

Organizing For More Power in Negotiations

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION LOCAL #1



CONTRACT CAMPAIGNS

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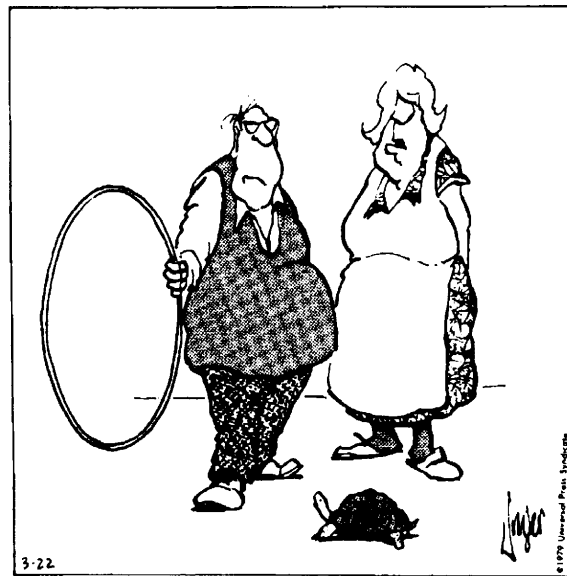
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HERMAN



"Your dinner's getting cold."

Dedicated to all the Local #1 Leaders & staff whose dinners have gotten cold.

CONTRACT CAMPAIGNS

Building Strength, Unity and Member Satisfaction

As union leaders, we've all faced at least one of these situations:

- Employers, who want to see a weak union or no union at all, are relying on confrontational bargaining to achieve their goal.
- Members say the union keeps them in the dark about negotiations, even though the chapter has meetings and puts out a newsletter.
- Attempts to use new bargaining styles (interest-based or win/win) are met with resistance from rank-and-file members, who are worried the union has "sold them out."
- Employees don't understand the contract, so chapter leaders spend a lot of time answering the same basic questions repeatedly.

We can deal effectively with these situations by taking a different approach to bargaining. "Contract negotiations" are being replaced by the "contract campaign."

In a contract campaign employees:

- Determine the goals;
- Research the district;
- Create an effective internal communications network;
- Pressure the district both inside and outside the district;
- Build community alliances, when necessary; and,




TIP Contract campaigns work with any style or method of bargaining: adversarial, win/win, interest-based or collaborative. The only difference is in the selection of strategies and tactics.

Chapters who undertake a contract campaign recognize that winning a good contract takes more than having a good negotiator at the table. These chapters recognize that power is the currency of bargaining, and that the most important source of power we have as a union is our numbers and unity. That's exactly what contract campaigns are designed to do: build and strengthen the chapter to increase our power and win a better contract.



Look for me to get ideas and options

Time and resources are important considerations for PEU Local #1 leaders and activists. That's why we've organized this workbook into steps and checklists to help you find the information you need easily and quickly.

As always, building the union is a slow process. The basic action items for each step are outlined in the checklists; they'll get your campaign off the ground and lay a solid foundation for future organizing efforts. Look for this symbol  to find optional ideas to try if you have the time, resources and have already built a solid foundation.



Look for me to get more information

Look for the boxes with this symbol for additional tidbits, as well as to find out about related materials and resources available from PEU Local #1.

10 STEPS in a Contract Campaign

**P
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- 1 Early planning
- ② Research & analysis
- ③ Issue identification
- ④ Goals & strategies
- ⑤ Pressure tactics



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- ⑥ Education & agitation
- ⑦ Volunteer recruitment
- ⑧ Bargaining
- ⑨ Ratification, celebration & evaluation
- ⑩ Education & enforcement

STEP 1

Early Planning

Laying the foundation for success

Most Employers head into negotiations with clear goals and well developed plans. We must do the same.

Early planning is perhaps the single greatest factor in determining success or failure. The more planning we do—and the earlier we do it—the more options that are open to us and the more involvement we can generate.

The campaign plan should be discussed among the campaign leaders and the IBusiness Agent. Discussing how to wage the campaign is the best way to make sure everyone who will be leading it understands it, has input into it and can carry it out.

Thoroughly discuss each of the steps on this and the following pages. Someone might record decisions on a flipchart, in minutes or as notes. And, as in everything, things change; so planning needs to be fluid and flexible.

Other important factors to consider:

- Campaign leadership
- Rank & file involvement
- Communications
- Community alliances
- Budget
- Timeline



CHECKLIST

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ How are we going to accomplish each of the 10 campaign steps? Decide who, what, when, where and how.
- ✓ The chapter leadership and staff should meet initially to discuss the overall plan for the campaign.
- ✓ Start with a general plan in the beginning. As research is completed and the campaign progresses, fill in the specifics of the plan.
- ✓ Determine all the information, and human and other resources, that we'll need.
- ✓ Outline the major tasks to be done.
- ✓ Think of as many potential problems, obstacles and bargaining developments as possible and consider how to handle them.
- ✓ Build in "checkpoints" to evaluate and revise the plan.
- ✓ As more and more workers become involved, let them help determine the planning and direction of the campaign.
- ✓ For each aspect of the plan, think about how to evaluate and measure our successes and failures.



TIP



For more information about the factors on the left, refer to the appendices in the back.

STEP 2

Research & Analysis

Before planning can begin, we need to find out what are our strengths and weaknesses, what are the employer's strengths and weaknesses, and what contract items are important to chapter members. Without preliminary research, we might have to deal with the wrong issues at the wrong time.

Research & analysis will:

- Provide more options.
- Help identify contract goals that match members' needs and desires.
- Help determine which strategies and tactics will work.
- Show how to involve workers in the campaign.
- Point to arguments to use at the table.
- Provide facts for use with the news media and potential allies.



TIP

PEU Local #1 chapter leaders several ...MAKE THIS FUN!

CHECKLIST

BASIC INFORMATION WE NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ Current contract
- ✓ Input from stewards on grievance history
- ✓ Input from site reps' contact with workers



- Wage & benefit comparisons from surrounding districts
- Notes from previous negotiations
- Memorandums of understanding
- Side letters

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR MEMBERS?

- ✓ Job titles & pay levels
- ✓ Departments & locations
- ✓ Work hours & schedules
- ✓ Employment status (part-time/full-time, 10 mo./12 mo.)
- ✓ Seniority
- ✓ What they want (through a bargaining survey, site meetings, etc.)



- Age
- Gender
- Martial & family status
- Racial & ethnic background

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANAGEMENT?

- ✓ Ability to pay (revenue & budget analysis)
- ✓ What reactions we can expect, based on past bargaining history



- Any management raises, benefit improvements, perks
- Wasteful or inefficient uses of district monies



TIP

For sample contract surveys, refer to *your Business Agent*.

STEP 3

Issue Identification

Now that we've gathered and analyzed all of our data, it's time to identify the issues. In the end, support for the union will depend on whether workers believe the union can successfully address the issues that concern them.

If we've done an effective job soliciting worker input through the written survey and our one-on-one (face-to-face) contacts, we should have a pretty good idea of what the issues are likely to be.

Now, if we have time, we want to go back to the workers and "test" these issues to verify whether they're valid and to determine the "top priority" issue(s).

We also want to look at all of the issues that affect workers individually and together. We might find, for example, that a big issue for folks in accounting and payroll doesn't matter at all to the bus drivers. Our first priority is to try to identify issue(s) that the entire bargaining unit can rally around, but that doesn't mean that we can't add a group of issues that are important to different segments of the workforce.

CHECKLIST

HOW TO SELECT ISSUES

- ✓ Based on the research, the demographics of the membership and the responses to the bargaining survey, which bargaining issues seem to be the "hottest."
- ✓ Based on our analysis of management, which of the issues selected above seem most likely to be either 1) successfully resolved or 2) important enough that the membership would be willing to go to the mat for them.
- ✓ A good issue is winnable. If it's absolutely impossible to do anything about it, it doesn't make sense to pursue it. Think through what our strategy for dealing with the issue might be to get a sense of what it would take to win.
- ✓ We want to organize for the long haul, so select issues that build the union—that will involve a lot of workers in the actual work of winning the issue.
- ✓ Pick issues that unite people. If half of the workers are on one side of the issue and the other half are on the other side, we're going to have problems.
- ✓ A good issue is strongly felt. We have to be careful that we don't pay too much attention to our own personal issues and not enough to the rank-and-file workers' concerns. If workers don't seem to care much about the issue, we're going to have a hard time getting them involved.
- ✓ Deciding on issues should involve as many people as possible. Workers will be more likely to volunteer if they have been involved in picking the issues.

TIP



This doesn't mean that there won't be other issues (such as agency shop, release time, etc.) from which the chapter leadership wants to fashion contract proposals. What we're looking for are the winnable organizing issues.

STEP 4

Goals & Strategies

GOALS

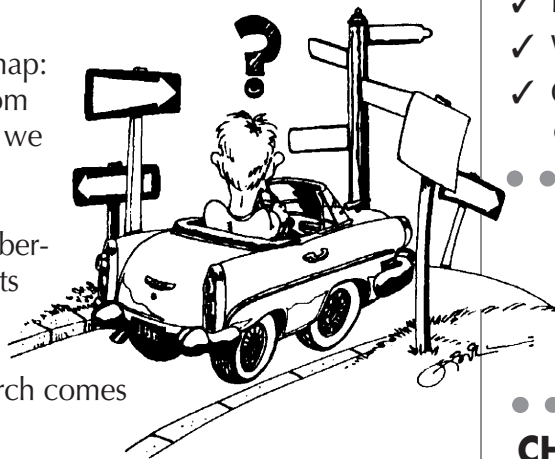
Goals are simply the outcome that we're seeking on the issues we've selected...where we want to go. Without setting clear goals, the union runs the risk of letting management determine the issues.

A good example of a goal might be to win a fair raise. Obviously, our secondary goals are to build the union and to increase member satisfaction by involving more workers in the bargaining campaign.

STRATEGIES

Strategy is like a road map: it's a plan for getting from where we are to where we want to go. We need to know what our starting point is: what our membership's strength is, what its skills and abilities are, who our allies are, etc.

This is where our research comes into play.



And just like a "road trip," we can run into roadblocks while trying to carry out the original strategy. So, we need to have alternative strategies ready, just in case. If we have only one strategy, then the workers have a much higher emotional investment in its success and are more likely to be disappointed if that strategy isn't successful. And, if we've already considered the road blocks, it's much easier to change direction.

Strategies should build the union

Strategies must also work toward our secondary goals to build the union. They must include activities that build up spirit and keep people interested and involved along the way. Otherwise, by the time the goals are reached, the stresses within the organization may build up to the point where they cause problems.

The basic strategy in any contract campaign is to educate co-workers, involve them deeply in every step of the bargaining process, then use the resulting solidarity to pressure the employer.



CHECKLIST

QUESTIONS TO ASK IN EVALUATING GOALS

- ✓ What do we want?
- ✓ Where are we now?
- ✓ How much time is needed?
- ✓ Can we do it?
- ✓ Is the goal relevant?
- ✓ What are the obstacles?
- ✓ Can we get buy-in & commitment to this goal?



CHECKLIST

QUESTIONS TO ASK IN EVALUATING A STRATEGY

- ✓ Is it rooted in reality?
- ✓ Is it a winnable strategy?
- ✓ Will it build the membership?
- ✓ Will it broaden our experience as a chapter?
- ✓ What new skills will it give us that we didn't have before?
- ✓ What old skills can we polish?
- ✓ Will it build our credibility?
- ✓ What things will it make possible that weren't possible before?
- ✓ Is it educational? Fun?



STEP 5

Innovative Pressure Tactics

Strategies and tactics are often talked about at the same time. Strategies are the overall plan for how we're going to get where we're going. Tactics are the specific things that we do to help us get there: petitions, picket lines, hearings, publicity and other pressure tactics. Tactics are important because they move the issues along and also build the union.

It's not enough to be right...we need might as well. PEU local #1 proposals cost the district money and control—and that often means management will resist unless we create meaningful pressure to reach agreement.

When people think of union pressure tactics, they usually think of strikes first—and strikes are one form of pressure which might become necessary—but there are also many other types of pressure that would be effective:

- Worksite activities, such as surveys, petition campaigns and demonstrations, can show management that workers will not be satisfied and productive without a fair contract.
- Job actions, such as refusing to do more than the bare minimum required by the contract (work-to-rule) can show management what they're getting "for free."
- Outside pressure can involve jeopardizing relationships between the employer and parents, politicians, students, and/or the community.
- Community action and the use of the media can damage an employer's public image and ties with community leaders and organizations.



CHECKLIST

ASK THESE QUESTIONS WHEN SELECTING PRESSURE TACTICS

- ✓ Is it winnable?
- ✓ Does it affect a lot of people?
- ✓ Does it unite people?
- ✓ Does it send a direct and simple message?
- ✓ Is it fun?
- ✓ Will our actions make our members uncomfortable?
- ✓ Will the tactic help members feel successful and empowered?
- ✓ Will our actions have a negative impact on our image in the public/media?

THEN CONSIDER THIS

- ✓ Are our tactics based on a clear analysis of our strengths and weaknesses, as well as the employer's?
- ✓ What have we learned from our past experience with pressure tactics?
- ✓ Have we considered that members often give strongest support to actions that they have helped develop?
- ✓ Do we have a combination of tactics (which it usually takes to succeed)?
- ✓ Have we effectively utilized all of our resources (like employees who travel the district in the course of their duties)?



Be Creative!

Instead of relying on old tactics, we should surprise employers with a combination of innovative actions, like:

- Poor working conditions can be protested not just through the grievance procedure, but through group activities. For example, when the ventilation in buildings needs to be improved, workers might show up wearing parkas or paint/dust masks.
- Worksite actions like work-to-rule, rolling sick-outs, etc.
- If management proposes taking away Lincoln's birthday, dress up as Abe and lead a protest meeting.
- Jeopardizing the employer's relationship with key "publics" like parents, politicians, etc.
- Present management with a huge check drawn from the "involuntary subsidy account," showing the amount of money we "spend" each month as underpaid employees to subsidize the employer's budget.
- Legal or regulating challenges to the way the employer conducts its operations.
- On signals from stewards or site contacts, workers take a coffee break ("Unity Break") at the same time. Hold short rallies, sing union songs or conduct marches outside.
- A media campaign and community pressure based on common interests.
- Whistle-blowing on health and safety violations (make a media event out of it).

Sample Pressure Tactics

MILD TACTICS

- Visibility activities like buttons, armbands, etc.
- Contract rejection votes
- Union Days
- Health & safety whistle-blowing
- Hold workshops
- Petitions
- Phone-flooding board members
- Silent vigils

INVOLVED TACTICS

- Informational picketing
- Daily rallies before & after work
- Management lessons (workers "talk up" bargaining)
- Letters to the editor
- One-minute moment of solidarity

STRONG TACTICS

- Work-to-rule
- "Public" bargaining (media, etc.)
- Public hearings
- Boycotts
- Legal action
- Targeting the board
- Rolling job actions (sick-outs, etc.)

OPTIONAL TACTICS

- Labor networking
- Paid advertising
- Press conferences
- Bring in local experts or big guns



STEP 6

Education & Agitation

One of the first things we need to do after we develop our goals and strategies is to get the rank-and-file membership “up-to-speed” on the issues. This will help us to recruit volunteers.

Surveys show the two primary reasons why workers join unions are that: 1) they expect to improve wages and benefits, and 2) to get a fair shake in the workplace through a grievance procedure. So, we’re starting with an “interested” audience.

We want to turn this interest into action. It’s important to the success of the campaign that rank-and-file workers don’t view PEU Local #1 as “an organization” that does something *for* them, but rather as themselves acting collectively.

What workers need to know

We must convince workers that the union’s demands are worth fighting for, and that the employer has the resources to meet those demands. If we did our homework during the research phase, we should be well-positioned to accomplish this task because our issues will be important to the rank-and-file members.

During the education phase, we want to show workers:

- How important our jobs are and how we contribute to the employer and community.
- That bargaining is a process of negotiation, trade-offs and compromises, so that workers have realistic expectations.
- How members have the power through joint actions and solidarity to win a decent contract settlement (we can win!).

In adversarial situations

- How the employer is attacking our jobs and trying to provoke a strike or force us to accept a poor contract.
- That the employer is confident of defeating the union because the union and its members are perceived as being weak or divided.

In non-adversarial situations

- How the union and the employer are solving problems in a way that’s beneficial to both parties.
- That employees can contribute to something good and that more employee involvement will convince management to cooperate further with the union.

CHECKLIST

WAYS TO EDUCATE OUR CO-WORKERS

- ✓ Begin early—as early as possible. Lay the foundation for bargaining...tell employees the economic climate, the state budget situation, the employer’s financial status, etc.
- ✓ Use Steward net-works to conduct one-on-one (face-to-face) education or to hold worksite meetings.
- ✓ Fully explain the “hot” issues and union positions, and focus on sending the messages listed in the “What workers need to know” box on this page.
- ✓ Use a variety of printed materials—like newsletters, flyers and buttons—to reinforce the one-on-one effort, and to reach employees who have not been contacted directly.
- ✓ Inspire members and set a tone of strength, momentum and unity.
- ✓ Begin a series of flyers for hand distribution by stewards, as well as for bulletin boards.



TIP

Communication is a key factor during the education and subsequent steps of the campaign. For more information about communications, refer to *Appendix D* in the back.

STEP 7

Volunteer Recruitment

Remember that our secondary goals are to involve more workers in the union and to increase employee satisfaction with the result of negotiations.

People are convinced to get involved for a myriad of reasons. Obviously we have to start with issues that are important to workers. The trick is to connect the issues to the need for involvement—enough to motivate the employee to volunteer.

- **Identify some activities for volunteers to complete.** People are much more likely to volunteer for a specific activity than for vague, unlimited “campaigns” or “contract negotiations.” (See list at right.)
- **If there is a Steward network,** institute a one-on-one campaign. Not only can site leaders talk up the campaign, but they can solicit input on the issues and tactics, as well as recruit volunteers for the campaign. (If you don’t have a chief steward or site rep coordinator, be sure someone will coordinate the volunteers.)
- **Provide volunteers with an “orientation.”** Whether through a meeting/rally or individually, welcome them in and build commitment and energy. Bring them “inside”: fill them in on the goals and appropriate strategies. Seek their input on the issues and on tactic selection.
- **Remember why volunteers volunteer.** It’s a commitment that’s often emotional or passionate. Use key events and issues, like take-aways, dignity and disparaging management remarks, to prompt workers’ desire to say they’ll help. And, because we don’t pay them, it’s essential we provide them with praise, recognition and personal fulfillment.
- **As much as possible, volunteers should help determine goals,** strategies and pressure tactics. This builds a stronger democracy and increases member satisfaction.

Sample Volunteer Activities



- Gather petition signatures
- Talk to at least two co-workers about an issue
- Make phone calls
- Write letters to the editor
- Clip articles about the campaign from newspapers
- Count and sort flyers
- Make picket signs
- Staple, fold and mail newsletter
- Take pictures at events/activities
- Update the telephone hotline

TIP



For more information about finding and recruiting volunteers, see Appendix C.

STEP 8

Bargaining

Bargaining should be conducted applying the same principles as the rest of the contract campaign:

- Research and analysis
- Planning
- Pressure tactics
- Membership involvement

The union's proposals will usually cost the employer money or require management to share control over the workplace and the workforce. Regardless of whether bargaining is adversarial or non-adversarial, we must convince the employer that it's in management's best interest to settle on a fair contract.

Gradually escalate pressure tactics

In most cases, we have to gradually build pressure away from the table that is appropriate for what is happening in the negotiations themselves. Timing and choice of strategies and tactics at the bargaining table should be closely related to our use of worksite activities, community action, publicity and other pressure tactics. As the employer's resistance to a fair agreement becomes clearer, members and allies will become more willing to take stronger action.

The key is implementing tactics one step at a time—moving from safe, easy tactics to stronger, "riskier" tactics. Members learn to become an organized force by starting with relatively easy actions and building step-by-step toward stronger tactics. Gradual escalation also teaches management to take the union seriously, and often makes use of the strongest tactics unnecessary.

Step-by-step escalation has a number of benefits:

- It builds members' confidence and commitment.
- It keeps the "blame" for increased confrontation on failure to settle the *issues*, rather than on *personalities*.
- It gives the employer incentive to settle.

Gradual escalation won't fully succeed, though, without a communication strategy. Otherwise, we run the risk of allowing management and the rumor mill to get out in front of us and set the bargaining unit's tone and attitude.

CHECKLIST

HOW TO ESCALATE PRESSURE TACTICS

- ✓ Start with something mild, like days when all workers wear the same color clothing, petition campaigns or button days.
- ✓ Move on to activities like a one-minute moment of solidarity, rallies, demonstrations of support at board meetings, informational picketing or phone campaigns targeted at board members.
- ✓ Escalate to job actions, such as refusing to do more than the bare minimum required by the contract (a work-to-rule campaign), rolling sick-outs and so on.
- ✓ The absolute last resort is some form of work stoppage, like a strike.
- ✓ Declare small victories along the way to bolster the bargaining unit.
- ✓ Find a "common enemy" to unite workers against, if necessary and appropriate, like the employer.
- ✓ Use one-on-one contact with workers to find out how many will participate in actions—and thus gauge the probable success or failure of planned tactics.

TIP



We're not going to dwell on how to bargain (preparing proposals, etc.) here because there are many other PEU Local #1 materials and resources available to you which cover that. Contact your Business Agent for more information.

STEP 9

Ratification, Celebration & Evaluation

Ratification is an important step in the bargaining process, yet it's not often used to its fullest potential. Ratification reinforces the democratic traditions of the union; it also provides an excellent opportunity for celebration and evaluation. Because of the preparation, research and two-way communication during the contract campaign, the bargaining team should know what is and isn't acceptable to the membership—and ratification, therefore, is more of a “sure thing.”

By holding informational meetings (ideally at each worksite) prior to the ratification meeting, the ratification meeting can become more of a celebration and “debriefing” of the campaign.



CHECKLIST

CONTRACT RATIFICATION, CELEBRATION AND CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

- ✓ Declare victory and “hype” the results of the campaign.
- ✓ It can be simple or elegant, based on the chapter resources, but celebration is one of the most important steps.
- ✓ Send out a congratulatory flyer highlighting the key contract gains.
- ✓ Solicit rank-and-file members' evaluation of the campaign.
- ✓ Thank everyone who helped (real and perceived).
- ✓ Pull together key leaders and activists shortly after the campaign ends to conduct an in-depth evaluation session and to plan follow-up activities.



TIP

The *PEU Local #1 Policy Handbook* and *Constitution and Bylaws* spell out certain required procedures and timelines for contract negotiations. For more information or to get a copy of these documents, contact your Business Agent.

STEP 10

Contract Education & Enforcement

Once a new contract is ratified, we should begin to lay the groundwork for the future. If (mostly) everything went according to plan during the contract campaign, we should have a lot of momentum going for us. It's natural for some of the "fervor" to subside, but we don't want to lose what we've built. It's important to keep new recruits involved, maintain the feelings of solidarity and build on our wins.

That's where contract education and enforcement come in. There are many things left to do after ratification. Committees need representatives; side letters often call for studies or committees to further examine issues that weren't resolved at the table; workers want information about the new contract...the possibilities are endless. The point is to maintain our momentum. By educating workers about the changes in the contract, we not only empower them, but we keep them connected to the union and provide value for their membership. And by enforcing the contract through grievances and other means, we score new victories to tout.

We also lay the foundation for the next campaign...whether it's a contract campaign, political campaign or membership campaign.



CHECKLIST

CONTRACT EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT

- ✓ Let employees know when they'll get their new contracts (distribute the contract as soon as possible).
- ✓ Start planning the follow-up activities: Prepare to enforce the new agreement; identify ways to keep volunteers involved; hold information session(s) on the new contract for stewards, site reps and other key leaders.
- ✓ Begin educating employees about the changes in the contract and how to enforce their contractual rights (through worksite meetings and written materials).
- ✓ Encourage, develop and nurture emerging leaders and volunteers.



AND FINALLY...
REMEMBER,
DINNER'S GETTING
COLD!

APPENDICES

SAMPLES

Campaign Timeline & Budget

TIMELINE

It's important to chart all of our planning so that we can follow through effectively. Once the campaign kicks into gear, everyone is so busy doing things that it's easy for some of the tasks we planned to slip through the cracks.

Here's a sample campaign timeline covering the beginning stages of bargaining:

Chapter leadership meeting	Every Monday, January
Preliminary campaign planning	Complete by January 15
Campaign research	January 1–30
Bargaining survey	January 5
Executive board meeting	February 5
Decide on issues	
Develop goals	
First flyer distributed (sets the tone)	February 10
Begin volunteer recruitment campaign	February 10
Negotiating team meets to develop contract proposals	February 13
Executive board meeting	February 20
Finalize initial campaign plan	
Decide on tactics	
Establish campaign committees	
First phone bank	February 22
Chapter meeting	February 27
Membership approval of proposals	
Check-in point	
Flyer distribution: contract proposals	February 28
School board meeting	March 5
Present proposals	
Flyer distribution: possible "April Fools" message	April 1
Negotiations begin	April 7
PTA meeting	April 14
Enlist support	
School board meeting	April 22
Possible presentation or action	
Flyer distribution: report on school board meeting	April 23
Executive board meeting	April 28
Check-in	
Refine/tweak plan for next portion of the campaign	

(this is only an example)

BUDGET

It's also important to prepare a budget breakdown for the campaign to make sure we have the resources necessary to carry it out.

Here's a sample of a simple budget:

PAPER

20 reams x \$5 per ream (500 sheets) \$100

PHOTOCOPYING

20 flyers, updates, etc. x 500 ppl. x 5¢ ea. copy. \$500

REFRESHMENTS/FOOD

10 events, meetings, etc. x \$15 ea \$150

HOTLINE

\$10/month x 6 months \$60

BUTTONS, T-SHIRTS, ETC.

\$10 ea. x 100 ppl. \$1,000

ADVERTISING

2 ads x \$500 ea. \$1,000

PICKET SIGNS & STAKES

50¢ ea. x 250 signs \$125

TOTAL \$2,935

CAMPAIGN STAFFING

Using Volunteer Resources Effectively

Obviously, we need to begin with our existing chapter structure. Chapter leaders—including the executive board, the bargaining team/committee and activists such as stewards, site reps and committee reps—are the key to the success of the campaign.

Stewards are critical links in our communication and distribution systems; stewards can provide important information about grievances, gripes and “hot” issues; Stewards produce our written materials; and, the bargaining team has the information we need to disseminate to the rank-and-file membership. For this reason, all these leaders need to be involved in the process as early as possible.

Getting all of these activists to work together depends on education, training, accountability and constant communication. Training and assistance from PEU staff needs to be arranged. Responsibilities and division of tasks needs to be decided. The left hand needs to know what the right hand is doing, and all leaders need to thoroughly understand the issues and the campaign.

The most effective way to achieve the unity necessary to victory is to establish a “body,” often called a *solidarity committee*, to coordinate the campaign. In fact, especially in larger chapters, it’s a “committee of committees.” Major campaign tasks are then easily delegated.

The benefit of decentralizing as much work as possible is that it involves more workers, prevents leadership burn out and relieves the executive board and bargaining team of smaller tasks so they can concentrate on overall campaign coordination.

Key tasks for the committee(s) to handle include:

- Research
- Education
- Health & safety
- Picketing
- Community outreach
- Food
- Volunteer recruitment
- Communications
- Fund-raising/strike fund
- Volunteer coordination

In addition, many chapters also will establish a “broader” bargaining committee, composed of representatives of various worksites, classifications and racial or ethnic groups. The purpose of the bargaining committee is not to supplant or oversee the bargaining team, but rather to support the team and to communicate concerns, questions and opinions from their “constituents.”

One decision that needs to be made early in the campaign is how to select leaders for these committees—are they appointed, elected or “anyone who’s volunteered?” If it’s not spelled out in the chapter constitution and bylaws, we should pick the method that achieves the best member buy-in. The committees will probably be headed by existing leaders, at least initially. As new volunteers are recruited, they can be plugged into the appropriate committees and activities—and perhaps developed to become leaders.



CHECKLIST

USING COMMITTEES EFFECTIVELY

COMMITTEES CAN PROVIDE

- ✓ More bodies to get the work done on time
- ✓ A forum for exchanging information
- ✓ A means of coordinating activities
- ✓ An opportunity for employee involvement in decision-making
- ✓ A source of control

BENEFITS OF HAVING COMMITTEES

- ✓ Get things done
- ✓ Prevent leadership burn out
- ✓ Promote mutual understanding
- ✓ Generate new ideas
- ✓ Provide experience in problem-solving
- ✓ Stimulate employee acceptance of changes

POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES OF COMMITTEES

- ✓ Don't set specific tasks and deadlines
- ✓ Consume too much of members' time in "meetings"
- ✓ Produce decisions that are too watered-down
- ✓ Contain members who are unable to contribute
- ✓ Suffer under poor leadership



RECRUITMENT

Some Tips on Making Contact & Approaching Volunteers

The first secret of recruiting is good planning. Start by making a list of the committees and activities for which you need volunteers. Figure out when and how you will recruit them. You'll also find it helpful to have an idea of how you want to approach people and what you will say. Think about making up a flyer about the issues that were identified in Step 3 and include a "tear off" volunteer form at the bottom of the flyer. Give potential volunteers a choice of tasks (phone calls, petitions, bulletin boards, cooking food, etc.)

Finding volunteers

- **Networking**—As you recruit new volunteers, ask them to commit to recruiting one co-worker.
- **Stewards**—If the chapter has these positions, kick in the "one-on-one" (face-to-face) contact system. Make each officer, site rep and steward responsible for getting one volunteer by a certain date.
- **Ghosts from the Past**—Ask all chapter leaders and activists if they remember anyone who volunteered for a past PEU activity (maintaining bulletin boards during the Prop. campaigns, making decorations for the chapter holiday party, etc.), but who has since become inactive. Contact these potential volunteers and ask them if they would be willing to help again.
- **Bulletin Boards**—Put the flyers you've created (see the introductory paragraph above) on all bulletin boards. Be sure the tear-off form has a return name and an address or worksite.
- **Occupational Leads**—Does someone in the chapter perform functions for the employer that would be useful to our campaign (graphic artist, food service worker, etc.)? Some chapter members may also have hobbies like cooking, photography, cartooning, etc. Ask them if they would be willing to lend their talents to the union.
- **Mail**—Use the district mail system to distribute the issue/recruitment flyers mentioned in the introductory paragraph above.
- **Meetings/Events**—Do campaign activities, like making picket signs or signing petitions, at all chapter meetings, site meetings, etc. Explain your need for volunteers and put issue/recruitment flyers or sign-up sheets out on a table. You can also utilize social functions, benefit fairs, etc.

Approaching potential volunteers

- **Understand Motivations**—People volunteer when they have a good reason to do so and a reasonable chance of being successful. Try to find out what issues/activities they're "hot" about (pay cuts, transfers, layoffs, etc.) or what interests they have (drawing, cooking, etc.), then capitalize on those motivating factors.
- **Emphasize Emotional Flashpoints & Rewards**—When "pitching" potential volunteers, try to stir up their anger, passion and sense of justice. Talk about what their involvement would mean to PEU—what a big help it would be. Try to develop some common interests/bonds. Get them excited and give them a sense of the union's spirit and solidarity. And by all means, make the activities sound like fun—not tedious work.
- **Overcome Reluctance**—If someone seems interested in helping, but they are still holding back, try to find out why. Perhaps they think they don't have the talent. Perhaps it's a child care problem. If you can, try to help them overcome these obstacles.
- **Start Small**—Often, people who are new activists are worried about how well they'll be able to do the job. Start off by asking them to do relatively easy activities that they like, feel comfortable with and can succeed at. Find tasks that are suited to their talents and be sensitive to their time constraints.
- **Go Easy**—Sometimes people who have never been active are leery about how much time is involved in volunteering, what assuming a "title" means, etc. Listen for these cues and adjust your "pitch" accordingly. For example, if someone seems afraid of the title, rather than asking them if they would like to be the "site representative," ask them if they would be willing to help you distribute a flyer at their site. Then gradually add responsibilities and build from there. Take your cues from the volunteer, and be careful not to overwhelm them or push too far, too fast.
- **Mentor**—Assign experienced leaders to help new recruits. That way you let potential volunteers know they won't be "on their own," but rather, helping out a leader. Leaders can provide encouragement, motivation and praise to volunteers to build their self-confidence and loyalty.

COMMUNICATION

If They Don't Hear About It, It Didn't Happen

Communication is the tool by which messages in the workplace are controlled. It is critical to our success to make communication a central part of our campaign strategy. With early planning, we can begin long before bargaining starts and maintain communication long after bargaining concludes. Communication ensures that we can stay on the offensive, rather than finding ourselves in the position where our only option is to *react* to bargaining developments.

As two-way communication improves—from leaders to workers and from workers to leaders—activism and solidarity will grow, and our positions at the table will remain in line with what workers want. But, without constant attention, rumors planted by the employer or spread by dissident workers can wreck the solidarity that we're trying to build.

Therefore, we need to determine our messages and then set up systems to gather information and disseminate them.

Basically, communication can be divided into two methods:

- *Oral communication* through meetings, hotlines, one-on-one, telephone trees, etc., are more personal than written communication—and therefore are often more convincing.
- *Written communication* through bulletin boards, newsletters, leaflets, posters and other printed materials are more efficient and also play an important part in the campaign because they reinforce our oral communication and reach members who haven't been contacted directly.

To be effective, communication must be repetitive and come to members in a variety of formats. But no matter which combination of methods we use, our communication strategy remains the same: we want to educate, agitate and recruit workers.

Setting up the one-on-one system:

- Obviously, site reps and stewards are key players in the one-on-one system; but where we don't have a rep at a site, we can recruit one by sending another rep to that site to talk up the importance of the campaign and solicit volunteers.
- Once all the players are in place, we want to train them. The training session should emphasize techniques for approaching fellow workers, for delivering a consistent message, for enlisting workers' support and, most importantly, for securing active participation in the campaign.
- Activate the system. Stewards and volunteers talk to their fellow workers about the issues, solicit input and encourage participation. This can be done during breaks or lunch, on the job (where possible), and before and after work.
- Once the system is activated, we need to keep on top of it. This can be accomplished through once-a-week meetings or through a one-on-one chair (or site rep coordinator), who keeps in close contact with the "troops" by phone and has meetings less frequently.
- Maintain the system. New messages need to be communicated to the one-on-one volunteers; we need to find out what the volunteers are hearing from the workers; and, we need to constantly furnish activities into which they can plug new recruits.

Tie it all together with written materials

As the communications officer for the chapter, Stewards are a valuable asset for distribution. And the bargaining team and/or labor relations rep will provide the steady flow of information we need to disseminate.

- Set up the system. We need to decide who will determine the messages, who will provide bargaining information to the Stewards, who will verify the accuracy of printed materials, where our materials will be printed/reproduced and how materials will get from the Stewards to the sites.
- Especially in written materials, we need to boil our ideas down to a few key messages. So, changes in insurance carriers and cost-containment measures would be boiled down to, “Stop Health Benefit Takeaways!”
- As much as possible, we want to provide a way for workers to volunteer in every written piece. This can be done by putting a “tear-off” volunteer form in each piece or, at a minimum, by including the union’s or a leader’s name, address and telephone number.
- Develop a standard format for the chapter newsletter and for flyers. Using the same layout over and over will reduce the amount of time it takes to produce materials and also provide a consistent identity (look) for the campaign.
- Put flyers out frequently in the heat of the campaign and as quickly as possible. We want the workers to hear about bargaining developments from us—not management. Sometimes, it’s possible to draft a flyer ahead of time and fill in the “holes” when we get the rest of the information.



CHECKLIST

WHAT TO PUT IN NEGOTIATIONS UPDATES

- ✓ A short summary of the issue, what just happened at the table, what’s next and what action workers can take to support the bargaining team.
- ✓ Facts, figures and examples to support the bargaining demands.
- ✓ Information about upcoming activities.
- ✓ How workers can volunteer (whom to contact and where).




- Pictures and stories showing volunteers participating in campaign activities.
- Quotes from members about campaign goals.
- Embarrassing quotes from management (in adversarial).
- Cartoons and jokes about management’s proposals and actions (in adversarial).



TIP



Choose a headline that is strong and to the point. “Stop pay cuts” or “Here’s how you can get yourself a raise” are much more powerful than “Negotiations Update.”

TIP 


The Walnut Creek offices has a supply of pre-printed flyer “shells” designed specifically for contract information. They say “Our PEU, Local #1 Contract,” “Our Contract is our Guarantee” and “Know Your Rights.” (See samples on this page.)

A note about meetings

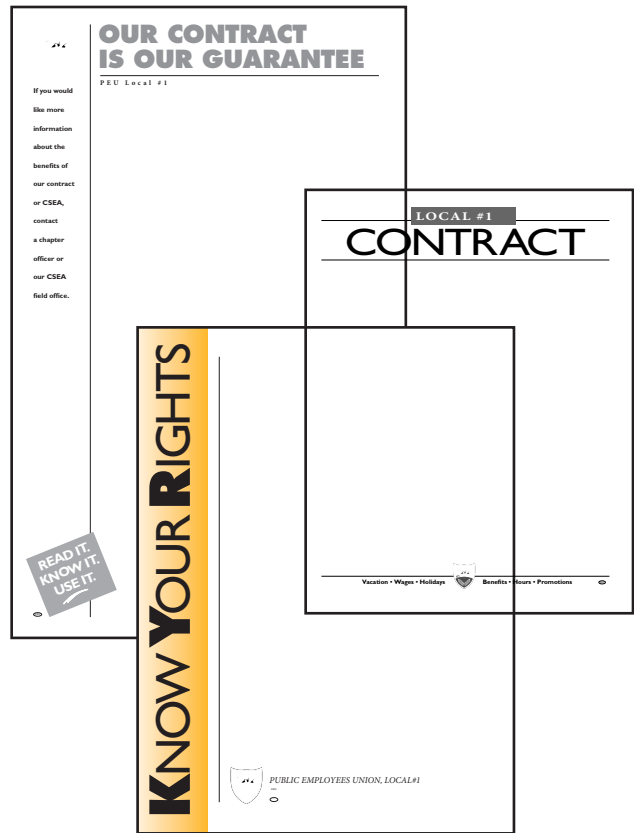
Often leaders are discouraged with attendance at chapter meetings. But, while we want to constantly strive to boost attendance, we don’t have to put all of our eggs in one basket. Simple flyers or newsletter articles summing up (“Here’s what you missed...”) will maximize the mileage we get out of our meetings.

Here’s some other suggestions for meetings

- Use a compelling issue as a draw (pay, hours and layoffs are all good ones).
- Welcome new attendees; make sure they feel a part of the group and feel comfortable contributing to the meeting.
- Use the site rep/steward network to personally invite each worker.
- Make meeting invites the first function of your telephone tree.
- Keep meetings brief and consider various work shifts when setting a meeting time (or hold multiple meetings at different times/days).
- Consider holding meetings off school property if intimidation is a factor.
- Assist with employees’ personal concerns by arranging carpooling, nearby child care staffed by leaders, and inclusion of spouses, partners and families in the invitation.
- Use one meeting to build for the next.

TIP 

For more information and sample materials for contract campaigns, refer to *How to keep your members “in the know” about the contract ...Contact your Business Agent.*



**ATTENTION
PARAEDUCATORS**

- ▶ **Tired of the District cutting your hours?**
- ▶ **Tired of being laid off year after year?**
- ▶ **Are benefits important to you?**

**YOU CAN MAKE A CHANGE!
ATTEND THE
CHAPTER MEETING!
DATE, TIME, PLACE**

Sample Meeting Notice

CASE STUDIES

Real World Examples

Abe Lincoln, unity breaks and the death of dignity

Two years before the expiration of their contract, Oregon state workers started their campaign to win major improvements. Instead of merely talking at members about the need to show their support for negotiations, the union leaders decided to take actions that were fun and that called attention to their concerns. Here's some examples:

- When possible, poor working conditions were protested not merely through the grievance procedure, but through group activities. For instance, when ventilation in buildings needed to be improved, workers showed up wearing swimsuits, parkas and gas masks.
- When management proposed taking away the Lincoln's Birthday holiday, a member dressed up as Lincoln and led protest meetings.
- Workers staged a "Death of Dignity" funeral procession which ended in the offices of management.
- A delegation of members presented management with a huge check drawn from the "involuntary subsidy account," showing the amount of money they "spent" each month as underpaid employees to subsidize the state budget.
- On signals from stewards, workers began to take coffee breaks at the same time. They called them "unity breaks" so they could hold short rallies, sing union songs or conduct marches outside their buildings.

- A network of members were trained to reach out to the community and media. Their efforts were supported by paid advertising.
- A Contract Action Team was established to maintain direct communication with members at every site.

After nine days of "rolling strikes" to cap off the campaign, the union involved more than 3,000 members and won an extra \$9 million to settle the contract. As a result of the involvement and unity built through the contract campaign, state workers developed the political clout to defeat four tax-related ballot measures and win approval in the Legislature for a \$22.6 million pay equity bill.

They say give back, we say fight back!

When the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (NUHHCE) began bargaining with the management association representing most of the major hospitals in Philadelphia, the hospitals were determined to introduce co-payments or restrict benefits in the employee health plan. The hospitals also demanded drastic cutbacks in pension benefits, expanded use of part-time workers, use of supervisors to do bargaining unit work and an end to the union's forward progress in wage increases.

The union borrowed some tactics from the past, combined them with up-to-date media, community and labor outreach efforts, and ended up significantly improving their contract.

(continued)

To accomplish this, the union undertook several major initiatives:

- Union members’ families were involved through a series of “family nights” and special publications to improve solidarity and test the organization of staff, bargaining team and site contacts.
- Through a series of rallies, meetings and publications, the union mobilized political, labor and religious support.
- With a series of press briefings, releases and interviews, public support was enlisted and pressure for a decent contract was increased.
- NUHHCE decided not to let its members strike or be locked out, and implemented widespread sit-down strikes instead.
- When negotiations broke down, bargaining team members went back to their hospitals and, within just an hour, launched effective sit-downs in eight hospitals.



As the actions grew in size and scope, one hospital after another came to terms because the workers were unified and because there were too many of them participating to be fired or arrested. When the contract was ratified, workers had won a three-year increase of 12 percent, fully-paid comprehensive benefits, protection of the pension system and improved language restricting the use of volunteers and supervisors.