



Best Practices Using ReunionDB To Ensure Reunion Success

Best Practice #1: Decision and Comfort of Knowing You Have Our Help!

- The most important first step to begin the process of planning and organizing a well-attended reunion is deciding that you are committed to having a successful reunion. Part of our job at ReunionDB is to guide you along the way, and to help ensure your success.
- **Before you receive your database and have your formal training with ReunionDB, it is very important to NOT advertise any ticket pricing information on Facebook or any other location.** Choosing a date is the most important aspect of your reunion to lock down early. Availability of a desired venue will help determine viable reunion dates. If your reunion date is already finalized, that is the only important information that should be advertised before your training.
- Ticket pricing and your entire reunion marketing plan will be discussed in detail with you after your database is built.

Best Practice #2: Knowing What Your Starting Database Contains

- When your class database is setup and available, it is important to know what you are starting with, and the process that we went through to build it.
 - All photos from your yearbook and the associated classmate names were entered into the database first.
 - Any additional names, middle names and middle initials were entered from your Graduation Program/Commencement Guide (if we received one from you). Without middle names and/or middle initials, locating missing classmates is difficult.
 - Any current contact information that you have collected, either in spreadsheets or manually, is entered into the database.
 - Any prior reunion contact information that we received from you was then entered into the database from newest to oldest.

Best Practice #3: What To Do First After You Receive Your Database

- AFTER we have our initial training conference call with the committee members who will be using the database (**no more than 2 committee members**), you now have the freedom to access and update your data as often as you like, and you should be keeping your database as current and accurate as possible. You can update/add email addresses, phone numbers and mailing addresses as you find or receive more current classmate contact information.
- The data entry team at ReunionDB is very conscientious about data entry and photo matching accuracy, but they are human and can make mistakes. If you see any typos or any data that you know is inaccurate, you can (and should) update or delete that data. If you see an incorrect photo on a classmate or an obvious duplicate record of a classmate, contact your ReunionDB support rep and they will get the issue fixed quickly.
- You will have the ability to **ADD** any needed additional classmate records into the database which may not already exist. For example, you may have some classmates who started with your class but did not graduate with your class. You may also have a classmate from another year who wants to attend your event or a teacher who you may want to invite.
- **Please do not use fields in the database for purposes other than how they are labeled.** If you are unsure how to properly input a specific classmate/invitee, please refer to **FAQ #18** when adding a new



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record. Click on the blue circle at the top-right of the database to access the **FAQs**.

- Your database should be as complete and accurate as possible **BEFORE** we send it to our research partner. We will use our research partner to see if we can find any missing **mailing addresses** and **phone numbers**, or more current addresses than what you have provided to us. The **ONLY** classmates who are NOT researched are those whose contact information has already been marked as **confirmed** by you and those with valid email addresses. **Research websites are not an effective source for up-to-date, valid email addresses.**
- Collecting accurate **email addresses** should be a continual process all the way up to your reunion weekend. **Sending emails is the most effective way to communicate with your classmates**, even if you are using social media sites to communicate with some of them. Start with your own address book, your committee's address books and collect as many email addresses as possible from your classmates who are on **Facebook**.
- Another possible source for **email addresses** is the alumni association at your high school. Many schools keep their own database of contact information for alumni, and they are often willing to share that information with you, especially if you return to them your "updated" contact information after your reunion is over. You could also promise to donate a small percentage of any excess reunion proceeds back to your high school, to give them incentive to help you.

Best Practice #4: Set Up a Class Specific Gmail Email Address If You Don't Have One Already

- Most reunion committees prefer to NOT use their personal email addresses when we send out email blasts for reunion correspondence. Setting up a class specific email address is very useful and allows any or all members of the committee the ability to send and receive all reunion correspondence through one **centralized** email account. Gmail is by far the most flexible email account service to use and it's free to set up a new Gmail address. Try to keep the class Gmail account name as **short as possible**, but clear enough for your classmates to know that it's a **class specific** email address. You **DO NOT** want to make it reunion or event specific. As an example, if your High School was "Sample High School – Class of 1983", your Gmail account could be SampleHS1983@gmail.com. All reunion email blasts sent from your database will be (by default) sent from the ReunionDB email servers using **your class Gmail account**.

Best Practice #5: Set Up a Facebook Group Page For Your Reunion If You Don't Already Have One

- A simple Facebook **GROUP** page should be used to communicate with classmates who use social media, and to display information about your reunion (at the appropriate time). When you create a Facebook page for your reunion, **it is very important to NOT create an "EVENT" or "COMMUNITY" page because when classmates RSVP on a Facebook EVENT page, they may think they have formally RSVP'd to the reunion.** The place where your classmates will RSVP and buy tickets is from the ReunionDB website. This will enable the committee to track reunion ticket purchases. **A Facebook GROUP page for your class is the only Facebook presence you will need.**

Please do not post any ticket pricing information onto your Facebook Group page until we have completed our training sessions with you and your committee and have gone through your budget in detail.

- Generating "buzz", excitement and anticipation on your **Facebook Group** page will help to drive ticket sales. **Uploading nostalgic photos from your yearbook or any prior reunions always helps to get classmates thinking about coming to the reunion.**



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When you do your Facebook Group posts (which you should do every few weeks), you want to always be positive and upbeat. Also, to keep classmates from turning Notifications OFF from the Group page, DO NOT post too much or too often. Classmates don't want to be pushed or over-sold. **ReunionDB has very specific content and timing for the Marketing posts on Facebook and these will be reviewed during training and follow-up conference calls.**

Best Practice #6: Determine Your Reunion Ticket Price (to be completed with ReunionDB)

- During one of your initial training conference calls with ReunionDB, we will be using the **Reunion Planning Calculator** that is built into your database to help you come up with an appropriate ticket pricing plan relative to your expected expenses. **It is very important that we do this together.**
- Your classmates are not deciding to come to their reunion because of a fancy venue. They are coming to see as many classmates as possible, most of whom they may have not seen in many years.
- Yes, they'd like to eat decent food while they are at the reunion and not leave hungry, but **they are not deciding to come to the reunion because of the food selection.** Food costs can be kept affordable by negotiating well with the caterer or venue. Serving lots of heavy appetizers instead of a formal dinner is becoming a trend.
- The goal is to keep your ticket price as low as possible and still cover expenses. Those who are bringing a guest and possibly traveling for the reunion will have additional expenses and will appreciate whatever the committee can do to help keep the ticket price reasonable.

Best Practice #7: Digital Invitation

ReunionDB will create a simple 1-page PDF invitation, which will contain your reunion details (date, location, price, etc.). The invitation will include information on how to RSVP and purchase reunion tickets. The database contains ten sample Invitation templates. To view the templates, click on the **Print** button and then the **PDF Invite Samples** button at the bottom of the **Print** window.

- Your final digital Invitation page will be made available on the ReunionDB **Ticket Purchase Page** for your classmates to view and/or print.
- This PDF file "**link**" (not the PDF file itself), will also be **posted on your Facebook Group page** and will be **emailed** regularly to all classmates for whom you have an email address. You should **never** "attach" the PDF to an email or post it onto your Facebook Group as a **file** because many SPAM filters will block emails with attachments, and using a **link** will always ensure that your classmates are looking at the latest version of the PDF file.

Best Practice #8: Use the ReunionDB Phone Call Lists & Queries to Make Phone Calls

- Another very useful way to help connect with classmates is to use the ReunionDB phone call lists to call classmates directly or use auto-call/text sites such as www.Text-Em-All.com. **Query (#13)** and **Print Option (#13)** inside of your database give you a variety of useful filter options when looking at your call list.
- The primary purpose of your phone call is to **get an email address** so you will be able to communicate reunion details to classmates **electronically** instead of by snail mail. Inform classmates that their email address is SECURE and PRIVATE and will ONLY be used for reunion correspondence. Also let the classmates know that by providing their email address, it helps reduce mailing costs AND they will receive a free digital copy of the Memory Book after the reunion (even if they do not attend).



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Best Practice #9: Use the ReunionDB Mailing List for Sending a Postcard or Invitation

- Sending a hard copy postcard or invitation is the only way to spread the word about your reunion to those classmates **who do not use social media, and for whom you may not have an email address or phone number**. Your ReunionDB support Rep will provide a custom postcard for your review, if you choose to take advantage of this option. You will review the postcard for **content**, but our direct mail partner will print, postage and mail for you. The cost of the postcard will be included in your overall budget.
- If any snail mail is being sent out **on your own**, you can print mailing labels directly from the database.

Best Practice #10: Important Miscellaneous Reminders & Tips

- Your level of excitement about your upcoming reunion will help set the tone for everyone else's interest level. Once you get 25-30 RSVP's, we will include a link to the **real-time** RSVP list with all electronic correspondence. This is a highly effective way to stir up interest from that group of classmates who are "waiting to see who is coming".
- Classmates who purchase their tickets early become great "cheerleaders" since they have already committed to coming to the reunion and they want to see a good turnout.
- **Do not advertise or encourage tickets sales at the door as this will delay classmates from purchasing their tickets early. If you do have a walk-in, their ticket(s) can be purchased easily by credit or debit card using the ReunionDB mobile ticket site.**
- All the Email/Facebook marketing material referenced above will be provided to you from your ReunionDB support rep during our conference calls. All Marketing material is reviewed by the committee before it is distributed to your classmates. **The content and timing of distribution for ALL of the ReunionDB Marketing materials is strategically planned for each class, so it is very important to follow the lead of your ReunionDB Support Rep for all "Call-to-Action" correspondence to your classmates.**
- A copy of your **Strategic Reunion Marketing Plan** outline will be reviewed during the first or second conference call with your ReunionDB Support Rep. Regularly scheduled (short) conference calls between you and your support rep will continue all the way up to your reunion weekend to help ensure **maximum attendance** for your reunion. The **Strategic Marketing Plan** is accessible within your database by clicking on the **PRINT** button and then clicking the **Strategic Marketing Plan** button.
- Asking family members or friends who were not in your class to help at the check-in desk will free up committee members and other classmates to have more time to enjoy the reunion.
- Honor deceased classmates. Display the names and pictures of deceased classmates on a simple white linen covered table, maybe with a candle in a votive, flowers or even some poetic verses by the pictures. Use **Print Option #10** to print **"In Memoriam"** photos and names of your deceased classmates.
- Contact local newspapers, radio stations and your own high school to ask them to include your reunion information in their public service announcements.
- Many committees secure additional funds for various reunion expenses through **donations or sponsors**. Donations may be collected using a GoFundMe page, through Memory Book Ads/Sponsorships or at the time of ticket purchases directly from the ReunionDB database.