

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER



TRAINER'S GUIDE

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Revised August 2017

Reprints

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INTRODUCTION

This guide shows how to put on a three-part training that teaches rank-and-file workers how to build power on the job, step by step.

This training is designed as a companion to the Labor Notes book *Secrets of a Successful Organizer*, available for individual or bulk orders at www.labornotes.org/secrets.

The guide includes:

- Icebreakers, closing activities, suggested ground rules, and example day-long training agenda
- Training curriculum
- Handouts
- Case studies

The trainer's notes for each workshop tell how much time to spend on each component and what is required to prepare for the workshop, and provide instructions for the training itself.

Parts in normal font are the training script and intended to be spoken out loud.

Parts in *italics* are directions to the trainer.

Parts in **[Bold brackets]** are advice for the trainer.



HANDOUTS



KEY POINTS



**REAL LIFE
STORIES**



POSSIBLE CUT

All the handouts are also available online at www.labornotes.org/secrets. Many of the materials are also available in Spanish.

Some points for trainers:

Organizing is for everyone. This curriculum is aimed directly at union members, but it is useful for a much broader audience. Many organizations, even those not specifically focused on workplaces, can find these organizing lessons useful. A version of this training adapted for worker centers is available in Spanish. Please contact Labor Notes with any questions.

Train together. Organizing isn't a solitary activity, and neither is labor education. Trainers do best when they train together, providing support and feedback. If you or your union are interested in a training of trainers, please call Labor Notes at 718-284-4144 or email training@labornotes.org.

Rank-and-file experiences front and center. In our monthly magazine and in our trainings, Labor Notes strives to put the experiences, creativity, and expertise of workers at the center of what we do. While the skills and techniques in this training guide might be new to many union members, they are hardly new to the labor movement. The fundamentals of organizing taught here arise from the hard-won knowledge of generations of workers. The best way to teach these skills is by creating space for participants to share their own experiences and draw connections.

All teachers, all learners. One of the principles underlying this training is that we are all teachers and we are all learners. Please feel free to modify, edit, add to, and play with this material so that it fits your style, your needs, and your approach. If you develop a new exercise, have a suggestion, or get stuck, please reach out to Labor Notes. We would love to hear from you.

Well begun is half done. Each workshop contains a setup checklist of required materials and actions. Use this list to make sure you are on track to a successful training.

Pace yourself. Each workshop contains a time breakdown at the very beginning. Before the workshop starts, write down the exact time that you should begin each part. This will help you to keep track of your pace and to decide if you need to make changes to get back on schedule.

Thank you. This guide, like with everything we do, is the collective effort of many people. We would like to thank everyone who provided feedback.

EXAMPLE DAY-LONG TRAINING AGENDA

9:00 – 9:30	Food, logistics, trainer intros, ground rules
9:30 – 11:30	Beating Apathy – 2 hours
11:30 – 12:15	Lunch – 45 minutes
12:15 – 2:15	Assembling Your Dream Team – 2 hours
2:15 – 2:30	Break
2:30 – 4:30	Turning an Issue into a Campaign – 2 hours
4:30 – 5:00	Closing

The training curriculum is broken down into three workshops that can be offered individually or as one daylong training:

PART ONE: BEATING APATHY

Are you beating your head against the wall trying to get people involved? This workshop is for you. Hear success stories about how others have turned their workplaces around and turned apathy into action. Learn practical organizing tools for engaging your co-workers, taking action, and getting results.

PART TWO: ASSEMBLING YOUR DREAM TEAM

Your workplace may feel like an unorganized mess, but the truth is you're not starting from zero. There's organization there already—though it might have nothing to do with the union. Learn how to map out the existing networks in your workplace, identify the leaders in those networks, and then knit them together into an organizing committee.

PART THREE: TURNING AN ISSUE INTO A CAMPAIGN

Everybody has complaints and frustrations, but an organizer has the skills to turn problems into opportunities. Learn how to sort the issues you hear from co-workers, bring people together, and make an escalating plan to solve the problem.

GROUND RULES

As a facilitator, your responsibility is to the group and group learning. Innumerable issues can arise in a training, but the question should always be: what does the group need? To help deal with unexpected developments, spend some time laying down ground rules at the start. Ground rules are a group agreement that can be used to help set expectations and then returned to as a guide for behavior.

Here are some examples of ground rules you might want to include:

One Mic

Only one person speaks at a time. No side conversations.

Land the Plane

Get to your point quickly! (can be paired with a hand gesture of a plane landing)

Take Space, Make Space

We want everyone to contribute, so after you speak up, wait for everyone else to have an opportunity to speak before speaking again.

Alphabet Soup: No Acronyms!

If someone says an acronym, immediately ask “What’s that?” (e.g. “COPE” = Committee on Political Education, the union’s voluntary political action fund)

Confusion Clapping

If someone doesn’t understand a term or acronym, they yell out “I’m confused!” and the room cheers them (heartily but quickly) before the facilitator addresses the point.

“What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!”

Let’s keep what happens at the training and what people say confined to the training. Feel free to share all the great lessons and ideas with others, but don’t reveal personal details that others share with the group.

Parking Lot

Have a place in the room where ideas, issues, or concerns that get brought up but can't be directly addressed can be written. Facilitators can then try to follow up if time allows or at another time.

Respect the Agenda

Let's stick to task and to time (can be coupled with parking lot).

"I" statements / Speak from your own experience

If you are giving your opinion or expressing a feeling, then try to use "I" statements to avoid assuming that others think or are feeling the same. Speak for yourself!

Be Curious

Listen to understand, not to defend.

Assume Good Intentions

We are all brothers and sisters, even when we disagree.

No Distractions!

Please silence your phones and put them away.

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

PART 1: BEATING APATHY



UFCW Local 400 (CC BY 2.0) bit.ly/10sm397

PART 1: BEATING APATHY

Total active workshop time: 2 hours

- Introduction/Icebreaker: 10 minutes
- Aim for the Bullseye: 5 minutes
- How Do We Currently Solve Problems?: 15 minutes
- How the Boss Keeps Us Disorganized: 20 minutes
- How to Identify an Organizing Issue: 5 minutes
- How to Have an Organizing Conversation: 65 minutes
 - How to Be a Good Listener: 5 minutes
 - AHUY: 5 minutes
 - Practicing Asking Questions: 10 minutes
 - Types of Questions: 5 minutes
 - Inspiring Hope, Creating Urgency, and Calling the Questions: 5 minutes
 - Example Roleplay: 5 minutes
 - Roleplay: 15 minutes
 - Debrief Roleplay: 5 minutes
 - *BONUS ROUND* Answering Tough Questions and Inoculating: 10 minutes
- Review

Setup (before the workshop starts)



- ☐ Have packets prepared for participants with all the handouts:

- Aim for the Bullseye
- How the Boss Keeps Us Disorganized
- A Good Organizing Issue
- How to Be a Good Listener
- AHUY: Developing a Rap
- Answering Tough Questions
- Inoculate Your Coworkers Against the Boss's Tactics
- Optional: Exercise: Track Your Victories.



- ☐ **How Do We Currently Solve Problems:** Find a workshop participant who can share a strong example of how they and others took collective action to solve a workplace problem. Prepare them to describe the steps they took to get their coworkers involved and what action they took together.

- ☐ Make four paper signs with the labels listed below and tape them up in four corners of the room so there is a different corner for each way the boss disorganizes us:

- Fear
- Hopelessness
- Division
- Confusion

- ☐ Have a poster-sized copy of:

- Aim for the Bullseye on the wall, covered.
- How the Boss Keeps Us Disorganized on the wall, covered.



- ☐ **Roleplay:** Find a workshop participant who can demonstrate the AHUY organizing conversation, playing the role of organizer. Prepare them to lead the demonstration during this section. The goal is for them to get to an “ASK.”

- ☐ Supplies:

- Flipcharts
- Markers
- Tape

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Icebreaker

This exercise should take 10 minutes if performing the short version of the “Who Does the Work in the Union?” opener after ground rules. This means adding 10 minutes to the workshop.

If performing the day-long workshop series, then perform the longer icebreaker as part of the morning introductions in the day-long agenda.

WHO DOES THE WORK IN YOUR UNION? (Short)

Summary

This is the recommended opening exercise for Beating Apathy, the first workshop in the series. This exercise can be performed in two ways: short, as a 10 minute opener or long, as a 20-minute opener, depending on how much time is available. Both should lead directly into Aim for the Bullseye in Beating Apathy.

Total activity time: 10 minutes

Ask everyone in the room to pair up with someone they don't know yet and share their name, where they work, and one key issue or problem that they hear their co-workers complain about in their workplace. They have three minutes apiece to talk.

Ask participants to come back together as a group.

By a show of hands, how many people here are relatively new to the labor movement? Under five years?

How many have been involved between six and 10 years?

Between 11 and 15?

More than 15? More than 20?

How many stewards in the room?

How many officers?

Raise your hand if you feel like you are part of a union in which the vast majority of your members share equal responsibility for doing the work of the union, and only a few are relatively unsupportive or disengaged.

[Expected result: few to no people raise their hands.]

Raise your hand if you feel like you're part of a small number of people who do the majority of the work of the union, while everyone else is doing far less.

[Expected result: just about everyone raises their hands.]

At Labor Notes, we think of our union as a bullseye. We think that this is at the heart of what an organizer does and that's why it is the cover of our book.

Go right from here into Aim for the Bullseye.

WHO DOES THE WORK IN YOUR UNION? (Long)

Summary

This is the recommended opening exercise for Beating Apathy, the first workshop in the series. This exercise can be performed in two ways: short, as a ten-minute opener or long, as a 20-minute opener, depending on how much time is available. Both should lead directly into Aim for the Bullseye in Beating Apathy.

Total activity time: 20 minutes

We are going to see who is in the room with us today. Please sort yourselves into a line, from the person with the longest experience in the labor movement at one end to the person with the shortest experience at the other.

Line Introductions: 10 minutes

After people have lined up, ask participants to introduce themselves one by one, starting at the end of the line with the least-experienced person:

Very briefly, in five seconds or less, tell us your name, what union or organization you are with, and how long you have been involved in the labor movement.

Paired Conversation: 7 minutes

After everyone has introduced themselves, explain that they will be pairing off with the person on the opposite side of the line from them. So the newest member of the labor movement will be pairing off with the person who has the most experience, the second-newest with the second-most experienced, and so on down the line until the two folks in the middle with similar amounts of experience are together. (If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator should pair up with the person in the middle.)

In pairs, each person should share their name again, where they work, and one key issue or problem that they hear co-workers complain about in their workplace. Tell them that they have 2 minutes apiece to talk.

Division of Labor: 3 minutes

Ask participants to come back together as a group.

We are going to be lining up again. This time I want you to line up by how engaged your members are in the union.

Point to one end of the room.

If you feel like the vast majority of your members share equal responsibility for doing the work of the union, and only a few are relatively unsupportive or disengaged, then you should be closer to that end of the room.

Point to the other end of the room.

If you feel like a small number of people at the top do the majority of the work of the union with everyone else doing far less, then you will be closer to that end of the room.

After people have lined up, pick out a few folks from different spots and ask them why they chose to stand where they are and what the situation is like in their union/organization.

[Expected result: the majority of the room will be clumped together at the end of the room symbolizing a union with only a small number of people on top doing the work.]

[Feel free to probe this further by randomly asking a few individuals to share why they choose that side of the room. Ask others to raise their hands if the description/experience sounds familiar to them.]

Go right from here into Aim for the Bullseye.

TRACK YOUR VICTORIES

Summary

This is an introduction you use if you are going to use the Exercise: Track Your Victories handout in your workshops.

This handout is optional and can be used to highlight victories that are shared over the course of the day. If you are performing the AHUY Closing Activity, then you must use this handout and introduce it at the beginning of the day.

Total activity time: 10 minutes

Point to Exercise: Track Your Victories in the handout packet.

Please feel free to fill out this worksheet throughout the course of the day, as we discuss examples of collective action to solve problems in your workplace.

We are going to be using them in an activity at the end of the day.

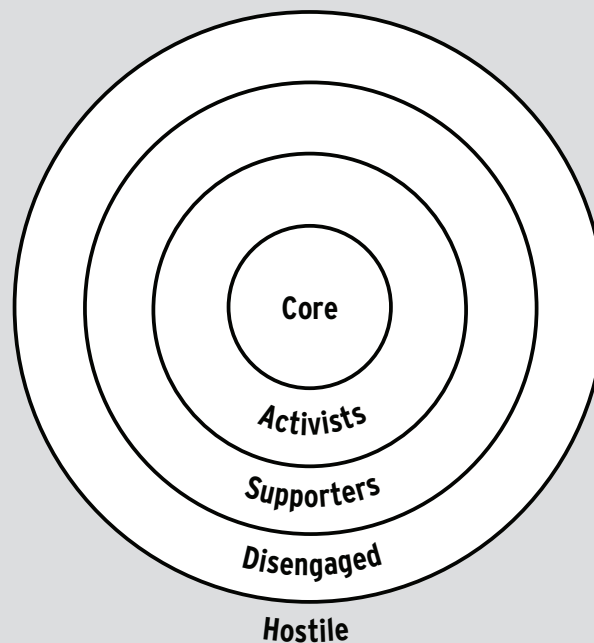
[As people tell good stories throughout the day, make sure to remind them to write these stories down on the handout.]

AIM FOR THE BULLSEYE (5 MINUTES)



Direct participants to the handout Aim for the Bullseye and unveil the poster-sized Bullseye on the wall. Explain the rings (Secret #3):

AIM FOR THE BULLSEYE



- At the center is the **CORE**. These are the people who are always thinking about organizing and how to get others involved. This might be elected leaders or stewards, but it might not.
- In the first ring are **ACTIVISTS**. These are the folks who can be counted on to help when an issue heats up. They will take responsibility for getting the word out and will recruit others to take action and get involved.
- In the second ring are **SUPPORTERS**. These are the people who will come to meetings, wear buttons, sign a petition, but don't take responsibility for getting others involved.
- In the third ring are the people who appear most **DISENGAGED**. They don't see the union as relevant to their lives, so they don't participate.
- There are some people who aren't just uninvolved, but are **HOSTILE**. They are outside the circle.

Discussion (5 minutes)

For those of you who felt like you are part of a small number of people who are doing all the work of the union, you would probably identify with being in the core. Most of the rest of your union falls somewhere else—maybe in the supportive or disengaged rings?

Is that how most of you see the union?

Is that how most of your members see the union?

What about your boss? Is that what they see?

What do you think the relationship is between how your union's members are distributed among the rings and the power that your union has?



Key Point

Our task as organizers is to move people toward the center of the bullseye by helping them take one step at a time.

HOW DO WE CURRENTLY SOLVE PROBLEMS? (15 MINUTES)

Questions and Discussion (15 minutes)

How do we do we move our co-workers to get more involved? Let's start by taking a look at how we currently solve problems in our union.

Let's have a show of hands: At the beginning of the workshop when you paired up, did anyone have a hard time thinking of any issues or problems in your workplace? **[Expected result: no hands go up.]** What were some of the issues?

Ask participants to "popcorn"—shout out their answers. Write the responses on the flipchart. Keep writing until you have a large list.

How do we currently solve these problems in our union?

You are looking for: "grievances" and/or "bargaining." If someone says "direct action" or similar, tell them that's great and we will be returning to that.

What are some of the pros and cons of settling our problems through grievances (and/or bargaining)?

Alternatively, these same points can be made with regards to bargaining or filing wage theft claims/legal complaints.

Ask probing questions:

- Are grievances getting at the issues that members care most about?
- Do grievances typically involve a majority of members?
- Are grievances typically visible to a majority of members?
- What happens when members don't see the union fighting for issues they care about?
- How do grievances and bargaining relate to the current spread of members among the rings?

Some participants might feel like it would be a miracle to get their union just to file a grievance. Don't be dismissive of the grievance process or the internal struggle at some unions to protect contract standards.

Grievances are necessary, but they are not enough to really shift the balance of power in the workplace. We need to “supercharge” our grievances through organizing.



Key Point

If your co-workers are feeling lots of issues and problems at work, but they don't think the union has the power to solve those issues or they think the union isn't even interested in solving them, that may be a reason why they're not getting involved.

Of course we need to file grievances/bargain, but what are other ways we can solve problems on the job?

Return to anyone who offered “direct action” previously.



[Ideally you have prepared one or more participants to share strong examples of how they used collective action to solve problems. Invite them to tell their stories now.]

If no one is prepared to speak ask:

Is there anyone who can share a story of how you used collective action to solve a problem at work?



Key Point

Taking action and winning on issues that people care about changes the balance of power on the job. It pushes the boss to do something they don't want to do. It builds people's confidence to get involved, and it brings more people into higher circles of the bullseye

HOW THE BOSS KEEPS US DISORGANIZED (20 MINUTES)

Introduction (1 minute)

Next let's talk about some of the obstacles that keep people from stepping up and taking on the boss.

Everyone cares about something. *(Point to issues previously listed.)* But there are very real reasons why our co-workers are reluctant to take action. In fact, while we are trying to organize our co-workers, the boss is trying to keep us disorganized.

In the four corners of the room you will see four of the tactics that bosses use to keep us disorganized: **fear, hopelessness, confusion, and division.**

Which of these four is the most effective at keeping people from taking action in your workplace? Let's vote with your feet. Everyone please get up and go stand in the one of the four corners. Pick the one that has the biggest impact where you work.

Breakouts and Discussion (19 minutes)

Direct everyone to spend a minute talking to someone else about why they picked their corner, then have the other person tell them the same.

Ask a few people in each corner to explain to the whole group why they chose that corner. (2 minutes per corner for 8 minutes). For variety, you could ask two corners to share how the boss keeps them from taking action, and the other two corners for examples of how they overcame their obstacles.

HOW THE BOSS KEEPS US DISORGANIZED

Ways the boss keeps us disorganized	Ways that organizers overcome
Fear	Taps into righteous anger
Hopelessness	Develops a plan to win
Division	Identifies common ground
Confusion	Interprets and shares information



After having individuals speak from each corner of the room, ask everyone to return to their seats. Direct participants to the handout How the Boss Keeps Us Disorganized and unveil the poster-sized How the Boss Keeps Us Disorganized. Review how organizers can combat each of the four obstacles (Secret #2):



[Ideally you have prepared one or more participants to share strong examples of how they overcame fear, hopelessness, division, or confusion. Invite them to tell their stories now.]

Ask the group:

How have you overcome some of these obstacles yourself? How have you seen others help one another overcome these obstacles?

Do our union's current strategies for solving problems address these obstacles? For example, do grievances and bargaining fundamentally challenge the fear that workers feel on the job?

This workshop is called Beating Apathy. We've identified all these issues that we face in the workplace and all these ways that the boss keeps us disorganized. So what do you think, is apathy really the problem? Is it the case that our co-workers really don't care?



Key Point

The punchline is this: apathy isn't real. We've seen from the beginning that there are lots of issues that you and your co-workers care about. But there are legitimate reasons why your co-workers might not be ready to take action.

They might not see the union taking on the issues they care about. They might not see the union as powerful enough to win. And the boss is actively using fear, hopelessness, division, and confusion to keep us disorganized.

It's our job as organizers to identify the obstacles that are keeping our co-workers from taking action, so we can help them to move beyond them and take action together.

HOW TO IDENTIFY AN ORGANIZING ISSUE (5 MINUTES)

Ask everyone to return to their seats.

Questions and Discussion (5 minutes)

If we're going to develop a union culture where people are expected to help defend the contract and have each other's backs, then we will need to identify and tackle the issues that enough people care enough about to take action.

An issue is a workplace problem.

We've already identified a lot of issues, but we can't take them all on at once. Which of these are potential organizing issues? Why?

[If necessary, draw a distinction between an obstacle, such as fear, and an issue such as arbitrary discipline.]



*Direct participants to the handout **A Good Organizing Issue** and read it aloud (Secret #22-25):*

A good organizing issue is one that matches most of these criteria.

- It is widely felt.
- It is deeply felt.
- It is winnable.
- It builds the union & builds leaders.



Key Point

If you're just getting started and your union doesn't have a history of taking action, try to remember this: we want to pick issues that are **small enough to win, big enough to matter**.

HOW TO HAVE AN ORGANIZING CONVERSATION (65 MINUTES)

How do we identify what issues people care about and what obstacles are holding them back?

We have to talk to them!

How to Be a Good Listener (5 minutes)

Has anyone heard of the 80/20 rule for conversations? Anyone know that is?

We should be listening 80 percent of the time and talking 20 percent of the time. One of the most important parts of an organizing conversation is active listening.

So what are some good rules for active listening?



Direct participants to the handout How to Be a Good Listener (Secret #9):

[Rather than walking through the entire handout, feel free to use the following points]

Points to hit—don'ts:

- Don't assume you know the answers to questions. Let people tell you what they think is important. It might not be what you think.
- Don't ask questions that are really statements: "Don't you think what we need to do is go on strike?"
- Don't go fishing—running through a laundry list of questions or issues that makes you sound like a salesperson: "So do you want higher wages, better health insurance, better staffing?"

Points to hit—do's:

- Do listen more than you talk (80/20)
- Do slow down. Don't rush through the conversation to get to the "ask."
- Do show you are listening by acknowledging what the other person says. Ask follow-up questions.

- Do practice empathy. When people tell you what they're upset about, acknowledge their experience. Don't judge or dismiss it.

AHUY (5 minutes)

Nobody should follow a script mechanically. We need to talk to people like human beings. However, organizing conversations are not gripe sessions.

An organizing conversation has specific goals: to identify the issues this person cares about, connect them to a plan of action, and get this person to commit to participating. The organizer follows a structure we call a "rap."

We want our co-workers to realize:

- They care about a problem.
- There is a decision-maker who has the power to fix this problem.
- The decision-maker won't fix it until someone pushes them to.
- If your co-worker really wants this problem to be fixed, they have to join you and other co-workers in taking action.



*Direct participants to the handout **AHUY** and review it (Secret #12):*

AHUY is an acronym we use to remember the steps in the organizing conversation.

Ask/Agitate/Anger: Ask questions, identify issues, and tap into righteous anger

Hope: Share your plan to win or examples of success

Urgency: Now is the time to act

You: Can we count on you?

Having an organizing conversation is a skill. It gets easier the more we practice it!

Remember the 80/20 rule?—we should spend the majority of our time listening. So where in this rap are we going to spend the majority of our time?

In the “A” part—Ask/Agitate/Anger—this is where you uncover what really gets under your co-worker’s skin. Try to tap into the anger they feel at injustice and to get them to say what it’s going to take to make a change.

To do that, good listeners ask good questions.



Practicing Asking Questions (10 minutes)

Let’s practice our listening skills.

Have participants break into pairs.

You’re going to start a conversation and get to know this person. Try to identify their number-one workplace issue and find out as much as you can... by only asking questions.

It’s important that we use open-ended questions. Does anyone know the difference between open and closed questions?

Closed questions are yes/no questions. Open questions require fuller responses.

Examples:

- Closed question: “Do you like where you work?”
- Open questions: “What do you like about your job?”

So for this exercise we want to use open questions.

Give them 3 minutes apiece, then tell them to switch and the other person will ask questions.

Bring the whole group back together. Discuss:

How did that go? What did we learn?

Types of Questions (5 minutes)

Let's review and brainstorm types of questions that are useful for having organizing conversations.

Intro questions: What are some good questions to start a conversation? (*Brainstorm.*)

Examples:

- How is your day going?
- How long have you worked here?
- How have things changed since you started?

Agitating questions: Once the other person has mentioned some issues, what are some agitating questions you could use to get this person fired up and figure out how strongly they care about an issue? (*Brainstorm.*)

Examples:

- Is that okay with you?
- How long has that been going on?
- Is that how you would do things, if you were in charge?
- What would need to change to make your job more fulfilling?
- What would need to change for you to feel respected at work?
- Why do you think we're having this problem?
- Have you told your supervisor? Did they fix the problem?

Polarizing questions: What are good polarizing questions you could use to get your co-worker to lay the blame for the problem, and move towards getting a commitment to action? (*Brainstorm.*)

Examples:

- Who is in the position to fix this? What would they have to do?
- Do you think this problem is going to fix itself?
- How much longer are you willing to put up with this?
- Is that ever going to get better if we do nothing?

Inspiring Hope, Creating Urgency, and Calling the Question (5 minutes)

What examples can we share to inspire hope? (*Brainstorm.*)



Key Point

A great way to inspire hope is to have a plan. It's the difference between praying it doesn't rain and having ponchos and umbrellas ready to go. Having a plan inspires confidence.

The next step is connecting the plan to win to the need for immediate action:

- We can't sit on problems.
- We have a timeline and we have to show the boss we are serious.

Getting a commitment is the "You" in AHUY.

What kinds of questions can we use to ask for a commitment? (*Brainstorm.*)

- Can we count on you?
- Are you on board?
- Are you coming to the meeting?

Don't shy away from being direct. Don't move on until you get an answer.

Example Roleplay (5 min)

You will have a chance to practice an organizing conversation in pairs, but first let's do a test run of what we've brainstormed.

[Ideally you have prepared an experienced rank and filer to play the role of the organizer. They should be prepared to get to an "Ask." If not, then the facilitator should play the organizer. Either way, recruit a volunteer on the spot to play the role of the other worker.]

Role-play the organizing conversation to model for participants what we are asking them to do in the next exercise.

Then debrief:

- What did you see? (Walk through how the organizer applied each step of A.H.U.Y.)
- What kinds of questions did you hear?
- What might you have done differently?



Key Point

What makes an organizing conversation different from a gripe session is that we plan a solution and end with an ask.

Roleplay (20 minutes)

Ask everyone to pair up to practice the organizing conversation. Explain that one person will play the organizer, and the other will be the worker. After 10 minutes you will let them know it's time to switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Give the organizers a prompt, such as that they are trying to get this worker to sign a petition, come to a meeting, or wear a button about a certain issue. If possible, draw your prompt from a story already shared or discussed in the workshop.

After 10 minutes remind the pairs to switch.

Debrief the Roleplay (10 minutes)

Bring everyone back together as a large group.

- What was most challenging about the conversation?
- Do you think you got a sense of what the member's issues and concerns were? How did you do this?
- What were some of the things you said that were effective in educating and agitating around the issue? What else could you have said?
- How did you specifically ask for the person's commitment to participate? Did you get a firm commitment?



Answering Tough Questions and Inoculating (10 minutes)

[*BONUS ROUND* If time allows, use this exercise. If not, move ahead to review.]

We know that our conversations won't always be easy. We are likely to get some pushback from our co-workers when talking to them. What are some examples of tough questions we might get? (*Brainstorm.*)

- I don't want to risk my job/get in trouble.
- It's pointless. Things will never change.
- Is the union going to back us up?



*Direct participants the handout **Answering Tough Questions**. Introduce the idea of “Affirm, Answer, Redirect.” **(Secret #34)***

This is one method for keeping the focus on our message while also responding to the concerns we are hearing.

Choose one of the tough questions participants brought up. Brainstorm as a group how you could answer that question using “Affirm, Answer, Redirect.”



*Direct participants to the handout on **Inoculation**.*

It's also important that we solicit tough questions so we can collectively work through what we expect the boss will do. We don't want our co-workers to be caught off guard when management pushes back. One method for preparing our co-workers for whatever the boss throws at us is inoculation:

1. Ask questions about how the boss will react to your organizing.
2. Discuss how and why the boss will fight.
3. After discussing, recommit to the action.

Inoculation is not about scaring our co-worker. It's about deepening their commitment to action.

Review

Apathy isn't real.

Organizers have conversations with workers to identify the issues they care about and tap into their anger at injustice, to overcome the obstacles that the boss relies on to disorganize us.

We identify the issues that enough people care enough about that they're willing to take the risk of collective action.

By taking action, our co-workers move up the bullseye, from disengaged to the core.

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

PART 2: ASSEMBLING YOUR DREAM TEAM



Dan Lutz

PART 2: ASSEMBLING YOUR DREAM TEAM

Total active workshop time: 2 hours

- Introduction/Icebreaker: 10 minutes
- Why We Need Leaders to Organize: 15 minutes
- Qualities of a Leader: 5 minutes
- Leader Scenario: 30 minutes
 - Small Group Activity: 15 minutes
 - Large Group Discussion: 15 minutes
- How Our Workplace Is Organized: 5 minutes
- Identifying Leaders: 5 minutes
- Mapping the Workplace: 40 minutes
 - Introduction: 5 minutes
 - An Example Map: 5 minutes
 - Draw Your Own Workplace Map: 10 minutes
 - Volunteer Shares a Map: 10 minutes
 - Discussion: 10 minutes
- Big Picture/Sum Up: 10 minutes

EPIC ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Summary

This is a great energizer or introductory exercise to do as a lead-in to the workshop *Assembling Your Dream Team*. This exercise helps to reinforce the point that we can recognize leaders by whether or not they have followers.

Total activity time: 10 minutes

INTRODUCTION

We are going to play a quick game called “Epic rock, paper, scissors.”

Real quick, let’s review how to play the game.

Walk through what beats each type: rock, paper, and scissors.

Epic rock, paper, scissors is an elimination competition. Everyone in the room will need to find a partner to play rock, paper, scissors with.

Demonstrate finding a partner and playing the game.

Whoever loses the first game, you now become the world’s greatest fan of the person you lost to.

You follow them around cheering their name wildly and clapping and dancing for them to win. The winner goes on to find someone else in the room who has won.

Whoever wins the next round, the person who lost and all their fans now become the world’s greatest fans of the new winner.

This continues until we have a final epic match-up pitting two great rock, paper, scissors champions against one another—and at last we have a winner that we are all the world’s greatest fan of.

LATER DISCUSSION

*This exercise can be brought up in the “Qualities of a Leader” exercise in *Assembling Your Dream Team*.*

Setup (before the workshop starts)



- ☐ Have packets prepared for participants with all the handouts:
 - Exercise: Why We Need Leaders to Organize
 - Exercise: Identifying Leaders (six pages)
 - Exercise: Map Your Workplace
 - Exercise: Draw Your Own Map
 - Ten Questions to Ask When Mapping Your Workplace
 - Exercise: Make a Chart, Too
 - Chart Template

- ☐ If performing as stand-alone workshop, be prepared with the following handouts:
 - Aim for the Bullseye
 - How The Boss Keeps Us Disorganized

- ☐ Have copies of Organized People Have Power ready to hand out separately (not in the packet) since participants will need to fold it.

- ☐ Have poster-sized copies on the wall of:
 - Bullseye Diagram
 - Workplace Map, covered (example provided on page 50)
 - Sample Organizing Wallchart, covered (example provided on page 51)

- ☐ Supplies:
 - Pens/pencils
 - Flipchart
 - Markers
 - Tape

GET ON THE BUS!

Summary

This is a great energizer or introductory exercise that can be used as a lead-in to the workshop series on Assembling Your Dream Team or Turning an Issue into a Campaign. This exercise can be used to reinforce the point that we need to actively recruit more people to be in our core group, or that there are many overlapping issues that workers share in common.

Total activity time: 10 minutes

INTRODUCTION

We're going to play a quick game called "Get on the Bus!"

I will ask a question, and you have to form a "bus" with everyone who shares the same answer as you.

For example, if I say, "Form a bus with people who speak the same number of languages as you," then you walk around and find those people who all speak the same number of languages and group together as a "bus."

EXERCISE

Form a bus with people who...

- Were born in the same decade
- Have been a union steward before
- Have the same favorite ice cream flavor

... believe you need more people on your organizing team!

Or

... believe we need a strong labor movement that can take on the boss and win!

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER (10 MIN)

[If performing as a stand-alone workshop, facilitators introduce themselves and the agenda.]

[To have people introduce themselves, consider doing first half of the short version of Who Does the Work in the Union? ending with question “How Many Officers?”]

[If performing as part of a workshop series, review lessons from Beating Apathy: organizing means finding out what our co-workers care about and inspiring them to action.]

To organize and win, we need more people on our team—leaders who can bring others along. The good news is, we’re not starting from scratch. In this workshop we’re going to talk about how to uncover the hidden networks that are already there in any workplace and recognize the people who can move their co-workers into action.

Icebreaker: Get on the Bus! or Epic Rock, Paper, Scissors

Choose either of the two icebreakers:

- Get on the Bus!
- Epic Rock, Paper, Scissors

WHY WE NEED LEADERS TO ORGANIZE (15 MIN)

Sometimes we get to choose the issues to organize around and sometimes the issues choose us. Let's start out by imagining that you showed up to work and learned that a respected steward was unfairly fired. You have until the end of the day to get the word out about a sticker day beginning tomorrow morning.

Think of your workplace. You want every member to be wearing a sticker at the start of and throughout the day of action. Because people can feel intimidated about taking action or confused about the issue, it's best to hand out the stickers in person, not just leave them in a mailbox or breakroom. It's important for the union to explain the issue and answer questions before the company has a chance to get its side of the story out.

Think how would you do it.

- Who would you talk to and give stickers to?
- Who would you have a hard time reaching?

Small Group Discussion (10 min)

Think about a plan for your workplace and discuss your plan with the others at your table. If you get ideas from other participants, update your plan.

[Depending on size of groups, it might make more sense to have participants share in pairs, so everyone has an opportunity to participate.]

Large Group Discussion (5 min)

Let's hear a few examples. How would you reach as many people as possible, as quickly as possible?

If people offer a solution other than using a network of co-workers (such as all on their own talking to every co-worker, or sending out a mass email), probe for limitations of their approach:

- Who wouldn't you be able to reach?
- What are the limitations of an email compared to a personal conversation?

Make sure you are touching on how to overcome obstacles such as fear, hopelessness and confusion.

The rest of this workshop will focus on how we can map and chart our workplace and recruit more people so we can grow the work of the union.

QUALITIES OF A LEADER (5 MIN)

So we need to find the right people to join our team and help build the union.
The goal is to identify leaders at work.

What is a leader? (*Brainstorm.*)



Key Point

A leader is someone who has followers, who can move others to action.

LEADER SCENARIO (30 MIN)



Direct participants to Exercise: Identifying Leaders in the handout packet.

Small Group Activity: (15 min)

Have participants break into small groups of four to six. Ask them to read the scenarios and discuss which characters they think are the leader:

Who would you recruit to your organizing committee?

Large Group Discussion (15 min):

Who did you think was the leader and why?

[Refer to trainers key. Make certain participants understand why Brenda is best choice and Cindy is worst. It might help to flipchart responses.]



Key Point

- Leaders have followers. (Secret #16)
- There are probably multiple leaders, with different followers.
- You have to talk to a lot of people to find out who the leaders are, and to learn about how the workplace is organized.
- This isn't to say that people cannot become leaders, but we are starting from the assumption that there are already leaders in the workplace and we have to find out who they are.
- There isn't always one leader, and the leader of one group might not be respected by another group, much less a leader.

IDENTIFYING LEADERS EXERCISE: TRAINER'S KEY

In this exercise, participants will read the profiles and pick their first, second, and third choices for the committee. Brenda Hammond is the best choice; Sally Rivera and Paula Harris are other top contenders. Participants should also select the person they do NOT think should be on the workplace committee; this is Cindy Thomas.

Worker	Signs of leadership	Warning signs	Additional info
Brenda Hammond	• She's a longtime employee and others identify her as a good worker. • She organizes birthday parties and showers, and has a list of her co-workers' numbers. • She trains new employees. • Her name came up in all four organizing conversations, mostly in a positive light.	• Participants may identify the fact that Brenda wants to find a better job as a negative sign. You can ask the group, "How many of you have talked about leaving your job when things were tough?" • Participants may also flag that Sally says management has plans for Brenda. That's often a sign that someone is a good worker, not that they won't be a good leader.	• She has an issue: she was hurt on the job and the boss made her work injured. • Just because someone doesn't see themselves as a leader doesn't mean they don't have followers.
Sally Rivera	• She spoke up to management. • She's been talking to her co-workers about getting organized. • Eve identifies her as the leader of the younger workers. • She brings a co-worker to meet you.	• Brenda says that sometimes Sally only fights for herself.	
Paula Harris	• Brenda, Eve, and Francis respect her.		Even though there's no profile for Paula, the fact that three people mention her makes her a potential leader, and definitely someone we want to talk to.
Cindy Thomas	• Francis described her as a "firecracker."	• She's only had the job for three months. • She says she doesn't talk to her co-workers, doesn't know their names, and calls them "robots."	Just because she's not a leader doesn't mean she can't be an activist.
Francis Powers	• She has worked at the hospital for eight years. • She's identified by Brenda and Eve, with a mixed endorsement (leader, but has screwy ideas).	• She doesn't have much respect for an obvious group in the workplace, the younger workers. • She says the younger workers don't take anything seriously.	
Eve Winters	• Sally recommends talking to Eve because "she has been around for a long time." • Francis suggests she would be a good leader.	• She doesn't want to get involved because she's waiting for a promotion, and will be mad if it goes to one of management's "pets."	
Helen Rockwell, Mary Smith			We don't know enough; need to do a one-on-one conversation with each of them.

LESSONS:

- You need to talk to a lot of people to find out who the leaders are and learn how the workplace is organized.
- Just because someone is already in favor of the campaign doesn't make them any more of a leader than someone who is unsure or even hostile to the union. Our job as organizers is to identify people's issues and move them with hope and a plan to win!

How Our Workplace Is Organized (5 min)

Let's talk briefly about the two ways the workplace is organized.

The workplace is organized by the boss, and also organized more informally or socially.

What does it mean when we say the workplace is organized by the boss? For instance, we are grouped by shift, seniority, department... What are some others?

Flipchart responses.

Our workplaces also have a more informal social organization. Anyone have ideas about what we mean by "social organization"?

Flipchart responses.

Examples:

- Who eats lunch or takes breaks together?
- Who waits at the bus stop together?
- Who socializes outside of work?
- Who speaks the same language?
- Who are relatives?
- Who goes to the same church, temple, or mosque?



Key Point

Our workplaces have work networks and social networks. We have to uncover both kinds of networks and then figure out who are the leaders in each.

Identifying Leaders (5 min):

What questions can we ask to find out who are the leaders in a workplace or department? (*Brainstorm and flipchart.*)

Examples:

- Who trains new employees?
- Who speaks up for their co-workers in meetings?
- Who do people go to with problems, or when the boss does something unfair?
- Who has been working here a long time?
- Who organizes parties?
- Who is known as an especially good or dedicated worker?



Key Point

These statements don't all have to be true, but if someone's name keeps coming up, there's a good chance that person is a leader.

MAPPING THE WORKPLACE (40 MIN)

Intro (5 min)

Has anyone here ever mapped your workplace?

If Yes:

- When? In what campaign?
- Why did you map the workplace?
- Was it helpful?

If No:

Many union activists have found this activity useful. We are talking about making an actual, physical representation of the workplace and then filling it in with information about who works in which areas and how people move around.

What are some reasons that this information might be useful?

*Write “Why We Map” on flipchart paper and start writing down people’s responses (**Secret #21**):*

Exercise: An Example Map (5 min)

Let’s look at an example.

*Unveil your **Example of a Workplace Map**. Talk about the different features of the map. Answer any questions.*

Exercise: Draw Your Own Workplace Map (5 min)

Divide the room into small groups. Give a piece of flipchart paper and markers to each group.

We’re going to ask each group to draw a map of one workplace. You have 60 seconds to decide whose workplace will be drawn. Go!

Wait 60 seconds.



*Direct them to the handout **Ten Questions to Ask When Mapping Your Workplace** and ask them to see if they can answer these questions for their map.*

Try to be as quick as you can. You don't have to answer all the questions, just see how many you can work through in a short period of time.

[Facilitator should be circling the room making sure groups are working together and determining which map to share in next activity.]

Exercise: Volunteer Team Shares a Map (10 min)

Ask the group with the best map to come up to the front and share it. Walk through as many of these questions as you can:

- Who can walk freely through the whole workplace?
- Where do people congregate?
- Where can you talk out of sight of the boss?
- Where do people go after work?
- Which groups have contact with each other through their jobs?
- Which groups are hard to reach?
- What on this map changes throughout the day and at night? How about the weekend?

Discussion (10 min)

A map can help you recognize where the different groups are, and find possible strategies to reach them.

Once you know you need to connect with a certain group, focus on identifying the leaders in that group—those are the people you want to recruit to your team.

How can we keep track of the information we're gathering and stay up to date? For that we use another tool: a chart.

*Unveil your **Example of an Organizing Chart**.*

A chart is a well-organized list of information about your co-workers. You could write it on paper or type it up in an Excel spreadsheet.

Make one row for each person, and one column for each piece of information you're keeping track of. For example:

- Name
- Job
- Shift
- Phone number
- Email
- Did they fill out a bargaining survey?

What are some other pieces of information you might want to keep track of for each person? (*Brainstorm and flipchart.*)



*Direct participants to the handout **Make a Chart Too (Secret #21)***

EXAMPLE OF A WORKPLACE MAP

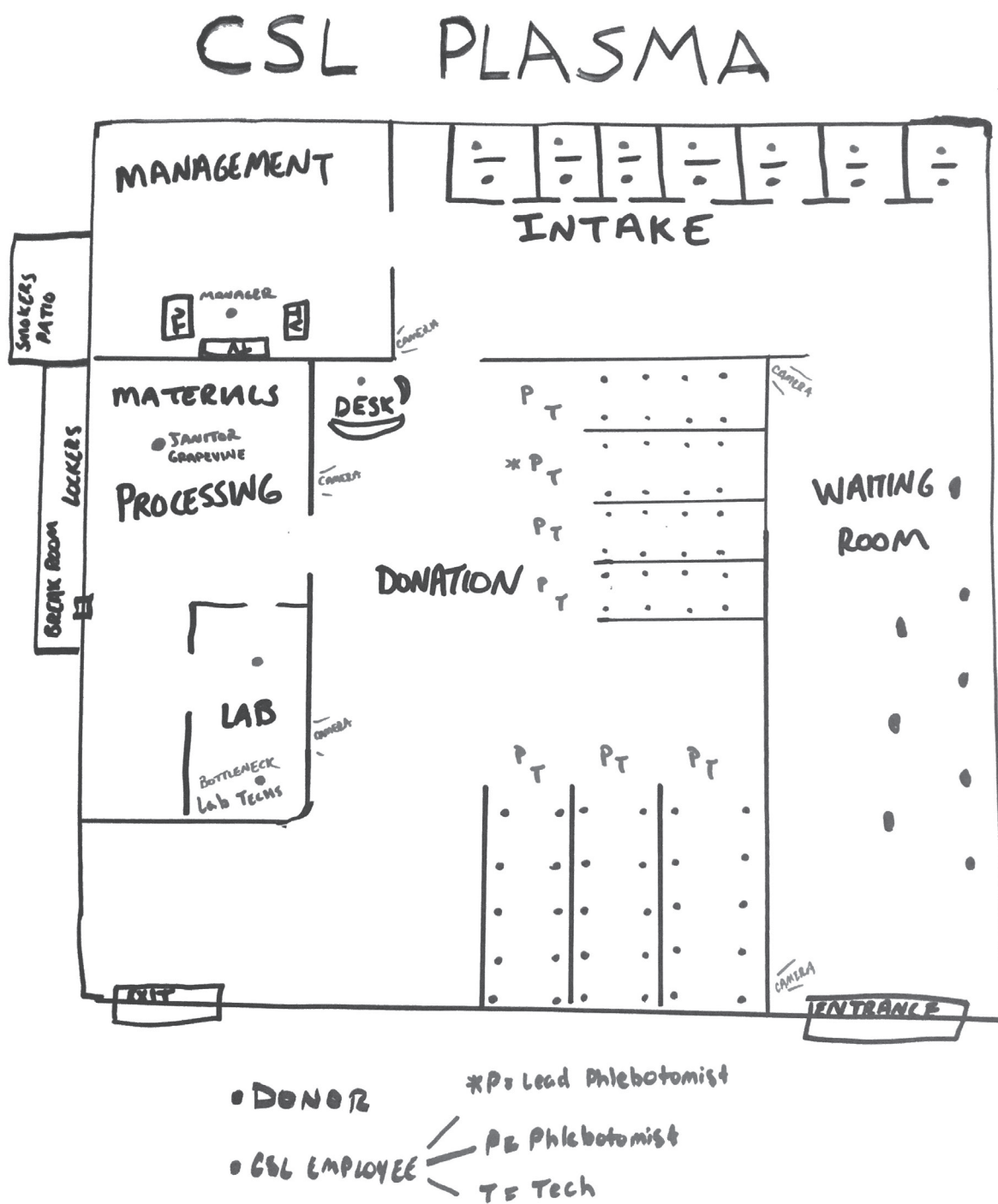


CHART TEMPLATE

CSL Plasma

Label these columns yourself with actions or other info you want to track.

[illegible]

BIG PICTURE/SUM UP (10 MIN)



Thinking back on everything we've covered:

We can't talk to everyone ourselves. We have to find influential and respected co-workers who can help carry the load. These are our leaders, they have followers. We have to know where they are. We need to know how to get in touch with people, which parts of our workplace have leaders that are active in the union and which do not.

Let's go back to the sticker day exercise we did at the beginning of the workshop.

Thinking about the plan you made, what would you do differently?

What if you call the action and no one shows up from _____? (Pick a work group or social group that has been mentioned, such as the night shift, the secretaries, the younger workers, the east side carpool, or the Spanish-speaking workers.)

Maybe we made the wrong assessments of who are the leaders in that group.

Additional points you could make: It might be that the leader is correct, but the issue was not widely or deeply felt, or the tactic was too big a leap and workers were not inoculated against their fear. Actions are tests, but what we learn from the test depends on the results.



Key Point

We test potential leaders by giving them tasks. Can they get their co-workers to do something, like come to a meeting, fill out a survey, sign a petition, or wear a button? The people who succeed at inspiring other people to take action are real leaders.



Hand out Organized People Have Power

We talked earlier about how the boss structures our workplace. Look at the diagram on the front of this page. As you can see, the bosses have set up a structure that they hope will keep us isolated and divided.

Today we've been talking about how we can organize ourselves to build a power that can rival the boss's power. We can't do that with just a few people. Our power is in our numbers, and we're strongest when our whole workplace can act in unison.

So how do we build the power to act in unison? By organizing a network that includes every group and that has leaders at the center.

Walk through the role of an organizer, following the steps shown on the handout:

The organizer has one-on-one conversations to identify the existing groups (work and social) and who their informal leaders are.

The organizer recruits those leaders to join our organizing committee.

Invite participants to fold the handout along the dotted line, so they can see the diagram of an organized workplace.

Our committee connects workers together in an organized structure that can challenge the boss.



Key Point

A strong organizing team should include leaders from every department, shift, and social group. Aim for one leader for every 10 workers. This means that we aim for having 10% of the union in our core, if they are leaders.

Return to the Bullseye Diagram.

[If performing as part of a workshop series: Review Aim for the Bullseye on Organized People Have Power]

[If performing as stand-alone, walk through Aim for the Bullseye:]

From an organizer's point of view, you can think of your union like a bullseye.

At the center is the **CORE**. These are the people who are always thinking about organizing and how to get others involved. This might be elected leaders or stewards, but it might not.

In the first ring are **ACTIVISTS**. These are the folks who can be counted on to help when an issue heats up. They will take responsibility for getting the word out and will recruit others to take action and get involved.

In the second ring are **SUPPORTERS**. These are the people who will come to meetings, wear buttons, sign a petition, but don't take responsibility for getting others involved.

In the third ring are the people who appear most **DISENGAGED**. They don't see the union as relevant to their lives, so they don't participate.

There are some people who aren't just uninvolved, but are **HOSTILE**. They are outside the circle.

We want to draw people toward the bullseye, step by step. Bring more people into the inner circle and they can bring more people into the second and third circles of the bullseye.



Key Point

Who do we want to bring into the center of the bullseye? The leaders, because they will be able to bring others along.

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

PART 3: TURNING AN ISSUE INTO A CAMPAIGN



James Leder

PART 3: TURNING AN ISSUE INTO A CAMPAIGN

Total active workshop time: 2 hours

- Introduction/Icebreaker: 10 minutes
- Why We Need Campaigns: 10 minutes
- Review: Identifying the Issue: 5 minutes
- Making a Game Plan: 10 minutes
- Turn Up the Heat: 20 minutes
- Campaign Mountain: 10 minutes
- Plan Your Campaign: 25 minutes
- *BONUS ROUND* Community Mapping: 25 minutes
- Wrap Up: 5 minutes

Setup (before the workshop starts)



- ☐ Have packets prepared for participants with all the handouts:
 - A Good Organizing Issue
 - Make a Game Plan
 - Checklist: Choose Tactics That Fit
 - Turn Up the Heat: Action Thermometer
 - Campaign Mountain
 - Campaign Planning Template
 - Community Mapping Survey
- ☐ If performing as stand-alone workshop, Organized People Have Power.
- ☐ Draw or print a poster-sized copy of:
 - Campaign Mountain on the wall, covered.
 - Thermometer on the wall, covered.



- ☐ Prepare to tell a story of a successful escalating campaign. You could use one of the Labor Notes case studies (see the list at the end of the section Turn Up the Heat below and in your curriculum packet) or use a story of your own.
- ☐ Have a participant prepared in advance to share a story of a strong escalating campaign.
- ☐ Prepare to share a story of a campaign featuring a strong union-community alliance. Alternatively, prepare to share the following case studies:
 - How to Jump Start Your Union, Chapter 6: Community Partners
 - “If We Can Change the White House, We Can Change the Hog House,” *New Labor Forum*



- ☐ Have a participant prepared in advance to share a strong example of how a union-community alliance influenced a campaign, or else be prepared to use a case study.
- ☐ Supplies:
 - Flipcharts
 - Markers
 - Pen
 - Post-its

INTRODUCTION/ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Facilitators introduce themselves and the agenda.

[If performing as part of a workshop series, review lessons from Beating Apathy and Assembling Your Dream Team: Organizing is finding out what people care about, identifying leaders, drawing them towards the bullseye, and fighting together to win.]

In this workshop we're going to talk about turning an issue into a winnable campaign.

Icebreaker

Let's start by finding someone in the room you don't know yet and sharing with them an example of a time when you and your co-workers took on a workplace issue collectively and won. **[If applicable, you can refer people back to the Exercise: Track Your Victories handout that they may have filled out in Part 1]**

Bring everyone back.

WHY WE NEED CAMPAIGNS (10 MINUTES)

This workshop is about turning an in issue into a campaign. First of all, what is a “campaign”? (*Probe for responses, flipchart responses.*)

A campaign is an action plan with a beginning, middle, and end, working towards a specific demand that we want to win. A campaign has a target, someone who can give us what we want. It usually involves a series of escalating actions (or tactics), which means that we progressively turn up the heat.

How many of us have been to an action that was awesome, but we didn't win, and we didn't have a plan for what to do next?

Facilitator can share a story of your own experience taking action without a plan, or draw one out from the audience.



Key Point

Campaigns are a way to identify in advance the ingredients we need to win, and put them together in a way that maximizes our chances of success. One isolated action may not be enough to solve the problem.

A good campaign creates increasing pressure on decision-makers over time by escalating the intensity of the tactics, increasing the visibility of tactics, and increasing the numbers of people involved. In this workshop, we're going to walk through the ingredients of how to build a strong campaign plan.

Ask:

Why would we want to organize a campaign to solve a workplace issue? Why not just file a grievance? **[A possible question to ask could be: “How many people here have done a march on the boss?”]**

Flipchart the answers. Ask for a few examples of actions people shared in the icebreaker.

What was the impact of taking action collectively?

**Key Point**

Campaigns help us to shift the balance of power in our workplaces and build members' confidence. Many issues that members care about can't be solved with grievances. Besides, grievances are invisible to most members, because they don't usually involve collective action. We need our actions to be participatory and public.

REVIEW: IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE (5 MINUTES)

Strong campaigns start with issues members care about. An issue is a workplace problem. Earlier we learned how to use conversations to find out which issues are getting our co-workers most worked up.

Since there may be many issues confronting workers on the job, we have to also think about what makes a good issue to organize around. Let's quickly review the criteria for what makes a good organizing issue:

- It is widely felt.
- It is deeply felt.
- It is winnable.
- It builds the union and builds leaders.



Key Point

If you're just getting started and your union doesn't have a history of taking action, try to remember this: we want to pick issues that are **small enough to win, big enough to matter.**

MAKING A GAME PLAN (10 MINUTES)

Once we have identified a good organizing issue, we need a plan of action.



*Direct participants to the handout **Make a Game Plan.***

These are the three basics of a plan:

- What exactly do we want?
- Who exactly has the power to fix the problem?
- What tactics can work?

Discussion:

Let's pick an issue that we could organize around. Someone shout out an issue in your workplace.

The facilitator could also suggest an issue that's been mentioned already in the training. After an issue has been suggested, walk through the four criteria to make sure it's a good organizing issue.

Now, what is our specific demand? What exactly do we want done to solve this issue?

If the demand is vague, push the group to get as specific as possible.

Does everyone agree that this demand will solve the issue? Anyone disagree?

Continue the discussion until there is a clear consensus on the demand.

Next, who is the decision-maker who can give us what we want?

Again, push for specificity. Give our target a name.

[At this point you could flag that sometimes—especially in the public sector—there will be multiple targets for our given issue. For example, teachers bargain with a school board but the budget is decided by the county commission.]

[For the purposes of this exercise, we want an issue that's winnable with the power we have at the worksite. If the target is too far up the chain, we might need to start over and pick a new issue where we can influence a target with the power we have right now.]



Key Point

If we don't know what we want, we can't figure out who can give it to us. We have to be very specific about who our target is, especially since there are often multiple targets or layers of decision-makers to target.

TURN UP THE HEAT (20 MINUTES)

Once we know what we want and who can give it to us, it's time to talk about tactics. These are the actions we will take to start putting pressure on our target.

What makes a good action?



Key Point

A good action should be:

- **Visible and public**, so that members are aware of what is taking place and the result.
- **Collective**, involving as many members as possible.
- **Confrontational**, shifting the balance of power by mobilizing members to challenge the decision-makers who can resolve the problem.



Direct participants to the handout: Checklist: Choose Tactics That Fit.

Small-Group Activity (5 min)

Break participants into pairs or small groups.

Together, brainstorm a list of actions we can take to get the boss's attention on our issue. Write down two or three of your action ideas on Post-It notes.

Thermometer exercise (10 min)

Bring the group back together.

Often to get the result we want, we need to “turn up the heat.” To think about how to do that, we’re going to create an action thermometer.

*Unveil your **Thermometer** wall chart. Ask a representative from each pair or small group to place their actions on the thermometer, ranking them from “cold” to “hot.”*

Pull out a few sample actions to discuss as a group. For each sample action, ask participants:

Tell us about this action and why you placed it where you did.

Ask the group:

Do you agree? Does anyone think this action should be “hotter” or “colder”? Why?

Use the exercise to discuss: “What does it mean to turn up the heat, and why do we do it?”

- Where would you start?
- What will you and your co-workers do next, if one action doesn't win the results you want?
- What makes one action “hotter” than another action?



Key Points

Why do we want to escalate gradually?

- **Take the high road.** By starting small, you show you are reasonable and credible. You did try asking politely.
- **It builds your group.** If you start off with low-intensity actions, members who have never said boo to the boss before will be more likely to participate. As your actions get more intense, make sure not to leave people behind.
- **Strength in numbers.** If you leap straight into high-intensity actions and only a few people participate, it's easy for your employer to single them out. If you start smaller and build, you can achieve greater participation.
- **Each action has a greater impact than the action before.** As your actions get more and more intense, managers begin to understand that you mean business. You also keep them guessing.
- **Don't play your aces too soon.** If you do your worst first, there's nowhere for your campaign to go but down. It's more effective when managers can see there's a lot more to come—and there's still time to save themselves a headache by giving in.

Example: (5 min)

Tell the group a story about a campaign where workers defined the issue, demand, and target, and turned up the heat with escalating tactics. You could use your own story, or one of these case studies provided in the back of this curriculum:

- How Teachers Broke the Mold (*Secrets of a Successful Organizer*: p. 134-135)
- Truck Workers Jump-Start Union and Reverse Two Tier (*Labor Notes*, May 2016)
- L.A. Car Wash Workers Turn Up the Pressure (*Labor Notes*, May 2016)

CAMPAIGN MOUNTAIN (10 MINUTES)

Overview (5 minutes)

Unveil your Campaign Mountain.

When you think of your whole campaign, think of it as climbing a mountain where each action is higher than the last one. The top of the mountain is our strongest action, the peak of our strength—for instance, a strike.

This is a tool we can use to map out a campaign to win stronger language in our contracts, or a series of actions to win a specific workplace demand, or even a series of mini-campaigns that work together toward a larger objective.

The Campaign Mountain gives us a way to imagine what it will take for our target to give in to our demand. We can then work backwards from what we imagine the peak of our strength will need to be, and plan out what we need to do and in what order.

The Campaign Mountain has five parts:

1. The **foundation** is where we have one-on-ones, identify issues and leaders and build the organization. It is also where the union plans out the campaign, identifies targets, and makes a timeline for tactics.
2. The **kickoff** is the public launch of the campaign. It can start with a low-level action.
3. The **escalation period** is where members turn up the heat by taking actions that gradually get more intense.
4. The **peak of our strength** is the most intense action we are building towards—our most powerful weapon.
5. The **resolution** is when we win what we want or strike a deal.

Connect back to Turn Up the Heat (5 min)

Where do some of the tactics we just brainstormed for our mini-issue fit into the campaign mountain?

Pull out a few tactics to test with the group. Reinforce:

Organizing conversations and mapping your workplaces are the key steps you need in the foundation phase to be able to escalate and take collective action.

What happens when we try to take shortcuts without laying the foundation? For example, suppose you call for a sticker day without having done the groundwork—and no one wears the stickers. How does this look to the boss?

Emphasize:

The boss doesn't know how far we will go, and we want to keep them guessing.

After every action, it's important to regroup and assess how it went. This helps us to plan our next steps.

Ask:

What are some examples of campaigns you have been part of? What types of actions did you do at the different stages of the campaign?



Ideally you will have prepared a participant in advance to share a story of a strong escalating campaign. If none is available, refer to case studies provided in this curriculum.

PLAN YOUR CAMPAIGN (25 MINUTES)

Break participants into small groups. Ask each group to choose an issue, identify a target, and plan a campaign with escalating actions. Encourage people to make a plan for something they are actually dealing with. If people are participating from the same local or workplace, work together. If people are participating from different unions and/or workplaces, they should pick only one to focus on.



Share: Campaign Planning Template

Point out the blank Campaign Mountain on the back of the Campaign Planning Template. Remind participants that the Campaign Mountain helps us place our tactics on a timeline. Encourage them to translate the tactics they come up with onto the blank Campaign Mountain.

Small Group Work (15 min)

Facilitators should walk around the room to ensure groups are not getting stuck on defining their issue and formulating their demand. Push people to decide that quickly and move on to the target and actions. Consider asking groups to report back on their issue and demand and target at set intervals to ensure groups are moving forward.

Discussion (10 min)

Ask a few groups to report back on their campaign plan. Each group should share the specific demand, target, peak of their strength, and a few of their favorite tactics. Pick a group that had strong plans.

Ask:

- What do you think it would take for your target to give in?
- Do you have enough capacity to impose that cost? Do you have to build to it? How do you plan to do that?

When you hear a group with a particularly strong campaign plan, write down two to three of their tactics on Post-It notes as they are reporting back.

Ask the group to show us where they would place these two to three tactics on the blank Campaign Mountain at the front of the room.



[If performing as a workshop series refer to Organized People Have Power and connect with the following Key Point.]

[If performing as a stand-alone workshop, hand out and walk through Organized People Have Power. Stress the role of the organizer in identifying issues and leaders in the Foundation Period of the campaign. Subsequent actions test leaders and grow participation in the union. Connect to the following Key Point.]



Key Point

Lasting power is the goal, not just a one-time win. Remember to aim for the bullseye—campaigns should help us shift power in the workplace and draw more members towards the bullseye, not just for one action, but for the long term.

Campaigns are also an opportunity to build a permanent structure in the workplace—with strong leaders—and a solid member-to-member network that can mobilize members for action.

As organizers we should always be thinking more than one step ahead.



COMMUNITY MAPPING (25 MIN)

Why We Need Allies (5 min)

Why do we need community allies when we are thinking about campaigns?

Refer back to tactics people shared in either the thermometer exercise or one of the campaign plan examples. Pull out any tactics that included community allies or the media.

In _____ *[insert example]* we talked about reaching out to _____ *[church leaders, parents, the media etc]*. Why did you feel that was important to win our demand?

Brainstorm reasons and flipchart why we need allies.

More and more, we may need to extend beyond the workplace to win a campaign, especially a larger campaign like a contract campaign.

Some employers are also going to care a lot about their public reputation or pressure from community actors. What are some examples?

Brainstorm a list: For example: school boards care about parents, hospitals care about patients, retail companies care about consumers and their brand.

But we also are fighting for things that are beyond our contract, like better services or schools for our community. That requires working together with allies and building long-term relationships and fights.

Case Study (5 min)

Share an example from your own experience of a campaign that build strong community alliances, or an example that you know about from the local context. We have included some longer case studies as possible examples.

Alternatively, use a clip from a video that highlights a successful community alliance.

Community Mapping (15 min)

Often we think we can only build these relationships at the top of the union, but our co-workers and members are often the greatest resource for connecting to community allies. We are also community members, parents, people of faith and involved in many different kinds of organizations and have a web of rich connections.

Let's go back to the example we used in our Turn up the Heat exercise and go through a series of questions:

Remind people of the issue, the demand and the target in the Turn up the Heat exercise.

Brainstorm and flipchart answers to each question:

- Beyond our immediate workplace, who else cares about this issue because they also have a stake in what's going on?
- Who does our target care about? Who has influence over him/her?

Now we have a list of potential allies that we want to build relationships with. But how do we know how are members might be connected to these organizations and community leaders?

A brief survey is one tool you can use to map your co-workers existing relationships.

Hand out Community Mapping Survey and run through questions.

Has anyone used a survey like this before? How did you use it?

How could you integrate this into the foundation stage in the Campaign Mountain?

Ideas:

- At a union membership meeting ask everyone to fill out a survey. At the next meeting compile the results and discuss them as a group.
- Ask CAT team members to get members to fill out survey when they are having organizing conversations.

Once we know connections our members have, how to we connect those relationships to our campaign?

Brainstorm list.

Ideas:

- Have members set up one-on-one conversations with community leaders
- Make a plan on who to contact, who will do it, timeline, and what's the ask.
- Ask to talk about the union's contract fight in a community meeting or faith service
- Participate in coalitions, ask what support is needed and bring updates and requests back to the union
- Mobilize members to go to other unions/groups actions

Share an example of a union that worked with members to explore community relationships and alliances.



Refer back to case study or solicit an example from the room. It's best if this is solicited prior to the workshop, so the participant can be prepared.



Key Point

We can start where we are and build from there, just like engaging and connecting with union members in order to bring them closer into the bullseye, the building blocks are the same: having conversations and building long-term relationships.

Our goal should be build long-term alliances that extend beyond a specific campaign, where we are working together and supporting each other.

WRAP UP (5 MIN)

Recap key concepts:

We talked about how a campaign is a series of escalating actions that get our target to say yes on a specific demand. We talked about how a strong campaign needs a demand, a target and tactics that will work.

To get the result we want, we often have to turn up the heat. Thinking about our campaign as a mountain with increasing action, that works back from the peak of our strength is a helpful way to keep us on track.

Finally, a key part of a building successful campaigns and broader movements is developing long-term alliances. We can start with the relationships our members already have.

Closing

*If enough time is available and energy remains for an exercise that allows for deeper practice with organizing conversations, then consider ending with the **AHUY** closer.*

*If enough time remains for a reflection and summation activity, consider ending with the **Head, Heart, Hands** closer.*

HEAD, HEART, HANDS, FEET EVALUATION EXERCISE

Summary

This is a closing activity that can be used as a quick evaluation and to have participants reflect on their experiences in the workshop.

Setup

Draw a head, a heart, a hand, and a foot on four different sheets of flipchart paper and tape them up on walls around the room.

Total activity time: 10 minutes

ACTIVITY

Hand out colored Post-It notes to participants.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on how you are feeling as we wrap up the workshop, and get your feedback so we can continue to improve the training.

*Ask participants to write on one color of Post-It note **something new they learned in the workshop**. This will be placed on the HEAD flipchart.*

*Ask participants to write on a second color of Post-It note **something they are feeling right now**, after completing the workshop. This will be placed on the HEART flipchart.*

*Ask participants to write on a third color of Post-It note **something they would improve for next time**. This will be placed on the HAND flipchart.*

*Ask participants to write on a fourth color of Post-It note a **next step they are planning to take after the workshop**. This will be placed on the FEET flipchart.*

If there's time, the facilitator can ask a few people to share their responses. It's often a nice way to close to have people call out what they have written on their HEART Post-It notes.

Ask participants to place their Post-It notes on each flipchart.

AHUY CLOSING ACTIVITY

Summary

This is a closing activity for the day-long training of all three workshops.

It attempts to weave together different components and materials from all three workshops and provide an opportunity for participants to again practice their organizing conversations.

Setup

Before the beginning of the third workshop, Turning an Issue Into a Campaign, tape signs up on the wall reading, “A (Anger),” “H (Hope),” “U (Urgency),” “Y (You)” on the wall before the.

Under “A (Anger),” place the workplace issues that were identified in Beating Apathy.

Under “H (Hope),” place the Exercise: Track Your Victories handouts that have been filled out over the course of the day.

Under “U (Urgency),” place a date. For example, write “Tuesday.”

Under “Y (You),” place the tactics that are brainstormed in Turning an Issue Into a Campaign.

Total activity time: 20 minutes

ACTIVITY

Walk over to the wall and review the organizing conversation rap. Talk about the different components you have placed under each letter, revisiting the key concepts from the workshops and connecting them to the bullseye.

Ask if there are any additional Track Your Victories handouts that anyone would like to add under “Hope.”

Ask participants to use the information provided—the victory worksheet they completed and the tactics discussed—to role play the organizing conversation from Beating Apathy with the partner they had in the morning.

If they prefer, the pair can come up and quickly match an (A) Issue to a (H) Victory to a (Y) Tactic and then practice having an organizing conversation based on their selection.

Tell each pair to divide into a worker and an organizer and to role play. They have six minutes each. At the end of six minutes, there will be an announcement to switch roles.

ACTIVITY

After both people have an opportunity to practice, bring everyone back together. Ask for feedback:

- How did you feel connecting these different parts together?
- Was there any particular part of the conversation you found to be challenging?
- Anything you would do differently next time?
- How prepared do you feel to have these conversations back in your workplace?

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

HANDOUTS



SEIU Local 205



SECRETS OF A
SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER
BEATING APATHY



EXERCISE: TRACK YOUR VICTORIES

Think about an example where collective action worked to solve a problem in your workplace.

Issue: What was the issue your co-workers were concerned about?

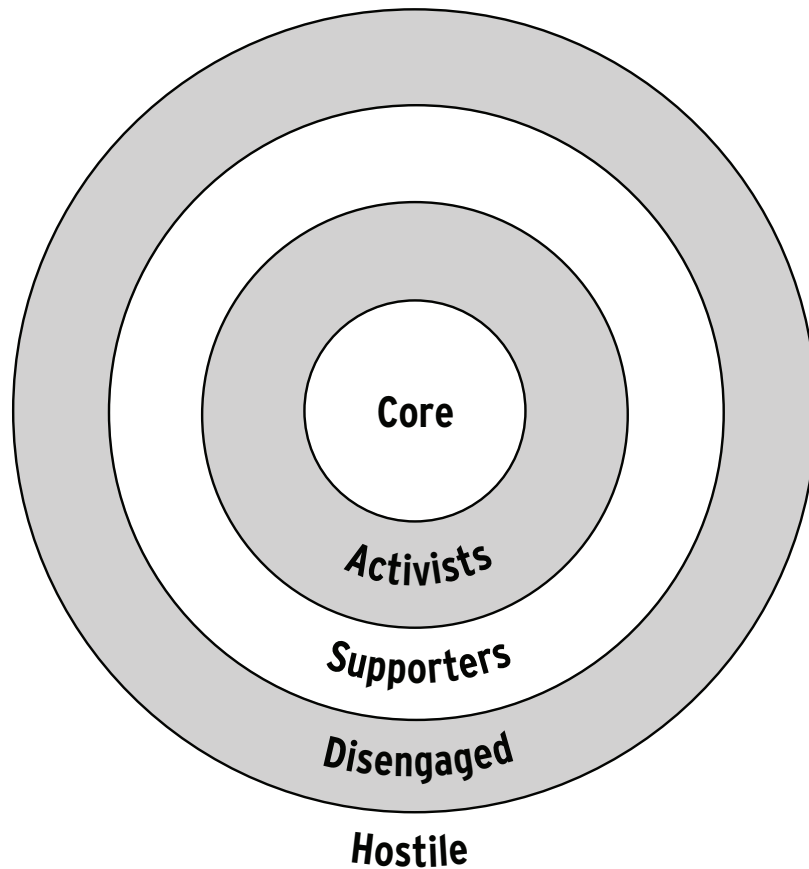
Action(s): What action(s) did you take? Who was involved?

Result: What happened? Was the problem solved?



AIM FOR THE BULLSEYE

From the organizer's point of view, think of your fellow members distributed on a dartboard. Your goal is always to move people one step closer to the center of the circle.



- **Core group:** These people are always thinking about organizing and how to get others involved, even on their time off. They might be elected leaders or shop stewards, or not.
- **Activists:** These people can be counted on to help when an issue heats up. They will take responsibility to get the word out and will ask other people to take action, too.
- **Supporters:** These people will wear a button or sign a petition, but don't take responsibility for getting anyone else involved.
- **Disengaged:** These people don't see the union as a factor in their lives, so they don't participate.
- **Hostile:** There are also people outside the circle who aren't just uninvolved—they're hostile to the union. Don't waste your time arguing with the haters. Maybe one day something will open their eyes, but it'll probably be an experience, not a debate, that does it.





HOW THE BOSS KEEPS US DISORGANIZED

What holds people back from confronting the boss about workplace issues? Instead of blaming “apathy,” it’s important to find out the actual reasons. You have to diagnose the problem before you can write the prescription.

This chart shows four common obstacles the boss relies on to keep us from getting organized—and how you can help your co-workers get past them:

The boss relies on...	The organizer...	Co-workers find...
... fear of conflict and retaliation.	...taps into righteous anger about workplace injustices.	...the courage and determination to act.
... hopelessness , the feeling that things can't change and we have no power.	...helps develop a plan to win , and shares examples of victories elsewhere.	... hope that change is possible and worth fighting for.
... division , pitting workers against each other.	...identifies common ground and builds relationships.	... unity to act together.
... confusion , passing around messages that will alarm or distract us.	... interprets and shares information, fitting it into a bigger picture.	... clarity to see through the boss's plan.





A GOOD ORGANIZING ISSUE

- **Is widely felt.** How common is the problem? How many workers face this situation? Many people must feel that this is a real problem and agree with the solution you're pursuing.
- **Is deeply felt.** Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to actually do something? It's not enough that many people agree, if none are really hot under the collar.
- **Is winnable.** It's hard to know for sure whether you *will* win, but it's possible to have a good idea whether you *can*. Your group should match your demand to the power you've already got.

To win, you'll need to make it harder for the decision-maker to keep saying no than to say yes. The more pressure you can bring to bear, the more issues will become winnable.

- **Builds the union and builds leaders.** Consider how this fight will build your capacity for future fights. Will the issue attract leaders or groups who haven't been very involved? Will it build solidarity between groups? Will it give you the chance to try an action that's one step beyond what you've done before? Will the solution lay the groundwork for future improvements?

Each fight should build off the last. It often happens that we don't win the concrete gain wanted, but we do come out smarter and better organized—which makes it more likely we can win next time.





HOW TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

- **Avoid distractions.** Look the other person in the eye, and put your phone away.
- **Slow down.** Our brains process thoughts four times faster than spoken words. It's easy to skip ahead in a conversation, using your assumptions to fill in the gaps and plan your response. Resist this urge. Focus on what is actually being said.
- **Don't interrupt.** Take the time to hear the full story.
- **Keep an open mind.** Don't assume you already know what someone cares about. People will surprise you.
- **Don't fish.** Avoid leading questions like "Don't you agree that..."
- **Practice empathy.** Sometimes people need to let off steam. Don't discourage them. Your immediate task is to hear what they have to say, not to judge.
- **Show that you hear what they're saying.** React, ask follow-up questions, and repeat back what you understood. If you don't understand, ask.
- **Find common ground.** You don't have to agree with every point, but look for areas of agreement, and acknowledge where you differ.
- **Don't feel you need to sell something.** An organizer is not a salesperson. You're genuinely looking to learn the other person's point of view and create something new together.





AHUY: DEVELOPING A RAP

The acronym “AHUY” is a helpful shorthand for what it takes to move someone to act: **A**nger, **H**ope, **U**rgency, and **Y**ou.

1. Opening: Introduce yourself and ask a question to get the other person talking about a workplace issue. *How will you strike up the conversation?*

2. Anger: “There is an injustice. We have to fix this.” Tap into righteous anger at the injustice and create determination to do something about it. *What questions will you ask to learn how the issue affects this person?*

3. Hope: “Change is possible. We can fix this. Here’s our plan.” Inspire hope by conveying a clear, credible, worthwhile plan and sharing why you feel hopeful. *What are the steps we need to take together?*

4. Urgency: “Now is the time. We can’t wait any longer.” *What will happen if you don’t act?*

5. You: “You can make a difference. Your participation matters.” *Why is this person’s support critical? What concrete action are you asking them to take?*



ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

On paper and in person, keep the focus on your message. When people come to you riled up over the spin from management, a good way to respond is “Affirm, Answer, Redirect.”

Affirm:

Let them know you’re listening, you understand, and their feelings are valid. Your co-workers may be scared or upset by what they’ve heard. Don’t get mad at them. It’s management’s fault, not theirs.

I hear you, I don't want to lose money either!

Answer:

Give a truthful, concise answer to the question. Don’t be evasive. If there’s a grain of truth to management’s message, say that up front.

Yes, it's true we wouldn't be paid during a strike. Going on strike is a serious decision that requires a majority vote—so we only do it if most people decide it's worth it.

If you don’t know the answer, don’t guess. Tell them you’ll find out and get back to them. Make sure you follow through, to maintain trust.

Redirect:

But once you’ve answered the question, don’t get bogged down in too much back-and-forth about it. Instead, be ready with a question that brings the conversation back to your message and points out what management is trying to distract them from.

If they're so concerned about our pocketbooks all of a sudden, why haven't they given us a raise for two years?

Remind your co-workers of the issues that inspired them to organize in the first place. Ask whether that’s changed. Steer the conversation back to the plan to win, and the next steps.





INOCULATE YOUR CO-WORKERS AGAINST THE BOSS'S TACTICS

Whenever you take action at work, you can expect management to fight back. Inoculation is the part of the organizing conversation where you prepare your co-workers so they're not caught off guard.

1. Ask questions about how the boss will react.

Do you think the boss wants us to organize? Why not?

When he finds out we are organizing, how do you think he'll react?

What do you think he might do to try and stop us?

2. Discuss *how* the boss will fight.

- If you're preparing for a strike, expect the boss to hire extra security and threaten you with permanent replacements.
- If you're organizing your workplace for the first time, expect captive-audience meetings about union fines and fees. The week before the vote, your boss will beg you to give him a second chance.
- If you're planning a union sticker day, expect to be told you're not allowed to wear the sticker. In fact, any time you confront the boss with a new tactic for the first time, you will hear, "You can't do that."

3. Inform your co-workers what their rights are, and how to react when they're denied.

Federal labor law protects our right to wear a union button at work.

If a manager tells you to take off the button, write down the date, the time, and who witnessed it, and let your steward know.



4. Discuss *why* the boss will fight.

This step is most important. Help your co-workers understand that every workplace fight is about power.

We're not simply building power—we're taking power from our manager.

Any time we challenge the boss's control, we can expect resistance.

5. Recommit.

Ask your co-worker whether any of this has changed her mind:

Are you still serious about solving this issue by coming with us to deliver the petition?

If yes:

Great! We're meeting in the cafeteria on Thursday at 1:45.

Your co-worker has strengthened her resolve by making this commitment out loud to you—and to herself. Later you can remind her of this conversation.

If no:

What's holding you back?

It's OK if your co-worker expresses some doubts now. She's getting real with you. This gives you the chance to ask more about her concerns, address her fears, and remind her about the issue she cares about. If she doesn't take action, is that problem going to solve itself?





SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

ASSEMBLING YOUR DREAM TEAM



EXERCISE: WHY WE NEED LEADERS TO ORGANIZE

Imagine a scenario where there is an urgent need to take on a fight of some kind. For instance, suppose a well-loved leader in your workplace has been fired, and you're planning a sticker day to demand she be rehired. You have 24 hours to get the word out to everybody and get the sticker into everyone's hands:

Use the following questions to make a plan for your sticker day.

- **Total number of people** you want wearing the sticker: _____
- **How many departments?** Can you cover them all? Who moves around the worksite and can reach other departments?
- **How many shifts** are there? Who can get stickers to workers on each shift?
- **Where's the best place** to reach people before they start work? Where are all the entrances workers use?
- Are there groups of workers who **don't speak the same language?** Who can reach them?
- Can you get a sticker onto **everyone** by yourself, or with your current group of stewards?

If not, that's why we need to map and chart our workplace, then recruit enough leaders to reach every worker!





EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING LEADERS

Background:

You are a steward at the hotel where you work and are trying to restart a workplace committee. The committee used to have 10 members, but hasn't been meeting for a while.

You work in the banquet department and don't know many people in housekeeping. You would like to recruit some leaders from the housekeeping department to the committee.

Instructions:

Read the profiles of the contacts you make and the information they share with you. You have 10 minutes to determine who you think you want to recruit as a leader. Develop consensus in your group about who are the best prospects to recruit. Rate the three best prospects (1 = the best).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Who is the worst possible choice to build the union? _____

Organizing is about making choices!

Contact 1

Brenda Hammond

Time at hotel: 9 years

Issues: She slipped on the floor and hurt her back, but the company cheated on her workers' comp claim.

I don't know who people look up to. It's not me. Nobody cares how I feel. I just organize the showers and birthday parties.

Sure, I have a list of everyone's numbers. I don't mind sharing it with you.

I'm just waiting for a better job to come along, then I'm leaving. I can't afford to make it look like I'm making trouble.



You should talk to Francis Powers. She's a real leader, although she has some screwy ideas.

Sally Rivera is a real fighter, but sometimes she just fights for herself. Sally is one of the younger workers. She likes to party a lot. I really respect Paula Harris.



Contact 2

Sally Rivera

Time at hotel: 4 years

Issues: The pace is too fast in housekeeping and workers have no voice.

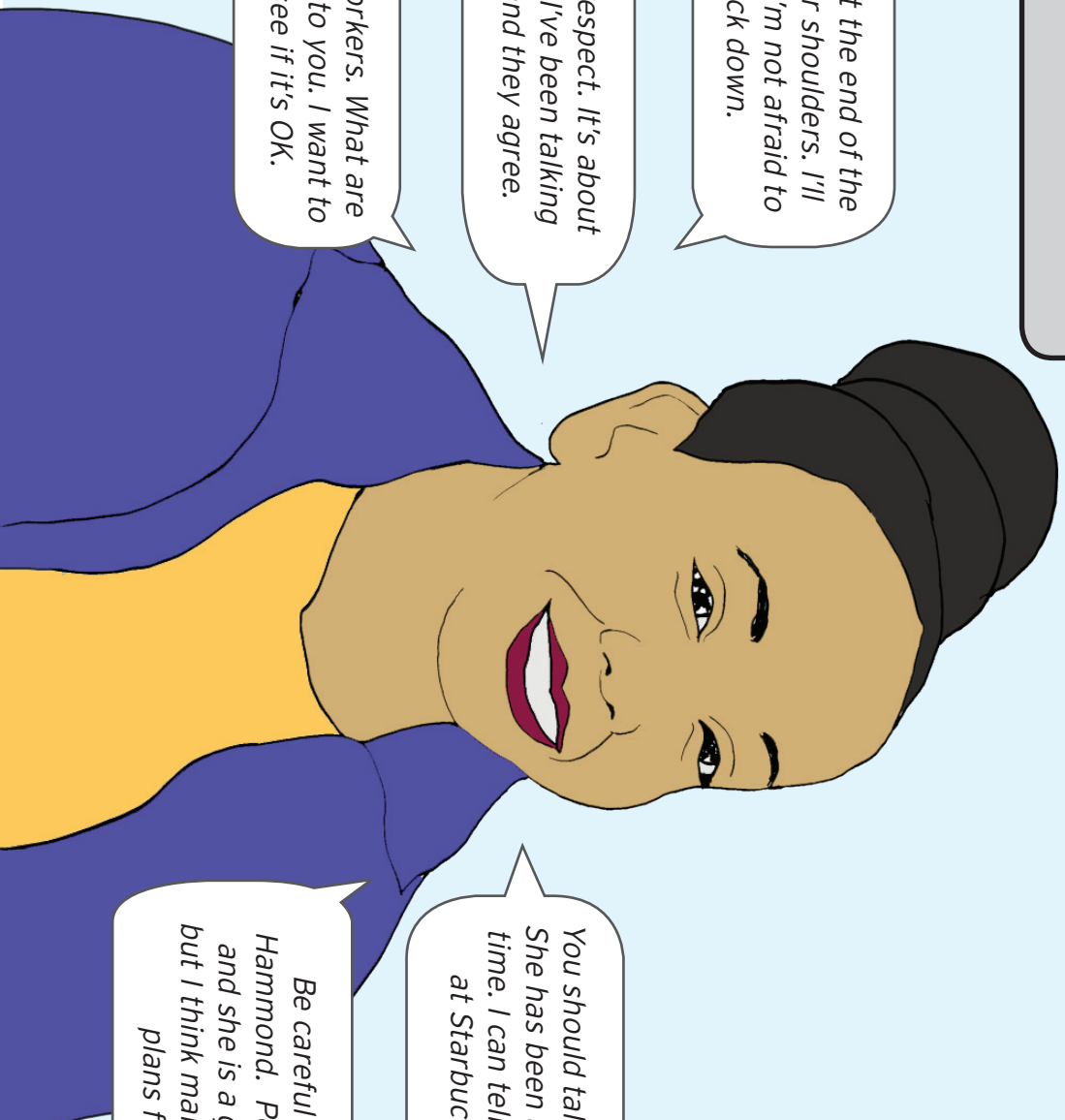
I told my boss I'm exhausted at the end of the day and she just shrugged her shoulders. I'll tell you one thing, I'm fed up. I'm not afraid to speak up and I won't back down.

We need power and we need respect. It's about time someone listened to us. I've been talking to some of my co-workers and they agree.

I mainly talk to the younger workers. What are their names? Let me get back to you. I want to check with them first and see if it's OK.

You should talk to Evie Winters. She has been around for a long time. I can tell her to meet you at Starbucks after work.

Be careful of Brenda Hammond. People like her and she is a good worker, but I think management has plans for her.



Contact 3 Eve Winters

Time at hotel: 12 years

Issues: The workload is too high.

They promised me a supervisor's job. I'm not getting involved until I know if I am going to get my promotion.

I'm not saying anything or doing anything until then. If it goes to one of their pets, I'll be mad as hell.

Brenda Hammond is a great worker, but a little shy. Powers is a great gal. A little nutty, but people follow her.

The younger women seem to stick together. They party a lot and Sally Rivera is their ringleader.

Everyone respects Paula Harris. She was employee of the year last year. You should see Helen Rockwell. She speaks her mind.



Contact 4

Francis Powers

Time at hotel: 8 years

Issues: Pace of work

We're just victims here. The managers only care about getting the most work done with the fewest amount of workers.

Some of these younger folks don't care either. They only care about having fun. Half the time I don't even know what they are talking about. Cindy Thomas is the one young person I do like. She is a real firecracker.

I really don't like Paula Harris, but I do respect her. Rockwell is a loudmouth just like Mary Smith.

Don't bother talking to any of the young workers. They don't take anything seriously.

Brenda Hammond and Evie Winters would be good leaders. Brenda got the shaft when she slipped and hurt her back. They made her come to work all doped up on pain medication!



Contact 5 Cindy Thomas

Time at hotel: 3 months

Issues: Disrespect from managers.

We need to shake things up. We need a work stoppage or some sort of action. I don't care what my manager thinks. We need to teach them a lesson.

Just give me the word and I'll talk to folks about walking out. I don't care if they fire me. I was looking for a job when I found this one.

Who would I talk to? Well, I don't really know their names, I just know their faces. I don't talk to them much. They are all a bunch of robots.



But there is one woman named Brenda. She was real nice to me when I first started. She made me feel at home.

Other names of co-workers who want to take action? You don't need names. You just need to call an action. I'll be there and so will everyone else.





QUALITIES OF A GOOD ORGANIZER

- Effective organizers are **good at their jobs and respected** by the people they work with.
- They have the **trust of their co-workers**. Their opinions carry weight. When they offer advice, people listen.
- The best organizers are motivated by a **strong sense of justice** and clear principles.
- They're **responsible, honest, and compassionate**.
- They're confident, even **courageous**.
- Organizers must be **good listeners**. They know you don't have to be the most vocal to have the biggest impact.
- They **bring people together**, welcoming new co-workers on the job and looking for ways to involve every member.
- Organizers **move people to collective action**. They don't just solve problems alone—they equip their co-workers to solve problems together.
- They put the **interests of the group first**, ahead of their individual concerns.
- They don't operate as lone rangers. They **respect group decisions**.
- Good organizers are **knowledgeable about their contract**, but not afraid to admit when they don't know the answer.
- They can stay **cool under pressure** and handle stress and conflict.
- They're willing to **stand up to management**—and they can inspire others to stand up for themselves as well.

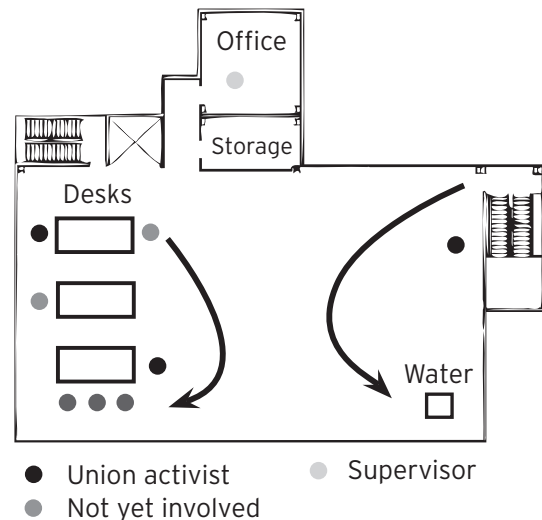




EXERCISE: MAP YOUR WORKPLACE

You will need:

- Butcher paper
- Color markers
- Sticky dots



Start with the physical space. First, use a flipchart or large sheet of paper and a black marker to outline the area or building, showing entrances, exits, and windows. Label the offices, production lines, storage areas, shipping and receiving docks, lunchrooms, and bathrooms.

Add details such as machines, desks, and water coolers. If the building is large, make maps of different areas. Be sure the map is large enough to show the information clearly.

Add motion. Draw the flow of work or production, and/or the paths that different people take through the space regularly, in different colors.

Are there spots where the flow of work tends to get bottlenecked? These could be important pressure points. Who works there?

Are there places where people congregate, like the break room or the proverbial water cooler? These could be good places for outreach conversations, or group gatherings.

Add all the people. Sticky dots work well to represent workers. You might use different colors to indicate supervisors, union activists, various jobs, or shifts. Mark the dots with initials or names.

CAN YOU GET A LIST?

It's best to work from a list of all employees in your workplace or department (whatever you're mapping). Otherwise it's surprisingly easy to forget people, especially those you don't work closely with, part-timers, or those with unique jobs.

Maybe you can get this list from your union office, especially if you're a steward. If not, is there a list at work you can discreetly copy or take a picture of? The boss may distribute an emergency phone list, or post a schedule. Be resourceful.





TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN MAPPING YOUR WORKPLACE

1. **Grapevines.** What paths do people travel? Who can walk freely through the whole workplace? How does news travel?
2. **Bottlenecks.** Are there spots where the flow of work gets bottlenecked? These could be important pressure points. Who works there?
3. **Work groups.** What work groups can we identify on this map? Consider the factors that determine who works together in your workplace, such as job, work area, and shift.
4. **Relationships.** Which work groups have contact with each other through their jobs? Which groups are hard to reach?
5. **Social groups.** What social groups can we identify on this map? For instance, who carpools together? Who speaks the same language? Who socializes at lunch or outside work? Who's related? Who are all the smokers?
6. **Group concerns.** For each work or social group, how does this group relate to management? What are the biggest problems affecting this group?
7. **Water coolers.** Where do people congregate? These could be good places for outreach conversations, or group gatherings.
8. **Broom closets.** Where can you talk out of sight of the boss?
9. **Hangouts.** Where do people go after work?
10. **As time goes by.** What on this map changes at different times of day, and at night if your workplace has night workers? How about on the weekends? Different seasons of the year?





EXERCISE: DRAW YOUR OWN MAP

Refer to the handouts *Map Your Workplace* and *Ten Questions to Ask When Mapping Your Workplace*. Draw your own workplace map in the space below.





EXERCISE: MAKE A CHART, TOO

After making a physical map of your workplace, you can keep track of the essential information in a chart. Charts are easy to update and help you monitor your organizing progress and see where the gaps are.

Keep it simple. Create a spreadsheet, using a computer program such as Excel or Google Sheets. Enter one row for each worker, even people you don't have much information about. Make a column for each bit of information you want to track, such as:

- First name
- Last name
- Cell phone
- Email address
- Job title
- Work area
- Shift
- Date of hire
- Wage tier
- Language
- Top issue
- Union member?
- Steward?
- Contract action team member?
- Completed bargaining survey?
- Attended training on X issue?
- Attended rally on Y date?
- Signed up or recruited a new member?

Keep it up to date. Charts are only as useful as they are accurate. Print out a copy of your chart to carry around with you. Continually update it, and enlist co-workers to help. This can include filling in gaps in contact information, adding people who are missing from your list, and removing those who have quit, gone on leave, or changed assignments.

Make a wall chart. Also make a big version of your chart to display on the wall, with all the names grouped by work area, job, and shift. Color-code it to show your organizing progress, so you can see at a glance where your union is weak and where it's strong. For instance, highlight everyone who has committed to attend a rally, signed a petition, or worn a button. Put a dot beside the name of each steward, activist, or contract action team member.

SAMPLE CHART

First	Last	Work area	Job	Shift	Cell phone	Email	Wage	Steward	Safety petition 10/31	Grievance training 11/10
Wanda	Smith	X-Ray	Tech	Day	123-456-7890	wandasmith@123.com	\$15.02	X	X	
George	Hernandez	Med Rec	Clerk	Eve	234-567-8901		\$16.73		X	X



Label these columns yourself with actions or other info you want to track.

[illegible]



SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

TURNING AN ISSUE INTO A CAMPAIGN



A GOOD ORGANIZING ISSUE

- **Is widely felt.** How common is the problem? How many workers face this situation? Many people must feel that this is a real problem and agree with the solution you're pursuing.
- **Is deeply felt.** Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to actually do something? It's not enough that many people agree, if none are really hot under the collar.
- **Is winnable.** It's hard to know for sure whether you *will* win, but it's possible to have a good idea whether you *can*. Your group should match your demand to the power you've already got.

To win, you'll need to make it harder for the decision-maker to keep saying no than to say yes. The more pressure you can bring to bear, the more issues will become winnable.

- **Builds the union and builds leaders.** Consider how this fight will build your capacity for future fights. Will the issue attract leaders or groups who haven't been very involved? Will it build solidarity between groups? Will it give you the chance to try an action that's one step beyond what you've done before? Will the solution lay the groundwork for future improvements?

Each fight should build off the last. It often happens that we don't win the concrete gain wanted, but we do come out smarter and better organized—which makes it more likely we can win next time.



MAKE A GAME PLAN

Once you've identified a good organizing issue, you need a plan of action.

THE THREE BASICS OF A PLAN

- 1. What exactly do you want?** It's amazing how far along folks can be in a campaign without having identified what solution they're after, and whether or not it's winnable.
- 2. Who has the power to fix the problem?** It's not enough to say "management." Figure out which person in management could say yes to your solution.
- 3. Which tactics can work?** Aim your actions to build the pressure on the decision-maker you've identified. Consider how much pressure it will take to win, and where your leverage is.





CHECKLIST: CHOOSE TACTICS THAT FIT

Your escalating campaign is made up of many tactics. A tactic could be mild, like a survey, or militant, like a work slowdown. It could be traditional, like a picket, or it could be a creative stunt a member just dreamed up. When your group is weighing what tactic to try next, here are some factors to consider:

- Does the action relate to your issue?
- Will it increase the pressure on the decision-maker?
- Is it simple?
- Is it visible?
- Is it timed for effect?
- Is it new and different—or tried and true?
- Are enough people ready to do it?
- How will others react?
- Will it unify people?
- How will management react?
- Could it backfire?
- Does it violate the law or the contract?
- If so, are you prepared for the consequences?
- Will it be fun?





TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

Don't bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn't succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don't leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action "hotter" than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:



14. Walked out of a meeting en masse
13. Spoke to the media
12. Pulled a publicity stunt
11. Called a meeting of supporters
10. Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
9. Filed an information request
8. Reached out to parents
7. Published a newsletter
6. Formed a grievance committee
5. Developed a communication network
4. Conducted a health survey
3. Gathered signatures on a grievance
2. Defined their issue: air quality
1. Met as a small group





EXERCISE: ARRANGE THESE TACTICS ON A THERMOMETER

Here's an assortment of tactics that workers have used and loved. Pick an issue in your workplace and imagine you're planning an escalating campaign. Use the blank thermometer, and write in the tactics you might use, beginning at the bottom with the mildest ones.

Which tactics are "hotter" might vary from one workplace to another, and some tactics will be unique to a particular workplace. Can you think of actions you might try that aren't on this list? Place these on your thermometer, too.

Bombard the boss
with phone calls and
emails

Put up posters

Wear T-shirts or
hats with a slogan
or cartoon on a
particular day

Visit the boss in
a small group

Strike

Wear
buttons or
stickers

Distribute
leaflets

File a group
grievance with
signatures

Hold an
informational
picket line

Rally in the parking
lot and enter the
building at the
same time

Circulate
a petition

Set up a
Facebook
page for your
campaign

Write and sing
a song about
the boss

Barrage
management
with tweets and
Facebook comments

Invite a giant
inflatable rat to
sit outside the
workplace

Do a survey

Meet with outside
supporters; get
them to take
action, too

Visit the boss in a
large group

All take breaks at
the same time

Spill the beans
to the media

Call the boss out
in front of other
workers

Everyone gets
"sick" on the
same day

Work to rule

Make up wallet
cards that define
workers' rights

Do a skit or other creative
action at a picket line,
shareholders' meeting, or
public place

Rally at company
headquarters or
another target

Stop working
overtime, all
together





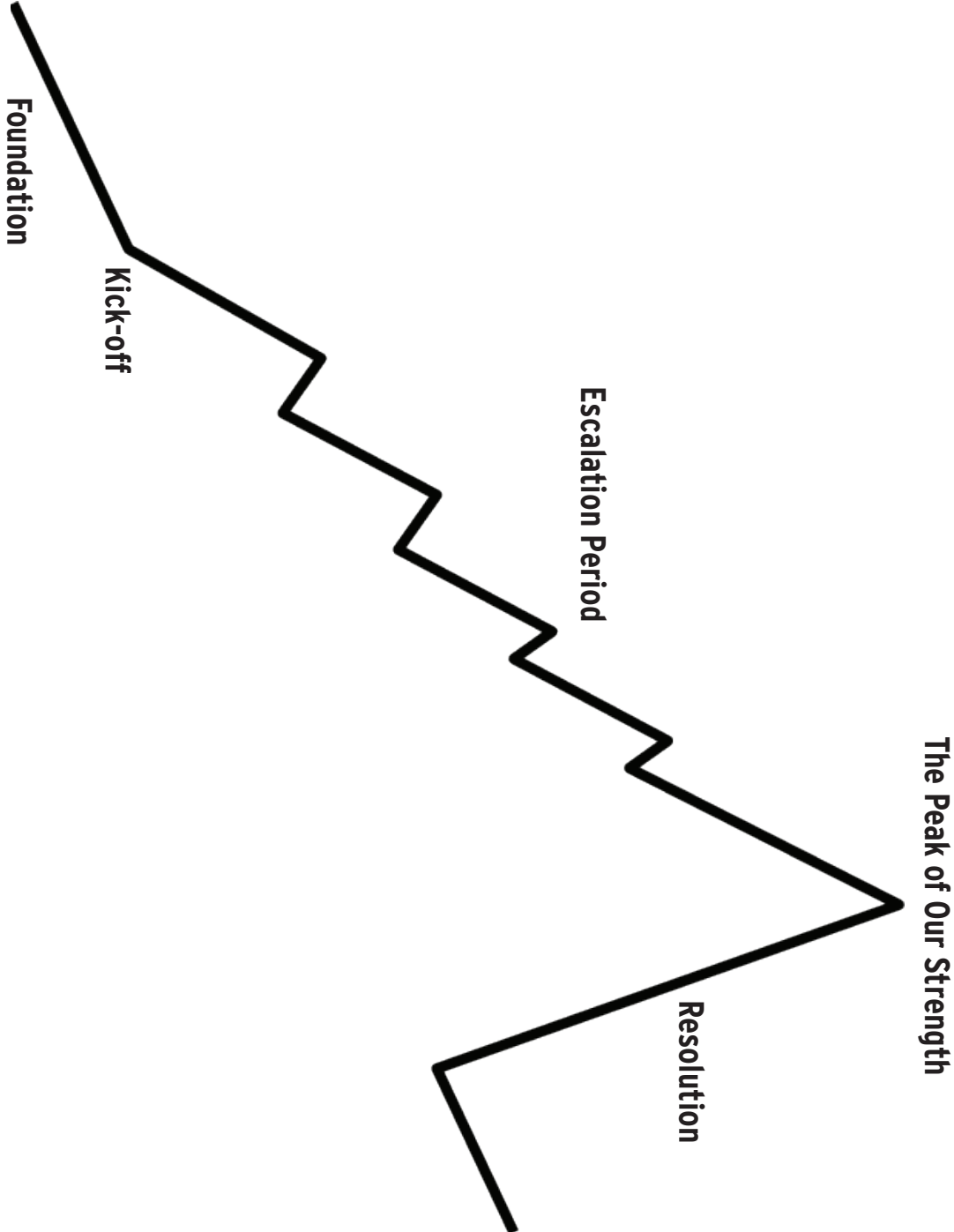
CAMPAIGN PLANNING TEMPLATE

Our Issue What is our deeply and widely felt issue? What is our demand to fix the problem?	Targets Who has the power to fix the problem?	Tactics What do we think will move our target? Which tactics fit this situation? What tactics do we start with? [warm] What tactics might we move to if necessary? [hot]



CAMPAIGN MOUNTAIN

Phases of a Campaign



COMMUNITY MAPPING SURVEY

Name: _____
Facility: _____

Date: _____
Shift: _____

Members are often the greatest resource for connecting a union to community allies. We are not just workers—we're also community members, parents, people of faith, and members of many kinds of organizations. By mapping out rich web of connections we can start to build a broader movement.

1. Do you or your family attend any kind of religious institution?

Name of religious institution:

Address:

Name of pastor/imam/rabbi/other:

2. What groups or clubs are you or a member of your family involved in? (Be specific)

Faith Group:	Professional Association:
Parent Teacher Association:	Neighborhood Group:
Sports League or Team:	Immigrant Association:
Kids Athletic Club:	Board:
Civic Organization:	Fraternity/Sorority:
Other:	

3. Do you or members of your family volunteer for anything that you have not already listed?

4. Which of your family members live in the area? What do they do? What union affiliations do they have?

5. Do you have any other connections to anyone in your community who has some kind of community profile or connections? Judges, journalists, elected officials, etc?

Worker cell phone:
Worker email:
Filled in by:

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

CASE STUDIES



CLEAN Carwash Campaign



HOW TEACHERS BROKE THE MOLD

"Our school was old and had not been well maintained," writes Steve Hinds, who was a teacher in New Haven, Connecticut. "We noticed that many teachers were suffering from sinus problems, headaches, and other respiratory illnesses. A group of teachers met to decide what to do.

"We decided to file a grievance, and got over 90 percent of the teachers to sign it in a single day. While gathering the signatures, we also conducted a health survey, and found that more than 70 percent suffered from symptoms related to air quality.

"There had been little grievance activity for years, so we could start fresh." The teachers formed a Grievance Committee, welcoming anyone. It held weekly meetings, produced a newsletter, and kept in daily contact with the parents' organization.

Using an information request, the committee forced the city to hand over a study of the school's air quality. "The report showed that the city knew there was a mold infestation in our building," Hinds writes.

"Our demands were simple. We wanted the city to do what its own report concluded it should have done six months earlier—fix the roof leaks that let moisture in, remove moldy ceiling tiles, and clean the walls and floors with bleach solution.

"We gave the city a deadline to agree to a reasonable completion date, followed by a walk-through by teachers and parents to inspect the completed work. The city indicated it was working on the problems, but wasn't formally agreeing to anything."

So the teachers decided to organize a meeting with parents. To publicize it, the next day teachers wore surgical masks to school.

"What a day it was," Hinds remembers. "We didn't even need to call the newspapers and TV stations to attract attention. Word got out through student cell phones, and the cameras and reporters were at the school doors by 9 a.m.

"Parents who heard about the masks were calling downtown with their concerns. City officials were furious, and the superintendent showed up to bully us. Most of the teachers simply walked out of this meeting.

"The city agreed to our timetable by the end of the day. The following day, a crew went through the building room by room to create a master list of work to be done. This list led to some 1,000 work orders. More work was done to improve our school building in those few months than had been done in the previous two decades, and health complaints by teachers and students gradually eased."

Through this campaign, Hinds wrote, "we developed leadership and negotiating skills in 15 members who previously had had no experience. And we built credibility with parents, who saw that the union was not interested only in salaries. We went on to form a Contract Organizing Group to pressure the local to fight for smaller classes."



UE Local 770 bargaining committee members made signs as they waited for their employer's response.

Truck Workers Jump-Start Union and Reverse Two-Tier

by Chris Brooks

Factory workers who make heavy-truck suspensions in Kendallville, Indiana, approved a contract in March that will phase out their two-tier wage and pension system, bringing everyone within 40 cents of the top tier by 2020 and eliminating the bottom tier by 2026.

How'd they do it? With a vigorous contract campaign that showed the company, Hendrickson International, that the union's 130 members were ready to strike. That's also how they've maintained 99 percent union membership, despite Indiana's "right-to-work" law.

United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 770 had accepted the two-tier wage and pension in 2010, after the company threatened to close the factory. Feeling the Great Recession's pinch, the union acquiesced to a six-year contract, where new hires earned almost \$3 an hour less for the same work.

Adding insult to injury, after the deal was ratified, the company laid off 10 workers and rehired them at the lower wage.

Hendrickson—which manufactures and distributes suspension systems for heavy-truck and bus manufacturers

such as Peterbilt, Volvo, Mack, and Freightliner—soon made a full recovery from the economic downturn.

But on the shop floor, morale sank, and the union sputtered along for the next five years. "Our union wasn't that strong," said Derk Derck. "Sometimes we are lucky to even keep a president in office."

In the lead-up to negotiations for the 2016 contract, Derck's co-workers encouraged him to run for local president. He agreed on the condition that he have a strong executive board. He and other activists went around and asked the strongest union members to step up and join the leadership of the flagging local. They ran and won.

But to be strong enough to defeat two-tier, the new officers decided, they would have to rebuild their local from the bottom up.

STICKERS, SHIRTS, CAR SIGNS

First, the new leaders formed a contract support committee of stewards and any interested members. They surveyed the entire union to develop demands.

Five top issues emerged and became the union's primary goals: relaxing the attendance policy, increasing vacation

days, reducing the penalty for retiring early, lowering health care premiums, and ending two-tier.

Next they needed to hash out a plan. Six months before negotiations would begin, three dozen members attended a bargaining workshop, open to anyone who was interested. (Leah Fried of UE International led the same workshop, "Build a Winning Contract Campaign," at the 2016 Labor Notes Conference).

Local 770 has maintained 99 percent membership in a right-to-work state.

"We brainstormed in-house tactics to put the company on edge," said Derck: "stickers, shirts, parking in management spaces, and showing up [en masse] for a bargaining session."

Early on, committee members stressed personal conversations. Before talking with their co-workers, they met to practice listening to each other and making concrete asks. They started small, asking everyone to participate by wearing stickers that said "Hands Off Our Pensions" and "No More Tiers."

Soon the union instituted “T-Shirt Tuesday.” Every Tuesday for months, the factory was full of workers wearing stickers and UE shirts to work. Members also made handmade signs for their car windows, calling for an end to two-tier.

Stewards watched to see who was participating in these activities. They kept talking with those who weren’t, trying to win them over. “Some people were scared at first,” Derck said, “but then they saw other people putting a banner in the back of their car, so they put one in theirs.

“Soon, people weren’t scared, and we organized a day where someone from every shift parked up front in management’s spaces, so they had to walk through the lot and see all the signs in the cars.”

NOT AFRAID TO STRIKE

The bargaining team, composed of equal numbers of first- and second-tier workers, invited members to attend a bargaining session. A few dozen workers came and sat quietly for hours, staring management down.

“You could tell they weren’t happy about it,” Derck said. “Just sitting in there for a couple of hours was enough to set management on edge.”

Members knew they had some leverage this time. Hendrickson had recently invested millions to build a new warehouse operation at the plant—making clear that it would be eager to keep production humming and avoid a strike.

Hendrickson had also received a city tax abatement of \$11.3 million in return for its promise to expand the plant and bring 40 new jobs to the area. If the company were to shut the plant down or outsource jobs, it would be on the hook to pay the taxpayers back.

Stewards and committee members circulated a petition for a strike, knowing the company would see it. According to Derck, between 80 and 90 percent of the workforce signed.

The new officers had also instituted regular membership meetings, where workers brainstormed new tactics. One tactic that came out was for members to haul burn barrels to work every day in their truck beds, to show they were ready to strike.

Members started organizing their own shift meetings, while on the clock. Directly after the production meeting with management, instead of returning to their machines, workers would stay and listen as the steward shared bargaining updates and union news.

In the end, the bargaining committee

won language on all five contract goals, including the phase-out of two-tier. The 10 workers who had been laid off and recalled at second-tier wages were immediately restored to the top wage.

“It’s not just what the bargaining committee did,” said Derck. “It was what we all did.”

STILL STRONG IN OPEN SHOP

This was Local 770’s first contract campaign since Indiana went “right to work” in 2012.

The union’s old contract had included a union security clause, where all represented workers have to pay their share in union dues. The right-to-work law bans unions from negotiating such clauses. In this new open-shop environment, workers could choose to opt out of the union and still benefit from the contract.

‘We brainstormed in-house tactics to put the company on edge.’

Derck was concerned that younger workers would drop their membership, feeling shortchanged by the two-tier system. And even some top-tier workers were growing skeptical of the value of paying dues, after the company started demanding cuts to their health care and pensions.

But through this contract campaign that dramatically increased participation and won big gains, Local 770 has maintained 99 percent membership.

“When we took these actions and won what we won, we learned how strong we are,” Derck said. “That is what is holding us together.” □



TURN UP THE HEAT

How did Local 770 members build an escalating campaign to defeat two-tier? They started small and turned up the heat...



9. Set a strike deadline
8. Held their own shift meetings, on the clock
7. Hauled burn barrels in their trucks
6. Conspicuously circulated a strike petition
5. Put signs in their cars and parked in management's spaces
4. Showed up en masse to bargaining
3. Held T-Shirt Tuesdays and sticker days
2. Invited everyone to a bargaining workshop
1. Surveyed members to develop demands

Learn to plan an escalating campaign with *Secrets of a Successful Organizer*. Buy the book and download free handouts like the Action Thermometer at labornotes.org/secrets



J Robert Burger

Members parked in management spaces, with signs opposing two-tier wages clearly visible.

LABOR NOTES

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Cleaning Up Wage Theft

Car Washers Build Pressure

by Sonia Singh

In Juan Hernandez's first car wash job, he and his co-workers used to put in nine-hour days for \$40 in cash. Workers would often arrive at 8 a.m.—but have to wait three or four hours to start working, with no fixed schedule.

"When I began to work in this industry, there was practically no control over car wash owners," Hernandez said. "Not knowing the labor law, you are

just giving away your work for free."

But through a collaboration between worker centers and unions, car wash workers in Los Angeles are teaming up and transforming their industry.

A coalition that includes community groups, the AFL-CIO, and Steelworkers Local 675 backs the CLEAN Carwash Campaign, launched in 2007. The campaign uses a range of strategies—from picketing the worst wage thieves to helping workers unionize.

Today, out of 500 car washes in the L.A. County area that have employees, 30 are union.

SURGE OF ORGANIZING

Organizing is a challenge in an industry with few chain employers and just 15 workers in the average workplace. Car wash workers do jobs like shampooing, vacuuming, waxing, and detailing. Even fully automated car washes usually have one or two workers doing specialized tasks.

Today, out of 500 car washes in the L.A. County area that have employees, 30 are union.

The campaign won its first union contract in 2010. But a surge of organizing followed changes to the Car Wash Worker Law that took effect in 2014.

California car washes must register with the Department of Labor Standards Enforcement and post a bond of \$150,000. Car washes with union contracts are exempt from paying the bond—which gives companies an incentive to agree to a union. (A similar law passed in New York City last year, but implementation is on hold).

A common framework agreement covers all the unionized shops, establishing health and safety protections and setting wages 30 cents above the

Continued on page 14 ...



CLEAN Carwash Campaign

Workers practice detail work in a peer training program at the Carwash Worker Center.

NEW BOOK!

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

by Alexandra Bradbury, Mark Brenner, and Jane Slaughter



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CLEAN Carwash

...Continued from back cover

minimum wage, which is \$10 an hour in L.A., with parts of the county going up to \$10.50 in July.

Because there had been so much wage theft in the industry, the first contract brought some workers up from \$4 to \$10.30, said Campaign Manager Justin McBride. Complaints of wage theft still occur in union shops, but now there are grievance procedures to quickly address it.

Union workers also negotiate side letters spelling out changes specific to each workplace. For instance, some have won a microwave, a place to eat lunch, a time clock to ensure hours are fairly captured, or caps to protect workers from the sun.

PRESSURE WORKS

But many car wash workers, including some of the most active leaders, are not formal members of the Steelworkers or covered by collective bargaining agreements.

'If we put up a picket line, we can generally turn away half of the customers.'

In car washes where they haven't yet built enough support to win a union election, workers improve conditions by other tactics, including direct action. They get help from the Carwash Worker Center, formed two years ago.

In a workplace of 32, Hernandez got 24 co-workers together for a meeting to discuss their rights. They decided to approach the manager as a group about their irregular hours and payment.

The owner retaliated by firing eight, including Hernandez. The workers immediately filed unfair labor practice charges at the Labor Board, but also stepped up community pressure, organizing a picket outside the car wash. After 17 days, they were back at work.

"We continued to fight and we were able to achieve many changes," Hernandez said. "We got paid for the extra hours we worked, they gave us 30 minutes for lunch, we won a 10-minute break every four hours, and we won that everyone get paid by check."

"But more than anything, the treatment is the biggest change," said Hernandez, who still works at the same car wash. "The manager treats us very differently than before."

Hernandez and his co-workers also tried to organize a union, but because of the slick anti-union consultant their employer brought in, they couldn't win enough support.

CAMPAIGN BIRTHDAY CAKE

In another car wash, community allies joined workers to deliver a letter demanding that their boss provide drinking water and eliminate waiting time in the mornings.

The pressure worked. The next day the employer began supplying water and changed the schedule so workers weren't waiting.

Next, the workers decided to push for a restroom, with another community delegation. They won that too. "The more they did, they saw they had power to push things and balance things in the workplace," said Flor Rodriguez, coordinator of the Carwash Worker Center.

To celebrate a year of organizing, the workers brought in a cake with the logo of the CLEAN Carwash Campaign and invited the manager and owner to join them for a slice. "They wanted to make sure it was known this is something that wasn't going to die down, but was going to keep going," Rodriguez said.

If employers stop responding to workers' demands, the campaign will announce a boycott. Depending on the employer's response, the boycott can be as short as a few days, or in one case, as long as three years.

"If we put up a picket line, we can generally turn away half of the customers," said McBride. "It's another key side to driving up standards—putting pressure on the worst shops."

SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

The worker center gives union and non-union workers a space to connect. At general meetings five times a year, workers tell their stories and strategize.

"Everyone has experienced wage theft at some point. That's just the way the industry is shaped," said Rodriguez. "[Sharing experiences] builds that system of support."

Hernandez sits on the worker center committee, which meets twice a month to plan. "Based on workers' testimonies in the general meeting, we decide how we will take action," he said.

Some committee members are in union shops, and others aren't. The point is to change the whole industry—something Hernandez can already see happening.

"Little by little, there have been many car washes that have implemented changes," he said. "Now workers feel more protected."

LEARN TO BUFF

The committee has also developed a peer training program, where workers teach one another to do detail work, like buffing. Having these skills can help workers get higher wages and more regular hours, since a car wash needs at least one worker onsite at all times who can do detailing.

But these are skills that workers often can't learn on the job, because employers—worried about time or liability for damage—don't let them shadow other skilled workers. In the program, workers practice on cars loaned by community allies.

These trainings are a way to reach out to workers in all kinds of car washes, both union and non-union, Rodriguez said. Because trainers spend so much time with the workers they're training, they end up identifying potential leaders.

"That's how the worker center committee grows," said Rodriguez. "It's like growing tentacles."

CONTRACT REOPENS

The framework agreement expires in September, so union members will start discussing bargaining priorities in April.

Non-union car wash workers will have the chance to weigh in too. That's

important, because the categories of union and non-union worker aren't fixed.

Turnover is high. A unionized car wash could close, or workers could move between jobs. "You may be a [union] member today and not tomorrow," said McBride.

'Little by little, there have been many car washes that have implemented changes.'

Besides, "it's important to have both perspectives," Rodriguez said, "so [non-union] workers can learn what the contract is, and together they can fight for more."

This worker center-union collaboration shows the value of experimenting with a variety of strategies. "One of the hardest things for labor partners is that it can't always be about collective bargaining," said McBride.

"It's about worker power. If we've learned anything from the worker center movement, it's that power can look like a lot of different things." □

[Some quotes in this story have been translated from Spanish.]



CLEAN Carwash Campaign

6

Community Partners

One of the most remarkable things about CTU's 2012 strike is that these educators won community support in a national political climate that was not simply anti-union but anti-teacher. A poll conducted by We Ask America in the strike's final days found that a majority of Chicagoans—including 63 percent of African Americans, 65 percent of Latinos, and 66 percent of parents of school-age children—were supporting it.

Community support, however, went far beyond mere favorable opinions. Neighborhood organizations throughout the city played a critical role in both drumming up support for the strike and coordinating on-the-ground support. Action Now, the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO), the Albany Park Neighborhood Council, and the Logan Square Neighborhood Association pulled members together to canvass their neighbors in the lead-up to the strike. They held town-hall forums, organized day camps for out-of-school children, turned out members en masse to downtown rallies, and organized pro-CTU press



Different Types of Alliances

(Excerpted from CTU training materials)

Weakest—“Please come support us!” Some people will come help, because they like us or because it is “the right thing to do.”

Medium—“You help us on *this* and we’ll help you on *that*!” Scratch each other’s backs: It does help for your ally to know that you will return the favor. It’s stronger than a one-way relationship, but people will only go so far just to help you with your issues.

Strongest—“We’re in it together!” Solidarity: We are both being harmed. Working together and supporting each other is the only way to fix it. “Supporting you helps me win, too.” ✪

conferences and rallies of their own (see details in Chapter 9).

Why did community groups feel so compelled to support the strike? It was simple, said Jitu Brown, a KOCO organizer: “Parents knew their schools were being sabotaged, and they knew that teachers were standing up against that, so they stood with them.”

In addition, said Raul Botello of the Albany Park Neighborhood Council, which functions on the Northwest Side, it was important that CTU was willing to call out the school board’s racism. “They were talking and speaking the language of parents and youth,” he said. “The people felt their fight.”

Parents didn’t just see the strike as a way to support their children’s teachers. They were fighting side by side on issues both groups were passionate about: smaller classes, more resources for schools, over-testing, and racial equity.

The relationships started long before teachers walked out—even long before CORE members were elected. Chapter 3 told how CORE members worked alongside community groups like KOCO as far back as 2004, long before they had institutional power. “Working with the community was natural to us because we had already been working with the community,” said Michael Brunson, now CTU’s recording secretary.

More than just shoulder-to-shoulder activism, the union’s ability to build enduring relationships came from its willingness to tackle the tough issues of race and class discrimination head-on

and to listen to community members, not just work to get them on the union's message.

Katelyn Johnson, director of Action Now, a community organization active on the South and West Sides of the city, said her group had tried to work with the old CTU leadership “and found they weren’t interested. If there was something they needed they would reach out, but after that you didn’t hear from them.” Botello said when the CORE members were elected, “it was like talking to organizers. The previous administration, they were politicians.”

CTU Staff Coordinator Jackson Potter says the goal now is “a real relationship,” one in which both union and community allies can “make mistakes and take risks to see where we can go and how far we can take it.”

Community Board

Once in office, leaders wanted to formalize their relationships with community groups. They wanted to make sure there was always a channel for community and parent voices to be heard in the union.

So CTU established a new Community Board. At its nucleus were the organizations in the Grassroots Education Movement (GEM), which was born in 2008 to fight school closings (see Chapter 3). The groups were invited to a big rally against layoffs



and school closings, held in the Hyde Park/Kenwood area on the South Side in July 2010—the new leaders’ first reach-out to the community.

Board members also came from the Grassroots Collaborative, a coalition formed by Service Employees (SEIU) locals and community organizations to campaign for a living wage ordinance for big-box stores (eventually vetoed by the mayor).

Mostly the groups on the Community Board had real membership roots in their neighborhoods, although a few were more of the think-tank variety. As in most large cities, plenty of non-profit and neighborhood organizations existed that were content to attempt influence through back channels to politicians; these were not invited. CTU chose groups with organizing traditions and with attitudes toward the power brokers that matched CTU’s new orientation.

“We gave more weight to groups that were more rooted in the community, rather than citywide organizations,” said Organizing Director Norine Gutekanst, who worked closely with the Board. “We wanted people who really wanted to push on the school board, who identified their policies as racist. We chose organizations that believed that, rather than those who thought they could work with the school board.”

According to Gutekanst, September and October 2010 were a “visioning period” for the Community Board, where the organizations discussed their top priorities in education, such as “social and emotional supports for children in the schools” (social workers and counselors), recruiting quality teachers from their own communities, and stopping the closings. “The visioning was a good way to all get on the same page,” she said, “and for us to understand how the partner groups identified the problems with our schools.”

The Board initially consisted of representatives from around 15 groups. (In 2012 it decided to re-adopt the name GEM. Today it includes 30 organizations and meets at least once a month.)

History teacher Jen Johnson pointed out that the Community Board rested on the years of work done by CORE before the slate was elected. “For CORE it was foundational to work with community groups to build a movement,” she said. “We didn’t want to just create a caucus. We wanted to create a movement,

and we wanted people to buy in and to know we would not sell out if we were elected.

“CTU has tried to carry out the same vision. Having those community partners will help hold us accountable to that vision. They can help keep us on track.”

Two Campaigns

After CPS CEO Ron Huberman stepped down in the fall of 2010, the union suggested a campaign for a say in choosing his replacement. Union and Community Board leaders chose a blue-ribbon panel of citizens to identify a schools chief with an education background—unlike Huberman and the two CEOs before him, whose backgrounds were in business.

And in 2012 groups on the Board launched a campaign for an elected, representative school board with seven of 13 spots reserved for parents. Since 1995 the mayor had controlled Chicago’s schools through an appointed CEO and seven-member unelected board. These appointees tended to be wealthy businesspeople, not educators or working class parents. The lineup included Hyatt hotel heiress Penny Pritzker and banking executive David Vitale, ex-CEO of the Chicago Board of Trade. CTU developed a research paper on the value of elected boards.

A group called Communities Organized for Democracy in Education (CODE) was formed. Its tactic was to run nonbinding referendums in 327 precincts on the South and West Sides, to ask the state legislature to change the law that gave Chicago an appointed board. (Each precinct contains a couple thousand residents; there are 2,069 precincts altogether.) “They targeted wards and precincts that had been struck by a history of school closings and destabilization,” Johnson explained.

Organizers presented 10,000 voter signatures in August to get the measure on the 2012 ballot in targeted precincts, and in November, a resounding 87 percent of those voting said yes. The victory was symbolic—actually switching to an elected board would require the state legislature to act—but the show of public support was a milestone.

Not surprisingly, neither of those campaigns directly moved Chicago’s powers-that-be. Looking back, Potter had second thoughts about the union’s push to engage the community in

choosing the next CEO. It was “a good talking point, but that didn’t translate into a campaign that had any chance of winning,” he said. “It was too wonkish of an issue to get broad participation from the public. In hindsight it was a poor use of our time and energy.”

The campaign for an elected board, on the other hand, worked out better—and this one had not been the CTU’s idea, but came at the insistence of KOCO. “We were not sold on this being a good use of union resources, initially,” Potter recalled, “because we were in the middle of a contract campaign.” But KOCO correctly predicted how popular the idea would be, and pointed out that having no control over school governance made everything CTU did an uphill battle. Chicagoans could see that racism and class bias were the reasons city authorities had, as Potter put it, “a free pass to ignore the desires of their constituents.”

The idea of an elected board was, and continues to be, “very easily supported everywhere we go,” Gutekanst said. “It’s a no-brainer: why would you have billionaires sitting on your school board? They don’t have kids in our schools.” Union leaders saw the elected board as a longer-term fight, something they knew they wouldn’t win that year but could support with their contract campaign.

As it turned out, not many CTU members worked on the elected school board campaign personally, because they were



thoroughly involved in that contract campaign. But the two campaigns were complementary. “It helped to set the stage,” said Gutekanst. “We could say, ‘We’re trying to get a better school day, but the school board is an obstacle.’” (See Chapter 7 on the “better school day” campaign.)

Gutekanst believes it’s important that the Community Board “isn’t a vehicle for CTU, it’s a collaboration. Some things we agreed on that were joint campaigns, some not.” Botello said, “We have some really honest and hard conversations. The union might say ‘we can’t weigh in as heavy as you-all.’” Johnson of Action Now says it’s important to CTU’s credibility with community groups that the union is also invested in issues that aren’t directly tied to education, such as getting an ordinance requiring that vacant properties within a certain radius of schools must be boarded up and secured.

In addition to the Community Board, aided by the fact that one of CTU’s in-house organizers is a minister, the union reached out to faith communities in the summer of 2011 to form Parents, Educators And Clergy for Education—PEACE. “Mayor Daley had certain ministers in his corner,” Brunson explained. “Rahm Emanuel the same thing. We had a breakfast and a certain group came just to get information and report back to someone. So we drew back and formed a committee of clergy that we knew were aligned with our vision.”

Local School Councils

Chicago schools differ from those in many other cities in that a voice for parents, community members, and teachers is built into school governance through the elected Local School Councils, which approve school budgets and hire the principal. In practice, the councils vary widely in their effectiveness. Some are rubber-stamps for the principal, some have low participation, and in the many schools on probation because of low test scores, their role is advisory only.

When CTU held its delegate training in March 2011, the invitation list was broadened to include the teacher reps on the LSCs. The union also obtained a citywide list of parent reps and sent them regular emails to keep them abreast of what was happening in the district and invite them to events.

In the strike, the LSCs didn't play a big role. It's easy to see their potential, though, if they were organized and strong. Fast-forward to summer 2013, when Rahm Emanuel announced drastic budget cuts, up to 25 percent for some schools. On the mostly middle-class North Side, some LSCs dared to defy the principal by voting down their diminished budgets. And as spring 2014 LSC elections neared, CTU planned a new emphasis that would encourage teachers to run, give training to those reps, and get active parents to run as well.

"We are really thinking through how we can get our members to deepen those relationships with parents," Gutekanst said.

From the beginning, the community partners shared the ideals that were animating CTU. "I remember an early meeting where they said, 'What is it that CTU is trying to do?'" says Gutekanst. "And I said, 'We're trying to build a movement in Chicago so that people in communities have some say-so in how the schools are run.'"

"Heads nod, and they said, 'Let's build a movement.'"



Read much more about CORE's and CTU's community alliances in Chapters 3, 7, 8, and 9.

Lessons

- ⇒ CTU saw alliances as year-round, not rustled up in an emergency.
- ⇒ CTU was upfront about its view that treatment of Chicago students amounted to institutional racism.
- ⇒ CTU was willing to take leadership from other groups, even if the union's own priorities were distinct.
- ⇒ CTU saw alliances as coalitions of equals that would learn from each other and sometimes agree to disagree or work separately.

- ⇒ CTU chose its allies carefully, declining to waste time on groups that were on a different page in their analysis of Chicago power politics.
- ⇒ CTU plans to use the Local School Councils, existing structures which have ranged from strong to moribund, and breathe new life into them through recruitment and training.

IF WE CAN CHANGE THE WHITE HOUSE, WE CAN CHANGE THE HOG HOUSE

Author(s): Gene Bruskin

Source: *New Labor Forum*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 62-70

Published by: Sage Publications, Inc.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25701463>

Accessed: 03-04-2017 19:04 UTC

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Smithfield workers and supporters gather in a Williamsburg, Virginia church, in August 2007, prior to a protest at Smithfield's annual shareholders meeting.

IF WE CAN CHANGE THE WHITE HOUSE, WE CAN CHANGE THE HOG HOUSE

ON DECEMBER 11, 2008, FORTY-SIX HUNDRED MOSTLY BLACK AND LATINO Smithfield Foods slaughterhouse workers in Tar Heel, North Carolina voted to join the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW). They ratified their first union contract the following July, after a sixteen-year fight against one

of the most insidious anti-union employer campaigns in recent decades. The victory was the result of both a national campaign to win public support and a persistent on-the-ground organizing program. This article will focus on the successful in-plant organizing segment—the largest victory in UFCW history.

SMITHFIELD'S HISTORY

THE 1992 CONSTRUCTION OF THE MIL-lion-square-foot Tar Heel hog plant marked a transformative moment for both Smithfield and the pork industry. The plant was designed to enable workers to kill more than thirty-two thousand hogs a day (Smithfield raised its own supply of eight million hogs a year

for the plant in the surrounding rural counties). This provided Smithfield with a competitive advantage referred to as “vertical integration,” described by the company as a way to control production “from the squeal to the meal.”

Workers immediately began to organize.

Smithfield Foods expanded—nationally and internationally—over the next fifteen years by acquiring a series of profitable companies in the Midwest, leaving the unions, the well-known product brand names, and the existing management teams of the newly acquired companies in place. By 2008, more than half of Smithfield's thirty-six thousand pork-plant workers were under union contracts—mostly with the UFCW—and Smithfield became the

largest pork- and turkey-producing company in the world, with \$12 billion in revenues. But CEO and Chairman of the Board Joe Luter III, grandson of the company's founder, believed that if the massive Tar Heel plant went union, there would be a dramatic balance of power shift between the UFCW and Smithfield. And he was determined to prevent that from happening.

THE CHALLENGE OF MOBILIZING WORKERS

TWO NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (NLRB) elections lost by the union, in 1994 and 1997, were overturned by the NLRB due to Smithfield's flagrantly illegal acts of misconduct. In June 2006, the UFCW expanded the Justice@Smithfield campaign into both a national media-focused and a community-based campaign to mobilize consumer and public support for the Tar Heel plant workers, to convince Smithfield to agree to a set of rules for a free and fair election that went beyond those required by the NLRB. The UFCW thus found itself faced with a contradiction common to comprehensive organizing campaigns: how do you actively engage workers in an open-ended fight for a free and fair process when there is no election scheduled?

How do you actively engage workers in an open-ended fight for a free and fair process when there is no election scheduled?

Then there were other daunting challenges:

- A workforce of nearly five thousand people—with a turnover rate as high as 100 percent—and a one hundred-mile-diameter

area within which workers lived (and frequently moved).

- Leaders and activists who were regularly fired or who just moved on out of fear or hopelessness, or out of exhaustion from the unrelenting daily pace of the work.
- Constantly shifting demographics within the workforce, which was largely made up of rural Mexicans and African-Americans who had little personal or family union experience.
- Black and Latino workers who were divided by a language barrier, cultural differences, and company-fueled manipulation tactics.
- An inexperienced organizing crew made up of former plant workers and new organizers.

There was no clear blueprint. In fact, some influential staff members and leaders within the UFCW argued that the local, on-the-ground efforts weren't important and success would instead hinge on the work of the national campaign. Many in the UFCW remained skeptical that Tar Heel would ever be unionized.

The Tar Heel campaign needed an activist core of at least one hundred people at any given time to maintain a visible local presence. The in-plant campaign focused on developing

leaders, activists, and activities to challenge the company's authority, minimize the plant workers' fears, win some immediate demands (to "act like a union"), and keep constant pressure on the company. Leaders were challenged again and again to prepare themselves for an eventual card check or alternative election process.

As the public consumer campaign went forward, it complemented and supported the in-plant campaign. The Tar Heel workers themselves took their stories about the plant across North Carolina and beyond, in key markets for Smithfield

products, attracting extensive media coverage and broad community support.

Organizers were in constant search of natural leaders—those who could generate a following—and they made ongoing efforts to develop leadership skills in others. To this end, they increased their contact with workers, reassured workers and listened to their concerns, encouraged workers to take a stand, assigned specific responsibilities to leaders, and provided various types of training sessions.

Workers joined in because of the feelings of dignity and respect that came from standing up for their rights and seeing their self images evolve from line workers to activists or leaders. Every worker understood the risks that came with plant activism.

Initially, organizers found very little interest among members of the workforce that (since 1997) had changed from largely African-American to largely Latino—a demographic shift that reflected a national trend within the meatpacking industry. Smithfield took advantage of the 50 percent to 100 percent annual turnover rate by actively recruiting and welcoming increasing numbers of Mexican and Central American workers, as a steady stream of eager Latino workers found their way to Tar Heel. The company was well aware of many of the Latino workers' vulnerable immigration statuses. Smithfield realized that Latinos were less likely to file complaints with regulatory agencies (such as OSHA) or file for workers' compensation—and that they were easier to manipulate on the production line.

The union sponsored a workers' center which helped develop trust over time. It became a valuable resource for workers who needed advice about immigration issues, injuries and workers' compensation problems, wage and hour issues, or unfair firings. The workers' center also served as a social anchor, hosting monthly potlucks, cultural nights, and ESL classes, while also giving the union a public

face in the community. A strong relationship was developed with the local Catholic priest who served as the pastor for most of the Latino workers. Still, the Latino-African-American fissure remained a problem to be solved.

SMITHFIELD'S COUNTER-CAMPAIGN

THE COMPANY RAN A CONTINUOUS PROPAGANDA campaign that maligned the UFCW as a "third party." For the most part, the union ignored these kinds of attacks and instead focused on the specific issues that workers raised and the company continually created.

The floor-level supervisors maintained a regular whisper campaign that exacerbated the cultural and language differences separating the black and Latino workers, telling the blacks that they needed to work harder to prevent the Latinos from taking their jobs; and telling the Latinos that the black workers wanted them out and couldn't be trusted. The stereotypical prejudices about both groups (that were prevalent in North Carolina) shaped each group's attitudes toward each other. Smithfield felt confident that they had a workforce that was unlikely to unify. Smithfield also maintained an aggressive and selectively enforced point system for tardiness and absences, which made it easier for them to fire union supporters under the pretext of sub-par job performance.

Despite the company's opposition, the incredibly difficult conditions inside the plant kept the campaign alive. The pace of the production line was unrelenting, with sixteen thousand hogs killed during each shift. Disrespect, sexual harassment, unfair disciplinary measures and firings, rampant wage and hour violations, and epidemic levels of injuries and workers' compensation violations were constant. Many workers' physical survival was at stake every day. These conditions generated

feelings of anger, resentment, and mistrust of management.

In November 2003, most of the 250 Latino sanitation workers employed by Smithfield's subcontractor QSI walked off the job to protest dangerous working conditions. The UFCW intervened to support the protest and filed unfair labor practice (ULP) charges against both QSI and Smithfield. The union hired one of the fired workers and both this worker and others told the story of repression at events around the country. The NLRB found that QSI and Smithfield—via their company police—physically assaulted, falsely arrested, threatened to call immigration services, and fired workers who engaged in protected activity. In 2006, QSI agreed to provide back pay to fired workers, although Smithfield's legal maneuvering eventually saved them from more serious repercussions.

THE IN-PLANT APPROACH: BUILDING THE ON-THE- GROUND STRUGGLE

IN SPRING 2005 AND APRIL 2006, LATINO production line workers led health and safety battles against the dangerous conditions that they faced. They filed petitions and voiced concerns to the human resources department, with the help of some African-American workers. Although they made limited gains, they got a sense of their potential power to impact production.

On May 1, 2006, Latino plant workers decided to join in on national immigrants' rights activities. Close to five thousand Latino workers and their families—joined by a contingent of African-American workers—marched and rallied in a union-sponsored coalition under the slogan: "Immigrant rights are workers' rights." Both before and during the march through friendly and curious rural black neighborhoods, the union distributed leaflets linking the march

to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) and the civil rights movement.

In July 2006, close to one thousand black and Latino workers came to work wearing golden Justice@Smithfield T-shirts, declaring it "yellow fever" day. The union issued a scathing public report, entitled "Packaged with Abuse," about the plant's health and safety violations, and held a dramatic public hearing in nearby Fayetteville with workers testifying before a prominent Workers' Rights Board.

The report revealed that plant workers were expected to continue working in spite of carpal tunnel syndrome, rotator cuff injuries, serious cuts and lesions, and back problems. Some workers lost fingers, damaged limbs, were trampled by hogs, and incurred permanent injuries. They were routinely denied workers compensation and were forced back on the line, while still in pain, in order to avoid being fired. Many workers simply didn't report injuries; but the resulting humiliation created a deep sense of anger and mistrust—and an opportunity for the union to support injured workers' fight for their rights and desire to go public with their stories.

Momentum was building.

THE NOVEMBER 2006 WALKOUT AND ITS AFTERMATH

ON NOVEMBER 16, 2006, CLOSE TO ONE thousand Latino workers walked off the job for two days to protest Smithfield's issuance of one thousand "Social Security no-match" letters and the subsequent firings.

For two days the workers rallied non-stop from early morning until midnight, in front of the plant. The walkout resembled a protest in Mexico more than a U.S. strike, although most of the demonstrating workers didn't seem to have been active in social movements in Mexico. They brought in amplifiers for music,

gave speeches, chanted, and signed union cards. Company security made it very difficult for the union staff to get onto the property. Once UFCW organizers arrived, they provided water, bullhorns, pizza, and regular advice—but the workers remained in charge. A group of at least twenty-five African-American and white union supporters joined the walkout. The Justice@Smithfield campaign broadcast the story across the nation and around the world: courageous Latino workers were standing up to an anti-union and anti-immigrant company.

On the first night of the walkout, fifty Latino and African-American workers met with the union organizers and decided on their demands. They wanted Smithfield to promise (in writing) that it would: withdraw the no-match letters, rehire all fired workers, impose no penalties for striking, and meet with worker-chosen reps to determine how to deal with these matters going forward.

At the end of the second day, the company agreed to these demands. But the agreement proved to be a short-lived solution. In late January 2007, two months after the walkout, the company handed twenty-one workers over to immigration services. Each worker who was affected by this stealth raid was arrested and then deported. The November 2006 victory bubble burst and, when the company reissued the no-match letters, many Latino workers—including key union activists and walkout leaders—quit to get out of the spotlight.

After the Latino-led walkout, African-American workers in the plant felt challenged to increase their own involvement and militancy. Working with the union organizers, they presented a petition to the company, with more than two thousand black and Latino signatures, demanding a paid MLK Day holiday on January 14, 2007. They threatened to walk out if this

demand was not met. The UFCW set up a Smithfield worker-centered MLK Day event in a large Fayetteville church, and linked King to Cesar Chavez. But the plan failed and the African-American workers (and the UFCW) got a wake-up call—there was not enough leadership strength within the plant to pull something like this off (although, in January 2008, Tar Heel workers won an important victory when Smithfield agreed to a paid MLK Day holiday to head off another conflict).

This setback signaled the beginning of the transition from Latino to African-American leadership, as immigration pressures forced out large numbers of Latino workers. In the wake

Workers in the livestock department—who herd thirty-two thousand hogs a day into the plant for their daily slaughter—staged a several-month fight for soap, warm water, and clean drinking water.

of the second immigration raid and arrests in August 2007, the workforce went from two-thirds Latino to two-thirds African-American.

Throughout their organizing work, the UFCW built up black-Latino unity at every opportunity. All literature and all meetings were in both languages, and the organizing staff was diverse. Unity was constantly stressed in conversations with the workers and in workshops conducted for the organizing staff members and leaders. Over time, the organizers carefully worked with both the Latino and

black churches, focusing on issues that were important to each group. Although the demographics changed dramatically, the union was able to hold support among both groups and develop the necessary diversity of leadership. The composition of the organizers gradually changed to more closely reflect the increasing numbers of African-American workers.

Smithfield claimed the Justice@Smithfield campaign attempted to extort a union relationship with the company, and had damaged the company's brand name.

In May 2007, workers in the livestock department—who herd the thirty-two thousand hogs a day into the plant for their daily slaughter—staged a several-month fight for soap and warm water (so they could wash their hands), and clean drinking water. This effort, led by a white worker returning with back pay after having been fired during the 1994 election, culminated in a workers' petition to OSHA and, ultimately, a one-day work stoppage in June 2007. In the end, they got new plumbing, new locker rooms, and an improved system for drinking water. This success provided hope and inspiration, and became a training source for new leaders. Over the next eighteen months, the livestock leaders applied this militancy to the rest of the plant.

The August 2007 Smithfield annual shareholders meeting, in Williamsburg, Virginia, was a watershed event in the campaign. The company and union officials had started meeting to see if they could agree to the union's demand

for a free and fair process. The campaign organized a one thousand-person, worker-led solidarity action. While union and community supporters from all over the eastern United States marched outside, Smithfield plant workers—and a contingent of ministers—presented the Smithfield board with petitions signed by more than two thousand Smithfield workers, demanding company neutrality and a free and fair process to bring in the union. This action outraged the company, but further inspired the workers and their supporters.

Talks fell apart and, in October 2007, Smithfield filed a multi-million-dollar RICO suit against the UFCW and its national leaders, Change to Win and Jobs with Justice. Smithfield claimed the Justice@Smithfield campaign attempted to extort a union relationship with the company, and had damaged the company's brand name and the total value of the company stock.

THE TURNING-POINT YEAR OF 2008

AFTER THE LAWSUIT WAS FILED, AND after extensive discussions and disagreements at the national level, the UFCW decided to escalate the ground campaign and deemphasize the public protests. They hoped to come up with other strategies to offset the union's resource-heavy, consumer-oriented actions.

Anger and frustration among African-American plant leaders (about their daily mistreatment by management) led to talk about shutting down production and bringing the conflict to a head. In response, the UFCW focused on building strength among the eight hundred—primarily African-American—workers on the “Kill Floor,” where the heart of the production takes place. The Kill Floor

was adjacent to the already activist livestock department, and there were many worker links between the two departments. If a solid core of workers from those departments were to take action, production in the plant would stop.

Semi-monthly meetings were held, focusing on these workers, and attendance grew steadily. Leaders actively recruited others in the plant. Workers from the large cut and conversion departments began to attend as well. While there was no strict segregation by race or ethnicity in the plant, most of the Latino workers were concentrated in these two departments.

The union began holding daily meetings between the first and second shifts in the back room of a small Mexican-owned store, a half-mile from the plant. This became a second union hall, a watering hole where workers could meet each other, a training and education center, a staging area for imminent plant actions, and a post-action debriefing room. The core group of mostly African-American leaders began to gel and grow.

The union started a monthly newsletter, *Gone Hog Wild*, with extended quotes and photos from workers, on key issues in the plant: health and safety concerns, wage and hour violations, the mistreatment of women (who comprised more than a third of the Tar Heel plant workforce), and the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign (in which North Carolina's African-American population played a key role in Obama's victory).

While another full-scale walkout never developed, there were times when smaller groups of workers organized work stoppages. And support for the union grew.

At the workers' initiative, a new tactic of "liberating territory" developed to replace the riskier production line-based direct action strategies. Led by the more experienced militants from livestock, groups of black and Latino

leaders marched into the huge cafeterias during lunchtime in their yellow Justice@Smithfield shirts and held union meetings, with up to one thousand workers in the room, and management looking on helplessly. They handed out the *Gone Hog Wild* newsletter and discussed the articles, chanted, and signed up workers for a massive wage and hour suit.

Black and Latino leaders marched into the huge cafeterias during lunchtime and held union meetings, while management looked on helplessly.

These actions electrified the plant. Workers then began a movement—in which about one thousand workers eventually took part—to write "Union Time" on their helmets. The growth of these activities demonstrated the strength of the union sentiment in the plant, and put to rest the company's line that the union was a "third party."

VICTORY AT LAST: THE RICO SETTLEMENT AND THE ELECTION

THE RICO TRIAL WAS SET FOR OCTOBER 2008. To send a clear message to the company that the RICO suit wouldn't silence the union's right to free speech, the Justice@Smithfield campaign conducted a high-visibility "Packaged with Abuse" public campaign in the summer of 2008, in the media and in African-American neighborhoods of Washington, D.C.—one of Smithfield's largest markets.

On the eve of the October 27th trial, Smithfield agreed to withdraw the RICO charges as part of a settlement with the UFCW that included special rules for an NLRB election within six weeks. In response, the UFCW agreed to stop the public campaign. While the details of the settlement are still under court order, the rules gave the union some access to the plant, limited the company-mandated anti-

Unions can win in the South if they choose their targets carefully, stay in the fight, and put in the necessary resources.

union meetings, required positive messaging (rather than mutual attacks) from both sides, and installed a mutually-selected court monitor to oversee the process.

The union's election campaign consisted of the following key elements:

- A message of "Yes We Can," building on the momentum of President Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. Obama had publicly supported the Tar Heel plant workers' campaign.
- Leaders and activists created their own slogan: "If we can change the White House, we can change the hog house."
- Intensive in-plant activity by the more experienced organizing committee activists,

who set the tone in the plant that "Union Time" had finally arrived.

- An extensive program to visit workers in their homes, with more than eighty organizers from the UFCW and other unions going door to door to build pro-union support.

On December 11, 2008, Smithfield workers voted for the union, 2,041 to 1,875. Despite the huge effort made by the union, more than one thousand workers remained uncontacted at the time of the election. For several days prior to the election, Smithfield—fearing that a loss was coming—surreptitiously flooded the break rooms with leaflets about plant closings and the growing economic crisis that had not been approved by the court monitor. They leaned heavily on the Latino workers and relied on the loyalty of some longtime employees. But it wasn't enough.

The Smithfield victory represented one of the largest wins for the labor movement in decades. It sent a clear signal that unions can win in the South if they are willing to choose their targets carefully, stay in the fight over the long term, and put in the necessary resources. In meatpacking and manufacturing plants throughout the South, opportunities abound. Whether the Tar Heel victory is a blip on the radar screen or a transformative event depends on how the UFCW—and the rest of the labor movement—takes advantage of this moment and the lessons it brings. That history has yet to be written.

