



OPENING FESTIVAL

AN OPENING FESTIVAL CAN DOUBLE AS A *DREAM BIG* FILM PREMIERE!

An Opening Festival held at museums and science centers where the film premieres offers a great opportunity to tie the *Dream Big* film to an institution-wide event. It can be promoted jointly as the ***Dream Big* Film and Festival!** Hosting a festival featuring family-friendly activity stations and local engineers will make a BIG impression in your community.

If you open the film in February, you can tie in with Engineers Week, but an Opening Festival can be successful any time of the year.

WHAT AN OPENING FESTIVAL OFFERS

- Festivals fill your space with multiple hands-on activity stations, demos, and other programs selected to engage families and visitors of all ages.
- Festivals attract exhibitors from local engineering societies, engineering companies, and other educational groups. Invite at least 25 exhibitors. They will conduct hands-on activities, demos, and other educational programs, all geared toward getting families and students turned on to engineering and STEM.
- Festivals harness the power of the local engineering community (organizations, companies, and universities) to promote the event, provide volunteers, and recruit sponsors. Involve them in the early planning.

OPTIONS FOR ORGANIZING A FESTIVAL: FIND THE BEST MODEL FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

1. One-Day Event on a Weekend: Hold the event on a Saturday and design a day that will attract a family audience.

Example: **National Building Museum in Washington, DC**

The annual DiscoverE Family Festival attracts 8,000–10,000 visitors to this all-day event featuring 40 activity stations sponsored and staffed by local engineering groups.

2. Two-Day Event: Invite schools for Friday’s activities and create a day for families and the general public on Saturday.

- A lot of work goes into contacting local engineers and setting up demos or activity stations; capitalize on that effort with a two-day event.
- Friday: Use activities for younger students and provide career information for high school students.
- Saturday: Some of the same activities can be used on Saturday, but expand with *Dream Big* activity resources.

3. One-Day Event on a Weekday: Focus on students.

Example: **McWane Science Center in Birmingham.**

An annual Engineering Showcase features more than 20 engineering exhibitors interacting with 1,000+ students from local schools. The program is sponsored by a local engineering company.

4. Family Night: Choose weekday or weekend nights.

Example: **Maryland Science Center & Science Museum of Minnesota**

Family Engineering Night, an event held on a weekday or weekend evening, features hands-on activities. Engineers volunteer at the activity stations or demos.

5. “Engineer It!” Weekend Event

Example: **Pacific Science Center, Seattle**

This partnership between the museum and the engineering organization NCEES brought in Nate Ball, a celebrity engineer, for a special day of presentations. Nate used the Atlas Power Ascender, which he invented, to ascend the Science Center’s 100-foot-high white arch.

PROGRAMMING IDEAS

Dream Big Activities: Choose activities that directly complement content in the *Dream Big* film, such as:

- Windy City Tower – Experience what it takes to build a skyscraper that won't fall over in the wind.
- Build an Earthquake Resistant Structure – Use marshmallows and toothpicks to build a structure that can withstand an earthquake.
- Strongest Shapes – Build a bridge using index cards and only one shape that is strong enough to support a toy car.
- Cable-Stayed Bridge (perfect for your theater lobby) – Make a model just like a real one, with bridge segments suspended from towers.
- Make Your Own Glue – Learn how to make sticky glue, just like the builders of the Great Wall of China, who used sticky rice to hold the bricks together in some remote areas of the wall.
- Slender Tower Challenge – Explore how to build a tall building on the smallest footprint.
- Daylight in a Bottle – Make a simple device that diffuses sunlight to illuminate interiors.
- Bridge Design Station – Set up a demo station featuring the Engineering Encounters [bridge design software](#) as shown in the film.
- Virtual Reality Stations – Let visitors walk on the Great Wall or stand atop the Shanghai Tower by showing the *Dream Big* 360 outreach videos.

Print passports so that visitors can get a stamp at each station as they try different activities throughout the day. Download a passport design from the *Dream Big* toolkit.

FIRST STEPS IN PLANNING AN ENGINEERING FESTIVAL

- 1. Contact Gwen Hearn at DiscoverE to get things started.** She will provide expert, comprehensive support. Gwen's contact info: gwen@DiscoverE.org
- 2. Organize a planning committee.**
 - Bring together museum staff, representatives from the local engineering community, engineering companies, and education groups.
 - Engage as many engineering organizations, universities, agencies, and companies as possible.
 - Meet monthly to plan the festival.
 - Designate a volunteer coordinator.
 - Decide on a budget and how you will fund the event. Will exhibitors be asked to provide activity materials and volunteers, with a small fee to cover the cost of rentals and cleaning? Will the museum cover the promotional budget? What about volunteer expenses like T-shirts and refreshments?
- 3. Coordinate event logistics.**
 - Contact exhibitors.
 - Create a registration form and collect contact info.
 - Determine an event timeline and floor plan.
 - Contact rental firms for tables and chairs as needed.
 - Develop event signage. Download *Dream Big* signs and graphics from the *Dream Big* toolkit to enhance the connection to the film.
- 4. Consult with exhibitors on educational content.**
 - Encourage exhibitors to choose activities that relate to *Dream Big*. The activity matrix identifies several.
 - Many engineering companies and professional organizations already have well-developed educational programs and materials, but will also take guidance from your institution.
 - Review all activities to avoid duplication and ensure appropriateness for your space and audience.
 - Other organizations might need help condensing the science and engineering information behind their work into a digestible, hands-on format. Use your communication strengths to assist them.
 - Consider inviting exhibitors to sponsor certain activities—for example, the DOT (Department of Transportation) office might sponsor the maglev train activity, while an architectural engineering firm might sponsor Daylight in a Bottle.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Develop marketing materials.

- Download *Dream Big* materials to create:
 - An email blast
 - Postcards and flyers
 - Signage and banners for museum and activity stations
 - A festival passport (festival goers can check off each station they visit)
- Use social media posts, photos, short videos for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Use *Dream Big* short viral videos in your promotions and at the event.
- Send out a press release.

2. Use all of the internal museum channels.

- Send out email blasts to museum members and group lists like scouts, other youth organizations, and teachers.
- Run articles in museum newsletters. Link to the *Dream Big* viral videos to boost interest.
- Distribute flyers two months before the festival, promoting the event.
- Hang signage in the museum.
- Get the museum’s marketing and social media department engaged in promoting the event.

3. Reach out to partners to promote.

- Provide every exhibitor and each company or engineering society with templates to use to send out email blasts to all of their members, clients, friends, and family.
- Schedule a preview day so that partners and engineer volunteers can see the film before the festival.
- Connect with local colleges and universities—contact engineering classes and departments—and promote to students and professors.

4. Contact local media.

- Get a media partner: newspaper, radio, TV, community organizations, websites.
- Send the info to mommy bloggers.
- Send the info to every engineering company in your city or community.

5. Package the “film and festival” as a must-do event for the weekend.

Visitors can:

- See *Dream Big* on the giant screen and then build a bridge or experience a “shake table” right on the museum floor. Or experiment with a wind tunnel and see how wind affects the design of a skyscraper.
- Build a model of a cable-stayed bridge with an actual bridge engineer!
- Visit the museum’s Maker/Tinker space.
- Walk the Great Wall of China through the wonder of virtual reality.

6. Bring in special speakers or local celebrities.

- Top engineers from the community can speak about local projects.
- Invite astronauts and other high-profile engineers.
- Have teams from student competitions like Future City (middle school), Concrete Canoe (collegiate), or FIRST (high school) showcase their projects.
- Bring in engineers from the *Dream Big* film: contact MacGillivray Freeman for information.

USING *DREAM BIG* MEDIA ASSETS

Visit the Media Assets page of the website for materials to use to enhance and promote your Opening Festival. Here is a short list of assets available:

- *Dream Big* Videos:
 - 10 Educational Videos. These 3–5 minute videos reveal more of the wonder around topics featured in the film and can be programmed with the *Dream Big* activities.
 - 5 Behind-the-Scenes Videos on the Making of the Film. These 3–5 minute videos reveal the stories about making the film and using the giant IMAX® camera on location in China, Australia, Scotland, San Francisco, Phoenix, and other locations.
 - 10+ Viral Videos. A number of viral videos are available for social media.
 - 360-Degree Videos. These special videos provide a 360-degree view of filming the Great Wall of China and filming underwater robots.
- *Dream Big* Photos and Fun Facts: A number of photos from *Dream Big*, and some with fun facts about the film and locations, can be used to promote the Opening Festival.
- *Dream Big* Email Blast Templates, Postcards, Flyers: Use these materials to promote the Opening Festival.

