

## Why Mobilize Members?

Mobilizing members to can be a key to strength and success for local unions in winning grievances or gains at the bargaining table.

Mobilizing members is also a matter of:

**Necessity:** Keeping members active and informed is a matter of survival for unions. Without educated, committed members, there is no union!

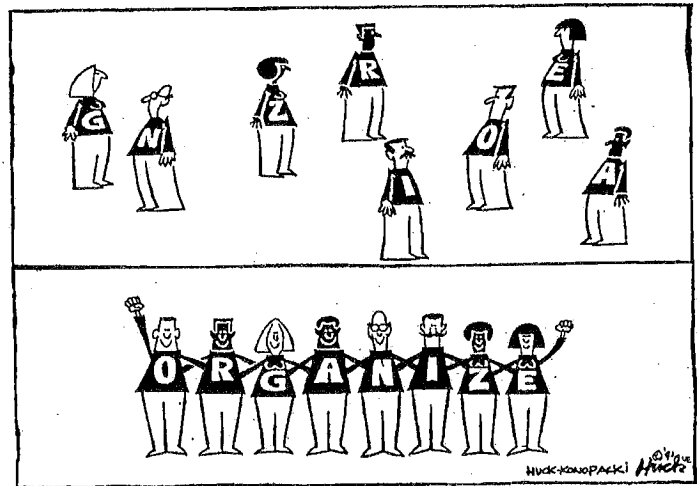
**Power:** "People power" – the strength coming from the collective will of a strong, active membership – improves your ability to make contract gains and mobilize support on important issues.

**Democracy:** Active member organizing means more voices and ideas are likely to be heard from across the bargaining unit.

**Communication:** Active member mobilizing requires ongoing one-on-one communication, and leads to a well-informed membership.

**Education:** When members are involved in mobilizing campaigns, they gain experience in educating other workers about the union, while inactive members learn what the union is all about.

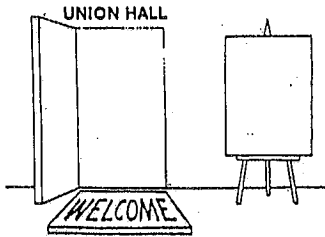
**Solidarity:** Ongoing member organizing and mobilization encourages workers to build relationships and support each another.



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# Creating an Internal Organizing Structure: Jobs for a Mobilization Committee

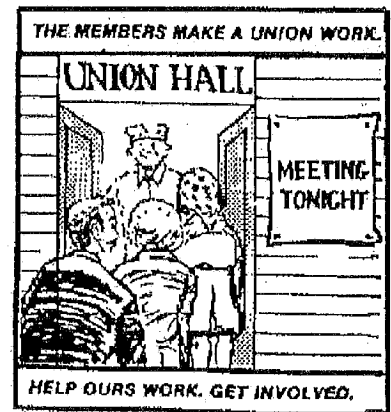
## 1) Chart current workplace membership and leadership



- Start with a list of all bargaining unit members, organized by shift and/or work area.
- Do gaps in membership or activism follow any trends – are certain work areas/classifications, men vs. women, etc. underrepresented?
- Are there gaps in leadership/communication structure – do certain shifts or areas lack a steward or active leader?

## 2) Recruit, train, and assign member organizers

- Focus especially on areas where membership or leadership gaps exist: who can be recruited to fill these gaps?
- Train stewards and member recruits to “talk union,” distribute literature, and educate co-workers effectively about current issues.
- Assign members and organizers a specific list of non-members or inactive members to contact.



## 3) Keep records and set timelines



- Collect reports indicating who has been contacted, how they responded, and whether/when they should be contacted again.
- Set a deadline for completing a first round of contacts, then reassess the plan, see where gaps still remain, and shift emphasis if necessary.

## Organizing Around Workplace Issues

During contract negotiations or during the life of the contract, collective member action can be highly effective in conjunction with negotiations or the grievance procedure, or as an alternative way of resolving disputes that may or may not be covered in the contract.

Using member involvement and action to address problems does not mean that we stop using the bargaining, grievance and arbitration provisions of our contract—we fought long and hard for these, and they are essential tools!

But mobilizing members to act in conjunction with these processes can mean we may win more in negotiations, we may not have to file grievances as often, or we may not have to move through as many “steps” of the process to achieve a resolution. It also means we are constantly communicating, building the union, increasing membership, and educating new leaders.

*In the short run*, this approach requires a lot of work.

*But in the long run*, it helps build the union into a force of many involved, informed members, rather than just a few committed but overworked leaders.

Mobilizing members around workplace issues requires:

- Informing members on an ongoing basis about workplace issues.
- Listening to members to find out their concerns.
- Involving more people in every workplace issue.
- Empowering people to do more for themselves in addressing workplace problems.
- Knowing the bargaining unit: who works where, what their concerns are, who they see as workplace leaders, where strong and weak points are.
- Knowing management: personalities, patterns in dealing with the union, key decision-makers, leverage points.
- Thinking strategically: choosing issues people care about to mobilize around.
- Publicizing the contract gains and grievances we win, and making sure everyone understands the process whether we win or lose.
- Recognizing and encouraging the development of new leaders from the rank and file.

# Assessing Issues for Mobilizing Potential<sup>1</sup>

## Mobilizing to Solve Problems—Sample Form

# of members in work area: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue \_\_\_\_\_

To whom is this issue important? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people are affected by this issue? \_\_\_\_\_

Can people be mobilized around this issue? Yes ( ) No ( )

**Can this issue:**

Increase the visibility of the Union ? Yes ( ) No ( )

Improve representation of underrepresented groups in the union? ? Yes ( ) No ( )

Leadership already involved with this issue \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership who would need to get involved: \_\_\_\_\_

**How can Pressure be exerted on:**

Decision-makers in Management \_\_\_\_\_

Outside decision-makers: (government agencies, employer associations, public, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Remedy or Goal to be achieved \_\_\_\_\_

Is this issue winnable or partly winnable? Yes ( ) No ( )

Possible action	Who will do?	When?
Grievance	_____	_____
Group meeting with decision-makers	_____	_____
Buttons, t-shirts	_____	_____
Newsletter article	_____	_____
Phone tree	_____	_____
Outreach to other union/community allies	_____	_____
Petition	_____	_____

<sup>1</sup> Form adapted from Teresa Conrow, "Contract Servicing from an Organizing Model," *Labor Research Review* 17, 48.

## THEMES & ACTIONS in and Issue Campaign

Choosing a theme or slogan that communicates the issues you are working on helps keep those issues on the minds of members and helps carry your message throughout the workplace—and to management!—during an issue campaign.

Themes and slogans should be chosen to....

- Inspire the members
- Define the central issues in terms of core union values (Why is your position Fair? Right? Just? Equitable?)
- Send a message to management [and]
- Win community support.

Once you have a theme, you can

- Encourage members to raise the same themes in every single conversation they have with management
- Structure communication and actions around the theme
- Print your slogan on signs, stickers, t-shirts, bulletin boards, etc...

**Examples of actions unions sometimes use during issue campaigns include ...**

<p><u>Making Solidarity Visible</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ surveys</li> <li>✓ petitions</li> <li>✓ button/t-shirt/sticker days</li> <li>✓ parking lot meetings</li> <li>✓ flyers, posters, etc.....</li> <li>✓ "lunch and learn"</li> </ul> <p><u>Work to Rule</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ follow safety and other rules to the "t"</li> <li>✓ report every equipment problem</li> <li>✓ don't bail management out</li> <li>✓ must be carefully planned!</li> </ul>	<p><u>Job Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ "unity breaks"</li> <li>✓ work-ins</li> <li>✓ group singing, whistling, etc.</li> <li>✓ refuse voluntary overtime</li> </ul> <p><u>Public Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ informational picketing</li> <li>✓ rallies</li> <li>✓ press conference</li> <li>✓ community meetings</li> <li>✓ shareholder actions</li> <li>✓ religious outreach</li> </ul>
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## Charting Your Members for Mobilization

The following list provides basic information—who your co-workers are, and whether they are members. It tells you that you have more non-members than members...but that's about all it tells you.

### Department A List

<p><b><u>Members:</u></b>                  Sara Hayes                  Tommy Smith                  Christy Brown                  Jason Park                  Kelly Mathes                  Karen Brand                  Missy Clark                  Cindy Carnes                  Carla Robinson                  Sue Kelly                  Bob Bett                  Joe Johnson</p>	Patty Lewis Rosa Miller Greg Ferguson Rhonda Montgomery Terri Lewis Susan Struthers LaTonya Marshall Donna Craig Sandy Courtney Donald Jones	<p><b><u>Non-Members</u></b>                  Paula Harris                  Theresa Pool                  Jerry Kopp                  Nichole Parsons                  Robin Allen                  Vicki Lincoln                  Gary Moore                  Patty Petersen                  Kim Roland                  Lisa Stiver                  JoAnn Park                  Deb Clark</p>	Matt Michaels Jeff Lee John Scott Bill Meyer Cathy Mitchell Nancy Haas Sue Valentine Kelly LaPorte Tom Carpenter Nathan Wise Shirley Eaton Mandy Robinson Brian Atkins
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By charting out member status, rating whether non-members are undecided or opposed to the union, and identifying activists (stars) and friendship networks, you can see which areas are good target areas, which are not, and which conversations should come first.

### Department A – Shift, Rating, Friends

1	Union Member
2	Undecided
3	Anti-Union

22 Members / 48 Total

★ = Union Activist

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Shift

1	Sara Hayes	★
1	Carla Robinson	★
1	Christy Brown	
1	Kelly Mathes	
1	Joe Johnson	★
1	Jason Park	
1	Tommy Smith	
1	Karen Brand	
1	Missy Clark	
2	Cathy Mitchell	
1	Cindy Carnes	
1	Sue Kelly	
2	Nancy Haas	
1	Bob Bett	
2	John Scott	
2	Bill Meyer	

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift

3	Matt Michaels	
3	Jeff Lee	
3	Jerry Kopp	
1	Patty Lewis	
2	JoAnn Park	
2	Deb Clark	
1	Rosa Miller	
3	Gary Moore	
2	Patty Petersen	
2	Kim Roland	
2	Lisa Stiver	
2	Paula Harris	
2	Theresa Pool	
2	Nichole Parsons	
2	Robin Allen	
2	Vicki Lincoln	

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift

1	Rhonda Montgomery	
3	Kelly LaPorte	
3	Shirley Eaton	
3	Mandy Robinson	
1	Greg Ferguson	
3	Tom Carpenter	
3	Nathan Wise	
2	Brian Atkins	
3	Sue Valentine	
1	Terri Lewis	★
1	Susan Struthers	
1	LaTonya Marshall	
1	Donna Craig	
1	Sandy Courtney	
1	Donald Jones	
3	Renee Fahey	

## Agenda for One-on-One Mobilizing Conversations

### 1) Begin with information that gets the person's attention.

- For example, "Jane, negotiations begin in just a few months. Health care costs are increasing all over the country, but we're preparing now so that we can keep our insurance affordable."

### 2) Ask questions and *listen*: find out their issues, questions, and concerns.

- People get involved because of issues they care about: find out what matters to them. Don't assume that they already know what the union is or how members can be involved.
- Ask questions to get them talking. For example: What has their work experience been like so far? What workplace concerns have they encountered in their shift or department? What, if anything, do they already know about the union, the contract, and its benefits?

### 3) Educate the worker about how they and other union members could work together to address these issues.

- Be prepared to highlight examples of any recent contract gains or current issues union members are working on.
- Be positive and be yourself: people are interested in first-hand information, so speak from your own experience.

### 4) Seek a commitment.

- Challenge them to take action by doing something concrete: signing a membership card, participating in a committee, running for office, attending a meeting, rally, or social event, etc.

### 5) Make a follow-up plan.

- If they've agreed to commit to something, indicate the next step. (Will someone call them with more information about an event? Will you take them with you to a meeting? Etc.)
- If they've not yet agreed to commit, set a time when you or someone else will contact them again.
- If they had any questions you couldn't answer, let them know when you'll get back to them with an answer.

# Sample Mobilization Committee Contact Report Form

Name of worksite leader \_\_\_\_\_

Work department \_\_\_\_\_

Shift \_\_\_\_\_

Members to contact:

Member name	Date contacted	Notes / issues, questions, concerns

Return form to \_\_\_\_\_ by [Date] \_\_\_\_\_.



## Designing Fact Sheets and Leaflets

A few basic pieces of literature can help get your main points out to members during a contract campaign.

### Fact Sheet

A detailed fact sheet can be distributed to all member organizers who have agreed to talk to co-workers. Organizers can use the fact sheet to inform themselves about the issue and arguments, to develop the "rap" they will use when talking to co-workers, and to refer to for help in answering questions.

Ideas of what to include:

- Brief overview of bargaining process
- Background on key issues
- Highlights of union bargaining proposals
- Concrete actions members can/should take to support bargaining
- "Frequently Asked Questions"—answers to things members might be wondering about
- Contact information in case people have further questions

### Leaflet

Copies of a one-page leaflet can be provided to member organizers to hand out to each coworker they have a conversation with. The leaflet should be brief and to the point, focusing on ONE MAIN POINT. Ideally it should be eye-catching and should raise issues in a way that's easy to understand at a glance.

What to include:

- The issue
- The union position on the issue
- What concrete action members can/should take
- Contact information for further questions

#### **HANDS OFF OUR HEALTH INSURANCE!**

Management is proposing to double the cost of health insurance by increasing our share of the premiums.

Our bargaining committee is standing strong, but they need our support!! Together we can protect our health care!

- **Sign the union petition.**
- **Join us to deliver the union petition to management:**

**12 noon, May 1, Boss's office**

Call Jane Steward at 55-union for more information or to get involved.

## Turning Issues into Messages & Action

One-on-one conversations are the basis of effective programs to collect ideas and concerns from members, get information out to members, and organize members to take collective action.

### 1) Design a One-on-One "Rap" for Leafletters Sample format for "mobilization rap."

→ *The Opening: Introduce yourself and the issue; ask questions to open a dialogue on the issue*

1) "Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ (from your union), and we're talking to members this week about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."

2) "What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Did you know that management recently \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Did you know our union is working on \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Do you think we need to do something about \_\_\_\_\_?"

→ *The Body: Explain the union's response and action needed*

3) "As union members, right now we are working on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ [explain union position]." A lot  
of us think that taking collective action on this issue is important  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."

4) "That's why we need every member to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ [describe action needed]."

5) "Can we count on you to \_\_\_\_\_ [take action] by \_\_\_\_\_ [date/deadline]?"

→ *The Happy Ending:*

"Thanks for your time—your help with this will make a big difference."  
[and/or]  
"I'll check back in with you next week to see how things are going / to give you an update."

One anticipated objection/question	Possible response

**2) Plan an accompanying Newsletter Article or Leaflet on the Issue**

Headline:

Key fact to highlight:

Action message will ask members to take:

