

## ORGANIZING IS ASKING: THE FIVE BASICS OF INTERNAL ORGANIZING

1. People join the union because they are individually approached and asked to join.
2. The more people we ask to join, the more people will join.
3. We will get hundreds of workers to join the union when we have hundreds asking.
4. We will get hundreds asking by building strong functioning organizing committees.
5. We have strong functioning organizing committees when people are meeting regularly, making plans, working with lists, doing charts, taking assignments and reporting.



## HOW TO ASK YOUR CO-WORKERS TO JOIN THE UNION

**MAKE A DIRECT ASK.** Successful organizers and activists agree that you have to clearly and directly ask people to join the union. Asking is organizing!

**ALWAYS USE A MEMBERSHIP FORM & PEN.** Put the membership form in the hand of the non-member and explain how to fill it out. Organizer assistance!

**BE PREPARED AND USE A LIST.** Plan to approach the most receptive people first. Speak to them when you are both on a break and have time to talk. Avoid very negative or anti-union people. Use a list to help you make decisions about who to target and when.

**BE YOURSELF AND SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE.** Don't worry about being perfectly articulate or providing the perfect case for union membership. Be proud that you made the choice to stand up for yourself and your job. Share why you are involved or your own experience of how union solidarity has worked.

**COMMUNICATE URGENCY.** Our fights in the workplace and beyond are urgent and so is the need for us to be strong and united. The time is now!

**CONNECT MEMBERSHIP TO ISSUES.** Whether the issue is job security, pensions, contracting out, or health and safety, union membership is the first step towards standing up, uniting and fighting back.

**MEMBERSHIP AND DUES EQUAL POWER.** We want to build the strongest, most effective union we can have. There is power in numbers. And resources in membership dues. Employers know, through payroll deduction, who pays dues; they view large groups of non-members as a lack of support for our issues.

**LISTEN AND DON'T ASSUME.** If people say no or that they will think about it, ask open ended questions to understand their point of view, such as "what is holding you back?" By listening, you learn what issues matter to them or if they might be an activist. Don't assume everyone shares the same views.

**BE PERSISTENT.** Some people don't join the union the first time they learn about it. Don't get discouraged when people say no. Many join after being asked multiple times. Work to identify and overcome objections. Being persistent shows their membership in the union is important.



## ASKING MEMBERS TO HELP BUILD THEIR UNION

### WHY PEOPLE GET INVOLVED:

- Want to make a difference
- Personally asked to help
- Understand what's expected

### WHY PEOPLE **DON'T** PARTICIPATE:

- Don't think it matters
- Weren't asked
- Feel they don't have time

### AN 'ASK' MUST DO 3 THINGS:

- Educate the person on the importance of the issue being addressed
- Describe activity in detail
- Explain how the activity relates to the issue and why it is an effective tactic

### MEMBERS NEED TO:

- Understand how the activity connects to the issue
- Feel like they are making a contribution, having an impact
- Have activity that is manageable

### LEADERS NEED TO:

- Identify and mentor prospective activists
- Draw connections between actions and issues
- Ask the member to do something that fits their level of commitment
- Confirm participation before activities (and follow up with no shows)

*"When the best leader's work is done, the people will say, 'We did it ourselves'" -- Lao Tzu*