

Hotels are looking for your reunion

I'm Edith Wagner, editor of *Reunions magazine*, the objective of this podcast is to talk about a great way to search for a reunion hotel. There are the traditional ways such as looking in the phone book and calling hotels individually. Or contacting the convention and visitors bureau for their assistance, which we encourage in any case, because they offer many other services too. And, of course, we certainly hope you'll contact our hotel partners in *Reunions magazine* and online where you can peruse and click through to the many accommodations listed in **Reunion Resources** at reunionsmag.com. But still, there is one more way to consider.

Had it ever occurred to you to have hotels fight over your reunion? If so, you must try a reverse auction site where you command the details of what you want from your reunion hotel. Not only that, but you can also expect discounts, free rooms and even a rebate if you follow through, book, and use the plan you make through this web site.

reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com is just such a reverse auction site and, if reverse auction site is a term you've never heard, let me explain. It means that you request what you want for your reunion accommodations and as many hotels as care to, who meet your qualifications, can bid on hosting your reunion. It's a web site where you can kick off the process of hotels (and other accommodations) fighting over your reunion. And, best of all, it's a free service to your reunion. AND you can earn a rebate for your reunion ... more about the rebate later.

When you arrive at reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com, it asks you to enter your destination city, what dates you want and the number of rooms you need for your reunion. When you click on GO! a second screen asks for more details about your reunion: target star rating, maximum cost per room/per night you're willing to pay and what type rooms you want. If you want to visit more than one city, there is space to include that as well. You can also designate what meals you require and whether you will be needing meeting and banquet space. Finally, you can add requests before completing your information. We recommend you include as much information as possible though all those details are not required at first.

reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com can customize the reunion planning experience to your specific needs. The more the site and its hotel partners know about your needs, the better they can help you get exactly what you want.

It is unwise to call hotels directly before they bid. If you call hotels before they bid, you will lose the competitive advantage of online bidding. You will get direct contact information for each hotel after you hit the "Contact Hotel" button to the left of the bid. You may contact as many hotels as you want through this system.

Since you are getting bids back directly from hotel sales managers, expect to receive bids during normal business hours.

This is one travel web site where, if you need to, you can talk to a real person. In fact, the persons' names are Tim Hentschel and John Prince. Let them know if they can help find the perfect accommodations or if you have questions about any of your bids. If none of the bids were suitable for your needs, they will help you

find something that is suitable. Do you have any particular hotels you'd like to hear from? They will notify hotels to respond.

It is always recommended that someone from your group visit hotels, to check out the accommodations before your reunion. In fact, the women of the Cooper Family Reunion, who enjoy their own annual reunion retreat, did **not** visit their choices one year and booked a facility that was not even completed when they arrived. They reported being mostly surprised but they had a great time anyway. You can be sure, the next year, they checked out the place of their choice very carefully before hand.

Reunion organizers can usually get free rooms at participating hotels and the required rooms per night may vary among hotels but on average, most hotels require 10 to 20 rooms per night to qualify. If a hotel does not specify a ratio in their comments, they do not participate in this offer.

reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com can also access VIP upgrades for most reunions. Upgrades can be to suites, rooms with a view, and/or added amenities in the room on check in, such as fruit baskets or other goodies. They can often leverage free banquet and meeting space as well as discounts on food and beverages. Through this web site you might also qualify for cash rebates for booking a Best Western through reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com while Hertz offers 50% off their online rental car rates for booking one or more cars for a group of five or more people.

They guarantee the lowest group rate or they pay for one of your hotel rooms. Carefully read your hotel offer comments for details. There are no fees associated with the use of reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com, so make the most of it!

And while reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com is a free service to reunion organizers, it can also be a source of money saving and a

way to add some money to your reunion treasury.

reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com offers a rebate of up to \$250. After you've checked out of the hotel, you must gather all the hotel room receipts from your group. The rebate is only for consumed rooms with proof by receipt received no later than 30 days after your hotel check-out date. You'll receive a check for the documented consumed hotel rooms within 30 to 90 days.

Read the terms and conditions carefully. The rebate is not provided by the hotel, it is reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com's offer. The maximum rebate is \$250 per reunion and will only be sent to US addresses.

Please don't keep reunionsmag.hotelplanner.com a secret, tell your friends, family and colleagues about it for their reunions and gatherings too.

We, at Reunions magazine, are always looking for ideas you've tested at your reunions. Feel free to email them to reunions@execpc.com or send them to Reunions magazine, PO Box 11727, Milwaukee WI 53211 or post them at our forum at <http://forums.reunionsmag.com>.

There're 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.