

Guide for Manufacturers

Overview

Despite its transformation over the past several years, manufacturing is still widely misunderstood.

However, we can combat negative and unclear perceptions of industry by showing — not just telling — our communities what manufacturing is and what it isn't.

By inviting elected officials, teachers, students, parents and other members of the community into our plants, we can showcase the superb teamwork and sophisticated problem-solving techniques applied every day by our employees. We can demonstrate how skilled trade workers operate high-tech equipment and monitor their own productivity and quality.

By working together, we can promote manufacturing as offering fulfilling careers that are vital to the health of our economy.

To this end, we invite you to open your plant to the public. We already know the importance of manufacturing to our everyday lives, now it's time to teach others.

An excellent opportunity to conduct plant tours is in conjunction with the MMA

Plant Tour Program during Michigan Manufacturing Week, slated for May 8-12, 2006. For help in arranging a tour at your firm, contact Kellie Garrett at 517-487-8542 or e-mail: garrett@mma-net.org.

Michigan Manufacturing Week isn't the only time MMA can assist you with plant tours. Companies are encouraged to open their doors any time throughout the year that is convenient.





Planning

A successful plant tour begins with early planning. To help, here are some important considerations:

Choose a specific target audience.

This guide offers information and tips on providing tours to students and educators, legislators and public officials, and the general public. It also contains information on events for the general public and consideration when working with media representatives.

Be prepared to offer information that is relevant to your tour group.

Regardless of who your target audience is, it's a good idea to do your homework and find out what kinds of information will capture their attention. Preparing information packets, signs, name badges, sign-in sheets, and product displays will inform your guests and maximize future networking possibilities.

Schedule the tour with your target audience in mind.

Whether it's a legislative session or final exams, knowing your target audience's schedule is critical to a successful event. If possible, or if the tour participants are contacting you, find a mutually beneficial time for as many participants as possible. If the event is to be held for a large group or to coincide with a specific date (such as Michigan Manufacturing Week) be sure to mail invitations in plenty of time for potential participants to attend.

Put your best foot forward.

Make sure your plant facilities and your staff are at their best on the day of the tour. Give staff adequate notice of the tour so they may be prepared to answer questions or simply offer friendly smiles as they go about their work. Prepare a route for the tour which shows important pieces of equipment or phases of the manufacturing process. Draw on the expertise of staff in different areas to provide added enthusiasm to the tour. The tour is a great opportunity to showcase your industry and your plant; if you are excited about the event, your participants will be, too.

Consider any liability or logistical concerns.

Check with insurance carriers or legal counsel for necessary safety precautions and liability coverage. To guard against any problems on the tour, provide safety goggles and hard hats in areas where necessary and utilize staff to direct tour participants from hazardous areas. A little preparation in this area can prevent an avoidable problem from marring the success of the tour.

Accommodating those with disabilities.

Occasionally, students and other guests with disabilities may be interested in touring your facility. If you are unable to accommodate wheelchair users or others with disabilities, please let MMA and/or the tour group contact know ahead of time. If MMA is assisting you with the tour, we will do our best to inform you of any disabled guests registered for the tour.



Guide for Manufacturers

Checklist

This checklist provides a quick overview of the steps a typical company would take to conduct a successful plant tour. Obviously, you may choose to do things differently or in a different order. One important consideration is when and which staff members should be involved in planning and conducting the tour.

1. Consider your objectives in hosting a tour and target a specific audience.
(If you have been contacted by individuals interested in touring your plant, skip to step 4.)
2. Choose a date for the tour. Keep in mind scheduling conflicts of your target audience.
3. Make contact with appropriate individuals by phone or by mailing invitations to the tour.
4. Contact MMA by completing the “Tour Participation Form” at the end of this document, by registering on the MMA Web site: www.mma-net.org/mmweek/planttour.asp or by calling 517-487-8542. MMA will add your tour date to our list and offer assistance where needed.
5. Prepare information packets for participants and customize contents to the target audience in order to meet your desired objectives.
6. Coordinate production of signs, name badges, sign-in sheets, and product displays.
7. Consult legal counsel or insurance carriers to determine what additional safety precautions should be taken.
8. Prepare your facility by making sure the tour route is easy to follow, hazardous areas are well-marked and the plant looks its best.
9. Test any processes you would like to demonstrate before the tour and prepare your staff.
10. When conducting the tour, provide a safety overview, distribute information packets and encourage questions.
11. Make sure guests register so that you have contact information for future networking opportunities.

Guide for Manufacturers

Audience:
Students & Educators

Only when our educators understand that nearly 700,000 people in Michigan are employed in the manufacturing sector and realize that manufacturing companies offer some of the best-paying, most challenging and rewarding jobs, will students understand these opportunities.

Plant tours are an excellent way to educate students — and educators.

What better way to show educators and students the careers available in manufacturing than to actually show them. Talk about the skills needed for most manufacturing jobs — the need for math, science, computer and teamwork skills. Share information about skills required to perform specific jobs in your manufacturing process.

Stress the importance of manufacturing to Michigan's economy, noting the corresponding wage rate and need for skills.

High wage, skilled and interesting jobs are available in the manufacturing sector. We must work to get this message out and to defeat the image of dark, dingy factories filled with lines of workers doing mindless piece work. Share recent data on the wage rate for the average manufacturing worker in Michigan which is 41 percent higher than information industry jobs and 71 percent higher than jobs in the financial activities sector.

Use the tour to generate interest in future employment with your company.

Tours are the perfect opportunity to talk to interested students about internships or apprenticeships with your facility and educational requirements necessary or beneficial when applying to your company. This is your future workforce; take the opportunity to introduce yourself and follow-up with students or educators who seem interested in learning more about your facility.





Guide for Manufacturers

Audience:

Legislators & Public Officials

Plant tours with legislators and public officials can help develop contacts and solidify relationships. More importantly, you can help legislators and public officials understand the impact of their decisions on your company and the people you employ.

Due to term limits, manufacturing constituents are even more critical to legislators' understanding of the issues that impact your business. Recognizing the important role of legislators, you may want to conduct a tour especially for them.

Include key personnel and offer important information about your plant.

For example, public officials may have questions regarding your tax liability — make sure the most appropriate person is available to discuss the issue. Key information that will be helpful when speaking to your elected officials also includes:

- information on products manufactured, i.e., what industries they are used in, where they are shipped, equipment necessary for production, staffing skills necessary, etc.
- number of employees, total payroll and average earnings
- federal, state and local taxes paid
- cost of regulatory and environmental compliance
- key competitors and customers
- community involvement, i.e., projects your firm is involved in, education initiatives, donations, etc.
- size of facility including dollar investment and any plans for expansion

Scheduling is especially critical.

Summer is a great time to hold an event for legislators because the State House and Senate are not in session. If you prefer to hold your event during the legislative session, generally January through June and September through December, try to schedule the tour on a non-session day, a Monday or Friday. You may also be able to arrange a tour during one of the legislative recesses at Thanksgiving or Spring Break. The legislative schedules are available at the Michigan Legislature Web site (<http://www.michiganlegislature.org/mileg.asp?page=Calendars>).

Publicity is good for all.

Most legislators will be anxious to publicize a visit to your plant. Discussing any media arrangements in advance is a good idea. For tips on working with media representatives, see that section of this guide.

Guide for Manufacturers

Audience:
General Public

Michigan has always been a strong manufacturing state, but most people don't realize just how valuable manufacturing is to our economic well-being. Plant tours provide an opportunity to not only showcase your plant products and contributions to the local community, but also to help raise awareness and improve the image of manufacturing across the state.

Plant tours and events for the general public must be well planned.

Inviting the community to your facility is a major undertaking. Because attendance will, most likely, be unknown, your event must have a number of contingency plans. If you decide to hold an event annually, you will be able to more likely predict attendance and better organize your activities. If your facility allows, you may also want to hold regularly-scheduled tours to accommodate all interested visitors.

Emphasize your plant's role in the local economy and community.

You are your own goodwill advocate. Highlight your company's achievements relating to job creation — both direct and indirect — contribution to the local tax base, and involvement in community organizations and the local schools.





Guide for Manufacturers

Audience:
Media Representatives

The local media can help get your message out and make your event a success.

Whether you utilize the media to publicize a tour prior to the date or simply send a press release after you have completed a tour, your message is important. Your company's activity, and those of your participants, shows efforts to further a new manufacturing image of good career opportunities, a safe and clean work environment and involvement in the community and local schools.

Send notification to the media at least a week ahead of your tour.

If you'd like media representatives to attend your event, contact local newspapers, radio and television stations, concentrating on those that have an interest in business news. When you describe your event, focus on explaining why the media representative should be interested in it — why it's newsworthy. Be sure to include all pertinent details, including date, time, location, who will be involved, and a short description of your company's products, the number of workers you employ and any other interesting details.

Coordinate efforts with tour participants.

Tour participants, especially public officials, may want to coordinate efforts with you and issue a joint press release or publish similar information in their areas. Remember, publicity of these events is mutually beneficial. If a presentation or interview is planned, be sure your company's sign or logo is visible.



What Should I Say?

One of the biggest concerns manufacturers have about giving plant tours is what to say or show tour participants. Immersed in the manufacturing environment every day, it may seem difficult for you to sort out what is important or interesting to visitors.

Don't worry. You will be surprised how easy it is and how interested tour participants will be with even simple operations. The sounds, sights and uniqueness of the surroundings will speak for themselves to a large degree.

Many participants have never visited a manufacturing facility before. They will have questions about the process and the product. By asking tour groups what their special interests are prior to the tour, you'll be able to tailor the tour content and highlights to really captivate your audience.

A strong presentation should include specific figures that are relevant both to your business and to manufacturing. Utilize your staff to research the most current information so that it is available the day of the tour.

Information about manufacturing's role in our state economy may also be useful for your tour participants. MMA has compiled the following statistics to assist you.

- Michigan employs the fifth highest number of manufacturing workers in the U.S., more than 670,000 people.
- Manufacturing contributes nearly \$76.3 billion to the Michigan Gross State Product, far outranking other economic sectors, including real estate (\$42.9 billion), professional and technical services (\$29 billion), health care (\$26.3 billion) and finance and insurance (\$22 billion).
- Michigan manufacturers helped our state to export \$3,523 worth of goods for every person in Michigan in 2004. This is the sixth highest per capita export rate in the nation.
- There are approximately 16,000 manufacturing facilities in Michigan, representing every county in the state.
- Michigan manufacturers pay the highest average wages to production workers in the nation, at more than \$20 per hour. The average pay for all of Michigan's manufacturing employees is more than \$56,000 per year.
- Michigan ranks second in the U.S. in total industrial research and development spending — \$18 billion worth annually.
- Michigan manufacturers contribute more than \$1.5 billion toward educational, cultural, human services and other charitable initiatives.



Guide for Manufacturers

Participation Form

This form is also available online:
<http://www.mma-net.org/mmweek/planttour.asp>

Manufacturer Information

Company name: _____

Company contact: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Company address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Check if you want MMA
to find a school for you

School Information

School name: _____

School contact: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Tour participant special needs: _____

Tour Information

Preferred date(s) of tour(s): _____

Preferred start time(s): _____ Preferred finish time(s): _____

Number of groups: _____ Maximum group size: _____

Can you accommodate those with disabilities/special needs? yes no

Media recognition/participation: yes no

Government official(s) requested: _____

Please return completed form by mail to:

Kellie Garrett
Michigan Manufacturers Association
P.O. Box 14247
Lansing MI 48901-4247

or fax to: **517-372-3322**.

For more information, call **517-487-8542** or e-mail garrett@mma-net.org.