

Managing the Local Union

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Give Credit Where it's Due!

Many thanks to:

- Sarah Arbitrio – LRS, TRO; Kari Baxter - LRS, Plattsburgh; Joan Deem – RSD,TRO; Mike Zagrobelny - LRS, Potsdam;
- Loren Fountaine, NYSUT & Deborah Cornavaca, NJEA for the following Seattle slides...

Today's Topics:

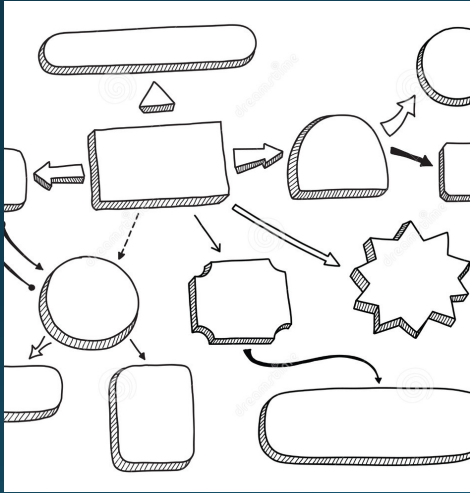
1. Basic Union Administration – Starting where we are
2. Understanding Apathy
3. Getting the Right People – The Seattle Experiment
4. Rethinking Structure
5. Talking to Members
6. Keeping Track of Members
7. Committees...again
8. Communication
9. Next Steps



Best Practice in Organizing is to

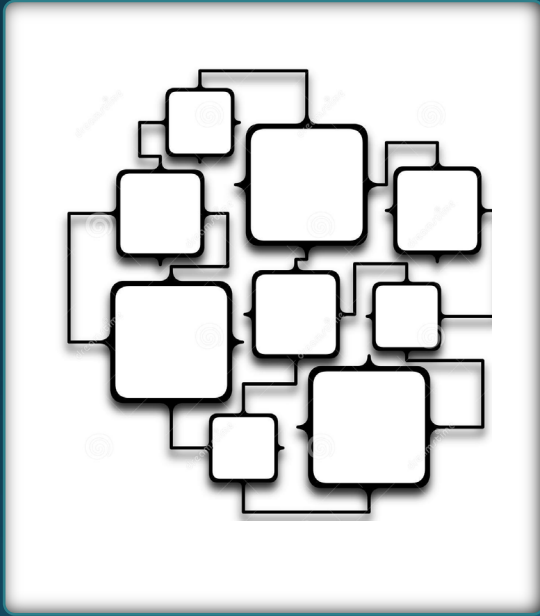
Start where we are

Charting your Local's Formal Structure



- Chart your *formal structure* as it is set out in governing documents or as best as you know it. Use post-it for each role (e.g. President, VPs, etc.)
- Put the person's name on each post-it for the roles that are filled.
- Arrange your post-it in a structure map that represents the way you local is designed to work as you understand it

Charting your local's informal structure



- Use a post it for each person in your leadership structure - their name and position
- On the post-its list the work they do in the local
- Organize the post-its to reflect how your local actually functions – how does information flow? How are decisions made?
- Mark decision makers with a red dot

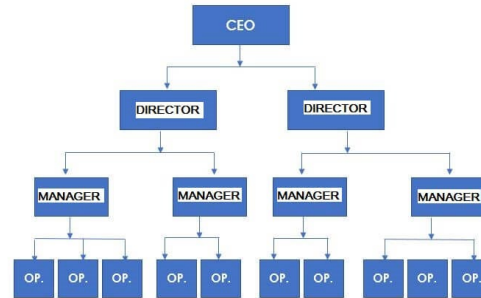
What is missing?

- What work of the association is:
 - Not getting done
 - Not getting done well
 - Not being done by the appropriate people
 - should be delegated rather than being done by one person
- What are the reasons for and barriers to addressing these challenges?



Traditional Vertical Structure

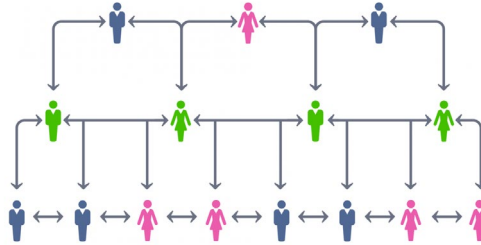
- Top down & static
- Can be efficient
- Clearly defined roles
- Communication is generally one way
- Little space to move ideas bottom up
- Requires followers to be effective



Horizontal/Lateral Structures

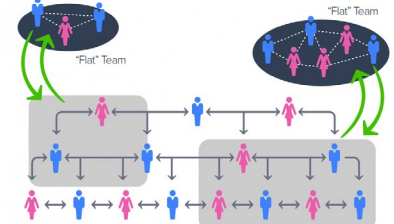
- Pluralistic at the top
- Communication flows all directions
- More people involved in decision making
- Less obvious who is making decisions

FLATTER ORGANIZATIONS



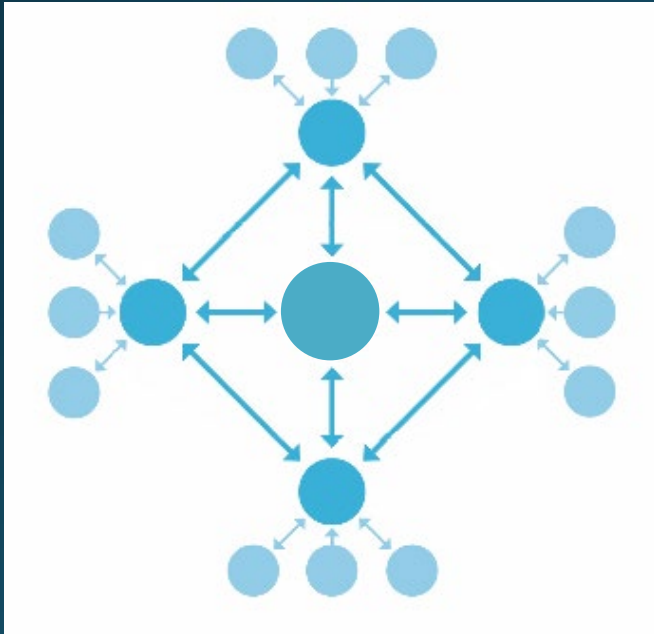
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FLATARCHIES

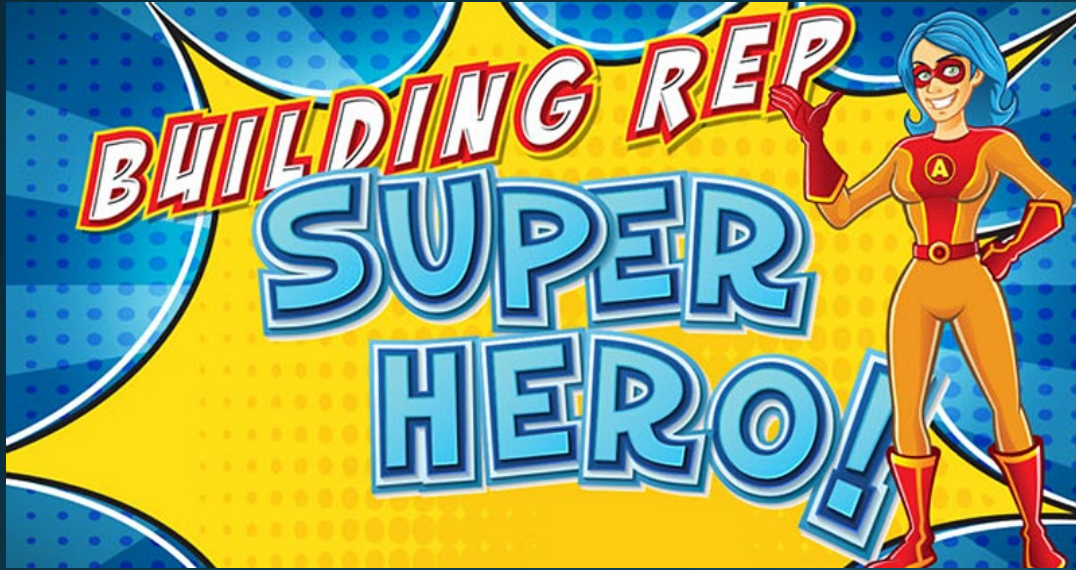


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Goal: Effective Horizontal Structure



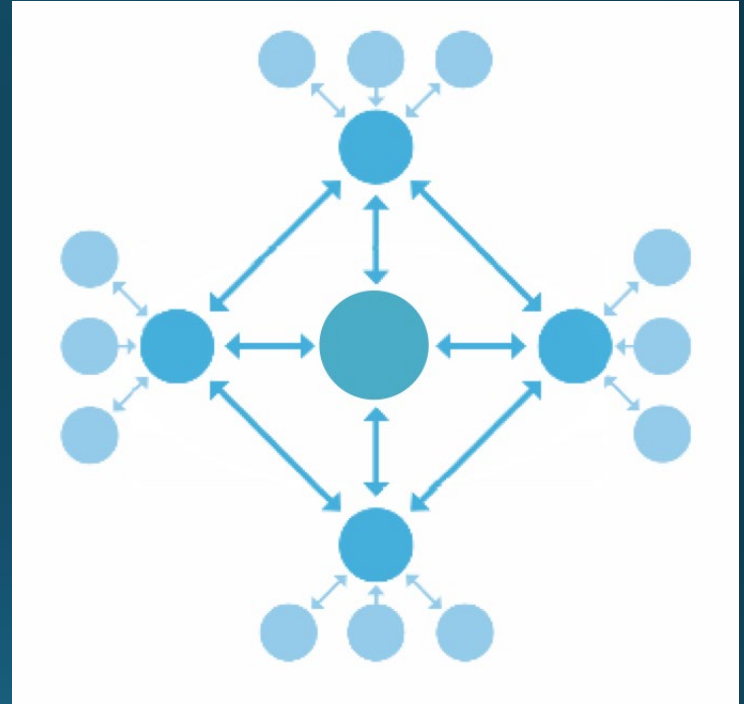
- Highly specific to organization
- Basic 'snowflake' model proves adaptable and effective
- Inclusive and flexible
- Clearly defined structure and roles
- Shared leadership
- Mindset shift that makes this lateral not hierarchical



Whatever the name

- Building Reps
- Shop Stewards
- Building Directors
- Ambassadors
- Association Reps
- Area Reps
- Building Advocacy Coordinates

Union Reps are a critical component to building a strong structure that focuses on M2M





In some locals, the traditional Union Reps will have the expectation of making M2M contacts as well as the transactional roles that they have served in the past. In other locals, there may be two sets of folks with different roles.



Making the Most of our Reps



- Will look different in every local
- But goals include:
 - Making them an integral part of the union structure
 - Enabling them to be empowered in their roles

Worksite Assessments

- GIVE YOUR WORKSITE A CHECKUP
 - *New Member Campaign Next Generation NYSUT – Module 1*
- QUIZ: ASSESS YOUR DANGER LEVEL
 - www.labornotes.org/openshop
- LOCAL UNION SELF-ANALYSIS
 - *Locally created documents*

UNDERSTANDING APATHY

ORGANIZE

AGITATE

EDUCATE





Coming to terms with apathy

- Apathy is a word used by union people every day. It usually refers to a membership that doesn't seem to care about sticking together, or fighting back, or that doesn't care about the union.
- We all know what WE mean when we say "the membership is apathetic."
- But...
 - What causes apathy?
 - Why are members apathetic?
 - Are members really apathetic?

Tackling Apathy through activity

- People aren't born apathetic. Rather, some people become apathetic to respond to tough situations. Sometimes management works hard, using divisive tactics to create a climate of apathy among the membership toward the union.
- Not everyone is apathetic. There are many of us who are actively involved in union activities
- What makes us different?
 - Why are you involved?
 - What got you to be active in the union?
 - Why aren't you apathetic?
 - What do you get out of being involved?

Levels of involvement

- We get involved and stay involved in large part because we get something positive from being involved that management denies us on the job
 - We get a real challenge
 - We get to use and develop our abilities
 - We get respect
- How do we help others get the same positive feelings from being involved?
- What things can members do to be involved in union activity?
 - High Level
 - Medium Level
 - Low Level

Getting the right people for the role- The Seattle Experiment



Some ideas stolen from John Donaghy – Washington NEA

Seattle 2012:

- Through surveys, found out that many ARs were not respected by co-workers, and many were put in place because no one else volunteered
- State affiliate (SEA) was having a hard time politically, with only 23% contributing to the WEA PAC
- A majority of members did not vote in elections

Seattle 2015:

- ARs some of the most respected co-workers by their peers
- 506 new members to the WEA PAC; 42% membership (almost double from 2012)
- A majority of members voted in officer elections

How did they do it?

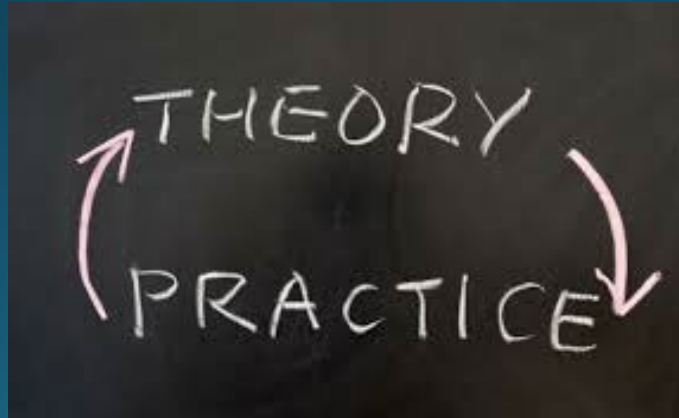
June 2012:

- Leaders planned a reboot of the SEA with three goals:
 1. Identify natural leaders within the buildings
 2. Build relationships with those members (The Association)
 3. Invite them to lend their leadership for new shared purposes



Their Theory:

- **Organizing** is turning the resources we have into the power we need to get the change we want. The greatest resource is members working together in schools and worksites
- **Leadership** is taking responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty. The Association's goal is to invite true school leaders to exercise leadership in the service of shared purpose.



Finding and Identifying Local Leaders:

They narrowed leaders down to three categories:

- Self: volunteers who seek out activism by putting themselves forward as reps
- Union: members “with potential,” recruited because a union leader is impressed by their attributes
- Co-Workers: members who are identified by their co-workers as trusted and respected

The end goal was to bring the third category into the leadership and give them space to reinvigorate the Association.

The Blitz

Currents reps, in groups of two, were directed to have 10 minute M2M conversations with as many members as possible in each building. One rep led the conversation, and one rep took copious notes. They focused on the following questions:

1. What do you think are the biggest issues facing us in public education? In our school district? As a union?
2. Who is trusted and respected around here? When given a name, ask “why does that person’s name come to mind?” (The goal was three names from each person)

The reps were directed to go from classroom to classroom before and after school, and on prep periods. Meetings were not set up in advance.

The Results:

- Identified 80 “high dot getters” who were not involved in the union and whose buildings were not well organized
- Association leadership approached these folks, acknowledged their leadership, and asked if they would be interested in meeting other people like themselves
- 80% of the “high dot getters” showed interest, and 80% of them showed up to the meeting mentioned above



The Summit:

- The “high dot getters” were asked the following question at the meeting:
 1. What is the story you find yourself telling about the SEA?
 2. What crossroads do you find yourself at as an educator right now?
 3. What could we do together that would make the difference?
 4. What should come of our conversations? Will you get involved?



Conclusion:

- Union Reps are much more effective if they have the respect of their co-workers
- People are much more likely to listen if they are spoken to by someone they respect
- We need to create space within our local structures for the “natural leaders” who garner the most respect from their co-workers

Table Discussion:

Where is the best place to put these “natural leaders” within your local structure?

Post Janus, who should be talking to current and potential members? Are these leaders built into your local structure, or are you adding this to the responsibilities of an already existing role within your structure?

Coming Full Circle

Rethinking Structure

Defining your local's ideal structure

- Identify the vital roles & responsibilities of your local's leadership team
- Identify who should fulfill each of those roles
- Create a structure that to maximize effectiveness of your team



Talking to the members

ORGANIZE

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EDUCATE



First we listen

- Hearing – physical part of listening, when your ears sense sound waves
- Interpretation - which leads to understanding or misunderstanding
- Evaluation – weighing the information
- Reaction – what you do with the information

More people are inefficient listeners. The average listener hears, understands, evaluates and retains approximately 50% of what is said. Within 48 hours, another 50% of that is lost, leaving comprehension and retention at only 25% of what was said.

Developing better listening habits

EFFECTIVE LISTENING	THE BAD LISTENER	THE GOOD LISTENER
Find areas of interest	Tunes out dry subjects	Asks "what's in it for me?"
Judge content, not delivery	Tunes out if poor delivery	Judges content over delivery error
Hold your fire	Tends to enter into argument	Doesn't judge until comprehension complete
Listen to ideas	Listen for facts	Listen for central theme
Be flexible	Takes intensive notes using only one system	Takes fewer notes, uses 4-5 different systems depending on speaker
Work at listening	Shows no energy output, attention is faked	Works hard, exhibits active body state

EFFECTIVE LISTENING	THE BAD LISTENER	THE GOOD LISTENER
Resist distractions	Distracted easily	Fights or avoids distractions, tolerates bad habits, know how to concentrate
Exercise your mind	Resists difficult expository material, seeks light recreational mind material	Uses heavier matter as exercise for the mind
Keep your mind open	Reacts to emotional words	Interprets color words; does not get hung up on them
Capitalizes on fact faster than speech	Tends to daydream with slow speakers	Challenges, anticipates, thought is mentally summarized, weighs the evidence, listens between the lines to tone of voice

Communicating by listening

HOW GOOD A LISTENER AM I?

1. Do I take in only words and ideas I want to take in? Am I open to hearing new things, do I reach out for new things to hear?
2. Do my prejudices block out facts and ideas? Or, do I keep my mind open to facts and ideas stated by somebody I don't like or related to subjects I don't like?
3. Do I let distractions keep me from listening? Or, do I push such distractions aside and listen attentively?
4. Do I tune-out a speaker because I'm thinking about how I'll add to what she says, or what I'll say to rebut her? Or, do I really listen to her?
5. Do I listen in terms of the speaker's experience and frame of reference? Do I take on his point of view?

Then we talk

- Phatic Communication – small talk or getting to know you
- Cathartic Communication – spilling your guts
- Informative Communication – sharing of ideas
- Persuasive Communication – transforming a way of thinking

One-to-one conversations

The Union's Most Powerful Tool

The ability to approach our members personally, to look them squarely in the eye and to communicate with them directly.

This is our most powerful tool, a tool that other organizations, businesses and causes pay millions of dollars to substitute for with the use of paid advertising of one form or another.

Until recently organizations such as ours under-utilized this tool.

But times are changing...

One-to-one conversation is our most powerful tool to do the following:

- Introduce ourselves as leaders; gain permission from members for continuing contact
- Personalize the union; give it a human face
- Build personal relationships; establish trust
- Identify issues; understand what concerns, motivate our members
- Relay information and deal with questions and objections
- Persuade people to take action (vote, contribute, get involved)
- Eliminate fear
- Assess support for the union and its issues
- Recruit members and volunteers
- Identify potential leaders

Preparing for One-to-One Conversations

- CREDENTIALS
 - Who are you?
 - Who sent you?
 - What do you want?
- AUDIENCE
 - Who are you talking to?
 - Who has already spoken with them?
- MESSAGE
 - What is the issue?
 - What is the union's position on the issue?
- YOUR OWN STORY
 - Can you relate to their struggles or the issue?
- LISTENING
 - What are good probing questions?
- ACTION or ASK
 - Plan for closing the contact no matter the result.

The “organizing” conversation

- IS an intentional conversation
- IS NOT about selling the benefits and services of membership or the attributes of the union.
- IS about building a relationship through which the organizer agitates a member to take action on behalf of self or collective interest
- IS more about listening than talking – tries to respect the 75/25 rule (the organizer listens 75% of the time and talks 25% of the time)
- IS about identifying the issues and concerns that are of interest to a member, not telling a member what to think
- IS NOT about coercing or pressuring a member

Designing & Utilizing a One-to-One Structure

- Who?
 - Officers, reps, committee chairs
 - Choose “lead” ambassador
 - Identify other potential ambassadors/leaders
 - Have the ambassadors choose their contacts
- What?
 - Communication system meant to encourage personal connections and relationships among union members
- Where?
 - Group ambassadors by work location
- When?
 - As often as needed
 - When might you utilize this system?
- Why?
 - political action
 - solidarity
 - agitate and organize

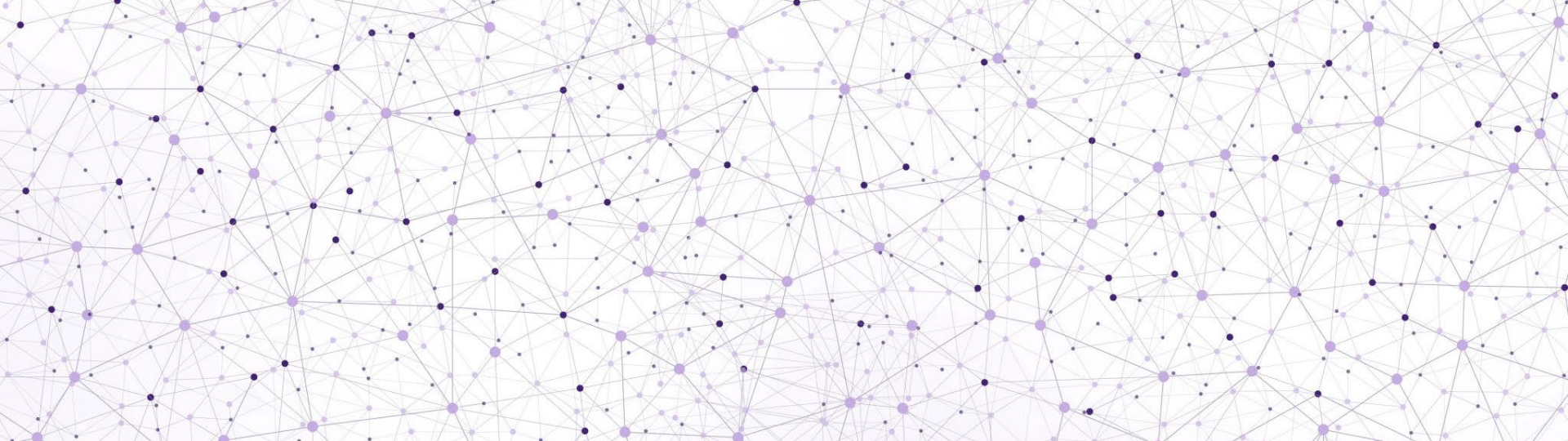


You Just Need to Ask

- At your table, create an action plan for keeping members involved and mobilizing different members. Try to include questions and format for an M2M conversation, simple actions, and ongoing communication strategies.
- Chart Paper & Markers
- 15 min.

Charting Responses to Negative Comments

- At your table, create your own responses to the excuses found on pages 20 – 26 in the Talking to Members section of the binder. Try NOT cheat using the suggestions found at the end of the section.
- Chart Paper & Markers
- 15 min.



Keeping Track of your members

Do you know your members?

Before you can assess, organize or mobilize your members, you need to know who your members are!

- District lists:
 - Unit Members v. Union Members
- NYSUT Lists
- Enrollment Forms/Payroll Authorization Forms
- Local Database
 - Name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, job title, worksite, issues, other information, union participation and assessment

Membership Mapping

- 1** Leader – Very active – Frames issues – Union Activist – Takes initiative
- 2** Strong follower/Potential leader – Active – Supportive of issues – Strongly pro-union member – Usually do if asked
- 3** Follower – Sometimes active – Sometimes supportive of issues – Passive union member – Will do if arm is twisted
- 4** Won't follow – Not active – Not supportive of issues – Non-member or consistently antagonistic – Will not do/participate

Worksite mapping

In order to effectively “map” your worksites, you MUST:

- Know who your members are
- Know where they stand on the union’s issues
- Know where they work

A physical map of your worksites and unit members will allow your membership team to see where pockets of resistance and threats are lurking.

Ignoring these threats is very dangerous.

Assessing and mapping reminders

- Membership assessments, maps and database information should never be shared outside of those actively building the plan for organizing and mobilizing your membership
- Mapping is only useful as long as it is accurate. Create a system for collecting data and keep your database, charts and maps up to date.
- Review membership assessments periodically. Member views can change positively with persistent communication and negatively when issues are not resolved. 3's CAN become 2's with some hard work, but 3's can also become 4's if they are not supported and nurtured.

Celebrate your successes!

Committee Structures

"It's a big job, but many hands make light work."

– Merriam Webster



Committees

Standing vs. Ad Hoc
Chairs
Members

Grievance

Negotiations

Education & Training

Finance/Audit

Political Action

Social

New Member

Social Justice

- Whether established by coordinators or by committees, effective locals have these programs in place:
 - ✓ New Member Coordinator
 - Professional Partner (Buddy) Program
 - Participation in workshops and activities for new members
 - ✓ Grievance Administration and Negotiations Program
 - Knowledgeable union representation at building level
 - Strategic planning for negotiations including research, proposal development and team development
 - Strong interaction with NYSUT LRS
 - ✓ Health & Safety Program
 - Labor-Management Committee
 - Training
 - Monitoring/inspection of conditions

- ✓ Communications Program
 - Newsletters
 - Regular membership meetings
 - Media relations strategies

- ✓ Political Action Program
 - Coordinator (VOTE-COPE; Political Action)
 - Budget Votes
 - School Board Elections
 - State and National Elections

- ✓ Community Activities/Social Justice Program
 - Charitable Events
 - Participation in Local Organizations

- ✓ Professional Issues Program
 - Participation in Statewide, Regional and Local workshops and training (PDP committees, NYSUT ELT classes, Teacher Centers)
 - Distribution of information on education issues

- The local programs outline above cannot be accomplished without the following:
 - Strong leadership that encourages participation and delegation to others
 - Fiscal strength and accountability
 - Appropriate dues structure
 - Accounting reports and audits
 - Frequent contact with and support from the NYSUT LRS and the Tarrytown Regional Office
 - Participation in NYSUT organizational structure
 - NYSUT Representative Assembly
 - ED meetings
 - Presidents' Council meetings
 - Regional conferences and workshops

COMMUNICATION



THE KEY IS

**Internal
&
External
Communication**

What is one of the biggest complaints you hear from members regarding your local union?

How can you fix it?



Types of Communication



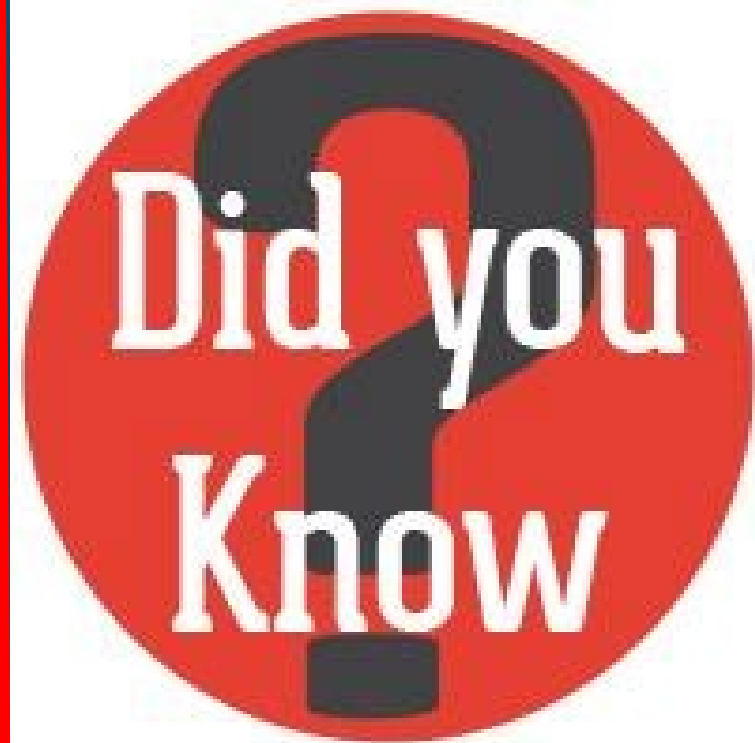
Local Newsletters

Does your local use them?

If you stopped or never have, why?

Do you feel that they are effective?

What works best for you?



Member benefits will give the local \$100 if they put a full-page MB ad on ANY local mailing/newsletter!

Negotiations Surveys & Updates

In a Post-Agency Fee world, why are these so important?

How will you change what you've done in the past now that we're working in a new environment?



Utilizing Your One to One Ambassadors

- Think outside the box...what messages could your ambassadors help you deliver?
- What important feedback could your ambassadors help you gain?



External Communication



Did you know...

Union Meetings are a form
of both internal and
external communication?



Why have meetings?

- Will the meeting be formal with agenda, rules of order, minutes taken?
- Will the meeting be informal with no agenda, no structure, and nothing written?



Meetings

Purpose of Meetings	Categories of Union Meetings
Status Update meeting	General membership
Decision-Making meeting	Executive Council/Board
Problem-Solving meeting	Committee meeting
Team-Building meeting	Grievance meeting
Idea-Sharing meeting	Labor-management meeting
Innovation meeting	Negotiation meeting
Mediation meeting	One-to-one meeting with Superintendent

Can any of the Union meeting categories have any of the purposes or multiple purposes?

Why have meetings?

- What is the purpose of your meeting?
- What do you expect to accomplish?



Are you lonely?

Tired of working on your own?
Do you hate making decisions?

HOLD A MEETING!

You can —

- See people
- Show charts
- Feel important
- Point with a stick
- Eat donuts
- Impress your colleagues



All on company time!

MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK

- Will this be a planning meeting?
- Will this be a reporting meeting?
- Could the meeting be both?

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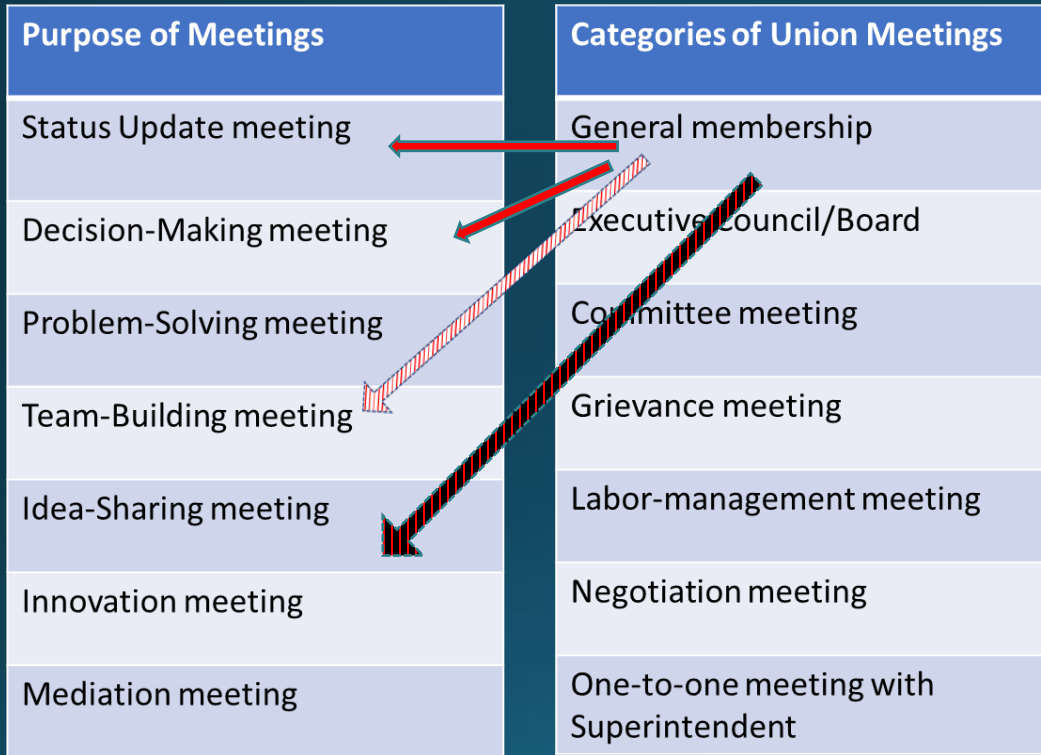
Can any of the Union meeting categories have any of the purposes or multiple purposes?

Why might you want to have a grievance meeting with the purpose of team-building and idea-sharing? When would you have such a meeting?

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Perhaps your grievance meeting is to update members about grievances, think about resolutions for pending grievances, and set up meetings with grievants and District for resolution?

What is needed to accomplish this type of meeting?



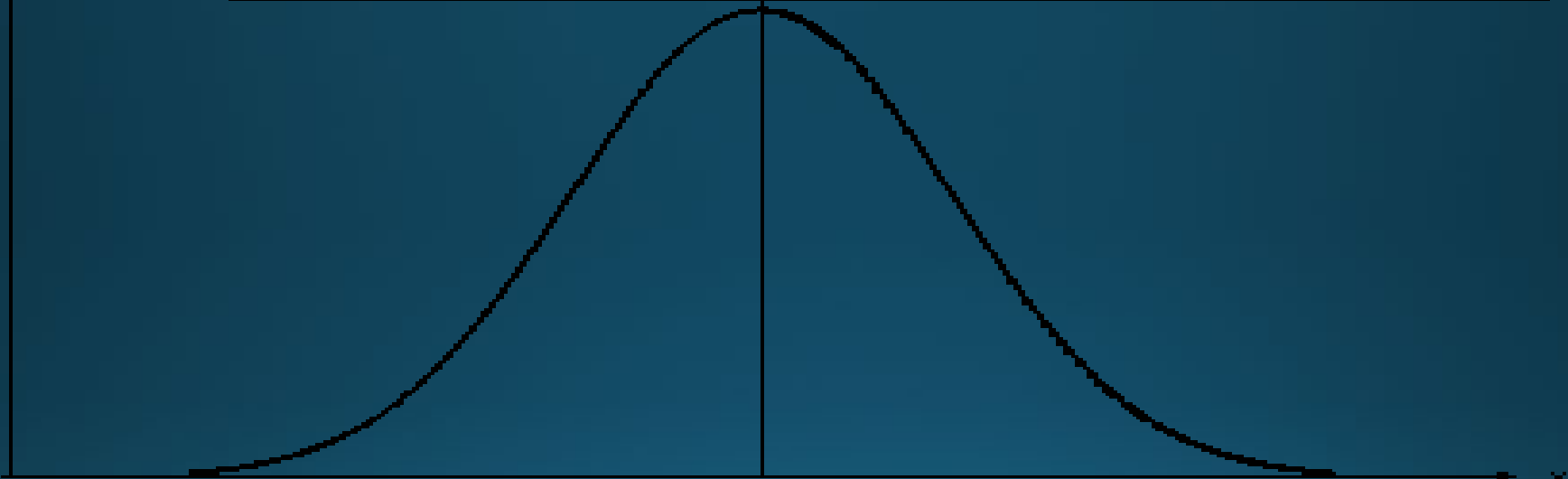
Most local constitutions require at least 1 general membership meeting per year. These meetings are most commonly status updates or decision making (ratifying a contract).

How could you make the meeting include team-building or idea-sharing?

Meetings

- Notification (how much is enough?)
- Time & Place
- Agendas
- Minutes
- Keeping it Moving
- Ensuring Members Feel Heard
- Respecting Members' Time
 - Start on time
 - End on time
 - Table or defer items
- SNACKS!

Bell-Shaped Agenda



Welcome

Minutes

Announcements

Easy Item

Hardest Item

For Discussion Only
(hardest item at
future meeting)

Easiest Item

Plan next meeting
agenda

Build a Local Communication Plan

- Who is in charge of what?
- What messages need to go out? When?
- How will you gather member contact information?
- How will you decide when to use face-to-face, paper, technology, or all three?
- How/why/when is your local communicating with the general public? Who handles this?
- How will your local leadership “check” the effectiveness of your communication and make adjustments as needed?



THIS IS A LOT!!

- We have more dates to get together
- How do you want to work as a cohort?
- Mentors?
- LRSs?
- Next Steps?

