



Session 2: External Organizing

What is Unionism?

- ▶ Workers coming together to promote their common interests.
- ▶ Building a union means creating democracy at work where there was none before.
- ▶ One worker trying to address concerns can always be ignored or even punished, but an entire shop or industry of workers has real leverage and power.
- ▶ Unions have a rich history and have been around as long as there have been workers and bosses ruling over them.
- ▶ Industrial or Craft Unionism?
 - ▶ Craft unionism is where union lines are drawn according to a specific craft or skill and organizing or collaboration do not go outside those boundaries.
 - ▶ Industrial unionism organizes across craft lines to bring entire industries into one union.

How to Get Started?

- ▶ What is the right union for your workplace?
 - ▶ Independent or AFL-CIO style?
 - ▶ Self-organizing may win more worker support and win the election because it most effectively counters management's "third party" narrative, however you'll be left on your own to manage legal paperwork with the NLRB as well as organizing rallies and community support.
 - ▶ Mainstream unions have more funding and expertise in the union world and will typically have staff to help guide you every step of the way.
 - ▶ Some unions can strike a middle ground and provide a decent balance of both.



- ▶ Do your research! Feel free to stay in touch with LUEL at info@luel.us

Building a Workplace Spreadsheet

- ▶ Collect basic info like names, contact info and what shift times everyone works.
- ▶ Start “Workplace Mapping”
 - ▶ Distinguish social connections between coworkers
 - ▶ Draw the physical workplace and how that affects people’s interactions
 - ▶ The workers with the most friends and influence in the workplace are the “natural leaders” and therefore prime candidates for an organizing committee
- ▶ Assessing union support
 - ▶ 1s: Pro-union and taking action to build the union
 - ▶ 2s: Verbally pro-union but not enough to follow through with action
 - ▶ 3s: Neutrals who don’t know where they stand (will ultimately vote no)
 - ▶ 4s: Anti-union but not actively working against it
 - ▶ 5s: Anti-union and taking action to undermine it

Talking Union With Coworkers

- ▶ Steps in the conversation
 - ▶ Start with an icebreaker
 - ▶ Discuss workplace issues & agitate
 - ▶ “What would happen if you went to the manager?”
 - ▶ “What happens if we all go to the manager?” (that’s a union)
 - ▶ Call the question: “Can I count on you so we can defend ourselves?”
 - ▶ If they say “no”
 - ▶ “What’s holding you back?”
 - ▶ Listen
 - ▶ AAR: Affirm, Answer, Redirect to the issues
 - ▶ Ask open ended questions
 - ▶ Inoculation: Preparing them for the boss’s narrative
 - ▶ Possible retaliation.
 - ▶ “Individually they’re going to pick us off but not together as a group.”
 - ▶ Bosses don’t want unions because they don’t want to lose power
 - ▶ Follow up with next steps and when to talk next
- ▶ Ideally don’t have these conversations on the shop floor!
 - ▶ Invite them to lunch or coffee
 - ▶ Home calls: Meet them at home where they are most comfortable

How to Build an Organizing Committee

- ▶ What is an organizing committee?
 - ▶ ~10% of a workplace tasked with building the union and gaining support
 - ▶ Should be reflective of the workshop's diversity and should consist of shop leaders and respected workers. To identify these people, cross reference your workplace mapping with who is pro-union.
 - ▶ Workers who complete tasks to move the campaign along are the one's who are eligible to be part of the organizing committee.
 - ▶ Organizing Committees have turnover rate like anything else. It's important to maintain a regular assessment of the workplace to maintain a strong presence.

Signing Cards

- ▶ Union Authorization Cards
 - ▶ Need minimum of 30% to have union election in the first place
 - ▶ Try to stay underground until ~75% of workforce are signed
 - ▶ (Can be difficult in large workplaces of +100 employees)
- ▶ Can be physical or digital
- ▶ In certain circumstances, is the sole means of union authorization
 - ▶ Canada
 - ▶ “Card-Check”

United Food & Commercial Workers International Union
Affiliated with AFL-CIO-CLC
AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION

I hereby authorize the United Food & Commercial Workers International Union, AFL-CIO-CLC, or its chartered Local Union(s) to represent me for the purpose of collective bargaining.

(Print Name) (Date)

(Signature) (Home Phone)

(Home Address) (City) (State) (Zip)

(Employer's Name) (Address)

(Hire Date) (Type Work Performed) (Department)

(Hourly Rate) (Day Off) Day Shift _____ Night Shift _____ Full Time _____ Part-Time _____

Would you participate in an organizing committee? Yes _____ No _____

amazon LABOR UNION
AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION

I, the undersigned, authorize the **AMAZON LABOR UNION** to represent me for the purpose of collective bargaining in all matters pertaining to wages, hours, terms, and conditions of employment.

PRINT FULL NAME _____ AMAZON BUILDING CODE _____ SHIFT _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Do you want to join the Organizing Committee?
 Yes No

Going Public

- ▶ After enough authorization cards are signed, union files paperwork calling for a union election within the workplace and must wait for an election date
 - ▶ Can take from 6 weeks to 4+ months
 - ▶ Have a plan of action on a week-to-week basis
 - ▶ Prepare a press release beforehand
 - ▶ Keep up a mass media campaign
 - ▶ Keep up regular inoculation in the workplace however...
 - ▶ ...try to avoid oversaturation of union conversation
 - ▶ Protection: Retaliation is still possible, but the consequences for management are more tangible after going public because it's easier to prove you were retaliated against for trying to organize.
 - ▶ Doing interviews & making friends with politicians certainly helps!

Solidifying your “yes” votes

- ▶ Focus on neutrals or 3s: Mission critical
 - ▶ They are usually the bulk of the workforce and will be the deciding factor in the election.
 - ▶ Try to normalize the idea of the union and remind them the issues that started the campaign in the first place (remember AAR).
- ▶ Focusing on antis or 4s/5s: Don't do it.
 - ▶ Antis are already convinced and will only use your words against you
 - ▶ Go about workday like usual. Don't take it personal.
- ▶ Collective actions
 - ▶ March on the Boss to address immediate issues
 - ▶ Targeting organizers
 - ▶ Workplace hazards
 - ▶ Form a shop newsletter
- ▶ Make a list of confirmed yes votes
- ▶ Expect last minute actions from management right before election

After the Election

- ▶ Establish bargaining committee
 - ▶ Job consists of drafting the contract and negotiation with management to accept the terms of said contract.
 - ▶ Contract should reflect the issues brought up by workers.
 - ▶ Management will dig their heels in at every opportunity.
 - ▶ Tangible strike power is the best way to motivate management to accept a contract worth your efforts.
- ▶ If you lose the election:
 - ▶ Possible to stick it out for second election campaign (1 year)
 - ▶ If not, stay involved by getting a union job as an organizer or otherwise
 - ▶ Whatever you do, help other shops organize and don't let your experiences go to waste!

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