Manufacturing Month: Activity Planning Tool Kit

The Manufacturers Association (MACNY) and Partners for Education & Business (PEB) are excited that you are considering hosting students for a site visit. Please see below for easy to facilitate activities to do with students.

Spaghetti and Marshmallow Challenge

Students work together in small groups to build the tallest free-standing tower using only spaghetti and marshmallows. This fun challenge encourages teamwork, creative thinking, communication, and problem-solving as teams figure out the strongest design.

Materials: Spaghetti, marshmallows, and an open area where towers can safely fall.

Possible Modifications: Have each student use only one hand to encourage stronger communication and collaboration. You can also set a time limit or reduce the number of materials to make the challenge more difficult.

Blindfolded Obstacle Course

Students are divided into teams of three or four and work together to complete a simple obstacle course. One student wears a blindfold while their teammates guide them through the course using only verbal directions. This activity helps build trust, communication, listening skills, and teamwork. For a little friendly competition, teams can race against each other, with the fastest team earning a small prize.

Materials: Hula hoops, cones, balloons, ropes, wooden planks or balance beams, and old tires. Companies can choose the obstacles that best fit their space while keeping safety a priority.

Team Scavenger Hunt

Students work in small groups to complete a scavenger hunt throughout the manufacturing facility. Along the way, they discover important equipment, products, and processes while learning how different parts of the business work together. Company staff can briefly explain each stop, giving students a better understanding of what the company does, how it is produced, and the variety of careers available.

Materials: A list of five to ten items or locations to find, during the tours it's important that the students know beforehand where is safe to go and where places are strictly off limits. Staff members available to explain each location or item.

Create Your Own Game

- Students work together to invent a game using simple materials provided by the company. After creating the game, each team explains the rules, demonstrates how to play, and invites the rest of the group to participate.
- This activity encourages creativity, collaboration, leadership, and communication while giving students the chance to think outside the box.
- Materials the company could provide: An open indoor or outdoor space and optional supplies such as cones, balls, rope, or other simple equipment. Providing a quick example beforehand can help students understand what is expected.

Product Assembly Challenge

- Students work in teams to assemble a simple product or complete a short building challenge within 10 to 15 minutes. The activity highlights the importance of teamwork, following directions, problem-solving, and attention to detail, all of which are valuable skills in manufacturing.
- Possible activities include LEGO building challenges, cardboard construction projects, paper engineering activities, STEM or engineering kits, or simple assembly kits. The first team to successfully complete the challenge could receive a small prize.
- Materials needed: Assembly kits or building materials, tables, and workspace.

Repurposing Trash Challenge

- Students use recycled or reusable materials to design and build a new product with a useful purpose. Afterward, each team presents its creation, explaining what it does, how it works, and why they designed it that way. This hands-on activity encourages creativity, engineering, teamwork, and environmental awareness while showing how everyday materials can be given a second life.

Quality Control Relay: Students experience the role of quality control by working in teams to create identical paper shapes or simple products. One team member serves as the quality control inspector, checking each finished item against the original design and identifying any errors. This activity demonstrates why consistency, accuracy, and attention to detail are so important in manufacturing while reinforcing communication and teamwork in a fun, interactive way.