

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good



The TUC Pocket Guide to **ORGANISING & CAMPAIGNING**

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The TUC has produced this guide for union members, reps, activists, officers, organisers and anybody who wants to build stronger unions in the workplace and beyond.

It has ideas and tips on good practice to help you run a successful organising and recruitment campaign. Some tips will be relevant to organising in new workplaces and others to organising where the union is already recognised.

tuc.org.uk/union-reps has additional resources on issues including:

- › organising at work
- › facility time
- › one-on-one communication
- › issues affecting young workers.

And on the e-learning pages of **tuceducation.org.uk** you can log in to short modules called eNotes. These cover topics such as:

- › health and safety and organising
- › facility time
- › tackling vulnerable employment
- › supporting exploited workers
- › building stronger unions
- › tackling the far right.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing sunglasses on her head, is smiling and looking towards a man. The man has a beard and glasses, and is looking down, possibly at a laptop. They appear to be in a professional or office environment. The background is blurred, showing other people and lights.

SECTION 1

We **ORGANISE** because it helps us build **STRONG, EFFECTIVE** unions capable of delivering for members in the workplace and beyond

ESSENTIAL

SKILLS FOR ORGANISERS

WHY ORGANISE?

- 1 Always keep in mind the following:
 - › **WHO** you are organising
 - › **WHY** you are organising.
- 2 Organising means:
 - › building a union that draws its strength not just from the number of members that it has but also from the number of reps and activists
 - › campaigning on the values and issues that members and potential members care about and involving them in campaign activity
 - › reflecting the diversity of the workers the union supports and represents in the profile of its members, reps and activists.

- 3 In an organised workplace:
- › There is a high level of union membership and activity.
 - › There are reps in all areas of the workplace.
 - › Meetings are well attended.
 - › Members prioritise and participate in union activity.
 - › There is effective and regular two-way communication between the union and its members.
- 4 When it comes to campaigning, organising gives us a chance to turn what we have (**OUR RESOURCES**), into what we need (**POWER**), to get what we want.

SECTION 2

RESEARCH helps
you concentrate your
EFFORTS where they are
most needed and can be
most **EFFECTIVE**

RESEARCH

FOR ORGANISING

- 1** Make sure you know **WHO** you are organising. Create a profile of the workforce based on:
 - > gender
 - > age
 - > ethnicity
 - > jobs
 - > working patterns.
- 2** Make sure you know **WHERE** you are organising:
 - > Where do people work?
 - > What roles do they carry out?
 - > Where do you have members and activists?
 - > Are there areas of low membership?
- 3** What are the **ISSUES?**
 - > What do members care about?
 - > What current concerns do they have?
 - > What are their hopes and ambitions?

4 Research the existing level of union organisation: what are its **STRENGTHS** and **WEAKNESSES?** Think about:

- › membership levels
- › member activity
- › the union's profile in the workplace
- › the relationship with the employer and the union's ability to have influence
- › the union's ability to mobilise members into action.

5 Research the campaign target, ie the employer or whoever it is that can give your members what they want. Think about:

- › What is likely to make them change their position?
- › What are the relationships they have with other people or organisations?
- › How can we involve members and even the public in applying pressure?

SECTION 3

You can't organise on your own! Other **REPS, ACTIVISTS** and **MEMBERS** all have a role to play in the successful organising **TEAM**

BUILDING

THE ORGANISING TEAM

- 1 In recruiting people to the organising team, the most effective thing that you can do is **ASK!**
- 2 Stewards, office reps, health and safety reps, union learning reps and equality reps can contribute to the organising team by identifying key issues and explaining how these can be a way of recruiting members.
- 3 Members are often the largest untapped resource for expanding the organising team. Try and turn members into active members and get them to **'DO SOMETHING UNION'** by following these simple rules:
 - › Be realistic in what you ask them to do - make sure that it not only appears relevant and effective but is feasible and practical.

- › Make it clear that the union values any and all contributions and emphasise how members strengthen the union and can make it more effective.
 - › Make a connection - give them a reason to be active and link what you ask them to do to something they already care about. If they're bothered about something, ask them to find out if there are others who feel the same.
 - › Start with small tasks and as confidence grows give volunteers bigger tasks and more responsibility.
 - › If members are reluctant to get involved, think about why. While it's important not to pester them, don't give up too easily either.
- 4** There's always 'something union' to be done during a campaign or in the daily running of a branch. Ask members to do the following:
- › hand out a leaflet or the branch newsletter
 - › provide information for a workplace map or campaign

- › canvas friends and colleagues on how they feel about a particular issue
- › tell others about a union campaign
- › ask colleagues to take part in a union survey or sign a petition
- › keep a union noticeboard up to date
- › bring someone with them to a meeting
- › sign an online petition and ask their colleagues to do the same
- › ask a colleague or a friend to join the union!

SECTION 4



Campaigns increase a union's **VISIBILITY** and relevance. A well-planned campaign can **INCREASE** membership and **PARTICIPATION**

CAMPAIGNING

- 1** All campaigns need a plan - this will be your road map for winning on an issue, recruiting more members and getting more people active in the union.
- 2** Make sure you pick an issue that is relevant to a significant number of workers or members. Check if the issue is **WIDELY** and **DEEPLY** felt.
- 3** Your campaign plan will:
 - › **DEFINE THE GOAL** - this will provide focus and help you to allocate resources.
 - › **IDENTIFY THE TARGET OF THE CAMPAIGN** - quite simply, whoever it is that can give your members what they want.
 - › **IDENTIFY LEVERAGE** - what will you do to influence the target? What will make them change their mind or act differently?

- › **ESTABLISH YOUR CAPACITY** – what resources do you have, will you need and can you generate to use in the campaign?
- › **DECIDE YOUR TACTICS** – what activities will be included in the campaign? These should be relevant to the goals and resources available, create opportunities for members to get involved and put pressure on the campaign target.
- › **ESTABLISH YOUR TIMESCALES AND MILESTONES** – what is it you want to achieve and when?

- 4 Your campaign should have a coherent message. This shouldn't be a list of demands – it should communicate what the union wants and why. In developing your message, consider the following:
- › what you want to say about the union campaign (**OUR POSITIVES**)
 - › what you want to say about the campaign target (**THEIR NEGATIVES**)

- › what the target might be saying about the union (**OUR NEGATIVES**)
 - › what the campaign target might be saying about itself (**THEIR POSITIVES**).
- 5** Evaluate the campaign not just at the end, but throughout. Test the campaign's effectiveness and contribution to strengthening the union by asking the following questions:
- › Have members and activists grown in confidence?
 - › Has the union's organisation been strengthened and its profile increased?
 - › Did you get what you want?

New technology can open up new ways to communicate and campaign in the workplace. For instance, Facebook or WhatsApp groups can be used to report back on meetings, build community, share documents, poll members or source ideas for future actions.

Online petitions offer a way to quickly gather support from those who support your campaign. They can help build pressure on decision makers and raise awareness of your issues. The TUC's petition platform Megaphone exists to support union members in their workplace campaigns.

Online survey tools like Typeform and SurveyMonkey can help you gather information from members or your colleagues about the issues that are most important to them or to gauge support for a coming campaign. These tools are intuitive and cheap, meaning you don't need to be an IT professional or have lots of resources to take advantage of them.

And while people need to be wary of how they use social media in campaigns, it can be a great place to make your campaign known to journalists, to gather support from politicians and the community and to build your campaign.

A group of diverse people, including a woman in the foreground and a man to her right, are smiling and clapping. They are wearing lanyards, suggesting they are at a conference or event. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a modern interior setting.

SECTION 5

By **WORKING** with other organisations, including those based in the **COMMUNITY** and with others with shared priorities, unions can increase the campaign's legitimacy and the leverage available

BEYOND

THE WORKPLACE

- 1 Alliances can be built with other organisations on the basis of the following:
 - > shared geographical area
 - > common identity
 - > common interest.
- 2 There can be overlap between these, but you should be clear on what basis you are seeking to build alliances.
- 3 When thinking about building alliances with other organisations think of the **RAINBOW*** on the following page.

- R** Develop **RELATIONSHIPS** with community organisations and use these to identify potential allies.
- A** **ASK** these organisations what their issues and priorities are. Try to find common ground.
- I** **INVOLVE** your existing members and activists. They may already have relationships and be involved with these organisations.
- N** **NURTURE** new relationships. Give them time to develop.
- B** **BUILD** the capacity of the alliances you form through joint training and expanding the base.
- O** **ORGANISE** joint events and activities that involve the wider community and that publicise and demonstrate the strength of the alliances you have formed.
- W** **WIN** on the issues that matter in the community.

*Based on a concept created by Amanda Tattersall, 2006
communityunionism.org



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