Spread the Word

Category: Family Reunion Planning Center
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Now that you have chosen the date, location and type of reunion, it is now time to invite your relatives and to inform them that a reunion is being planned.

Save the Date

As soon as you have made your final decision about the date of your family reunion, you can send out a fun and informative “save the date” card or email to create excitement about the reunion. You want to let your relatives know the date far in advance so that they will be more likely to attend. Your “save the date” should be attention grabbing and only include key information such as the date, type of reunion and location (if already decided). If you do not have many people’s email addresses at this point you can send the “save the date” by post. The “save the date” should encourage people to visit the website and provide details about how to register online. A custom registration form on your reunion website will allow you to gather important information such as e-mail addresses so you can send out information, invitation, and notifications all online.

If you want to gather the input of family members in terms of where the reunion should be held and what activities should be included, then your “save the date” can explain how to vote online to be part of the decision making process. Making people aware of the event way in advance is a way to maximize attendance at the reunion You can even include a short personal note letting people know how fun it will be for everyone to catch up.

If you have not made many final decisions by the time you send out your “save the date” card, once they have been made, you should send out a broadcast email announcing more information such as location and activities, a list of missing relatives, a request to register online and create a profile, and you can include a nostalgic note to encourage people to attend.



Invitation

Whether you are having a small reunion at your home or a large family gathering at Disney World, you will need to send out invites to your relatives whether it be by phone, post or email. Sending invitations by email eliminates the hassle, costs and effort of printing and postage. Regardless how you invite your guests, you should definitely encourage people to RSVP online. Invitations should be sent about 3-6 months before the reunion.

The content of the invitation should be clear and include:

- Date, time, type and location of the reunion
- Contact person’s phone number and address for any question
- A description of the activities and game

- Explain how to register and RSVP online
- Cost per person or family and what is included in registration fee or ticket price
- Detailed instruction of payment procedure
- What you need to bring to the reunion

You need to make sure to include an RSVP deadline so you can make reservations and continue planning. You should consider offering incentives to encourage your relatives to register early. You should also mention if there will be a refund offered if necessary.



Reminders and Follow-Ups

The best part about being able to send out invitations online is that if you have not received a response, you can send another as a reminder without the cost of postage. Reunions require continuous communication. Unless you are having a very small reunion with just immediate family that live close to one another, just one invitation is often insufficient.

A second follow up invitation to non responders can be sent two weeks following the initial invitation, however you should come up with a new look and subject line to capture the interest of your relatives and clearly feature RSVP and ticket purchasing deadlines.

A third reminder invitation can be sent out about a month after that with an appealing subject line. About 6-8 weeks before your reunion you can send out a broadcast email to build even more excitement and remind your relatives about the time and place and if any changes have been made. Two weeks before the reunion you can send a short email that will include the weather prediction, an itinerary, and remind your relatives if there is anything that they should bring with them such as old photos or family heirlooms.

You may also consider sending out ongoing newsletters, before and after the reunion, which can serve as a means to keep in touch, provide information, updates, reminders and announcements to your relatives. It is a great way to learn more about your family members as the newsletter can include personal articles, photos, quizzes and more.

Best Strategies to increase attendance at your reunion

- **Be persistent**
  You need to follow up and send reminders to your relatives. Sending out regular broadcast emails will build further interest which gives people more reasons to attend. You also need to encourage people to go and visit the website, register and create a personal profile, RSVP, give their input through polls and surveys, and pass the word along to other family members.

- **Promote the event**
  You can post your reunion on social media and encourage relatives to spread the word to the rest of the broader family. You can create a Facebook reunion page and share the link on your event website. Some relatives will not be on social media which is why it is necessary to have a family reunion website that will act as a private social network.

- **Continuously update the website**
  This is a way to get people to keep coming back to your website. You can include who is coming, the names of most recent registered family members, add photos and videos, and post updates about your reunion. It can be an opportunity for others to continuously learn about their family history and heritage.

- **Build excitement**
  Make mention of how great it is going to be to meet new relatives and catch up with those who you have not seen or spoken to in years. You can also post pictures and videos of past reunions to show how much fun they were. You can also state that there will be great awards and prizes for the winners of the various planned games and activities.

