provider information. Its sources and commercial relationships are public.

LONG · 100 WORDS

MORTL is an independent publisher that helps people figure out what to do before and after a death. Built for adults who don’t know where to start, it publishes 51 cited jurisdiction guides, original reporting on grief, aging, end-of-life care, estate law, funeral costs, and death culture, ordered checklists, practical tools, and provider information. Public guidance doesn’t require an account. Optional saved features help people organize a plan and hand selected information to family. MORTL isn’t a law firm, medical provider, funeral home, or financial institution. Its sources, corrections, provider standards, revenue model, and commercial relationships are public.



Stephanie Werner

CEO, FOUNDER, & EDITOR

Stephanie Werner founded MORTL in 2026 after her father died of brain cancer and her family was left to work through hospice, paperwork, costs, and decisions without a clear guide. She has more than 18 years of experience leading brand, growth, and marketing across consumer and healthcare companies. She built MORTL to turn the practical realities of death into plain, sourced, useful information. She holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix and a bachelor’s degree in Strategic Communication from The Ohio State University. Based in Denver, Colorado.

The launch film, "My dad died, so I built MORTL," is at mortl.com/videos/my-dad-died-so-i-built-mortl.

PRESS AND MEDIA

press@mortl.com

GENERAL INQUIRIES

mortl.com/contact

RESPONSE TIME

Within 24 hours on business days. Mark urgent requests URGENT in the subject line.

INTERVIEWS AND HEADSHOTS

press@mortl.com

NEWSROOM

mortl.com/press, with the RSS feed at mortl.com/feed.xml

Founder bio as published at mortl.com/press. Use as written.

9

BRAND EXPRESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following pages show the system at work across the places MORTL lives: a link preview, a feed, an inbox, a state guide, a podcast segment, a card, and the six reports the brand has published for employers, executors and providers. The pieces are distinct, and every one of them is from the same brand.

SECTIONS

9.1 THE FAMILY
9.2 THE LIBRARY

MORTL™
— MMXXVI —

You're going to die. Let's talk about it.

The link preview, as it ships. Pulse wordmark on Ink, the tagline in Inter, the line at the foot.

SO IS EVERYONE *YOU LOVE.*

MORTL™

mortl.com

STATE GUIDE · 06 OF 51

COLORADO

What to do when someone dies, and how to plan ahead.

MORTL™
— MMXXVI —

Built from primary sources. Checked every 30 days.

MORTL™

THE DEATH DISPATCH

Death, in your inbox, every Sunday.

READ

The will your parents think they have, and the one on file.

DO
Ask one parent where the will is. Today.

THE MORTL PODCAST · SEGMENT

DYING TO ASK

"Can I be buried in my backyard?"

MORTL™

EXPLICIT

MORTL™
— MMXXVI —

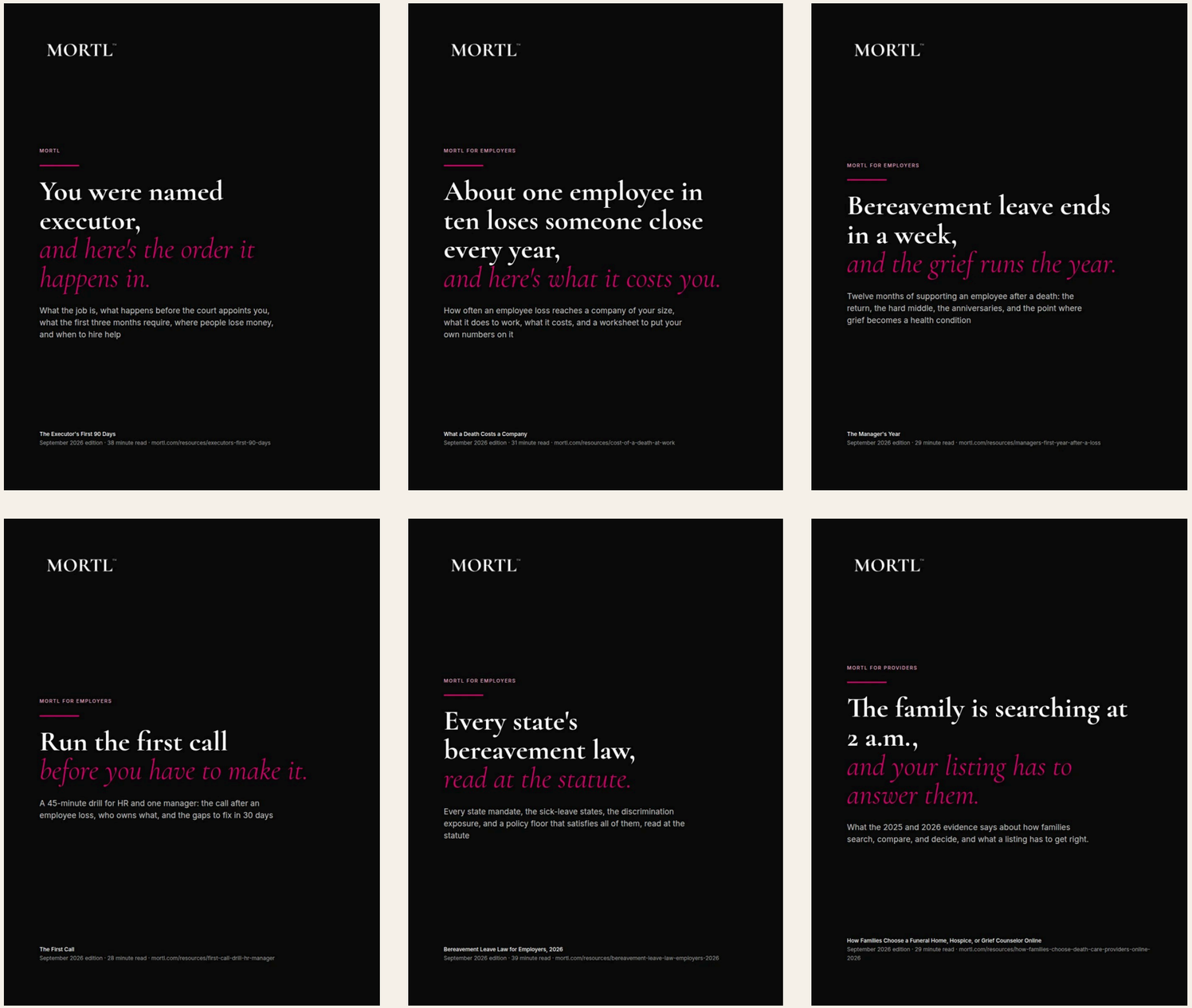
Stephanie Werner, MBA
CEO, FOUNDER, & EDITOR

steph@mortl.com
mortl.com · Denver, Colorado

SIX REPORTS. *ONE COVER.*

Every downloadable report MORTL publishes wears the same cover: Ink, the White compact wordmark, who it's for in a Pulse eyebrow, the headline in Cormorant with its second line in Pulse italic, and the title, edition, read time and address at the foot.

Inside, every claim traces to a primary source with a retrieval date, the method is on the page, and the limits are stated. One or two pages is never a report.



Left to right, top to bottom: The Executor's First 90 Days; What a Death Costs a Company; The Manager's Year; The First Call; Bereavement Leave Law for Employers, 2026; How Families Choose a Funeral Home, Hospice, or Grief Counselor Online.

MORTL™

— MMXXVI —

BRAND BOOK · VOLUME ONE

MMXXVI

MADE FOR THE LIVING.
BUILT FOR THE INEVITABLE.

PREPARED BY

Stephanie Werner, MBA
CEO, Founder, & Editor, MORTL, Inc.

COMPANY

MORTL, Inc., a Delaware C corporation
1521 Blake St STE 44587, Denver, CO 80202
mortl.com · press@mortl.com

ASSETS

Official wordmark files, favicon, hero and link card from mortl.com/press; story images, share visuals, report covers and the dashboard screenshot from the site's own source; founder photographs from mortl.com/about. Values as published in the press kit.

TYPEFACES

Cormorant Garamond by Christian Thalmann
Inter by Rasmus Andersson
Both under the SIL Open Font License, served by Google Fonts

SOURCES CITED

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MARK

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