

Kent ISD



INDUSTRY TOURS

Information Packet

Overview

Program Goals

Kent ISD's Industry Tours are designed to increase student awareness of the diverse careers available and to expand the talent pipeline in the Kent County area. Students will participate in a small group tour with professionals in the Grand Rapids area to better understand the skills required for success, the academic training needed, the different working environments available, and the career paths that exist for those interested in that field.

More than a simple field trip or site visit, an industry tour is designed and structured to meet specific learning outcomes, be educationally rich, and build awareness of the business, industry sector, its role in the economy, and the career options it provides.

Schools or teachers can initiate company tours by reaching out to local employers. Companies can also initiate them by offering tours to schools in their communities. Tours can be for students at all grade levels, from elementary through high school.

An Industry Tour is conducted at a workplace for small groups and involves preparation and follow-up in the classroom.

What are the benefits of the Industry Tours?

For employers:

- Showcases the place of work by increasing visibility in the community
- Prepares our future work force
- Informs students about careers in their industry or line of work
- Enables employees to easily participate in a community activity
- Strengthens and promotes involvement in education

For employees:

- Introduce the world of work to a young person in a very brief timeframe
- Become a positive adult role model
- Showcases the career mentor's skills and education
- Impacts a young person's life in a fun way

For students:

- Explores career options of their choice
- Learns what fields of interest are like in real life
- Deepens their understanding of the demands, rewards, and challenges of a chosen career
- Gains an overview of the world of work and career opportunities available

- Formulate realistic career goals
- Understand the connection between school, work, and their goals for the future

Making it Effective and Educational

BEFORE THE TOUR

COORDINATE WITH THE SCHOOL OR TEACHER ABOUT LOGISTICS. Establish contact with the school or the classroom teacher so you understand their expectations and requirements.

Logistical questions to discuss

- ✓ How long should we schedule the tour? (Note that student tours often last for 60 to 90 minutes; for longer tours, you might want to include more breaks for Q&A time, hands-on activities and other opportunities to break out of the “talking at the students” mode.)
- ✓ How many students will be on the tour? How many teachers and other adults?
- ✓ Can the tour include lunch?
- ✓ Make sure to provide information they need to make the visit a success, including:
 - Where to park/what entrance to use
 - Where you will meet them
 - What safety requirements students and adults on the tour will have to follow
 - What students and teachers should wear (are your facilities cold/hot?)
 - What else to bring (bag lunches, water, etc.)

CONNECT IT TO THE CLASSROOM

Find out who the students are and what they will be learning about in class so that you can connect your company’s operations to the teacher’s learning objectives

Questions for the school or teacher

- ✓ What is the background of the students in class?
- ✓ What are your learning objectives for this Industry Tour? Are there any specific connections you are trying to make or reinforce? Are there any questions about jobs/careers the students should be able to answer after the tour?
- ✓ What are the students currently learning? What level of understanding do they already have about the featured industry/occupations?
- ✓ Are there plans to have the students reflect or report out on what they learned during the Industry Tour? How can the company support this goal?

Preparing your Workplace

LINE UP A VARIETY OF EMPLOYEES TO SPEAK TO STUDENTS

One employee may end up leading the tour, but make sure to involve other workers so students have a complete picture of the variety of jobs and careers in your company and your industry. Make sure featured employees represent different aspects of the company's work, different skill sets and educational backgrounds, as well as diversity in terms of gender and race/ethnicity. Young employees can be especially good at connecting with youth.

- ✓ Be sure to prep all employees who will be presenting to the students so they understand their roles.

Organize Hands-on Activities, if possible

- ✓ Think about how to get students involved in your company's work in a more direct way. Can they give some of the equipment a test run?
- ✓ Can they create an artifact of your company's product to take home? Can they get their hands on some of the raw materials that go into your products?
- ✓ Safety should be your primary concern when creating opportunities for students to experience your company's operations in a more direct way.

SCHEDULE A LUNCH OR WATER/SNACK BREAK

- ✓ If students are going to be on site for more than an hour or two, talk to the school or teacher about including lunch or a snack break on the agenda. You may consider checking with the teacher food allergies.

This might be an opportunity for students to sit briefly with employees and talk in a more casual way about their jobs.

PROVIDE TAKEAWAY MATERIALS AND FREEBIES

- ✓ Make sure you have attractive, informative materials to share about your company, including brochures and other handouts that students can take home.
- ✓ Can you share an example or artifact of a company product? Consider putting those materials in a gift bag for each student, along with company freebies such as note pads, pens, or other giveaway items. Avoid highly technical materials or materials that are full of jargon.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Coordinate with your company's security office about identification requirements and badging, as well as other policies for visitors.
- ✓ Ensure that none of the tours occur in areas that are off-limits to visitors.

- ✓ Make sure all students and adults on the tour receive relevant safety instruction.
- ✓ Advise all tour participants about the “rules of the road” for the tour—no wandering off, wear safety equipment as appropriate, etc.
- ✓ Provide necessary safety gear for all participants—eye goggles, earplugs, hard hats, gloves, etc.

What should we expect when students arrive?

The objective of this tour experience is to allow students to get a “behind the scenes” glimpse at of the work you do and learn about your company and industry. Below are some suggestions to make the scheduled afternoons enjoyable for both student and mentors.

Welcome/Introductions

- ✓ Have a designated representative welcome your student.
- ✓ Consider a quick orientation:
 - Invite students to gather in a conference room or other large space for a quick overview of the company and its industry, history and operations, as well as any safety tips they need to know.
 - Discuss how many people work for the company, and provide a quick overview of the various types of jobs they hold.
 - Give the students a preview of what they are going to see on the tour. Consider using a brief (no more than three-minute) video or slide presentation as part of the orientation and make sure to point out where restrooms and water are a part of your orientation
- ✓ Provide a tour of your workplace/offices
- ✓ Identify other staff that students may meet/shadow during the tour. Students will benefit from hearing multiple perspectives, when possible.

During the Tour

- ✓ Staff who interact with students should be prepared to explain their current/past roles with the company and the associated responsibilities. Engage in brief discussion of: different departmental functions, job titles, educational preparation, pay ranges, and relationships between suppliers and customers as applicable.

- ✓ Encourage students to talk about their interests and abilities. Incorporate that information into discussions about employment choices or offer suggestions for training or experience.
- ✓ Visuals are worth a thousand words! With safety in mind, show or demonstrate what happens at your company whenever possible. For example, students could be given an opportunity to perform a function/task or be allowed to sit in on a team meeting.
- ✓ Show them the industry tools which include from software, actual equipment, or even the "people skills" necessary in your line of work.
- ✓ Discuss math, science, and communication foundations of the job.
- ✓ Consider providing students with any resources that you think may be helpful to their exploration of engineering careers.
- ✓ Meet students where they are in their varying levels of career maturity; clarify misconceptions and support them in their efforts to explore the field of engineering.

Questions Students May Ask

There will likely be others, but mentors may want to share with students responses related to the following questions:

Best Practice – Offer your answer to this question: What were you thinking of doing after high school when you were 16 or 17 years old? Was this what you thought you would do? **Students love to know how you got from “here to there”.**

1. When did you decide to pursue a career in this field?
2. What other jobs did you consider before deciding on this one?
3. What skills and education are required for your current position?
4. What do you like most about your job?
5. What do you like least about your job?
6. What is a typical day like? What are your hours/days of work?
7. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
8. Do you work alone or on team most often?
9. What can cause stress in this job?
10. What is your perception of the job outlook for this career?
11. What are some of the surprises you have had in this job?
12. Were you employed in another profession before coming into this position?

13. If so, why did you change professions?
14. What kind of training do companies like yours provide incoming employees? What do you expect to be learned beforehand?
15. What advice would you give to those considering this same career?

Following up

EVALUATE IT

In your follow-up contacts with the school, evaluate whether the classroom visit met the school's goals and your goals. Consider developing a brief survey to capture student reflections along with how the Industry Tour impacted learning and career awareness.

THINK ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT

Speak with the school or teacher about offering follow-up activities to give students additional connections to your industry, including other work-based learning activities (job shadows, internships, and guest speakers) and project based learning activities. Continued support of the school's curriculum and classroom goals is an excellent workforce development strategy.

Employer Safety Guidelines

The following standards are presented to help employers understand the practices expected of them as sponsors of student programming. While these standards seem to be self-evident, it is important to list them.

Conduct Standards

Sponsors should instruct their employees or volunteers to not:

- Have any inappropriate contact with any student met through their job shadowing, including those students 18 years of age or older.
- Engage in any job shadowing experience with any student without the prior consent of the student's parents.
- Some examples of inappropriate conduct include, but are not limited to:
 - Violations of state laws regarding child abuse, and/or providing alcohol or controlled substances to minors.

- Use of profanity or inappropriate language in the classroom or workplace.
- Physical contact which is inappropriate to a mentor-pupil professional relationship considering the age and sex of the student.

Facilities Safety

If a student is injured at your worksite, seek immediate medical attention.

If the injury is not serious, the student may go to his/her own doctor. All injuries, including minor ones, must be reported to Kent ISD.

Transportation

Students and sponsors should meet at the primary location of the employer; sponsors agree to not transport students elsewhere (e.g., job sites, client offices) without prior written consent from students' legal guardians.

Health and Safety

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) regulations that apply to the workplace also apply to the student. The Kent ISD Program Coordinator and employer will define the health and safety issues at the worksite in advance and coordinate how the necessary safety instruction will be delivered to the students.

Non-Discrimination

Employers are expected to adhere to Kent ISD's non-discrimination policy. "It is the policy of the Kent ISD School Board that no student, staff member or candidate for any position in the District shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, height, weight, veteran status, political belief or disability which does not impair their ability to perform adequately in the individual's particular position or activity, excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity for which the Kent ISD School Board is responsible for or receives financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education."

Harassment: Sexual and Racial

Employers should uphold policies and procedures for addressing sexual and racial harassment. All policies that apply to employees should apply to students in job shadows during their experience at the job site. Employers must make it clear that harassment is a serious matter and will not be tolerated. It is important to protect the rights of the students at the workplace and create a safe and supportive environment for learning.

Kent ISD Career Readiness Team Support

Our team can help make connections between schools and employers. Please reach out to discuss your interest in planning or hosting a local Industry Tour. We will work with you to facilitate a valuable career exploration event for local students.

Reach us at careerexploration@kentisd.org

