

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS **REUNION TOOLKIT**





CONTENTS

PLANNING A REUNION? START HERE	3
WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL REUNION?	3
WHAT ARE THE MAJOR LINES OF EFFORT?	4
COMMUNICATION	5
CEREMONY	6
WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?	7
WHO DO I NEED TO REACH OUT TO?	8
WHAT IS A SUPPORTING AGENT? WHO ARE THEY?	8
WHAT IS SWAG? HOW CAN I GET IT?	9
HOW DO I BUILD MY COMMUNICATION STRATEGY?	9
HOW DO I SEARCH FOR MY TARGET POPULATION	12
AFTER ACTION REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS REUNIONS	13

Reunions with your fellow Marines are important. Unlike those boring high school reunions where you struggle to find anything to talk about with a bunch of people who just can't relate to who you are, reunions with fellow Marines are a true reuniting with friends and comrades who have done what you have done, been where you have been, and truly understand you.

Marine reunions strengthen ties with your fellow Marines and provide a place where you can talk about your experience with people who understand. They reconnect you with a meaningful time in your life and with the group of people who shared that time.

PLANNING A REUNION? START HERE

Like any large event, you need a team, a solid plan, and enough time and resources to carry out that plan.

CONVENE A REUNION PLANNING LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Review the major lines of effort
- Determine who on the team will do what action items

CONSIDER WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

- How formal or informal?
- What is the primary purpose of the event?
- What are the desired components of your event? (A memorial ceremony? A guest speaker? A round of golf? A meal? Time set aside for visiting?)
- Who are the target attendees? The Marines only, the Marines and their spouses, or the Marines and their families?
- Where would you like the reunion to take place?
- When would you like the reunion to take place?
- How do you want to communicate with your target population?
- What kind of swag or other takeaways do you think you want to use?

CONSIDER YOUR TIMEFRAME

- Are you at least 9-14 months before you want your reunion to occur?
- Do you have the time to commit to planning a reunion?

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL REUNION?

Begin organizing your reunion nine to fourteen months prior to the reunion date, the earlier the better. Consider using this checklist to keep on track.

12-14 MONTHS PRIOR TO REUNION

- Convene Leadership Team
- Set tentative dates
- Establish the event on social media
- Develop and begin to implement Communication Strategy
- Develop and begin to implement swag strategy

9-12 MONTHS PRIOR TO REUNION

- Continue to implement Communication and Swag Strategies
- Identify financial assistance
- Establish contact with current Commanding Officer
- Begin to search for target population
- Set preliminary budget
- Set up payment site
- Set event date
- Send/post "Save the Dates"
- Price shop venues
- Determine event timeline (day of event)

6-9 MONTHS PRIOR TO REUNION

- Continue to implement Communication Strategy
- Continue to search for target population
- Reserve venue/identify cost
- Determine memorial location
- Select meal/identify cost

- Gift coordination/identify cost
- Reserve hotel blocks
- Meet with current CO/identify support

4-6 MONTHS PRIOR TO REUNION

- Continue to implement Communication Strategy
- Continue to search for target population
- Coordinate media coverage
- Coordinate Base access
- Coordinate guest speaker
- Coordinate memorial speaker

3-4 MONTHS PRIOR TO REUNION

- Continue to implement Communication Strategy
- Continue to search for target population
- Coordinate audio support
- Coordinate overhead tents (if necessary)
- Coordinate media coverage
- “Reveal” VIP guests and speakers via social media

DAY AFTER REUNION

- Conduct post event survey of attendees

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR LINES OF EFFORT?

LEADERSHIP CONVENE COMMITTEE

- Begin 14 months prior to reunion.
- The reunion planning committee should be “owned” by those who have best contact with target population.
- Representation on the reunion planning committee should include different ranks, geography, companies, sections, and MOSs. Look to include organizations and similar with access to community opportunities (fundraising, resources).
- Identify potential meeting places, ideally one that does not cost money.
- Consider using technology to enhance collaboration. Options may include a conference call number, Skype or other video conferencing tool, Google Drive, message board, group on a social media platform, or others.
- Create a battle rhythm that is sustainable but sufficiently frequent to keep things moving.
- Determine the Intent of the Event. Make early decisions on what the reunion will look like: formal, picnic, etc. This affects the ceremony at the event.
- Assign specific roles, and encourage that member to solicit others to assist the members of the planning committee.

MAKE CONTACT

- Contact current Battalion Commander, SgtMaj, and I&I, past and present, as they may be needed for command assistance.
- Locate and engage members of Command from the time period or mission that the reunion covers. This includes leadership, but also central “characters” who may be helpful in communication.
- Reach out to ancillary organizations such as the local VA, and key organizations to spread the word about you reunion, seek assistance, and network.
- Engage a sponsor. Consider contacting one or more of the many Veteran Service Organizations and other charitable entities with standing offers to assist personal and events. Remember, services and support capabilities will vary, as do the pros and cons.

ENGAGE ENABLERS

- Organize specifics of fundraising with support agent/fundraising sponsor. You will have to fundraise to support your reunion.
- Plan for and invite your VIP guests. As an example, for the 1st Battalion 25th Marines reunion, this included Commanding General 4th Marine Division and Commanding Officer 25th Marines. Your VIPs are “enablers” of your reunion.

LOGISTICS

Make Initial Selections

- a. Make tentative selections for your reunion location and venue.
- b. Consider centrality, each of access, and cost. Recognize that bigger cities may be easier to fly into for out-of-town

attendees.

c. Consider the liability and risks associated with signing a contract. Also, consider signing a non-binding Letter of Intent with the venue. Remember reunions are not MWR, MCCS, or NAF authorized events.

FUNDRAISING/COVERING THE COST OF THE REUNION

- a. Engage the supporting agent/fundraising sponsor. Coordinate the specifics of the relationship with your supporting agent.
- b. Research and select your ticketing platform. Your supporting agent might be able to help you. Recent Marine Corps Reunion planners report that you do not want to manage this manually. 1st Battalion 25th Marines utilized their support agent, who created a ticketing site that did not charge a fee.
- c. Plan accordingly, as ticket sales will be a primary revenue generating source to support your reunion.

DEVELOP REUNION SWAG STRATEGY

- a. It starts with a design. Design should emphasize and brand to provide high recall among target audience and frame the communication that it accompanies. It needs to be simple enough to leverage in multiple forms as well (electronic, print and apparel).
 - b. Prior to using Marine Corps protected marks on marketing media or event swag coordination must occur with Marine Corps Trademark and Licensing Office (TMLO) for permission.
 - c. Swag is only partially about fundraising, and perhaps more importantly about awareness. The return on investment is difficult to justify if for fundraising alone. Ensure the planning committee is onboard with intent with swag, as it will guide on visibility versus profit. Include your swag strategy in the Communication Strategy. Encourage Marines to show off the swag items and highlight the importance of committing to the reunion by purchasing tickets.
- Consider whether you will allow ticket purchases at the door on the day of your event and whether you will have swag available for purchase at the event.

CONTRACT AND PURCHASE

- Contract with the venue. This step often has milestones you will have to meet. Schedule those into your plan, and ensure you allocate fundraising income to meet these milestones.
- Order your reunion swag from the vendor or vendors you have chosen.
- Consider how you want to sell your swag. Some vendors have websites where attendees can make their purchases from (and you choose to use it-recommended). Recent Marine Corps reunion planners opted to use eBay linked from Facebook to sell their swag.

EXECUTE

- Continue fundraising and selling tickets to your reunion. Consider soliciting corporate sponsors but recognize that they may sometimes be difficult to secure. If Active Duty, consider brushing up on the Joint Ethics Regulation as solicitation is not allowed.
- Continue to sell your reunion swag and fulfill those orders. Do not underestimate that effort required for fulfillment. 1st Battalion 25th Marines suggests thinking about volunteers outside of the committee to assist. Someone with mailing experience will be valuable here.

COMMUNICATION

DEVELOP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Design a Logo and a Theme. Get this done early. Consider including the year of the anniversary in the logo design, especially if it is a significant number, since it should be a reminder about the both the unit/battle and the specific event. Don't forget to check with TMLO.
- Design a social media strategy. What platform(s) will you use? Be realistic about the time it will take to effectively use those you select and select only those you believe will yield the greatest reach to your target audience.
- Have one person on committee coordinate the Facebook effort.
- Create a public Facebook group, and encourage "thought leaders" to join early, and frequently promote. Share stories as they come up. Look to link to ECP 1A site, and similar cross-battalion sites, as well as existing sites, even private sites.
- Use the reunions designed logo and create a recognizable version to use on the profile. Over time, Marines will come to recognize this logo on their timeline. This type of recall is important to 1) drive their participation and 2) encourage them to execute on ticket purchase.
- Link to other private groups. 1st Battalion 25th Marines reunion planners chose to reach out to the 1st Battalion 25th Marines site, and other Groups and Pages such as ECP 1 (a cross-battalion group), or sub-units like Weapons Platoon Charlie Company, 1st Battalion 25th Marines (it does exist, and it is strong!).

- Have your Facebook leader post regular, interesting posts. Include some funny posts, some in remembrance of fallen brothers, and some as sales. Maintain a steady rhythm of communication. Work with “thought leaders” and ask they share the Group and use the Group to solicit participation.
- Don’t forget to publicize sales opportunities! Post links frequently for Electronic Ticket site. Post links on a regular basis for various swag and have “thought leaders” wearing/using the same as a promotion opportunity.
- Design “viral” campaigns, such as clever videos, to gain attention. Post some of the great videos and photos of the event. Remember to hit all Companies, sections, AOs and the like. Include junior Marines, NCOs, Officers, and others.
- Launch an email campaign (via bcc to maintain the privacy of your target population).
- Designate a committee member to be the Gold Star contact in order to assemble family lists and serve as a point of contact for your gold star families.
- Develop snail mail strategy (post cards)
 - a. AARs of prior reunions reveal moderate success with snail mail. Many postcards came back undelivered due to outdated or inaccurate addresses.
 - b. You can print four post cards per page, using “card stock” paper, then cut them using a paper cutter. Print these 2-sided on a color printer. Most computers come with installed software that supports this capability, and there are several online free programs available. Many corporate printers can print two-sided color on card stock. These are expensive, so reduce mailing list as much as possible.
 - c. The IRR Recall Roster from Marine and Reserve Affairs can be used here. You may need to do this with a member of the current command, as this list cannot be distributed (but can be used to print labels). Note, this is only to be used if the Reunion is an officially command sponsored event.

• SWAG STRATEGY

- a. What swag will you make available? T-shirts? Patches? Coins?
- b. Purchase. How will your target population purchase swag?
- c. Fulfillment. Don’t underestimate the burden of fulfilling orders. This takes time and effort. Reach outside of the committee for help on this.

IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Execute your social media campaign(s). Be aggressive about it.
 - a. Encourage fundraising efforts.
 - b. Encourage commitment to the event by buying tickets early.
- Launch email campaign. Use historic chains of command (Company Commanders, Company 1stSgts, section leaders, etc.). Follow up on the above campaigns. These require regular vigorous attention to succeed.
 - a. Encourage fundraising efforts.
 - b. Encourage commitment to the event by buying tickets early.
- Launch snail mail campaign. After a couple of months of ticket sales, execute a snail-mail campaign of postcards to the IRR recall roster. This is expensive, so you will want to reduce the mailing, excluding those you know you have contacted, or who have already purchased tickets.
 - a. Encourage fundraising efforts.
 - b. Encourage commitment to the event by buying tickets early.

SUSTAINMENT

- As time progresses, use the announcement of “special guests” and the Guest of Honor as further solicitations for ticket sales and donors.
- Continue to encourage fundraising efforts.
- Continue to encourage commitment to the event by buying tickets.

CEREMONY

DESIGN CEREMONY

- Know what the priority of the event is. If connection is important, consider limiting the formality, or accommodate a post-ceremony rally process.
- Have pictures of deployment around venue. Consider AV solutions such as computers with slide shows, etc.
- Have memorials for our fallen brothers and leave space around them. Group by Company, as these will be important rally points.
- Have behavioral health professionals at reunion, at designated locations and also in crowd.

SUSTAINMENT

- Coordinate with local I&I for COMREL support of the event. Recommend discussion with I&I SgtMaj for input on

ceremony.

- Contact agencies who can set up tables in the lobby, or if a picnic, in tents at the picnic.
- Battalions and Regiments may be able to support outdoor events with tentage.

FOLLOW UP

- Have a place where attendees can enter their emails and contact information. This opt-in can be saved by the committee and used in the future. Keep this contact information separate from work, as to not inadvertently create government records and trigger Privacy Act requirements.
- If you use an online ticketing process, save the emails and mailing addresses from that effort for future contact.
- Schedule your next “Annual Anniversary Reunion Event,” and publish during the Reunion.

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

Like any mission, planning a reunion requires a team.

The Reunion Planning Leadership Team should be independent of the command. Consider including individuals who have best contact with the military installation. Be sure to include different ranks, geography, companies, sections, and MOSs. Look to include members of local Veteran Service Organizations chapters, and similar people with connections to community opportunities, including fundraising and resources.

Each member of the leadership team works with the other members of the team. Each member of the leadership team should consider soliciting additional help. None of these roles is a small job.

REUNION PLANNING LEADERSHIP TEAM ROLES

- **Communications/Marketing** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC and agent for creating and implementing the communication strategy.
- **Communications/Marine Locator** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC and agent for locating the target population.
- **Swag Logistics** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC and agent for ordering, selling, and fulfilling swag orders.
- **Nonprofit Liaison** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC and agent for interfacing with nonprofits (potential supporting agents).
- **Treasurer** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC and agent for collecting and disbursing the funds used and generated in the planning and execution of the reunion.
- **Venue & Ceremony Coordinator** - The person in this role serves as the primary POC for agent for working with the venue(s) as well as planning and executing the ceremony.

Now that you have identified who needs to be involved, what do they do? Do Joint Ethics Regulations apply? Am I liable if I sign a contract? Veteran Service Organizations? Review this checklist and the major lines of effort.

CONVENE REUNION PLANNING LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING (12-14 MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT)

- As a group, determine what you want to do
 - How formal or informal?
 - What is the primary purpose of the event?
 - What are the desired components of your event? (A memorial ceremony? A guest speaker? A round of golf? A meal? Time set aside for visiting?)
 - Who are the target attendees? The Marines only, the Marines and their spouses, or the Marines and their families?

• ASSIGN ROLES

- Communications/Marketing
- Communications/Marine Locator
- Swag Logistics
- Nonprofit Liaison
- Treasurer
- Venue & Ceremony Coordinator

• CREATE YOUR BATTLE RHYTHM

- How often will your leadership team meet?
 - How will the team meet?
 - How will the team collaborate?
- Tentatively select your reunion’s date

• SELECT YOUR REUNION’S LOCATION

- Do you want to be on or near a specific installation?

- o Is traveling to or from the potential location easy?
- o Consider brainstorming possible venues

• Direct team members to check out AARs from recent reunions

• REUNION PLANNING LEADERSHIP MEETING DUE-OUTS:

- o Design branding for reunion
- o Develop swag intent and strategy
- o Develop communication strategy
- o Determine ticketing platform
- o Identify potential supporting agents (including your fundraising sponsor)
- o Engage fundraising sponsor
- o Research reunion locations and venues
- o Designate a Gold Star contact
- o Begin ceremony design

WHO DO I NEED TO REACH OUT TO?

Like all large events, you need a team. You can't plan an event all on your own, or even just you and one buddy. First, you need Marines to join your reunion planning leadership team. Reach out to Marines from your unit and be sure to include variety in your reunion planning leadership team. But you also need to reach out to others.

You need to reach out to Marines to attend your reunion. Where will you find them? How will you reach out to them?

Reach out and invite Gold Star families to attend your reunion. They may be VIP guests at your reunion.

Ensure you reach out to potential support agencies. These organizations may be able to help you manage the money brought in and spent and provide a platform for selling reunion tickets and swag.

The current Command leadership includes other individuals to whom you should reach out. They can be extremely helpful in your planning and ceremony design and may be VIP guests at your reunion.

Contact members of the historic chain of command, who may be able to help you reach other Marines and serve as a vital part of your communication strategy. They may be VIP guests at your reunion.

As part of your communication strategy, reach out to Veteran Organizations who may be able to pass the word to their members and via their social media channels to maximize your reach to Marines who may wish to attend your reunion.

WHAT IS A SUPPORTING AGENT? WHO ARE THEY?

What is a supporting agent? Why might I want to reach out to potential supporting agents for my reunion? A supporting agent is a private organization that you as an individual might engage for reunion planning assistance. A supporting agent might be able to assist you with communication, with planning, with registration, with specific events at the reunion, or perhaps with initial funding.

While the Marine Corps cannot use government funds to support reunions, private organizations have supported previous reunion efforts. To research and locate potential supporting agents, please use the VA's Directory of Veterans Service Organizations or the National Resource Directory to locate private organizations that may be contacted for support. Recognize that your reunion is a private organized event and not an official Marine Corps event. Check out the AARs provided by planners of recent reunion efforts to learn more about how those planners engaged supporting agents.

Blue Star Families

- Website: <https://bluestarfam.org/>
- Contact: info@bluestarfam.org
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BlueStarFamilies>

Honor Flight Network

- Website: <https://www.honorflight.org/>

- Contact: <https://www.honorflight.org/contact-us/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HonorFlightNetwork>

Hope For The Warriors

- Website: <http://www.hopeforthewarriors.org/>
- Contact: <http://www.hopeforthewarriors.org/contact-us/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HopeForTheWarriors/>

Semper Fi Fund

- Website: <https://semperfifund.org/>
- Contact: <https://semperfifund.org/contact/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/semperfifund>

WHAT IS SWAG? WHERE CAN I GET IT?

Now that the reunion logo is designed it's time to decide what to order. Remember, if using trademarked materials contact TMLO.

T-SHIRTS

More expensive, but critical advertisers. Encourage Marines to sport T-Shirt in certain events and share on Facebook. Especially important to have these available for ancillary memorial events leading up to the reunion. Helps to remind Marines about the upcoming event. Size ordering is expensive and difficult to manage. Sizes may need to err on the larger side.

PATCHES

Lower cost of production, and shipping, patches are important early products. Marines should be encouraged to share delivery of their purchased patches on Facebook and Twitter. Patches can also be used in the Distinguished Visitor communication plan as a “follow up” method (“Gen Puller, hope you are still available to attend our reunion. Here's a patch as a simple reminder”)

COINS

Coins enjoy fairly broad popularity but are more expensive to initially produce. Great to provide certain donors, leverage Battalion leadership to help present if needed.

OTHER SWAG ITEMS

You are not limited to “standard” swag items. Consider your audience and budget as you choose your swag and develop your swag strategy. Other swag items might include:

- Pens
- Matchbooks
- Magnets
- Custom silkies

HOW DO I BUILD MY COMMUNICATION STRATEGY?

One of the most significant parts of planning your reunion is developing and implementing your communication strategy. How are you going to reach your target population to publicize your event? How will you track down attendees? How will you develop excitement? How will you sell tickets to your reunion? How will you sell swag? Recognize that planning a reunion and the actions associated with it are not official actions of the Marine Corps, so ensure the information you present does not imply that the event is an official or Marine Corps approved event. All of this information and more will be part of your communication strategy.

YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

How do you want to use social media? How will you conduct outreach on social media?

- Balance the need for marketing and the need for security as you develop your social media strategy.
- Engage other groups & pages on the social media platforms you choose to use. Request that they share your event information.
- Develop a “stock” request, including sample posts and tweets to make it easy for the other groups and pages to assist you.
- Effective use of social media requires planning. Plan how you will use specific posts, videos, images, and calls to action.
- Viral social media campaigns include “revealing” swag, special guests, speakers, and other information.

Tip! With every social media post, regardless of platform, include some call to action, whether it's to like a page, join a group, purchase a ticket, share a post, tag other members of the target population, visit a website, purchase some swag, make a post with a hashtag, or something else pertaining to your reunion. Engage your target population to effectively market your event.

Tip! If you've opted to use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat and you're using swag for awareness of the event prior to the event, ask your target population to post pictures or videos of themselves and/or the swag to generate excitement. Consider featuring one or more of the shared pictures or videos to keep the momentum going.

Tip! Consider creating and using a hashtag for your event across social media platforms (especially if you opt to use Instagram and Twitter, where hashtags are most effective), so that you can easily see all posts including those that others are making that have to do with your event. Use #USMCreunion too!

What platform(s) will you use? Consider the platforms that your target population uses. There is a tremendous amount of resources available on the internet for conducting reunion communications. Some free, some at a cost. You must decide which platform best meets your specific reunion needs. Provided below are examples of several platforms as examples of how social media can be used.

Facebook

Are members of your target population active on Facebook? Recent reunion AARs strongly suggest using Facebook to help reach and inform your group. Will you use a Facebook Page, a Facebook Group, a Facebook Event, or a combination of all three? They are distinct, and there are positives and challenges to each.

Tip! Use media in your Facebook posts. Facebook posts that include images or videos are more successful than Facebook posts that are text only.

Tip! Reach out to the Marine Corps on Facebook.

Tip! If you are still active duty Marine Corps, keep in mind existing policies related to the use of social media, including Facebook.

FACEBOOK PAGE

- Positives
 - A Facebook page has a more "official" feel than other options.
 - You can create and schedule posts in advance.
 - You can review the analytics and make informed choices about when to post and what to include in future posts.
 - You and other page followers can invite other members of the target population who are your Facebook friends to follow the page and receive updates in that manner.
- Challenges
 - Facebook pages and posts to the page are public; consider security as you develop your posts.

Tip! If you've opted to use a Facebook page, invite your friends who are in the target population to like it. As that page, post a request that all who like it invite their friends too. Share this post regularly.

FACEBOOK GROUP

- Positives
 - Facebook groups may have a range of privacy settings applied; consider security as you develop your posts.
 - You and other group members can invite other members of the target population who are your Facebook friends to join the group and receive updates in that manner.
- Challenges
 - You cannot create and schedule posts in advance.
 - You cannot review analytics.

Tip! If you've opted to use a Facebook group, pin a post to the top of the group page to highlight the content of that post. This post might include the link to purchase a ticket and/or swag.

Tip! If you've opted to use a Facebook group, invite your friends who are in the target population to join the group. Follow this up by making a post in the group requesting that they invite their Facebook friends who are in the target population to join the group.

FACEBOOK EVENT

- Positives
 - o An event makes it easy for a Facebook user to see when an event is.
 - o Facebook events may have a range of privacy settings applied; consider security as you develop and share your event.
 - o Facebook users who have marked “Going,” “Maybe,” or “Interested” receive reminders about the event from Facebook.
- Challenges
 - o You cannot create and schedule posts in advance.
 - o You cannot review analytics.
 - o There may be some confusion about the difference between making an RSVP to the Facebook vs purchasing a ticket for the event. Mitigate this with clarifying language in the details of the event and in other related posts.

Tip! If you’ve opted to use a Facebook event, invite your friends who are in the target population to the event. Share the event on Facebook frequently and widely.

TWITTER

Are members of your target population active on Twitter? If they are, consider incorporating the use of Twitter in your Communication Strategy.

- Positives
 - o The Marine Corps is active on Twitter.
- Challenges
 - o Marine and Family Programs is not on Twitter and cannot offer support on this platform.

Tip! If you are still active-duty Marine Corps, keep in mind existing policies related to the use of social media.

LINKEDIN

Are members of your target population active on LinkedIn? A LinkedIn Group may be a way to reach that segment of your target population.

- Positives
 - o Many Marines who have recently separated or retired are familiar with the LinkedIn platform and have profiles.
 - o The Marine For Life Network, part of Marine and Family Programs, maintains an active presence on LinkedIn, and can help you reach Marines who are already on LinkedIn.
 - o LinkedIn groups may have a range of privacy settings applied; consider security as you develop your posts.
- Challenges
 - o LinkedIn’s demographics skew older than many other social media platforms. If your target population is not largely separated or retired Marines, this may not be a good use of your time.

Tip! If you’ve opted to use a LinkedIn group, make a post inviting your connections who are in the target population to join the group. Follow this up by making a post in the group requesting that they invite their connections who are in the target population to join the group.

Tip! If you are still active-duty Marine Corps, keep in mind existing policies related to the use of social media.

INSTAGRAM

Are members of your target population active on Instagram? If it is a popular social media platform with your target population, consider incorporating the use of Instagram in your communication and swag strategies. Hashtags rule on Instagram. They are extremely common and expected. Create one for your reunion, use it, and encourage your target population to use it in addition to #USMCreunion.

- Positives
 - o Because of the visual nature of Instagram, it can be an effective aspect of your swag strategy.
 - o You can encourage your reunion attendees to continue to use Instagram during and after the event to share their photos from the event.
 - o The Marine Corps is active on Instagram.

- Challenges
 - Because Instagram relies so heavily on graphics, text is not as prevalent.
 - Creativity is required for Instagram to be an effective social media platform for your reunion.
 - Marine and Family Programs is not on Instagram and cannot offer support on this platform.

Tip! If you are still active-duty Marine Corps, keep in mind existing policies related to the use of social media.

SNAPCHAT

- Positives
 - Snapchat is less formal than many other social media platforms.
 - The Marine Corps is active on Snapchat.
- Challenges
 - Snapchat's demographics skew younger than many other social media platforms. If members of your target population are not younger, this may not be a good use of your time.
 - Marine and Family Programs is on Snapchat so they cannot offer support on this platform.

Tip! If you are still active-duty Marine Corps, keep in mind existing policies related to the use of social media.

YOUR EMAIL STRATEGY

Expect to receive many email bounceback messages as you build your email list, especially if the timeframe you are celebrating was quite a few years ago. With every email, make it easy for the reader to purchase a ticket or like or follow your reunion social media accounts.

Tip! Use BCC when emailing a large group.

Tip! With every email, include some call to action, whether it's to like a page, join a group, purchase a ticket, share a post, visit a website, purchase some swag, or some other action. Engage your target population to effectively market your event.

YOUR SNAIL MAIL STRATEGY

With your mailing, include contact information and links to primary sites: where to purchase a ticket, where to purchase swag, main social media source of information (such as a Facebook page, group, or event). Consider using QR codes.

Tip! Snail mail gets expensive quickly. Limit the amount of postal mail you send and anticipate quite a few pieces to be returned to sender.

Tip! Use Mail Merge to print mailing labels to save a lot of time.

YOUR SWAG STRATEGY

Consider the extent to which your swag, if any, is intended to raise awareness prior to your event. How are you using swag to raise awareness prior to the event?

YOUR OTHER MARKETING STRATEGIES

Provide details about reunion for posting to reunion website. Reach out and provide details about the reunion to the Marine Corps Association, Wounded Warrior Regiment, and VSOs who may be able to pass the word.

HOW DO I SEARCH FOR MY TARGET POPULATION?

Social media. Other reunion planners have had success using Facebook to conduct outreach, connect with Marines in their target population, and promote their reunions. How you will use social media to conduct outreach and advertise your reunion is a major component of your communication strategy.

Postal mailing address and/or email addresses.

- IRR rosters
- Individuals might solicit email addresses of interested parties at other events where the target population is likely to be
- Email FROST calls through the historic chain of command

- Solicit emails through social media
- Marine and Family Programs

AARS FROM RECENT REUNIONS

What action is ever complete without an ARR?

After Action Reports from recent reunions can be extremely valuable as you begin to organize your own reunion. The planners of the reunions graciously submitted their AARs to help you. Review them and learn from them.

After your reunion, please submit your AAR to help the next group of Marines when they plan their reunions.