



# THE TUC POCKET GUIDE TO ORGANISING & CAMPAIGNING



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# WELCOME

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

It contains ideas and tips on good practice to increase the chances of you running 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.

For a more complete guide to building stronger unions, visit the union organising pages in the union issues section of the TUC website – **[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)** – and look for the following publications:

- *Organising at Work*
- *Planning for Organising*
- *Organising for Health and Safety*
- *Bargaining to Organise*

The TUC, via the Organising Academy and the Activist Academy, offers a comprehensive range of organising and campaigning related training for union officers, organisers, reps and activists. More details available at:

- **[www.tuc.org.uk/OrganisingAcademy](http://www.tuc.org.uk/OrganisingAcademy)**
- **[www.tuc.org.uk/ActivistAcademy](http://www.tuc.org.uk/ActivistAcademy)**

Also, don't forget to visit the Stronger Unions blog at **[www.strongerunions.org](http://www.strongerunions.org)**

Additional support for lay union representatives is available at **[www.unionreps.org.uk](http://www.unionreps.org.uk)** – the TUC's website dedicated to the work of union reps.



# 1

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ORGANISERS

We **organise** because it helps us build **strong, effective** unions capable of delivering for members in the workplace and beyond

### 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 its member numbers 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.

**Organisers**  
turn resources  
into power that  
helps members



# 2

## RESEARCH FOR ORGANISING

**Research** helps you concentrate your efforts where they are most needed and can be most **effective**

- 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?
  - 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 i.e. 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?



# 3

## BUILDING THE ORGANISING TEAM

You can't organise on your own! Other **reps, activists** and **members** all have a role to play in the successful 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 they 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. Whilst 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 research
  - 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
  - ask a colleague or a friend to join the union!

# 4



## CAMPAIGNING

Campaigns increase the union's **visibility** and relevance. A well planned campaign can **increase** membership and **participation**

- 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 goals and resources and create opportunities for members to get involved.
- **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**)



Has the union been **strengthened**?

Have members been **empowered**?

**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?
- Was the issue resolved?

# 5



## BEYOND THE WORKPLACE

By working with other organisations, including those based in the **community** and with whom they have shared priorities, unions can increase the campaign's legitimacy and the leverage available

- 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.

\*Based on a concept created by Amanda Tattersall, 2006  
[www.communityunionism.org](http://www.communityunionism.org)



- 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.





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