

Section 8

Organizing

INTERNAL ORGANIZING ACTIVITY CHECKLIST FOR LOCALS

These questions are intended to suggest some of the activities your local might carry on in its internal organizing activities. Your committee is urged to review them and use them as a reminder. When the answer to the majority of these questions is Yes, your local's organizing program will be on its way to success. This list is by no means final. Add to it as you see fit. The more activity, the greater will be your success, provided you have properly organized that activity.

		YES	NO
1	Does your local keep membership profiles on all members?	_____	_____
2	Has your local enlisted the building reps. in organizing work?	_____	_____
3	Have all building reps. been briefed on the local organizing situation and have they been given training on how to activate members?	_____	_____
4	Does your local have enough literature for an organizing campaign?	_____	_____
5	Does your local contact the new employee immediately upon his or her coming to work?	_____	_____
6	Do the building reps. communicate with the members regularly on the job?	_____	_____
7	Is each building rep. equipped with literature?	_____	_____
8	Does your local have regular building rep. meetings to discuss and plan organizing activities?	_____	_____
9	Has your local arranged social affairs?	_____	_____
10	Has your local tried to build teams of active members for use in activating other members?	_____	_____
11	Has your local checked to see whether any building reps. need help?	_____	_____
12	Is organizing on the agenda of every executive committee or officer meeting?	_____	_____
13	Have your building reps. received training in organizing and activation of members?	_____	_____
14	Does your president consult with building reps. on their problems?	_____	_____
15	Has your local ever tried to get non-members together to talk about issues at the workplace and what the union is doing about these issues?	_____	_____

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- | | | YES | NO |
|-----|---|-------|-------|
| 16 | Has your local tried to get your union members in the departments together at lunch or after hours to see what they can do to help the activation of members? | _____ | _____ |
| 17 | Does your local make the best use of its union bulletin boards to inform and mobilize the membership? | _____ | _____ |
| 18. | Does your local recognize and publicize the successful efforts of local activists in mobilizing new members? | _____ | _____ |

CHECKLIST FOR ORGANIZING AROUND ISSUES

1. Identifying and generating interest in your issues
 - A. Ways to identify issues:
 - Written survey to members
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Workplace meetings during lunch or break to solicit issues
 - Home visits
 - B. Building rep./officer discussion sessions:
 - To discuss problems in particular departments, job classifications, etc.
 - Identify areas where union support is weak
 - Have building reps survey workers on their attitudes towards the union
 - Have building reps survey workers on ways they could contribute to the local
 - C. Special meetings for people affected by particular issues (Special Interest: Group Organizing)
 - Invite people personally to attend the meeting (in addition to leaflet or phone call)
 - Develop plan of action at this meeting
 - Follow-up with reports to the people who attended the meeting, or those who wanted to attend
2. Direct action to involve the membership
 - A. Signing and delivering petitions and letters
 - To management
 - To state agencies, health and safety agencies, etc.
 - B. Wear buttons, T-shirts, caps
 - Pick slogan that portrays issue in a way that would gain public support
 - C. Demonstrations before or after work
 - D. Lunchtime meetings or rallies
 - E. Picnic, social events, etc., to involve the families
 - F. Have members develop and design posters, banners, leaflets

3. Community outreach
 - A. Develop slogan that appeals to the public from the outset
 - B. Political contacts
 - Form legislative contact committee
 - Committee to meet with legislators
 - Ask members to telephone or write legislators
 - C. Clergy contacts
 - Ask members to contact their clergy
 - Get clergy to sign letter of support
 - Ask clergy to conduct a prayer vigil in support of just resolution of the issue
 - D. Local media contacts
 - Ask members/supporters to write letters to editor
 - Have members/supporters signed paid advertisement
 - Invite reporters to event
 - Form media outreach committee to get to know reporters and do editorial board visits
 - E. Other labor, community groups
 - Send delegation of members to local central body meeting, meetings of other locals
 - Solicit letters of support from other labor and community groups
 - Send members to meetings of senior, women's, civil rights, etc. groups, to explain issues
4. Keeping members informed
 - A. Publicize all victories, newsletters, leaflets, bulletin boards
 - B. Phone tree for last-minute messages and announcements
 - C. Give recognition to activists
 - Awards dinner
 - Certificates of appreciation (to individuals who brought refreshments, made posters, etc.)
 - Plaques
 - Articles in union newsletter

ELEMENTS of an EFFECTIVE NYSUT LOCAL

LOCAL: _____

DATE: _____

Each of the five categories below contains a list of elements that contribute to an overall effective Local. Each list is not "all-inclusive" and elements may overlap in various categories. Use the general categories and lists of elements to reflect upon your Local, and to facilitate discussion with your local officers and members regarding strategic planning and member mobilization.

Categories	Notes
Local Governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget/Financial Audit • Functioning Rep Structure • Regular Rep Council And General Membership Meetings • Union Release Time Utilized • Leadership Responsibilities Delegated • Effective Relationships With Members And Employer • Engaged In Goal Setting/Strategic Planning (Process) • Internal organizing/member mobilization program 	
Communications/Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Minutes Taken And Shared • Regular Newsletter/Email Communication • Local Use Of Social Media • Local Website • Leadership Accessibility • Effective Record Keeping • New Member Orientation Program 	
Local NYSUT/AFT Regional Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends ED Meetings • Attends County President Councils • Participates In Regional Training • Attends RA/AFT Conventions • Regular Daily/Weekly Contact With LRS • Includes LRS In Local Activities (Negotiations etc.) 	
Political Action Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners With Other Bargaining Units • Sends Reps To Committee Of 100/Endorsement Conference • Attends BOE or Trustee Meetings (or other employer mtgs) • GOTV "Get Out The Vote" Program • Active in ALF-CLC's • Local Mobilization process? • Vote/Cope Campaign 	
Community/Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active in STRIDES • Scholarship Funds • Connected to PTA or other community groups • Local Volunteer Activities • Contributions To Local Charities • Media Contacts 	

Annual Goals: _____

Subdividing goals into manageable activities

- I. List all the major activities that are necessary to reach the goal.
 - A. Ask the following questions about each major activity:
 1. Who is responsible for accomplishing this particular activity?
 2. Does the person responsible for the activity need help from others?
 - a. If yes, how many helpers are needed?
 - b. If yes, who is responsible for recruiting and/or assigning the helpers; and has he/she recruited/assigned the helpers?
 - c. Do any of the helpers need to have any specialized skills? Do we have volunteers with these skills?
 3. What are the necessary pre-conditions and/or other tasks that must be done before we can complete this activity?
 - a. How long will it take to accomplish the pre-conditions?
 4. What resources are necessary to complete this activity?
 - a. Do we have all the necessary resources?
 - b. If no, who is responsible for obtaining those resources and when will those resources be available?
 5. Where and when will the work on this activity take place?
 - B. Prioritize and schedule the major activities.

NYSUT Board Resolution

Passed April 16, 2018

Membership Matters

Whereas, with a united membership, NYSUT has the power to exercise and protect our rights, to defend the things we value and to give our members a voice in the workplace and in the halls of power; and

Whereas, in addition to fighting for strong union contracts which guarantee higher wages, quality healthcare and a secure retirement for our members, we use our collective strength to provide members with expert representation and legal defense, an extensive portfolio of member benefit products and services, and high quality professional development and training through our Education and Learning Trust; and

Whereas, members across New York are recommitting to a strong union in solidarity with their co-workers and with the understanding that withdrawing membership will result in weakening local, state and national unions by jeopardizing their ability to collectively bargain and represent their members; therefore be it,

Resolved, that only dues-paying members will be eligible for the benefits of union membership above and beyond those defined in the collective bargaining agreement. The benefits of membership will include:

1. Legal defense and representation services above and beyond that which is defined in the local union's collective bargaining agreement provided by NYSUT Legal and Field Services such as for §3020-a, §75, pt. 83, etc., and
2. Rights to purchase endorsed member benefit products and services above and beyond the local union's collective bargaining agreement provided by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust, NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation, and NYSUT Member Benefits Catastrophe Major Medical Insurance Trust, and
3. The right to represent coworkers through elected office in the union, and
4. The right to vote in union elections including officer elections and contract ratification votes, and
5. Access to discounted ELT professional development and training, and
6. The right to attend any local union meetings or activities; and be it further

Resolved, that the NYSUT Board of Directors will periodically review and update the benefits of NYSUT membership in order to effectively incentivize new and former members to join our union; and be it further

Resolved, that the NYSUT officers and Board of Directors will continue to practice good stewardship of member dues in order to provide the highest quality services to our members.

What do you lose as a non-member?

- ✦ Legal defense and representation services above and beyond that which is defined in the local union's collective bargaining agreement provided by NYSUT Legal and Field Services such as for §3020-a, §75, pt. 83, etc.,
- ✦ Representation by my local union as well as state and national affiliates,
- ✦ Rights to purchase or maintain endorsed member benefit products and services above and beyond the local union's collective bargaining agreement provided by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust, NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation, and NYSUT Catastrophe Major Medical Trust,
- ✦ Rights to use any member benefit services attorney referral program, benefit card, discount programs/purchasing which are not part of the collective bargaining agreement,
- ✦ The right to represent coworkers through elected office in the union,
- ✦ The right to vote in union elections including officer elections and contract ratification votes,
- ✦ Access to discounted ELT professional development and training,
- ✦ The right to attend an local union meetings or activities.



Taylor Law Reform of 2018
NYSUT Department of Field and Affiliate Services
Fact Sheet for Local Leaders

HISTORY

The 2018 State Budget includes and codifies several important issues to protect a public employee's right to join a union, the rights of union members in the public sector, and the obligations of unions to members and non-members. Overall, these changes are very helpful in our preparation for a post-agency fee environment. This fact sheet was developed to provide local union leaders with a summary of the new provisions and guidance on how to incorporate these changes in their local union operations. As with any changes in statutes, time and court challenges may impact our review of these provisions. Local leaders are strongly encouraged to work closely with their LRS and regional office as certain interpretations may be subject to change as facts and situations unfold.

The Taylor Law changes cover two general area topics:

1. Changes involving membership information and payroll deduction of dues.
2. Modification of the union's obligations to non-members under the Duty of Fair Representation.

Area 1: Membership Information and Payroll Deduction of Dues:

Employers are now required to provide the union with information about new employees within thirty days of hire. The law requires the employer to provide: employee's name, address, job title, employing agency, department or other operating unit, and work location.

Advice to local leaders:

- Evaluate the extent to which the new requirement conforms to or conflicts with contract language.
- Discuss with your employer the process by which this information will be delivered.
- Identify any disagreement with your employer about what information will be provided.
- Identify the appropriate union officer to receive the information and inform the employer.
- Consider creating a specific form to ensure the information is uniformly supplied.

Employers are now required to provide union release time for a union representative to meet with all new hires within thirty days of hire without charge to leave time.

Advice to local leaders:

- Evaluate the extent to which access to new employees is already addressed in your contract along with any past practice that may exist.
- Identify the union representatives who will be tasked with meeting with the new employees and provide them with training and materials.
- Discuss with your employer the process by which this provision will be implemented including the scheduling and location of the meetings.
- Be mindful that while this may be most commonly utilized at the beginning of a school year, unless contract language limits it, this right applies year-round.

Changes relating to payroll deduction of union dues include:

1. Remittance of payroll deduction funds no later than thirty days from when the employee submits the authorization form.
2. The employer must honor any "opt out window" incorporated in the language of the authorization form.
3. Payroll deduction forms can be in any format approved by NYS Technology law including authorization submitted through MiniVan or other digital means.
4. Automatic reauthorization of payroll dues deduction when an employee returns from an approved leave of absence.
5. Automatic reauthorization of payroll dues deduction when a laid off employee is returned to his/her position within one year of the layoff.

Advice to Local Leaders:

- Complete your ongoing re-enrollment campaign using the approved NYSUT card.
- Discuss these technical changes with your employer and identify any areas of potential conflict or disagreement.
- Closely monitor your employer's actions concerning payroll deduction of dues.
- Discuss what language in the existing contract needs to be amended, modified and/or adjusted with your LRS.

AREA 2: Obligations to non-members under the Duty of Fair Representation

Amendments to the Taylor Law continue to require the union to enforce provisions of the collective bargaining agreement without regard to the employee's membership status in the union. However, the union may now exclude non-members from receiving services and benefits that do not flow from the collective bargaining agreement.

Advice to local leaders:

- The impact of this change on your local will depend on the language of your collective bargaining agreement.
- Carefully review your collective bargaining agreement language with your LRS to determine what level of service is required for non-members.
- Carefully review the Grievance Procedure. Be sure to focus on the definitions and rules that define a grievance, state who can grieve and how a grievance is advanced to arbitration.
- DO NOT rush to negotiate rights out of your agreement – eliminating important, hard-won provisions will hurt members and will ultimately reduce the value of the collective bargaining agreement.
- Work with your LRS to determine ways to address ambiguous, broad or conflicting language.
- Work with your LRS to review your local constitution in order to clarify and/or create a clear policy regarding what local services will be provided to non-members.

Services likely to be required:

- Representation in the grievance/arbitration process concerning the violation of any contract provision.
- Representation in any disciplinary matter covered by a contractual just-cause provision.
- Providing for any benefit established in the contract (insurance, sick bank, leave time etc.)

Services that may be limited:

Representation for matters covered by Education Law/Commissioner's Regulations:

- Section 3020-a (discipline of tenured teachers)
- Section 913 – Medical Examinations
- Sections 3019-a/3031 – notice of termination
- Section 2510/3013 – Layoff and Recall
- Part 83 – Moral Character Complaints/Revocation of Certification

Representation in matters covered by Civil Service Law:

- Section 75 – discipline and discharge
- Sections 71 – 73 – leaves related to ordinary disability and work-related disability
- Section 80 – layoff and recall

Advocacy Relating to other laws, regulations and agencies:

- Unemployment Insurance hearings
- FLSA/Wage and Hour compliance
- Retirement system advocacy
- Workers' Compensation Claims
- Disability Claims
- NYS Division of Human Rights/ EEOC Claims
- Enforcement of FMLA and ADA rights

PLEASE NOTE: if there is any provision in the collective bargaining agreement that speaks to these rights then they may convert to a contractual provision requiring union representation without regard to union membership. This is particularly important for determining what support is required during investigations of employees, "*Weingarten rights*" meetings and other meetings with management.

NYSUT's Board of Directors has voted to remove support of NYSUT services from non-members who would be subject to statutory or regulatory proceedings as listed above.

OUR UNION DUES WORK FOR YOU



EVERY DUES DOLLAR DEFENDS OUR VOICE, OUR VALUES, OUR UNION



50%

Negotiating contracts that provide better pay, good benefits and a secure retirement.



12%

Providing legal support to help members defend their rights and enforce their contracts.



8%

Providing professional development tools, training conferences and assistance with certifications for members and local leaders.



8%

Amplifying our voice and advocating for our professions in the media and online.



7%

Fighting to ensure our voice is heard in the halls of power.



7%

Providing regional offices with the resources and technical infrastructure to support our locals.



6%

Providing direct assistance to SRPs, small and rural locals, health care professionals and retirees.



2%

Partnering with state and national unions to amplify our voice and defend our values.

100%



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A Union of Professionals

2 UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZING MODEL OF UNIONISM

The chart in *Appendix 1* provides an outline of two very different ways of operating a union. The Organizing Model represents, in a way, a process called “Back to the Future,” in which unionism of the 21st century resembles unionism of the 19th century, when it was totally driven by the membership and had to fight for every gain against enormous opposition from both the bosses and the government.

Over time and for a variety of reasons that are beyond the scope of this book, The Servicing Model of Unionism developed and has continued virtually unchanged and unchallenged since the mid-1940s—beyond the lifetimes of most union members today.

So why change? Because we are in big trouble, that’s why! Current figures present disastrous conditions for unions and an even more frightening future. The numbers show unionism in the new century faces a many-sided crisis, so that just staying the course is no longer an option.

While membership—defined as dues-payers, especially by the supporters of The Servicing Model of Unionism—is pitifully low, there is another even more chilling figure, which is harder to measure: the low level of involvement of members in their unions. It is now common



for only 3-5% of union members to be active—to run for office, or to serve as stewards or on committees.

In the 26 states—a number that is dropping disturbingly—where it is legal to negotiate a union shop, many union “members” belong to the union because it is required under the terms of their collective bargaining agreement, or union contract. You get hired somewhere with a union contract and in that contract is a union security agreement, which requires that you become and continue as a union “member” as a condition of employment.

Does this payment of dues make you a union member, in the true sense?

Of course not!

It is more common for a member to sit back and complain—loudly!!—that all The Union does is collect dues. These “members” regard The Union as a third party, somewhere between themselves and the boss—a helpful insurance plan, but not an organization worth supporting. The list of complaints is long and, in many cases, justified.

THE FORK IN THE ROAD

So the member comes to a fork in the road. One path leads to greater indifference or anti-unionism—to never participating and to constant complaining. The other path, which you obviously took, is to shoulder the weight of leadership and get ready for changes. As Henry Ford famously said: “Don’t find fault—find a remedy. Anybody can complain.”

This chapter concerns the fundamental way the local union should operate. If you got elected as an insurgent candidate—that is, without the support of the good-old-boy network (which often includes women)—then you already know the importance of membership involvement.

You have also figured out how to rouse the membership, the sleeping giant, at least to the extent of getting them out to vote for you. It is so important to use the excitement and momentum of your election campaign “by coming up with member social activities and getting really busy getting our feet under us,” as one new leader described it, emphasizing that a new officer also has to switch from “campaign mode to being responsible for the members and their families.”

Now you have to accept *maximum membership involvement* in the future as a positive thing for your union. If you don't, your election will not improve the union at all. You may get re-elected if that is your desire, but you will not become an outstanding union leader. You will be merely another tired copy of the officer you replaced, and unionism, as a whole, will continue to circle the drain in the United States, illustrating the famous quotation from management guru W. Edwards Deming: “The only reason an organization has dead wood is that management either hired dead wood or it hired live wood and killed it.”

Let's look again at two models for union operation—The Servicing Model and The Organizing Model—in *Appendix 1*. Go through each line of each model and see which items apply to your local union. In 1995, when John Sweeney ran for president of the AFL-CIO—as a, you got it, insurgent candidate—he made popular the expression “organizing model of unionism.” Diagrams began to appear as if by magic, and some excellent theories of revitalizing unions became real. Union members at all levels, leadership and rank-and-file alike, began to look at how things got done and how we got where we

are. Even after Sweeney has long left office, the term is still kicked around, even if most union officers won't practice what they preach.

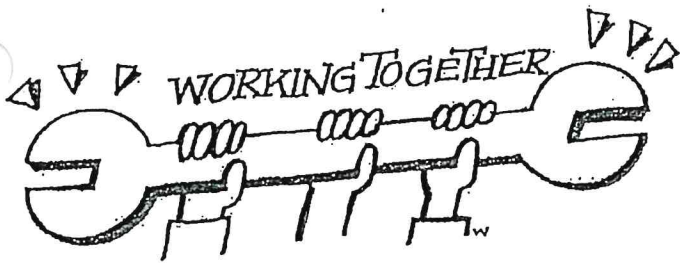
A publicly held company that experiences huge losses in sales and revenue, and a horrendous drain on its resources and assets, would be exposed to public scrutiny. Stockholders and investors, at least, would be screaming for change. In a union, the stockholders are the members, but they have separated themselves from any knowledge of the union as a whole, concentrating on such essential personal issues as: do I have a job, will I be getting overtime this week, can I make all of my bills this month?

Very few union members raised the alarm, certainly not the officers of the various unions that make up the AFL-CIO. Most of them were experiencing dramatic declines in membership, loss of bargaining power and erosion of conditions, but admitting that the emperor has no clothes would expose every leader to the threat of overthrow. The dynamic of union leadership is to resist and to resent change, which threatens the incumbent officers. The development of the Change-to-Win coalition was in direct response to this inertia. The AFL, at its convention in late 2013, raised the issue of declining membership and power and considered various ways to expand our movement by accepting “worker centers” or other alternative labor groups as part of the federation but the fundamental issue of how our unions operate was never a major topic.

IS IT WORTH IT?

A deeper question is whether building the union or expanding its membership is worth doing. Most union officers don't seem to think





so. I have seen many officers who sit around and dream about increased membership, or at least more dues income, but never worry about how to make it happen. After all, in today's anti-union atmosphere in the United States, a boss is unlikely to show up at the door of the union hall and beg to sign a contract. As we will see in Chapter 4, most unions are not devoting the resources needed for an extensive organizing program to rebuild both sheer numbers or bargaining power in core industries.

In reality, the Organizing Model is simply a move toward the past. In the days when unions were active and growing, the full membership's participation was needed to build power to take on some of the most vicious anti-union SOB's in history. Union members lacked the conveniences that are common today: dues check-off, full-time union staff and officers, union halls, money in the bank. Everything that the union did, the members and their supporters had to do for themselves. They had to talk about the union with each other at work; in their communities the union became an essential part of their lives.

Because unions were struggling, members looked around for help and found it outside their own membership: in their communities, with organizations like churches, ethnic social groups and neighborhood associations. Union members realized the importance of involving their families and their neighbors in their battles. Union members understood the importance of growth through organizing, and who better to describe the advantages of being in a union than a worker who had recently organized? In his wonderful memoir about growing up in a union family, Jack Metzgar wrote in *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* about dividing life into two distinct periods: before the union and after the union.

All of this history may seem ancient but a new union officer can look at these activities and get some excellent guidance on how to increase membership involvement today. The old-timers, as we often call them, knew something. After all, they helped build the labor movement. As a new officer, you should also look around in your own life at how other organizations—churches, fraternal organizations, the PTA, Little League teams—try to increase membership and raise money. Look at the ones that are successful and see what worked. Look at the ones that are slipping into oblivion and avoid their mistakes.

Speaking of old-timers, one new officer urged his local to support a New Unionists committee to encourage the next generation of officers to get involved now. There has been a continuing national effort through the AFL-CIO to encourage participation by these younger members with groups like the Young Trade Unionists, attached to central labor councils. These groups may be dependent upon the energies of an individual, or small group, and are regularly challenged by inertia, reduced hiring and, honestly, opposition from entrenched union officers who fear the involvement of new blood.

To get yourself started in transforming your union, the first thing to do is to make a list of all of the activities of the union (and you may need to refer to Chapter 4 to get a list of the union's functions) and rate each one (1 for "high" to 5 for "low") according to its membership involvement. Do not give any particular activity a value judgment at this point. For example, do not ignore the large numbers of members who may participate in union social or athletic activities, contrasted to the meager numbers who show up to leaflet for a political candidate or who volunteer to run for union office. Every union activity is both important and instructional because it shows you how members can be attracted to union activities.

If you accept membership involvement as a positive thing for the union, now you have to

make it happen. Knowing your starting point is a good idea, so you can judge whether you are making any progress. In some ways, the measurement is easy because it is driven by sheer numbers: the more members who turn out for a particular activity, the better.

There are several ways to run each function of your union, so making maximum membership participation an important element is really a dramatic change. Every activity will be run differently as a result.

As a case study, let's look at a common function of the union—filing grievances—to see how you can implement The Organizing Model of Unionism. While contract negotiations always get the maximum membership participation because every member feels affected by a new contract, negotiations take place only every 3 or 4 years, and you cannot wait this long to begin to expand membership involvement. Grievances are every day in every department on every shift.

Under The Servicing Model of Unionism, grievances are handled almost in secrecy by a small group of officers and stewards. It is a good guess that no more than 5% of all members are affected by a grievance in any particular year—if you haven't been fired or been denied a job bid or seen your work subcontracted, you have no contact with the grievance procedure. Maybe the officers make a report at the local meeting on grievances they considered important, and maybe they don't bother. Maybe a grievance gets discussed because an unhappy member shows up to bitch—loudly and repeatedly—about how an individual grievance was handled. Maybe members who turn out for a meeting never return because so much time was wasted arguing over individual grievances.

Many good officers and stewards will argue that members don't know enough about the contract or about how to manipulate a grievance, so they should not wander into an area where they might cause damage. You need to understand, however, that every officer and steward came new into your workplace neither knowing the grievance

procedure nor understanding anything about presenting one. They learned, and the rest of your members can too.

In any case, the grievance procedure does not expand membership participation. You need to think about grievances, then, as part of your organizing campaign, in which you want to involve as many members as possible in particular issues. By becoming proactive, you can find issues that excite the membership rather than simply reacting to something the boss has done.

Look at group grievances as a way to get your membership involved.

Look at *organizing campaigns* in the workplace to support grievances as a way to get your membership involved.

Look at grievances, then, in a new way—as a way to do more than enforce your contract. Look at them as a way to *build your union* and to involve your membership and you will be off to a great start as a new officer. You will also begin to understand *leverage*—the ability to make your boss do what he doesn't want to do.

You must understand that you will meet some opposition from the members themselves. The Organizing Model of Unionism requires not only that the union officers change the way they do things, but it also forces the members to change dramatically. Union membership will no longer be a spectator sport. Members will have to learn the contract, will have to attend meetings, will have to make decisions. Each of these involves a lot of time, a lot of work and sometimes becomes a royal pain. Most workers think they can be successful by being obedient: follow orders, don't rock the boat. As a result, they often find it difficult to make the complicated decisions that face today's unions.

A while back there was an interesting exchange via the internet among some UAW members who were unhappy with the direction of both their local unions and the International Union. When

one member lamented the difficulties of getting the members together for a strike or some sort of large-scale action, another member replied that the members were unhappy and could be expected to vote accordingly.

This is not good enough today. Don't let your members think that showing up every three or four years to vote for some candidate who is supposedly going to change the union is enough. There is a parallel movement in politics: if all citizens do is participate every couple of years by voting, is it any surprise that major issues—the decline of our living standards, the issue of economic inequality or the repeated attacks on unionism for example—are rarely debated? Once upon a time, the unions were a movement. The Organizing Model of Unionism requires that we put the movement back into unionism. You have to challenge each of your members to truly be a member, not just a dues-payer.

You also have to understand what I call “The Savior Mentality”—people believe that, in

politics or in the union, electing some charismatic figure will suddenly make everything right, as if one person can magically provide leverage. This attitude, based upon the unwillingness of people to put time and effort into social change, is a flop, so don't duplicate it in your union planning. This is especially true for you as a new officer because it is unreasonable for your supporters to expect immediate miracles. You cannot turn around a situation overnight that took years to build up while they sit back and cheer—or boo, depending on the moment.

Remember one important point: we have no choice. Look at the numbers, which show that we are approaching extinction, especially in the private sector. A whole generation has come into our workplaces as children of Reaganomics, trained in schools and in society to oppose collective action. If we don't organize young workers of every generation, the unions may die.

Now Go Do It!

TASKS:

- 1) Evaluate your local in terms of the chart on The Servicing Model of Unionism. Carefully go over each item and discuss it in your union. How do your officers and your members fit into the scheme?
- 2) Has your local union gained or lost members in the past five years? How about your international union? The district or region?
- 3) Evaluate all of the functions of your local in terms of membership involvement.
- 4) Do you think that grievances are being properly handled in your workplace?
- 5) How successful were your last contract negotiations?

APPENDIX 1

TWO MODELS OF UNIONISM

When unions were first organized, the workers' success depended on total membership involvement: the early organizations had no resources except the passions of the members and their communities. As unions became more established, this **Organizing Model of Unionism** gradually was replaced by **The Servicing Model of Unionism**, which became the dominant structure for unions. In the mid-1990's, as some union officers recognized the desperate situation for unionism, **The Organizing Model** was revived, at least as a discussion topic.

The differences between the two models are shown below.

ORGANIZING MODEL

Proactive

Independent of management

Actively involves members in all decisions

Creates many activities in workplace

Constantly negotiating for improvements

Develops the skills and abilities of the members

Open communications channels

Active membership

Decentralized union structure

Bottom-up decisions

Regularly supports other unions

SERVICING MODEL

Reactive

Dependent upon management

Union officers "solve problems" for members in response to complaints or requests

Total reliance on grievance and arbitration

Waits for regularly scheduled contract dates

Total reliance on union staff, "experts" and lawyers

Union info is considered privileged and kept secret within a small group

Passive membership

Centralized union structure

Top-down decisions

Basically isolated from other unions' activity

APPENDIX 6

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENTS FOR NEW UNION OFFICERS

A man who knew something about leadership, Franklin D. Roosevelt, once said "If civilization is to survive, we must learn something about the science of human relationships." The same can be said for the survival of your union, so FDR could have been directing his comment at new local officers and stewards, who have to look at their personal relations, especially if they've just come into office.

We all have our "work personalities," and in many industries, like manufacturing or the building trades, personality is not an important part of keeping a job. Assembly line workers often are isolated by management design so they can be as grumpy as they want without anyone's much caring. Trades people are hired for their skills, not for their geniality, so a skilled worker will find employment even with a cantankerous personality.

On the other hand, many workers in the service industries, especially women, are trained rigorously in the-customer-is-always-right approach so they have to appear cheerful and perky even in moments of conflict.

In their unpaid times, like lunch hour or breaks, workers create voluntary networks: they eat with the same people, break with the same people and even go outside to smoke with the same people. Often these work groups are self-segregated: by race, by sex, by age and seniority, by language or by skill. It's possible to ignore the workers you don't like or don't know as the work day follows a predictable pattern.

Taking on the new responsibility of a union office means learning all sorts of new skills and an attitude adjustment is among the first significant changes that must be accomplished. This concern arose when a newly-elected officer toured a work

site and ran into a longtime co-worker who had a question about the union contract. The new officer brushed off the member, proclaiming "I didn't like the guy when I worked with him and I'm not going to start now."

Officers in service industries, on the other hand, have to re-learn human relations because they will be dealing with bosses who—unlike the customer—are almost never right. Taking strong stands and recognizing that conflict is part of the territory is a major attitude shift for a new officer.

Becoming a new union officer obviously means representing all workers, which may require a careful scrutiny of your everyday activities. Officers must proactively seek out all workers they represent, meeting and greeting longtime coworkers as well as new hires. A shrewd officer will use break times and meal times to circulate, hanging out with a different group each day to break down the segregation, listening to problems from all areas of the workplace.

In an amalgamated local, a new officer should travel to different, and often distant, work sites because this informal face time is essential to building good relations with the members, whom new officers might see only at busy local meetings. With union meeting membership participation generally low, a new officer might never see these members at all.

A steward also has to learn new "languages" to represent the members. If you have workplaces with different ethnic groups and languages, a new officer obviously has to figure out a way to speak with these workers—maybe through another member who is fluent in the language—and to appreciate the customs of these workers. In order to represent workers out of the officer's home base, the new officer must learn "the lingo" of every area—the work processes and issues, the

management personalities and the leadership patterns among the members. Sitting with some of these members at lunch or at a break will help you become familiar with these areas.

One concern surfaced recently when a union officer, a white male, enrolled in a college class that used a textbook called *Embracing Diversity*, and considered dropping out because he thought “there was just a little too much diversity—enough is enough.” It is certainly unfortunate for any worker to allow differences among coworkers to fester but for a union officer, it is inexcusable. Part of the attitude adjustment of becoming a new officer is looking honestly at your own prejudices to see if you are creating the same distance accepted by the officer you beat in the election.

And, of course, a new officer has to learn the electronic “language” of younger members, overcoming both an age and a digital divide. You can communicate through e-mails, text messages, or tweets and must set up a local web site to reach out to every member.

Another area of attitude adjustment is a constant sense of the need to learn more about “the science” of being a union officer. At work, we often do the same things over and over, in a kind of routine. If our employer demands that we learn something different—like new technology or new nursing techniques—the initiative comes from above and training is provided, usually on the employer’s time and expense. As an officer, the initiative to learn new things—new laws, new strategies, new issues—must come from within or else you will lag behind. No “job” is changing more than a officer’s so everyone needs to keep up with the extraordinary conflicts that came with the Great Recession. Administering your local the way “Old Joe” did is just not good enough—didn’t the election results demonstrate this?

An occasional training workshop will simply not keep you and the other officers current, considering that all employers, even in these economically distressed times, spend beaucoup bucks training their labor relations experts. If you doubt this, look at the content—and the prices—

for management conferences on “keeping your union under control.” You should proactively look around for union training classes, get a book or video on union activities and make yourself a better officer, even if it is on your own time and at your own expense. The union—which protects the steward and officers as well as the members—is worth it.

Finally, you must recognize that the status quo does not exist, no matter how much a steward might wish otherwise. The union is either growing stronger or it is being pushed back and the skills and personal relationships of the new union officer are essential to controlling the direction.

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