A short guide to thinking through who to invite and why so your invitations land with the right people for the right reasons.

Why invite guests at all?

Demo Day is built for students first. **But the right guests in the room**— a workforce development director, a school board member, a chamber director, a state or regional education official— **add something real**. They bring visibility for the work happening locally and a chance for people who influence funding, policy or partnerships to see the impact firsthand rather than hear about it secondhand. This is optional, not a requirement, and **a Demo Day without any guests is still a great Demo Day.** But if you have the bandwidth, it's one of the higher-leverage things you can add.

There's no universal guest list

The right guest list looks different everywhere. A small rural event might invite a local school board member and a chamber director. A regional event might reach a state workforce official. Think about who in your own community would genuinely benefit from seeing this, and who would be genuinely moved by it, rather than reaching for a generic list of titles.

Match the invitation to what they care about

Different stakeholders respond to different parts of the story. Framing your invitation and what you highlight when they arrive around their specific interest makes the invitation land better and makes their time feel well spent.

- A **workforce development director** cares about the talent pipeline. Frame the invitation around what this event does for local hiring long-term
- A **school board member** cares about student engagement and outcomes. Frame it around what students are actually getting out of the experience
- A **chamber director** cares about the employer experience. Frame it around how local businesses are showing up and what it does for them
- A **state or regional education official** cares about innovation and seeing students given real opportunities. Frame the invitation around what makes your event a genuinely fresh approach worth witnessing firsthand.

A few things to keep in mind

- Invite guests early enough that they can actually plan to attend, several weeks out if possible, not a last-minute add.
- Give guests a clear sense of what they'll actually see and how long their visit will take.
- Guests are there to observe and be part of the broader conversation, not to be the center of the event. Keep their presence low-key rather than building the day's focus around them.
- A short personal note after the event referencing something specific they saw goes a long way if you want them to stay engaged for future events.