

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

PLANNING OUT OF ORDER

June 2016

The Situation:

Several members of our reunion planning team were assigned to research hotels/lodging for the upcoming reunion. When we met to report our findings one person had pretty much made a deal to hold the reunion at the place they researched which was a little pricey. However there was another location that was researched in the same vicinity, with pretty much the same amenities, that offered a much better rate. What should/can we do?

The Fix:



Doug Harris

My first response is that "stuff happens." And the question is whether the terms of the deal involved a binding contract, a cash deposit, or penalties for backing out. In most cases, if you back out, you just don't get the discount. If this is the case, just let the venue know that plans have been changed. Give as little information as possible if they ask why and respond with the equivalent of "It's a family situation, and I don't want to go into details," then go with the more affordable venue.

My family faced a similar situation 20+ years ago when a family member placed a non-refundable \$500 deposit on a property without consulting anyone in the family. When the Reunion Committee found out the details of the deal and the property, they were unanimous in their dissatisfaction with what had been done. A vote was taken on paying the deposit the family member had paid out of Reunion dues. The consensus was that since the family member acted without authority or consultation from anyone on the Committee, that dues paying members should not be penalized for his misstep. He resented the decision and until this day the family's relationship with this individual has not been the same. But again I say, in any family situation (sticky or not) "stuff happens."

The Fix:

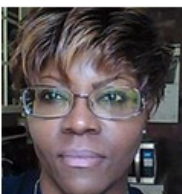


**Suzanne
Vargus Holloman**

I suggest that before speaking to the family member regarding this situation, that the instructions given to the planning team for researching hotels be reviewed. Was it clear to the reunion planning team that they were only to research hotels and not make a commitment? Or were the instructions somewhat ambiguous and therefore open to interpretation? To minimize family drama, approach the family member directly, not in a group setting, to discuss his/her actions.

Hopefully, a deposit wasn't made by the family member and/or a contract signed. If so, the planning team will need to review the contract to determine how to withdraw from the deal with no/minimal cost. As a precaution, as you move forward you may want to make it mandatory that two family members be authorized to execute any contracts or even make a verbal commitment. This will provide a fail-safe going forward.

The Fix:



**Sylvia
Ford-George**

"Pretty much made a deal" is totally different than making one and signing a contract. If no contract has been signed, follow through with reviewing all of the information that was researched and select the location that best fits your family's needs. And remember, the role of the planning team is to plan with the entire family in mind.
