

DISCOVER MANUFACTURING™

Discover Manufacturing Week EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Sept 28-Oct 2, 2020



West
MICHIGAN
WORKS![®]

ABOUT DISCOVER MANUFACTURING

Discover Manufacturing is a collaborative of manufacturers, educators, workforce development, and economic development organizations working together to meet West Michigan's manufacturing talent needs. Discover Manufacturing's key roles in West Michigan are:

- Share trends and best practices affecting talent in manufacturing
- Lead, support, and promote talent initiatives throughout West Michigan
- Understand manufacturers' current education and training needs to inform curriculum and adequate enrollment.
- Promote networking among manufacturers, educators, workforce development and economic development organizations

ABOUT DISCOVER MANUFACTURING WEEK

Discover Manufacturing Week (DM Week) is a West Michigan event that seeks to address common misperceptions about manufacturing and runs concurrent with national "Manufacturing Day" efforts lead by the National Manufacturers Council. In West Michigan DM Week is officially September 28-October 2 but includes all events scheduled during the month of October. DM is focused on creating a collaborative event with a coordinated effort to provide open houses, public tours and other activities.

Discover Manufacturing has built a team of core "Champions" from each county consisting of at least one economic development partner, one educational partner, one manufacturer, and one West Michigan Works! Business Solutions representative. Each team will be responsible for supporting the Discover Manufacturing Week efforts in their respective county. Manufacturer champions will help you complete your registration on the Discover Manufacturing website and assist you with planning the best experience.

Manufacturer Champions by county:

Allegan	JR Gerloski, Parker Hannifin Amanda Cooper, Lakeshore Advantage
Barry	Andrew Walsh, Flex Fab Travis Alden, Barry County Chamber of Commerce
Ionia	Spence Riggs, The Right Place
Lake/Oceana	Jodi Nichols, The Right Place
Kent	Kristen Childress, Plasan Carbon Composites Jay Dunwell, Wolverine Coil Spring Steve Heethuis, Autocam
Mason	Crystal Young, West Shore Community College Kathy Maclean, Mason County Growth Alliance
Montcalm	Kathy Jo Vanderlaan, The Right Place
Muskegon	Tim Zwit, Michigan Spring and Stamping Kenneth Robinson, Scherdel Sales & Technology Darryl Todd, Muskegon Area First
Newaygo	Julie Burrell, The Right Place
Ottawa	Nancy Manglos, The Chamber of Grand Haven, Spring Lake and Ferrysburg

SETTING UP A DISCOVER MANUFACTURING WEEK EVENT

DETERMINE THE TYPE OF EVENT YOU WILL HOST:

- **Facility tour**

A manufacturer opens its doors and invites members of its community to observe its operations first-hand. If your company ever conducts tours for prospective clients, you can model your DM Week plant tour on your existing walk through and presentation. A plant tour can also be staged as a more elaborate event, with structured activities such as equipment demonstrations, hands-on exhibits, speeches, and question-and-answer sessions.

- **Multi-company community event or expo**

Small groups of manufacturers in the same industrial park pool their resources to offer successive plant tours at each of their facilities. This is a great way for the local manufacturers to work together to expose visitors to a range of manufacturing work environments and to drum up local interest in the manufacturing segment of their respective communities.

- **Job fairs (on or off-site)**

Job fairs have been organized in dozens of cities by companies in the temporary placement industry. Often these will take place at a manufacturing employer, but they can also take place at the offices of the placement firm with several representative employers participating.

- **Educational fairs**

Educational institutions such as community and technical colleges can be excellent venues for Discover Manufacturing Week events. Working with local manufacturers to plan career-fair-style happenings can be a great way for high schools and technical colleges to inform their students about careers in manufacturing. Manufacturers can also use these opportunities to share information about their companies with a wider audience of students and parents.

- **Celebrations of the manufacturing community**

Celebrations of the manufacturing community are springing up all over the country as a way to kick off Discover Manufacturing Week activities. They can be organized by Chambers of Commerce, local or regional manufacturing associations and economic development groups. They have even been organized by banks, accounting firms and other businesses that do a significant portion of their business with manufacturers. These can be breakfast, lunch, or dinner events.

DETERMINE THE DATE AND DESIRED LENGTH OF EVENT.

Will it be one hour, half a day, a full day?

SETTING UP A DISCOVER MANUFACTURING WEEK EVENT

DECIDE WHO TO INVITE:

- **Local school students**

Students are the workforce of the future. This is your opportunity to provide information about the kinds of careers that your company offers and the type of training and educational coursework you seek when hiring employees. There is no better time to offer comments about opportunities available to dedicated workers with a professional attitude. DM and your local educator champion are happy to connect you with local educators and students!

- **Elected officials**

Invite your local, state, federal officials to come to your plant and see for themselves. Remember most elected officials have never set foot inside a manufacturing facility; you can educate them!

- **Families of employees**

If family events aren't a common occurrence at your company, this is a perfect day to invite them to come and see where their family member works and learn what they do. Maybe you could do a special event just for family members at the end of the workday.

- **Potential customers**

Give these folks a reason to want to do business with you.

- **Current customers**

Make Discover Manufacturing Week your annual customer appreciation day.

- **Business service providers**

When was the last time you were visited by your banker, insurance agent or accountant?

- **Media**

Is there a local reporter who seems to have a serious interest in manufacturing? Invite them to visit your facility during Discover Manufacturing Week. They are always looking for interesting stories to tell.

- **Public**



**Inspire the next
generation of
manufacturers.**

FACILITY TOUR

BEFORE THE TOUR:

- Put together internal planning group, if necessary.
- Choose tour guides that speak loudly and clearly and are comfortable with students.
- Decide how the tour guides will travel through the facility for the best possible experience for the students.
- Clean up before your visitors arrive. No clutter, everything in its place, floors swept clean, a path through the shop that is easy to follow. Remember that part of the reason you're inviting visitors to DM Week events is to show that manufacturing facilities are great places to work. *First impressions count: What does your company look like as visitors approach from the parking lot? Let's dispel the myths that manufacturing is dark, dirty and dangerous.*
- Put together an agenda. Include time to introduce your company and tailor your event to the audience that you're inviting.
- Make sure employees are dressed neat and clean on tour day. They should be wearing a name badge so that they can be addressed by name when there are questions.
- Determine required safety equipment for attendees.
- Prepare a brief information packet for students, educators, lawmakers, other guests.
- Determine what machinery will be in operation.
- Prepare a map of the tour route, if applicable.
- Hang a welcome sign. Shake hands with visitors, thank them for coming, and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the opportunity to share your company's information with them.
- Create a display. Of course you can't allow visitors to get up close and personal with your machinery, but you could create a display that illustrates what a product looks like in various stages of completion, or where they could be allowed to pick up and hold something they've seen made. Maybe you even have something that one of your machines can make that they could take with them as a souvenir. (Think small useable object like keychain, etc.)
- Gather company literature and background materials.
- Display any trade association materials, if appropriate.
- Ask the teacher(s) if there are specific concepts, curriculum or STEM topics that your team should point out to students during the tour.
- Provide dress code, identification and behavior codes to the teachers and tour guides.
- Provide directions to the plant if necessary
- Confirm required departure times with teachers.
- Have ready business cards/applications/marketing material/swag...whatever necessary for a student to make the connection to your company!

FACILITY TOUR

DURING THE TOUR:

Share your company's story.

Start strong. Give them a reason to listen. Rather than starting your story with dry historical information, "ABC Company opened in 1922 and has operated out of three different locations," hook visitors right at the start with an interesting anecdote. Talk directly to them. For example, "If you've ever been young and in love, you'll be interested in how this company got started. Joe and Angela Johnson opened the doors back in 1922. He was 23, she was 19. They'd been married for two weeks and this was their American Dream ..." If you're not sure what your "hook" is, ask yourself: How did your company get started? Who started it? What challenges have you overcome? What successes stand out? Is there something about your company that might surprise people? What is the company culture? What compelling or creative reason should the arriving students care to listen about your company?

Talk about types of jobs and open positions.

What kind of jobs do you have? Do you have any openings? Let them know education/training requirements. (This is a great time to offer comments about opportunities available to dedicated workers with a professional attitude.)

- What are the entry level roles that your company is looking to hire for? (Apprenticeships, temporary staffing, summer help, etc.)
How do you invest in a new employee? Do you offer tuition reimbursement?
- What onsite training and development is offered to employees of the company?
- Can employees go to seminars, webcasts, symposiums, conferences or other presentations?
- What is your safety record?
- Do you have an environmental or recycling program?
- Who are some of the customers or suppliers that you work with (if you can share!)

Utilize age equivalent or similar workers to help connect students to the employability opportunity.

Consider other functions in your organization that play roles in your company's success: sales, supply chain, finance, HR, marketing.

Get your engineers, technicians and designers involved in creating student interactions:

Let them get creative with your organizations business needs

Don't overcomplicate!

Leverage teams and competitive drive.

Observe interactions and let students know expectations.

Considerations:

- Is there an automated process that students could try to replicate manually?
- Use other mediums to highlight processes or technology that helps the student connect ideas.
- Create problem solving challenges that groups have to figure out.

Show your guest students and attendees how your machinery works, how different items are put together, what new technologies are being used and your workers' overall productivity.

Have some sample items and/or parts to show, and ask some questions about them.

Have informative and interactive activities.

If your plan is to host students, make sure you have some fun activities related to your company for them to participate in. Focus on the "cool" things that you do. If able, offer giveaways. Local examples:

Email preset questions to teachers to give to students as an assignment so they are prompted to ask during tours to receive credit (JR Automation).

"Find Waldo on the shop floor:" give students picture of employee highlighting an occupation to find during their tour (DeWys Manufacturing).

"How's it made game show:"/relate to different occupations involved (DeWys Manufacturing).

"Estimating activity" "cost per hole" etc. with prizes (Walker Tool & Die?).

Provide some hands-on activity that students can try if possible (possibly in a training room). Local examples:

- Laser puzzle build that students keep (Walker Tool & Die)
- Design/CAD Project with change colors and wheels on Corvette (Walker Tool & Die?)
- Scan student hand activity (Walker Tool & Die?)
- Run a machine if possible/ pipe cleaners exercise (Wolverine Coil Spring)
- Team Building activity "building with spaghetti and marshmallows" (DeWys Manufacturing)
- Utilize the MCAM trailer from GRCC (DeWys Manufacturing)

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Keep group size small. Limit group sizes to 15 or less. If your work environment is loud, keep the groups even smaller. Break into smaller groups and offer multiple activities if needed.

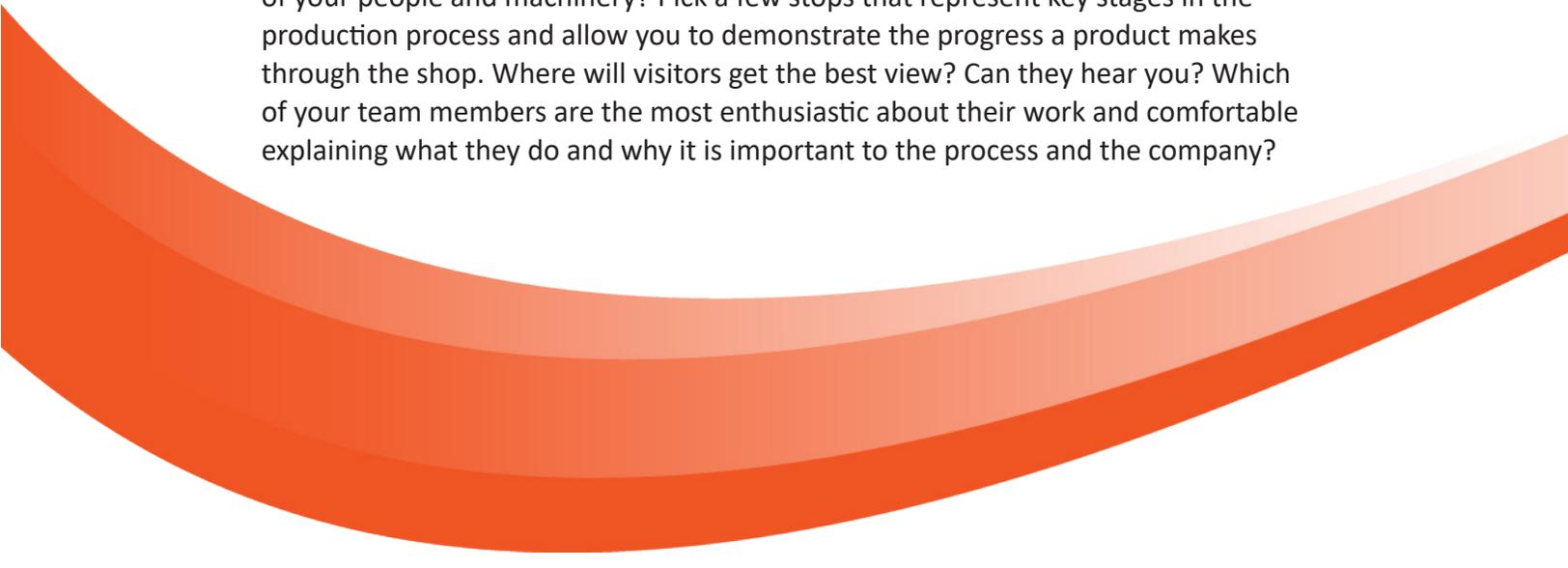
Back up your stories with facts. Know your numbers. Anecdotes backed up by figures create a strong impression. If your company employs 200 talented people and the average employee has worked at the facility for 14 years that tells people something. While visitors may not remember the numbers, they will remember what those numbers mean – professionals who work at your company, stay with your company.

Avoid jargon. Don't assume visitors know anything about manufacturing. Pretend that you're explaining facility operations to a 6-year-old. Or your grandma. What language would you use? Avoid industry terms and business lingo that others don't understand.

Make it relevant to students. Take something they find interesting and show how, with the right skills and training, they could do it themselves. Build that bridge! You guarantee their attention because you've shown the direct connection between the world they live in and the work you do. If the product you manufacture is not something they personally use, identify an analogous product or how it's used, what it is a component of, etc.

Show and tell. When you read a magazine or newspaper, photographs capture your eye. Think of your plant as a photograph for your story. Point out interesting equipment and/or interesting people. Perhaps there's a safety feature no one would notice but it makes a huge difference. Perhaps there's a third-generation employee on the floor. Show visitors why your facility is special.

You can't – and shouldn't – show everything. The quickest way to lose the interest of your visitors is to try to show every bit of minutiae. What are the best places in the plant to give an overview of the production process and highlight the work of your people and machinery? Pick a few stops that represent key stages in the production process and allow you to demonstrate the progress a product makes through the shop. Where will visitors get the best view? Can they hear you? Which of your team members are the most enthusiastic about their work and comfortable explaining what they do and why it is important to the process and the company?



Wrap up on a positive note. It's important to give your visitors a chance to ask questions. However, people often hesitate to ask the first question. If no one raises a hand, take the lead: "I know one of the questions we're often asked is, "How long does it take to produce ...?" Ask the question and answer it. And, rather than ending on the Q&A session, tell another story. Reminding them of the original story is a great option. For example, "With the changes in manufacturing, we're looking for talented people who are skilled in mathematics and chemistry, so please send them our way! The vision the Johnsons had in 1922 remains our vision. We still consider this company our key to the American dream!"

Speak loudly as you explain portions of the tour. Encourage the students to gather in close (especially in louder environments) so that the students can remain engaged with the tour. Don't walk while talking.

Know what you want to say and how you want to say it. No matter how long you've been with the company, it helps to plan ahead. Make notes about what you want to say – from key points to fun anecdotes. How you tell the story also matters. Stand up and speak up.

Make eye contact and smile! A smile changes your voice and the listener's perceptions.

Be flexible! If your students are highly engaged in an activity, adjust your plan to support that engagement.

Have fun! Lastly, don't be afraid. Your first event will be a learning experience for you to find out what works and what doesn't. After your first year, the event will become easier.



FACILITY TOUR

AFTER THE EVENT:

- Send thank-note to guests.
- Thank your own staff.
- Send photos to pertinent attendees and DM Coordinator.
- Provide press coverage.
- Use social media to recap the event.
- Continue to communicate with contacts post event.
- Decide what went well and what could have gone better regarding the tour for continuous improvements.
- Complete DM survey to win a \$250 Visa gift card.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Host Promotion Kit

<http://www.mfgday.com/sites/default/files/Host-Promotion-Kit.pdf>

Social Media Playbook

<http://www.mfgday.com/resources/social-media-playbook>

Host Media Guide

<http://www.mfgday.com/playbook/Host-Media-Guide.pdf>

SOURCES

<http://www.plasticsindustry.org/article/tips-hosting-your-own-mfg-day-event>

<http://www.mfgday.com/resources/open-house-tips>

<http://www.sonnhalter.com/2017/05/16/score-big-manufacturing-day/>

<http://www.sonnhalter.com/2015/08/13/save-the-date-oct-2-is-national-manufacturing-day/>

<http://bit.ly/flatetourtips>

<http://bit.ly/flaiteindtour>

<http://www.mfgday.com/playbook/Host-Toolkit.pdf>