

GET STARTED

Internal Organizing Campaign

Does your local union need some re-energizing, have a tough contract fight coming up or just needs more fully engaged members? An internal organizing campaign is a way to set some goals and build some momentum. The result: Your members can make concrete improvements at work and emerge a stronger local ready to take on the next challenge.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED

You will need a leadership committee for the campaign to be responsible for the plan. This may or may not include formal local leadership. You will need:

- enough people—roughly one activist per 10 workers;
- a group that represents the diversity of the workforce (by shift, classification, gender, ethnicity, etc.);
- people who already are hubs of natural and informal networks; and
- people who believe in the mission of the campaign and can commit to having one-on-one conversations with their co-workers.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

You may or may not have all the people you need. Do an honest assessment of your local to identify what you need.

- Do you have enough stewards/activists and are they the right people?
- Are they in the right places? Or are there areas that are weak?
- Are they committed to do internal organizing or take on the fight at hand?



Assess Your Local

- Create a list of members and nonmembers.
- Map out work areas and identify where you have stewards and activists.
- Identify issues that may be hot for some or all of the members.
- Use this to evaluate your organizational strengths and weaknesses to meet your goals.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

Set some goals and give yourself a deadline to get there.

What would make this internal organizing campaign successful? For example:

- new members;
- turnout to rallies, hearings or meetings;
- winning a bargaining victory or reversing an employer action;
- new activists or new potential stewards in a particular area; and/or
- getting the majority of people to do an action together.

What Difference Will It Make?

Translate your goals into a vision for how we will all be better off at the end of the campaign. Use this message to recruit new activists, sign up new members and inspire people to take action.

GET STARTED: RECRUIT NEW ACTIVISTS

New activists can help you build a large and diverse committee and inspire local veterans who have been carrying the load.

Getting some new people involved at the start also builds buy-in to the plan. Here are some ideas for where to start looking:

- reach out one on one to every member who has been active in some way in the past;
- target key areas where activism has been low and talk to each person there about the plan;
- ask people to help identify others who have strong natural networks;
- ask members to refer others they think would be a good fit.

OUTREACH PLAN

A one-on-one outreach plan is the most effective way to sign up new members and get people into action:

- create a list of every person in your workplace, figure out who talks to whom and have a system to track the results;
- have the committee agree to the goal and deadline;
- agree on what to say and what you will ask people to do, then train;
- start with “easy” people—it’s good practice and builds confidence;
- identify urgent issues to rally around;
- use concrete asks like joining or signing the petition to help you measure success;
- be creative to develop easy asks that get more people engaged;
- meet regularly to share progress and troubleshoot problems; and
- recognize that written materials supplement the outreach plan, they don’t replace it.

WHEN YOU WIN!

Whatever the outcome, members will gain experience and commitment and your local will be stronger:

- claim every victory you can and connect membership growth and activism to each win;
- debrief the campaign with the committee and local leaders—What worked? What failed? What will we do differently next time?;
- organize all the new information you have about people and issues;
- develop a plan to build on your success. What's the next step for new members and activists?; and
- recognize people for their contributions and hard work throughout the campaign.

Good One-on-One Communication

- start with what you have in common;
- build from what the other person cares about;
- share a vision about how things could change;
- ask people to get involved; and
- connect the action to the vision and the win!