

how-to guide: giving a company tour

This guide will assist you in planning a company tour for members of your community such as school groups, potential employees and the general population.

what are the benefits of giving a tour?

- *Raise your company's profile within the community, especially among job seekers.*
- *Build relationships with parents and educators who influence young people in career decisions.*
- *Start your "future employee candidate" list from visiting students who show interest in your company.*
- *Spread the word about the incredibly rewarding careers in the field of industrial distribution.*

what kind of preparations do I need to make before a tour?

a few weeks or days before your company tour:

- Prepare for a tour the same way you would prepare to invite guests to your home. Catch up on general housekeeping both inside and outside of your facility to make sure all is clean and neat. If something is broken, fix it or remove it before the tour. Make the best impression for your visitors. Think of them as your future employee recruits and/or customers.
- Students love giveaways. Plan to give a small token of your appreciation for their visit (preferably with your company name and/or logo prominently displayed).
- Food always goes over well for students as well as adults. If you will be providing breakfast, lunch or a snack, order ahead of time.
- Confirm with the group details like arrival time, parking suggestions, tour length, any special requirements (e.g., wear closed toe shoes and long pants).
- If any safety items are needed, make sure to have enough on hand for everyone on the tour.
- Think about how people will be moving around the facility. Is it all under one roof or do they need to travel from one building to another? How will you accomplish this for a group of people? Can they walk or do you need transportation? Is everyone in the group capable of making it up and down steep ramps, stairways or ladders?

on the day of your company tour:

- Depending on your company procedures, you may need to have a sign-in sheet. This is also a great way to collect names and contact information for follow-up if you find a potential candidate you'd like to talk with later.
- If you will be taking the tour to a part of your facility where safety equipment is required, make sure you have it readily available for everyone.
- Be sure to have a safe place to stash jewelry, coats and other personal belongings, just in case your visitors need to remove these items before touring your facility.

during the tour:

As you lead the tour through your facility, think about how an audience with little experience in industrial distribution will be viewing the place. Point out company culture touchstones such as signage and employee gathering places. Do you have an employee softball team? How did they do last year? Do some of the employees shoot hoops during lunch break? Show how working at your company can be fun and builds camaraderie among coworkers.

post-tour:

When the tour is over, bring them back together and conduct a de-briefing. Ask your guests if they have any questions now that the tour is finished. Do a brief wrap-up of what they saw. Ask them questions to gauge what they learned. For example, ask what their favorite part of the tour was. Extend an invitation to any person who wants to learn more to set up an informational interview or email you with any questions they have later. Give them your business card along with the giveaways you have prepared in advance for them.

- *Send a thank you email to the instructor who brought the class*

faq's

what kind of questions do you get from the participants?

Questions run the gamut, depending on the group.

Students may want to know about the level of education you need for an entry level position. They are also curious about the products and where and how they are used.

Some teachers help prepare their students before the tour by discussing the tour in class. Others may turn the field trip into an assignment of sorts and require students to find out certain facts about the company such as when the business started, what kind of technology is used, etc.

Knowing your audience is important prior to giving the tours. Say your company is employee-owned, you might get questions about company culture as well as about products, inventory, delivery, history of the company and people. Knowing your audience will help you prepare for questions.

here are some examples of real questions asked by students:

- What's a typical day like at your company?
- What level of education is required to begin a career in industrial distribution?
- Do I need to go to college to be able to work here?
- Do you work weekends?
- How do I know if I qualify to get a job here?
- How did you learn so much about parts inside plants?

Typically, tour groups are curious to know about the products inventoried. Provide some examples of how specific parts are used by your customers and how the parts work. Questions relating to logistics and human resources, such as salary and benefits, also come up when a tour group is comprised of potential job-seekers. Two questions that top the list at student career fairs are: "How much money do you make?" and "What kind of car do you drive?"

do you provide any refreshments or giveaways?

Everyone loves food and freebies. If you don't have a place to have a meal, you can offer coffee or bottled water and cookies. We usually provide lunch and sit with those touring to answer questions and discuss various topics.

If you have promotional items with your company name or logo on them, whatever it is, the students LOVE these things. It also gets your company name out in front of more than just the students that complete the tour. Plus, it helps them remember your company when they are ready to find employment.

You can also give out the flyers and giveaways. It's a good idea to provide a flyer on the company that explains the various job opportunities within your company.



what do visitors like the best?

Every visitor to your facility will have a favorite part of the tour, depending upon their own individual situation and interests. Some guests comment on the feeling they get when they walk in the door and feel the culture. Everyone they run into is friendly, willing to help and excited to talk about the company. The cultural pieces are always the ones that stand out. Some really like cookies and any hands-on activities. Some might enjoy learning about how distributors operate and how we fit into the bigger economy in this area of the country.

how long does the tour last?

All agree the length of your tour should depend on your guests. Student tours should probably be no more than an hour and a half. Teachers must account for student travel times and their school schedule. Tours for customer groups or members of the community could extend longer, depending on the guests.

Be sure to discuss the tour length ahead of schedule with the group's leader/planner so there are no surprises. Try to be flexible during the tour. If you find your guests become interested in one topic or another during the tour, let them linger there a little longer and cut the next part a little shorter. Always have an exit plan in mind, in case things need to wrap up quickly.

how can I organize and offer a tour with a school in my area?

That's where HARDI comes in. If you are interested in offering a school tour, contact us to help. At absolutely no cost to you, we make contact with schools in your area to discover interested teachers and/or "right fit" programs that could benefit from a tour. Then, we help you determine the time/schedule that works best for you. Generally with school tours, the school/instructor is responsible for transportation and other details. All you need to do is welcome your tour group and guide the tour.

We will uncover as much information as possible in advance of the tour to help you plan. This includes name and contact information, student grade level and interest, and available tour schedule times. Generally, once the tour day and time is set, we will connect teacher and tour guide for any last minute details and arrangements.

when is the best time to conduct a tour?

Events such as National Manufacturing Day (the first Friday of October) present a golden opportunity to showcase your facility to your community, but company tours can be offered any time of the year. Student tours tend to be conducted in fall and spring.

If you're ready to conduct a tour of your facility,

contact us at 614.345.4328

and we'll work to connect you with a school in your area interested in a tour.

we're here to help