

How to get the most out of hosting a **SteelDay** event in 2010.

It's a **STEEL**-ebration

PART 1

BY ROSS ALLBRITTON AND WALT PRIMER

STEELDAY WAS CREATED in 2009 to celebrate the structural steel industry's contribution to building America. SteelDay 2010 is set for Friday, September 24, and it's not too early—or too late—to make plans to host an event.

Across the nation, steel fabricators, mills, service centers, galvanizers, HSS producers, bender-rollers and others will open their facilities, job-sites, and offices, offering tours and inviting the AEC community and general public to see what we can do, and how we can do it. The result is an unparalleled interactive networking event for members of the design, construction and structural steel industry.

SteelDay events are happening across industry segments throughout the United States. As of June 1, there were already 131 events scheduled. And in 2010, the celebration also has expanded to other parts of the globe, with events scheduled in Canada and Italy.



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Why You Should Be a Host

There are several direct benefits to hosting a SteelDay event. Among them are:

- In a single day, you can proudly demonstrate your organization's expertise to professionals from across the industry. A typical comment from last year's attendees was along the lines of, "I have been designing for 15+ years, and if I had ever seen exactly how you do it before, my designs would have been much better."
- By becoming a part of SteelDay you will benefit from AISC's national advertising and awareness campaigns. These include print advertising and a SteelDay website that lists all the events so people can see who and where events are being offered.
- You can also take advantage of SteelDay logos and other branding materials to use in your outgoing communications. Planning materials are also available. Some of the most successful event hosts of 2009 said that all they did to drive people to their event was to follow the instructions on the SteelDay Hosts web page.
- Hosting a SteelDay event is a great way to leverage your AISC membership. Among other things, it reminds your visitors that you are an integral part of a national group supporting the highest quality construction through the use of structural steel.



AISC staged its 2009 SteelDay event in Chicago's Millennium Park featuring two stilt-walking "Men of Steel" as well as a variety of learning stations, walking tours, and lunch.

Things to Consider

The theme of SteelDay is to "Interact. Learn. Build." It is an opportunity to educate people about steel construction, to network with other building professionals, and build more steel projects. Here are some simple ideas that will help you get the most value out of SteelDay 2010:

- Host an event. Step one is to decide to get involved. Any AISC member organization can participate. Whether you are an architect or fabricator (or anyone in between), you can receive the benefits of hosting a SteelDay event. Once you choose to be a host, your AISC support staff can help guide you through the steps to a successful event.
- Your event can be as simple as just opening your doors and inviting your customers in. Offering coffee and snacks provides a bit of friendly hospitality.
- Partner with another organization and host a multi-facility tour. How many of your target prospects have seen a galvanizing operation? You could take the attendee on a trip through the process from design to fabrication, from coating to erection.
- Arrange a jobsite tour with the owners/contractors/architects of a local steel-framed project for a tour of the job site under construction. Explain any challenges and how you overcame them with structural steel.
- Invite *all* your contacts. The more people you invite, the more will come. You may be surprised by who can influence a project. For example, if you typically communicate with structural engineers, take this opportunity to reach out to architects. You have the power of a national campaign to help give you local exposure. Don't forget to invite:
 - Community members. Bring them into your shop and office for lunch and a demonstration.
 - Your local business development commissioners.
 - The local media. This is a local opportunity to cover a national event.
 - Students. They are the builders of tomorrow.
 - Local chapters of industry associations (AIA, SEA, etc.).
 - Owners. Many of these senior development professionals are most directly affected by your capabilities and few have had the chance to visit your operation.
- Network. This is possibly the best part of the day. It is a chance to ask and be asked questions that directly influence the industry's local and national business environment.
- Offer a seminar. Give a presentation about your company, or an educational seminar. Become known as the person to come to for answers.

Top 3 Reasons For Not Hosting a SteelDay Event

1. My facility is a secret. I can't risk others knowing where I am or what I do. That would just get people excited about the possibilities, and my shop could get so full that I might have to hire more people, and that's a hassle.
2. My expertise is a secret. I have already established relationships with everyone that could possibly be doing anything in steel. Meeting new people would just lead

to them calling with questions. Once they see what I can do, they may want to include me in projects to see what the best approach might be. That could lead to being part of a project team, and teams are a hassle.

3. My quality is a secret. If outsiders were to meet our people and see how much they care about what they produce, they might have an expectation that the next job they send us may save them time in the field. And quality is a hassle.

Here are several more ideas for specific types of hosting opportunities.

Engineers & Architects

- Invite your current and potential clients, as well as your vendors and other firms with whom you work to tour your office.
- Put together a self-guided tour of local (“hometown”) projects that are steel-framed, like historic structures, etc. You can download an example from AISC’s SteelTools website by visiting <http://bit.ly/cOFRiA>.

Fabricators, Galvanizers, Producers

- Consider a multi-company tour. Last year there was an event in Tacoma, Wash., that included a cocktail reception, presentations and acknowledgements from the developer, general contractor, architect, structural engineer, erector and fabricator followed by an onsite tour of the in-progress steel-framed project.
- Set up an exchange day. Your staff visits one of your supplier’s facilities in the morning and they visit yours in the afternoon.

- Demonstrate the process. One idea floating around this year is to have a bus take people from a steel service center, to a fabricator, to a bender-roller and then to a galvanizer. Many in the A/E/C world have not seen all the pieces of the process.

Clearly there are as many different ways to host a SteelDay event as there are participants in the industry. There are many benefits beyond those that we have touched upon. To see what last year’s hosts had to say about participating in SteelDay 2009, visit www.aisc.org/2009HostRef.aspx.

A SteelDay event can be a great place to build new and solidify existing relationships. It can deepen your business relationships. You can shine as an industry expert, and meet and learn from other industry experts. You can answer questions, get your questions answered, and if you are not careful, probably have a lot of fun. Join the celebration!

To learn more about any aspect of SteelDay, visit www.steelday.org. **MSC**

SteelDay 2010 in Salina

Mark Hamade is passionate about the opportunities SteelDay offers. As the chief human resources officer at Salina, Kan.-based PKM Steel Service, Hamade is planning an impressive event. “My goal is 1,000 people at our site,” Hamade says.

In addition to a lunch of burgers and brats, PKM will offer a short presentation on the company and its operations, followed by a facility and shop tour. But that’s not all.

Hamade’s short list includes:

- Ensuring that everyone within the organization knows about SteelDay 2010.
- Mailing SteelDay information to architects, engineers, contractors, technical university contacts, customers, bankers, insurers, family and friends.
- Issuing a press release and working with the local chamber of commerce, newspaper, television, and radio.
- Inviting the mayor and the governor.

Additionally, he is working on having a radio station on premises, and even perhaps even streaming the live event. Wouldn’t that make this SteelDay event one to keep an eye on?