

## Now That The Legal Stuff is Over With, Here Comes The Flood: Marketing St. Joseph Abbey's Caskets

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### Abstract

St. Joseph Abbey operated a small Catholic seminary north of Covington, Louisiana. One of the Abbey's financial means of support was wiped out by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Deacon Mark Coudrain, a woodworking enthusiast, approached Abbot Justin Brown about using cypress to produce hand-made coffins to sell to the general public. After investing in a woodshop and dedicated in late 2007, which was publicized in a local Catholic newspaper, the state Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors [BEFD] issued a cease-and-desist order before one casket could be made. The rest of the case began with an overview of the funeral industry and a summary of the legal battle between the monks and BEFD, which was won by the monks after three years. The abbey's marketing efforts were then briefly discussed, and the new challenge brought by a major flood of the entire campus in March, 2016 concludes the case.

### Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Understand the importance of monitoring the external environment by any business.
2. Assess the impact of the legal, political, economic and competitive environmental factors on St. Joseph Woodworks' marketing efforts.
3. Recommend specific promotional activities to make more people aware of St. Joseph Woodworks' caskets.

### Application

This descriptive case is primarily targeted towards the Principles of Marketing course at the undergraduate level. It may also be useful in a graduate level Foundations of Marketing course. Chapters on marketing strategy and marketing environment should be covered before using this case.

### Key Words

Caskets, legal issues, flood recovery, marketing

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