

A Guide to Organising your

CLASS REUNION

How to organise a class reunion
in 8 easy steps!

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



WBS Wits
Business
School
Sculpting global leaders



REUNITING YOUR CLASS EXPERIENCE

Your group experience at the **Wits Business School** means you will remember the university in its own unique way. This memory belongs to your group and is part of what keeps the University's traditions and spirit alive and special.

Class reunions are an opportunity to strengthen existing friendships, to reunite with old friends, to re-engage, to form new alliances, to expand your professional network and to share memories of a very important and special time in your studying career. They are also an opportunity for you to build a future based on the common experience of the classroom. In addition, these reunions afford you the opportunity to become involved in some of the projects, initiatives and developments that are taking place at your alma mater.

This Reunion Guide provides you with some tools and indicators to assist you in arranging a successful and memorable class reunion, whether it is after 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years – or even further back into the 1970s when Wits was the first university to offer an MBA programme.

The WBS Alumni Office will work with your reunion organisers in the planning and co-ordination of your reunion so that it will be fun, enjoyable and a memorable experience. Some of the assistance and services we offer include:

- A contact list of the alumni in your class
- Assisting with inviting alumni to your event
- Assisting in locating those “lost alumni” whose details have not been updated on our system. Some useful search mechanisms include
 - ✓ Facebook
 - ✓ LinkedIn
 - ✓ Google
 - ✓ Personal networking
- Promoting the reunion on our website, through our social media and other university mechanisms
- Booking any WBS venues you might need. You might like to factor in a tour of the campus
- Assisting with gifts to the alumni group

9 – 12 MONTHS LEAD TIME

GETTING
STARTED

Create a committee with a chairperson and core team of dedicated, enthusiastic individuals.

- Compile a spreadsheet of contact details and other information - perhaps the graduation and current names differ etc. Ask the WBS Alumni Office to assist
- Contact the group and maintain frequent communications (every 3 or 4 weeks) for comprehensive updates and class details
 - ✓ You may also wish to include those who studied with you but graduated later; those who did not graduate; the partners of those who graduated but have since passed away
- Send Initial Reunion Notice to assess interest and level of commitment
- Ask the Alumni Office to update mailing lists and contact details

REUNION DATE AND VENUE

- Decide on suitable date and time of year to maximise attendance and participation
- Select an appropriate venue – convenient vs exotic. Consider an appropriate destination venue if the class is globally dispersed
- Compile a reunion budget based on:
 - ✓ number of participants and estimation of cost structures – venue, catering, entertainment, accommodation
 - ✓ class donation to your alma mater – monetary, research project, building refurbishment, library contribution, piece of art or other meaningful contribution
 - ✓ It may be convenient for the convenor to open an account for the event in his/her own name for classmates to make their deposits in advance of the event. This helps to avoid handling payments and/or cash at the event/s. The caterers and other service providers need to be paid around two weeks in advance so you need the cash flow. For the sake of good corporate governance, a regular feedback, and a final set of accounts should be shared with the rest of the organising committee.
- Send a **Save The Date** with location details
- Invite appropriate university officials, past lecturers etc

STYLE AND TIMING OF THE FUNCTION

- Decide on an appropriate type of function taking into account the group's personality, their preferences and their needs.
 - ✓ Decide upon a specific time of the year and period of contact e.g. a weekend (two evenings) comprising re-engagement, learning and celebration; a day; a few hours
 - ✓ Determine the type of function e.g. a breakfast, lunch, dinner, concert, lecture, golf tournament etc
 - ✓ You might want to offer a combination of a number of options and alternatives for people to make choices as to which of the events/functions they will be able to attend
 - ✓ If the group exceeds 50, a number of optional events are preferable. This makes the visit more attractive for overseas travellers
 - ✓ Develop a schedule for each proposed event of the reunion programme allowing time for catching up
- Booking of venue/s based on required type of function – hotel, club, private home, destination venue etc
- Negotiate preferable hotel rate for out-of-town alumni
- If possible, negotiate a discount structure based on numbers, function length etc
- Draw up a list of possible sponsors to approach for
 - ✓ Memorabilia for participants – branded T-shirts, caps, stationery etc
 - ✓ Additional branded gifts in the form of wine, prizes etc.



GETTING STRUCTURES IN PLACE

6 - 8 MONTHS LEAD TIME

Allocation of tasks to various committee members including:

- ✓ Sourcing and confirming appropriate draw card speakers
 - ✓ Necessary technical equipment
 - ✓ Audio visual equipment for presentations
 - ✓ Photographers, podcasts, video recordings
 - ✓ Music and Entertainment
 - ✓ Allocation of class donation to the School
- Review of budget to ensure all the costs have been covered
 - Decide on a structure of the Programme for the event or for each day
 - ✓ If there any class members have passed away, someone might share some memories of that person or persons (around 5 minutes)
 - ✓ Collect anecdotes, profiles, memories and stories of the learning experience at the WBS to share with the group – a couple of 5 minute reminiscences
 - ✓ Source appropriate relevant audio visuals in the form of photographs, a video, a powerpoint presentation, music of the day etc
 - Develop an invitation which includes dietary requirements and dress code suggestions
 - Compile A CLASS INFORMATION DIRECTORY for each alumnus at the reunion
 - The booklet would include:
 - ✓ Completed structured profile template with a *then* and *now* photograph
 - ✓ A short 5 - 10 lines profile on where each alumnus is now and what s/he is doing
 - ✓ Include 5 - 6 structured questions: spouse, names and ages of children, hobbies, interests, bucket list, most memorable incident at the WBS etc
 - ✓ Include any other detail and information the group would appreciate and wish to share
 - Compile A TIMELINE for contacting the group:
 - ✓ emails from both alumni office and individual class members encouraging attendance
 - ✓ phone calls
 - ✓ follow up communication



ACTIVATING THE STRUCTURES

2 - 5 MONTHS LEAD TIME

Mail the invitations with RSVP email/telephonic details of an appointed co-ordinator

- Extend invitation to Dean/Head of School/past lecturers
- Based on information gathered, create a master spreadsheet list:
 - ✓ Name at graduation and name now
 - ✓ Address
 - ✓ Email details
 - ✓ Number of tickets
 - ✓ Name of partner
 - ✓ acceptances
 - ✓ apologies
 - ✓ dietary requirements
 - ✓ specific event attendance
 - ✓ payments
 - ✓ other appropriate necessary detail
- Continue updating “lost alumni” list with the WBS alumni office
- Ensure each project portfolio manager task is on track
- To maintain momentum, communicate with the class every 2 – 3 weeks
- Remind the alumni to return the Profile Template (to compile the booklet)

1 - 2 MONTHS LEAD TIME

**INJECTING
ENTHUSIASM
AND HYPE**

Confirm participation of each alumnus

- Persevere in collecting the Profile Template for A CLASS INFORMATION DIRECTORY
- Confirm the Programme of Events
- Memories of a person who has passed away
- Memories of learning experience at the WBS
- Photographs, a video, a powerpoint presentation, music of the day etc
- Finalise the class gift
- Planning committee to:
 - ✓ Collect and record receipt of monies for participating in the event
 - ✓ Confirm venue/s
 - ✓ Confirm the catering (and menu), entertainment, photographer, podcast etc
 - ✓ Confirm attendance of special guests and their requirements
 - ✓ Finalise logistical arrangements including signs, displays etc
 - ✓ Prepare a check list for each event during the reunion period
 - ✓ Allocate an MC for each event or retain one MC for entire duration
 - ✓ Have a contingency plan in the event of last minute financial or other untoward occurrence
- Liaise with the WBS alumni office for school memorabilia and any other assistance you might need.

1 WEEK LEAD TIME**THE HEAT
IS ON****Print** A CLASS INFORMATION DIRECTORY for each alumnus plus extra copies

- Confirm where out of town people are staying and get their local contact details
- Confirm alumni numbers with the venue
- Confirm the venue has arranged all the extra requirements – registration tables, podium, microphone, seating etc
- Give caterers final numbers and confirm dietary requirements
- Ensure that all alumni monies have been paid
- Finalise and print name tags, programme of events
- Collect the ordered shirts and other gifts and memorabilia from the sponsors
- Pre event briefing the day before to ensure everything is confirmed and on course

THIS IS IT! THE EVENT



Bring to registration:

- ✓ Reunion task list
 - ✓ Name labels (graduation name PLUS current name)
 - ✓ Gifts
 - ✓ Copies of the compiled class book
 - ✓ Programme of events
 - ✓ Copies of the profile book for each alumnus plus extra copies
- Give each reunion committee member a copy of the task list for the day
 - Brief all staff and volunteers
 - Provide a detailed class list for the delegates to update for class distribution and for the university records

**ENJOY LIVING IN THE MOMENT
– YOU DESERVE IT**



**RE-LIVING
THE
MOMENT**

1 WEEK POST THE EVENT

Share the memories of the event with your friends and the wider WBS alumni community

- ✓ Write about the reunion and send it with photographs to the WBS Alumni Office for sharing on the website
- ✓ Compile a booklet and/or website piece on the shared anecdotes, profiles, memories and stories from the presentations
- ✓ Send details of the event to those who could not join the reunion

**THINK HOW YOU CAN RAISE
THE BAR FOR AN EVEN GREATER
REUNION NEXT TIME ROUND ... 😊**

