

Career Exploration Field Trips



What is a Career Exploration Field Trip?

A career exploration field trip takes students to a workplace where they can learn more about that company, observe employees in their typical work routines, and ask questions of employees and owners. It is an ideal opportunity for students to take their first steps into Maine's tourism and hospitality industry and begin envisioning their futures within it. Hosting a field trip is a lot of fun and makes a great impact, but does take a bit of planning. This guide will help you prepare for a truly meaningful event.

We recommend involving as many employees in the visit as possible so students can have plenty of attention during their visit. We recommend the ratio of 1 employee per 5-7 students. Tours will focus on 9th-12th grade students, but may be expanded to other age groups in the future.

Consider the Benefits

Benefits for the Student

- Students see a functional workplace and get a first-hand feel for working in the hospitality and tourism industry.
- Students meet with professionals and gain real-world insights into jobs and careers.
- Students can get more comfortable seeing themselves in a given work environment.

Benefits for the Employer

- Employers can nurture student interest in jobs and careers they may never have otherwise considered.
- Employers can introduce job opportunities that high school kids could start now, with an eye toward future careers.
- Employers will advance their reputation as supporters of education and as community leaders among school leaders, teachers, parents, and students.

Benefits for the Employees

- Employees have an opportunity to connect with local students and reflect on their jobs, their careers, and the skills they use every day.
 - Employees gain valuable experience in public speaking and in serving as ambassadors for their companies.
 - Employees increase their job satisfaction after connecting with youth in their communities.
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Before the Tour

Coordinate with MTA about Logistics

Make sure to give Maine Tourism Association the information we'll need to make the visit a success:

- Where to park/what entrance to use
- Where you will meet the students
- What safety requirements students and adults on the tour will have to follow
- What students/teachers should wear (Are your facilities indoors/outdoors? Do they need non-slip shoes?)
- Whether the tour will provide lunch/snacks
- What else to bring (bag lunches, water, etc.)

Organize Hands-On Activities, When Possible

Consider 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 get their hands on some of the raw materials that go into your products? Of course, safety should be your primary concern when creating opportunities for students to experience your company's operations. The more interactive the visit, the more likely student will want to learn more. Here are some possible suggestions:

Lodging	Sheet folding Olympics, mock guest room inspections, making a guest room reservation, mock phone call answering, hands-on groundskeeping/gardening
Food and Beverage	Cookie or cupcake decorating, sandwich preparation, Point of Sale system demonstration, dishwashing trials, mocktail mixing
Retail	Gift wrapping tutorial, mock customer interactions
Outdoor Recreation	Knot tying with rope, basic trail maintenance, timed boat holdings, boat races
Office	Software demonstrations, revenue management exercise, activities around scheduling, mock phone calls, brainstorming about a marketing campaign
Arts and Attractions	Tour of museum archives, faux art restoration, lost and found "auction," rotational scavenger/treasure hunt, mock board meeting
Other ideas	Fixing or refinishing a project, small engine maintenance, mini-carpentry projects

Be Prepared with Answers

Make sure employees are prepared to talk with students about the following topics:

- What is your job with the company?
- What was your pathway to the job? What did you study in school, and what level of education do you have?
- What were your plans when you were the age of the young people on the tour?
- What is it like to do your work (including a description of your typical day and your responsibilities)?
- What are the educational and skill requirements for people in your position? For others in the company and the industry?
- What are some of the skills you apply on the job on an everyday basis, including math, science, writing, and communications?
- How much do you work alone, and how much do you work as part of a team?

During the Tour

Welcome the Students

Designate people to welcome the students and give them a quick overview of the company and its industry, history, and operations, as well as any safety information they should know. Discuss how many people work for the company and provide a quick overview of the types of jobs they hold.

Be sure to introduce everyone--nametags are a big help. Make sure to point out where restrooms and water are a part of your orientation! Try not to lecture for more than 10 minutes maximum--you will lose students' attention if they aren't able to work on a project or interact with you.

Activities to Incorporate

1. Give a tour of the facilities.
2. Meet different employees in different departments and allow students to speak with them and ask questions.
3. Present the backgrounds of different employees and the path they took to get where they are/plans for future career development.
4. Set up hands-on stations where students can try out activities of the business, if possible
5. Provide lunch or snacks if possible – this can be especially effective if food and beverage is a part of your business!
6. Assign 5-7 kids to one employee and rotate through an area with them or do an activity with them in that area.

Make an Impression

Leave students with an exciting picture of what it is like to work at your company, and make sure they understand what skills, degrees, or certifications they need to enter a career in our industry.

If possible, provide attractive, informative materials to share about your company, including brochures and other handouts students can take home. Do you have company products, promotional materials, or items for guests you could share? Consider putting those types of materials in a gift bag for each student, if you have them.

After the Tour

Think About What's Next

Maine Tourism Association will follow up with you after the field trip to make sure the visit met your expectations. Did the trip meet your goals? Are there things we could improve for next time?

We will also speak with you about offering follow-up activities to give students an even closer look at your company and jobs in our industry, including job shadowing and internship opportunities. MTA will discuss options and how to proceed with you.

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Thank you!