



# MANUFACTURING DAY HOST TOOLKIT

A Guide to Successful Manufacturing Day Plant Events



# Getting Started

Manufacturing Day has been designed to expand knowledge about and improve general public perception of manufacturing careers and manufacturing's value to the U.S. economy. Manufacturing Day is for students, parents, educators, media, customers, suppliers and the community at large. Visitors will learn about real career opportunities, training and resources. In addition, manufacturers will learn about business improvement resources and services delivered through manufacturing extension partnerships.

The core element to Manufacturing Day is the schedule of manufacturers' open houses. Manufacturing Day will promote the open house schedule through its planned general and trade media campaign, which will alert thousands of people to the opportunity to visit manufacturers and see for themselves that manufacturing is alive and well in America and needs skilled employees. It will also make it possible for manufacturers to visit other manufacturers in their region that may be potential business partners — either as customers or suppliers.

Thank you in advance for your interest in hosting a Manufacturing Day event! This is your opportunity:

## Tell your company's story

- Dispel outdated myths about manufacturing
- Inspire a new generation of manufacturers
- Connect with potential customers in your community
- Learn about manufacturing extension partnerships that can improve your efficiencies and workforce skills and boost your profits
- Visit other manufacturers to initiate business relationships and learn what is being made in your community

In this toolkit, you will find the resources you need to successfully open your plant to community members this fall.







# Complete Event Checklist

## 1. PREPARING FOR A MANUFACTURING DAY EVENT

### Setting Up a Manufacturing Day Event

- Determine the format of your event (presentation, facility tour, roundtable, etc.)
- Determine the desired length of your event
- Register your event on [www.mfgday.com/user/register](http://www.mfgday.com/user/register)
- Decide who to invite
- Send the invitations
- Track and confirm RSVPs and follow up as necessary
- Distribute memo of visit to employees

### Organizing a Facility Tour

- Put together internal planning group, if necessary
- Craft welcome and introduction
- Establish look and feel of welcome area
- Create name badges for guests and staff
- Determine required safety equipment
- Brief tour guide(s)
- Craft tour script

- Hire/designate photographer
- Prepare an information package
- Research talking points, your company story, current events, legislative tasks, etc.
- Prepare a map of the tour route
- Write out any questions for students, educators or other attendees

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### Preparing Displays/Literature

- Determine product display, if applicable
- Gather company literature and background materials
- Display your association materials, if appropriate

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### Planning for the Media

- Draft a media advisory, if desired
- Prepare area for news media
- Prepare a message from the CEO



## 2. Hosting a Manufacturing Day Event

### Preparing for Arrival

- Designate a note taker
- Determine what machinery will be in operation
- Provide directions to the facility

### Conducting a Facility Tour

- Welcome guests on arrival
- Provide safety equipment to tour guests, if applicable
- Show students and attendees how your production line works
- Let your visitors be active participants
- Mention any prepared talking points during the tour



# 3. FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE EVENT

- Send thank-you note to guest(s)
- Thank your own staff
- Send photos to pertinent attendees
- Report your experience on the Manufacturing Day website
- Provide press coverage
- Use social media to recap the event
- Continue to communicate with the contacts post-event





**Preparing for a  
Manufacturing Day  
Event** .....



# Setting Up a Manufacturing Day Event

- Determine the format of your event (presentation, facility tour, roundtable, etc.)
- Determine the desired length of your event. Will it be one hour, half a day, a full day?
- Be sure to register your event on [www.mfgday.com/user/register](http://www.mfgday.com/user/register).
- Decide who to invite (students, local schools, lawmakers, media). Manufacturing Day is a national celebration of the 12 million talented men and women who work in the industry. Who could you invite to share this celebration with you?
  - **The families of your 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.
  - **Your elected officials:** Ever complain about the fact that your elected officials (local, state, federal) don't make good choices as related to manufacturing? Invite them 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!
    - + Decide who to invite. Is this a visit for candidates, local lawmakers, federal members of Congress and/or congressional staff? Consider starting with a local or state staff person and working up to a visit from a federal elected official. A staff level visit can be just as important as a member visit.
    - + Send the invitation. Send a letter to the candidate and staff explaining who you are and what you would like to showcase. Include directions to the facility, as well as a requested amount of time. When inviting a legislator for a plant tour, be flexible, and be prepared for last-minute schedule changes. Try to arrange the tour around the legislator's schedule.
    - + Track and confirm RSVPs and follow up as necessary. Call the lawmaker's scheduler to make sure the invitation has been received. Make follow-up phone calls if the scheduler has not gotten back to you to confirm the lawmaker's participation. Don't be discouraged if their participation is not scheduled or confirmed immediately. Be flexible and persistent. If the elected official is not available for your Manufacturing Day event, feel free to invite him or her to drop by for a tour and cup of coffee the next time he or she passes through town. Most lawmakers will occasionally have a few minutes of free time during a busy schedule.

[Click here for sample lawmaker invitation](#)

- **Potential customers:** Give these folks a reason to want to do business with you. Invite them in on a day when they can see how great your organization is.
- **Current customers:** Make Manufacturing Day your annual customer appreciation day.

# Setting Up a Manufacturing Day Event (cont'd)

- **Your 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 on Manufacturing Day. They are always looking for interesting stories to tell. Do you have an interesting story?
- **Invite a youth organization:** Are you active in, or do you know someone who is active in the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or a similar youth organization as a leader? Invite them to visit your company as a field trip. Better yet, invite a school group.

[Click here for a sample event invitation for educators](#)

- Track and confirm RSVPs and follow up as necessary
- Distribute memo of event to employees

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## Organizing a Facility Tour

- Put together internal planning group, if necessary
- Craft welcome and introduction
- Establish look and feel of welcome area
- Create name badges for guests and staff
- Determine required safety equipment
- Brief tour guide(s) if you are hosting a guided tour
- Craft tour script
- Hire/designate photographer
- Prepare an information packet for students, educators, lawmakers, other guests(keep it brief and avoid technical jargon)
- Research talking points, your company story, current events, etc.
- Prepare a map of the tour route if applicable
- Write out any questions for students, educators or other attendees



# Preparing Displays/Literature

Create a display; offer hands-on experiences. 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. (This doesn't mean one of your production parts or finished products!)

- Gather company literature and background materials
- Display any trade association materials, if appropriate
- Download a customizable sign from your Host dashboard on [www.mfgday.com](http://www.mfgday.com) to announce your participation in the Manufacturing Day program. Fill in company name, date and time of your event and send to your favorite quick print shop.

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## Planning for the Media

Media advisories, press releases, photo releases and letters to the editor are four tried-and-true approaches you can take to bring your Manufacturing Day event to the attention of traditional local media like newspapers, TV and radio stations.

- The Manufacturing Day Host Media Guide describes each of these approaches and provides you with a template for preparing each one. It also provides you with a timetable to follow that will guarantee that your efforts meet with the most favorable media attention. Download the kit here [www.mfgday.com/resources/host-media-guide](http://www.mfgday.com/resources/host-media-guide)
- If you want to use social media to promote your event, download the Manufacturing Day Social Media Playbook here [www.mfgday.com/resources/social-media-playbook](http://www.mfgday.com/resources/social-media-playbook)

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## Preparing for Arrival

Clean up before visitors arrive. No clutter, everything in its place, floors swept clean, clear path through the shop. Remember that part of the reason to invite visitors is to prove that manufacturing is a great place 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. Make sure employees are dressed neat and clean on tour day and if they have a role to play in explaining things to your visitors, they should be wearing a name badge so that they can be addressed by name when there are questions.

- Designate a note taker
- Determine what machinery will be in operation
- Provide directions to the plant if necessary



# Hosting a Manufacturing Day Event





# Conducting a Facility Tour

Manufacturing Day gives you the perfect opportunity to share your company's story with people outside the industry.

## The question is: What's the story and how can you make it memorable?

- Put up a welcome sign: This is important both literally and figuratively. Put a sign on the door, shake hands with visitors, thank them for coming, and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the opportunity you have to share your company's information with them. Download a customizable sign from your host dashboard on [www.mfgday.com](http://www.mfgday.com) to announce your participation in the Manufacturing Day program. Fill in company name, date and time of your event and send to your favorite quick print shop.
- Welcome guests on arrival
- Don't assume visitors know anything about manufacturing. In planning a good event – especially when the intended audience members are primarily people with no manufacturing background, you have to start by creating a story of your company that anyone could understand. How did your company get started? What do you make? Who buys your products? What do they do with them? Keep explanations simple and free of industry jargon. Think story-telling with illustrations rather than text books packed with pages of small print.

## Tips for effectively communicating with non-manufacturers:

- Prepare materials for guests that emphasize the benefits that good manufacturing jobs bring to workers, suppliers and your area's economy. Put together a one-pager that highlights your company's characteristics and accomplishments.
- 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. When you look and sound proud, that's the positive image visitors will take away. Make eye contact and smile! A smile changes your voice and the listener's perceptions.
- 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?
- **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.

- **Student visitors?** They are the workforce of the future. This is your opportunity to provide advice about the kinds of careers that your company offers, the type of training and educational coursework you seek when hiring employees. No better time to offer comments about opportunities available to dedicated workers with a professional attitude. If there are certain specific kinds of training or skills that you need and find it hard to hire, let them know.
- **Avoid jargon.** Pretend that you're explaining facility operations to a 6-year-old. Or your mother. What language would you use? Avoid industry terms and business lingo that others don't understand.
- **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.
- **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!"
- **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?
- Provide safety equipment to tour guests, if applicable
- 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.
- Let your visitors be active participants. If feasible without shutting down production lines, offer your visitors the chance to address your entire workforce. Have guests do something "physical," such as shake hands, run a machine, examine your product or look at a computer screen.
- Mention any prepared talking points during the tour or presentation





# Following Up After the Event .....





## 1. FOLLOW UP

- Send thank-you note to guest(s)
- Thank your own staff
- Send photos to pertinent attendees
- Report your experience on the Manufacturing Day website. Be sure to forward along any photos as well
- Provide press coverage
- Use social media to recap the event
- Continue to communicate with the contacts post-event

## 2. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Looking for more? Additional helpful information and tools for anyone interested in hosting a Manufacturing Day event are available at [www.mfgday.com/resources](http://www.mfgday.com/resources).

Also, when you register your event on [www.mfgday.com](http://www.mfgday.com), you'll have access to a "Host Dashboard" where you can find tools to develop, promote, execute and follow up on your event, including:

- Social Media Playbook
- Website banner ads
- Co-branded, customizable posters
- Sample press releases
- Samples invitation letters to lawmakers, public officials and student organizations