

Create an ad book for your reunion

Hi! I'm Edith Wagner, editor of *Reunions magazine*. In this podcast, I'm going to answer a question from our forums page, which has been asked by others thinking of creating an ad book as a money raiser and reunion souvenir.

Question

In a question on our forums page, Martin asked, "I would like to know how I should go about getting companies to purchase ads for our souvenir booklet. Our reunion is in July in Houston, Texas, and we're expecting about 200 people."

Answer

Martin did not say what kind of reunion he was planning so I'll address both class and family reunions in my response as there are slight differences and many similarities.

But first there are many steps before you sell ads ... you must know what you're selling and how much you're going to charge along with the justification for charging those amounts. Prices will be marked up over the cost, and the income from sales after production costs makes the book a fund raiser.

First, your goal is to sell space on pages, which will be a large challenge under any circumstances. You must be able to explain your product verbally and in writing. You'll need a plan or description of the product, specifications for ads - their size and shape - and prices - which include expenses for selling, production and printing. And must know all of that before you even try to sell one ad.

You'll need to decide how many pages you hope to include though the ultimate number will be determined by the number of ads you sell. You'll also need to determine whether your book will be a standard 8 ½x11 inches or any other size larger or smaller. But be aware that using standard sizes can be cheaper because it requires no special paper or trim.

Before you can start selling you'll also need to estimate how many books to print. So for a class reunion where 75 of the 200 attendees are spouses, you need 125 books for classmates. For a family reunion of 200, 25% are kids and the group is 40 to 50 households, you'll need only 40 to 50 books. But you should also provide copies to or at the very least tear sheets (the page their ad is on), so you'll definitely need extras. When you do any print work, more is less. In other words, the larger the number you print, the smaller the price per copy. So small print numbers such as these, the per copy price will not be inexpensive.

If you're not personally doing the book layout, hopefully you can find a skilled layout person or graphic artist in your reunion group willing to contribute this important service. If not, you'll need to hire someone to do page preparation which includes layout, ad and photo preparation, and other graphics which are crucial to the look and quality of your ad book. Someone must also collect, proof and prepare materials for the layout person including writing and editing.

Finally, before determining ad cost you'll need to decide how to divide your ad pages and attach prices once you know costs. Ad sizes can be from full pages to any logical way a page can be divided; by quarters, sixths, ninths or

twelfths. One twelfth of an 8 ½x11 inch page is a business card size. Also, don't forget, ads can be vertical and horizontal.

As a sample, but with far more information than you'll ever need, go to ad sales on our website, reunionsmag.com. Scroll all the way down to the bottom of the home page and click on ad sales. The specification page should be the greatest help to you because it shows sizes and shapes. If you're using standard 8 ½x11 inch pages, feel free to copy these examples.

You'll also be wise to include some ad sizes and prices that your members can afford to buy. But then, also be prepared to offer design and layout services to buyers who can't or don't know how to prepare ads for print.

When you've made your decisions and know the book size and number of copies you need to print, you're ready to get quotes from printers as your final step to understanding the cost of individual ads.

To determine ad cost, total all the costs and divide by the number of books you hope to print. Then, add your markup for fundraising to determine the cost of each individual book.

You might also want to ask the person who will lay out the book to create a mockup so your sellers can visualize what they're selling and buyers have an idea of what they're buying. If you can, make one mock up for each salesperson to show advertising prospects: it always helps to see what the product will look like. And if you already know what the cover will look like, use it for your mockup.

All of these factors go into determining the price of ads. So when all those decisions are made and you have your

helpers lined up such as sales people, writers, editor, layout or graphic artist on board, it's time to sell.

If you're lucky enough to have members who are salespeople, enlist their help or counsel. Ask them to evaluate your materials before you start approaching potential buyers. Also ask who they would sell to. Who would they contact?

It's also wise to make a long list of every potential buyer you can imagine, including your own members, and designate who will do the calling. Once you get to selling, you do not want all your sales people approaching the same potential advertisers. Too many cooks in that kitchen would surely alienate potential buyers.

You'll want to consider establishing a purpose for your book as something more than a program for one evening. If it's also a member directory or a member birthday book, for example, you can tell advertisers this is something your membership will keep and use regularly for some time.

While you're trying to earn money selling ads, at the same time, look at how you can save money. Ask for volunteers to sell, design and layout books. If it's a family reunion, don't forget to ask kids: they often know how to do exactly what you're looking for.

As for selling ads, be prepared to sell the advertiser on the benefits of paying for advertising in your book. If many members live in and around Houston, as Martin does, you can sell the fact that your members can take advantage of the advertiser's product or service. You must impress upon the advertiser that their advertising dollars will reach potential customers. If you're lucky enough to have national

businesses in your community and you can impress them that you and your reunion members are their consumers: go for it. An example of that might be an unlikely idea like a manufacturer of diapers advertising in a 10 or 15 year class reunion book: it's when classmates are all buying diapers. Well, I guess that could be a 50 or 60-year reunion too!

Encourage family or class members to buy pages to beat their own drums, congratulate reunion organizers or list family member's names, maybe kids' achievements or pictures of their grandchildren. It's a great place for family members who are insurance agents or do taxes or internet marketing or have a local business to entice classmates or relatives to buy from them.

Stress loyalty when selling. Emphasize how you are related as family or classmates if potential advertisers are related. During election years local candidates will sometimes buy ads. One caution from someone who relies on ad selling for a living, this is NOT an easy job ... when you finish, let me know what you learn and, of course, send a copy of your book.

Finally, don't wait too long to get started. You'll need months to get this job done. Selling advertising takes many call-backs and follow ups and it takes time if companies, businesses and individuals are having ads made for you.

Deliver the book to the printer with plenty of time to spare, at least four weeks ahead, so you're sure it arrives in time for the reunion. Otherwise, you'll not just be holding the bag, you'll have one big box of books you'll have to pay postage to send. When you talk to printers, ask how long they'll need and if you're signing a contract, make

sure it speaks to the delivery date because if you don't get it in time AND you delivered it to the printer in plenty of time, they may have to pay your mailing costs. Don't forget, you promised advertisers how many eyeballs will be reading this book and they expect that's what you're doing.

An ad book can be fun to do but it's lots of work and if you've never done a print project before, you'll be blown away by the outcome. Share a copy with Reunions magazine. Send it to PO Box 11717, Milwaukee WI 53211.

I'd like to thank Kevan Sharp at Clarke Graphics in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for reading this script for accuracy.

Also note that a direct link to the ad specification examples on our web site is at the end of the pdf transcript that accompanies this podcast, scroll down to the second page for drawings.

We, at Reunions magazine, are always looking for ideas you've tested at your reunions. Feel free to email them to editor@reunionsmag.com or send them to *Reunions magazine*, PO Box 11727, Milwaukee WI 53212 or post them at our forum at <http://forums.reunionsmag.com>.

Lots of ways to communicate about reunions.

If you've never seen *Reunions magazine*, you can request a free copy at www.reunionsmag.com.

Thank you for downloading and listening to this podcast.

DIRECT LINK TO AD SPECIFICATIONS

http://www.reunionsmag.com/advertise/REU_RatesSpecs-rev.pdf