

# NATIONAL FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

## STICKY REUNION SITUATION

### WISHY WASHY RSVPs

APRIL 2024

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#### The Situation:

We haven't had a reunion since covid. We've been trying to plan one for the past two years but haven't because family members are being wishy-washy about confirming intent to attend. How do we secure a plan or reunion event without assurance that anyone will attend?

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#### The Fix:



Doug Harris

Every family has wishy-washy members and every reunion faces issues about who will confirm to attend—some just more than others. The fact is many people do not want to commit until the deadline about anything. But what should you do?

- Plan well in advance, at least a year.
- Pick a place where you think at least 25-35% of the family would like to go.
- Communicate as often and in as many ways as possible throughout the planning process. Begin with "Save the Date." Give updates and reminders (preferably monthly).
- Talk about the reunion as if it's definitely going to happen, and everyone is going to be there.
- Give specifics of what is going to happen at the reunion as well as nearby attractions. (Check the local Convention & Visitors Bureau for details and possible goodies for giveaway bags.)
- Enlist family in different geographical areas to be point persons to contact people by telephone and text, sending messages to people they are close to in locality and relationship. Many of the messages, can be as simple as... "Did you get this?" "Did you register yet?"
- Make sure your planning committee is representative of geography and family branches, even if some only give input when asked.
- Construct special messages from family patriarchs and matriarchs about their feelings about family.
- Post photos of people having fun at prior reunions and family get-togethers.

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#### The Fix:



Sylvia  
Ford-George

- Keep an eye on dates where final numbers, confirmations and payments are due. With respect to rooming, the reunion is responsible for negotiating discounted room rates. This should be set-up so that family members make their own reservations and payments, so you'll only have to remind the fam to reserve by the specified cut-off date. Where food & beverage is concerned, as a precaution most locations prepare for a buffer of about 3% over your final number. When giving your final count only confirm the number of family members who have actually RSVP'd or paid. (It's better to give a final number of 45 who have actually RSVP'd rather than 60 anticipated because, if only 50 show up you're liable to pay for the number you give.) Note: If you do give "45" as your final number and prior to the event an additional 15 make payment, let your food & beverage provider know, so they can have enough food on hand to cover the additional attendees who've made payment.
  - Follow-through with your plan to hold a post-covid reunion, even if the only people to RSVP (or attend) are the planning team and their family members. Plan it. Go. And have a great time.
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