

# Invitations

BY MAURA KELLER  
Inviting Ideas to Make Great First Impressions.

Invitations create a first impression of an event. They are style representatives that provide the glimpse into what attendees can expect to experience at the event itself.

"TODAY'S INVITATIONS CAN BE MORE THAN ink and paper," says Todd Pottebaum at Quality Resource Group in Plymouth. "The most successful invitations evoke an emotional response. The invitations I most treasure are those that are multi-faceted—combining items such as printing, promotional items, packaging and creative delivery."

According to Char Mason, owner of Char Mason & Associates, an event production and communications firm, one of the biggest trends in today's invitations is an invitation that makes a miniature paper sculpture for your desk when opened. "These keep the event top of mind and act like more of a gift," she says.

Recently, Pottebaum designed an invitation that included a custom countdown timer (digital clock), reminding them of the date. The clock counts backwards to the date of the event. Another unique invitation was sent out as images in a Viewmaster, complete with

custom packaging.

With the "green" trend receiving a tremendous amount of attention, what goes into the invitations is as important as what goes on them. "Soy based and low-solvent based corn inks and UV-cured ink technology are very popular," Mason says. "Use of reclaimed materials—such as fabric, metal, newspaper and brown paper bags—is on the rise. People are also minimizing the amount of virgin paper used and are selecting papers that are processed chlorine-free or even have seeds embedded into the paper, which can be planted in the ground later to grow flowers.

To go completely green and to embrace technology at the same time, more and more event planners are embracing the use of e-mailed invitations or "save the dates" in the form of fun and funny mini-movies, Mason explains. In turn, attendees register by phone or online to avoid more paper.

▶ get  
connected

CHAR MASON & ASSOCIATES  
St. Paul / 651.698.2672  
[www.charmason.com](http://www.charmason.com)

QUALITY RESOURCE GROUP  
Plymouth / 763.478.8636  
[www.quality-resource.com](http://www.quality-resource.com)