

UNION POWER = ACTIVE MEMBERS

Total Time—2.5 hours

Learning Goals

- Understand how and why people become active in our union.
- Discuss the importance of signing up and welcoming new members.
- Consider what's useful to learn about our co-workers and how to track the information.
- Learn the elements of an effective one-on-one conversation.
- Practice sharing our own stories and talking with co-workers.

Sections—Time

- I. Welcome, Review Goals of the Training—5 minutes
- II. How and Why People Become Active—15 minutes
- III. Signing Up New Members—5 minutes
- IV. Welcoming New Employees—15 minutes
- V. Learning About Our Co-Workers—15 minutes
- Break—15 minutes
- VI. Charting and Mapping Our Worksites—15 minutes
- VII. Sharing Our Story—30 minutes
- VIII. Conversations with Co-Workers—30 minutes
- IX. Wrap-Up—5 minutes

Materials Needed

Flip Chart, Markers, Tape
Copies of the Steward Handbook

Handouts/Worksheets

Talking with Members Handout
Box Room Handout
Map Your Workplace Handout
One-to-One Conversations Handout
Sharing Your Story Worksheet
Member Profiles (4) Worksheet

I. Goals for the Training—5 mins



Post and review the goals for the training:

- Understand how and why people become active in our union.
- Discuss the importance of signing up and welcoming new members.
- Consider what's useful to learn about our co-workers and how to track the information.
- Learn the elements of an effective one-on-one conversation.
- Practice sharing our own stories and talking with co-workers.

II. How and Why People Become Active—15 mins



Observe that identifying and recruiting others to become more active in our union is one of the most important contributions a steward can make.

Ask how and why the participants became involved in our union. Ask a few people to share their stories, including as many specifics as possible (Why were you interested in and willing to be involved? Did someone recruit you?, Why did they recruit you?, Were you asked to participate in an action or event? What was that like?)



Reflecting on these stories and their own experience, ask the group how and why they think people become involved in our union. Chart the responses.

Add the following if not mentioned:

- People often become involved when there's something that affects them personally.
- It's easier for people to become active if there are concrete actions—i.e. asking someone to sign a petition or to help distribute a survey.
- It's important to have a series of steps as part of these actions— so that their involvement can build.
- People have different interests and skills. Someone who won't attend a meeting might be interested in participating in a rally.

Module Icon Key



Flip Chart



Ideas



In Handbook



Worksheet/
Handout

- Sometimes people need assistance with childcare or rides—helping to alleviate the barriers to their involvement can make a real difference.

III. Signing Up New Members—5 mins

Note: You can skip this section if the participants do not work in a so-called “right to work” state.

Explain that in a number of states, UFCW local unions operate under so-called “right-to-work” laws. These laws are designed to weaken our ability to represent workers effectively by limiting how we’re able to collect union dues (in states that do not have “right-to-work” legislation, once workers come together to form a union, they all pay dues—and don’t have to sign up individually).

So-called “right-to-work” laws are really the opposite, bringing down wages and benefits and hurting our right to represent our co-workers.



If you live in a so-called “right-to-work” state, one of your primary jobs as a steward is to know who belongs to our union at your worksite, and to sign up everyone else.

IV. Welcoming New Employees—15 mins



One of the most critical roles of union stewards is welcoming new employees into our union.

Explain that it’s critical for new members to learn about our union from other union members (versus from management). By talking with new employees about what union membership means, stewards can also find out what people care about and how they might want to participate.

Ask if anyone has had conversations with new employees or participated in a new member union orientation. If so, ask people to describe their experience.



Ask for tips on how to approach new employees, and what to include during these conversations. Chart the responses.

If not included, mention:

- Try to avoid lecturing people; ask questions that draw out their experiences and ideas
- Share why you became involved and why you’re a steward; what being a part of our union means to you
- Explain what a union is (building off of their knowledge)
- Introduce the contract/ review highlights of important language
- Let them know how to reach you in the future

- Invite them to meetings, actions and events
- Ask how they'd like to be involved (offer options, so that attending a meeting isn't the only way to show an interest or become involved)
- Check back with them

IV. Learning About Our Co-Workers—15 mins

Explain that whether you're having a conversation with a new employee or someone who's been at your worksite for many years, it's important to learn more about who they are and what they care about. Ask what kinds of things we might want to learn about our co-workers. Chart the responses.

If not included, mention:

- Name and contact information
- Where they work (department/area)
- When they work (shift/ schedule)
- What they do (job titles/ classifications)
- Their familiarity with unions
- How long they've worked at this job (seniority)
- Their first language and other languages they speak
- The problems they'd like to see addressed at work
- Questions and thoughts they have about our union
- Their social connections at work (who they take breaks, eat, carpool with, etc.)
- Community organizations or places of worship they are involved with (this may be useful if/when our union needs support around bargaining or organizing campaigns)

Explain that it's also important to understand the ways that people's ability, age, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion and sexual orientation impact their work and life experiences. As stewards, we may notice if workers from different groups are not participating in our union (and then try to include them).



Stewards are uniquely able to serve as a bridge between people, protect against any employer divide-and-conquer tactics, and help to build solidarity.



Point out that a list of things we'd like to learn about our co-workers is in the Steward Handbook.

V. Charting and Mapping Our Worksites—20 mins

Explain that it would be impossible for any of us to remember all of the information we learn about our co-workers. For this reason, we need to record and track as much of it as we can.



Distribute and review the Talking with Members Handout. Explain that this is a basic chart that can be used to track what we've learned from conversations with our co-workers.

Ask what's missing from this chart (friendship networks, seniority, etc). Explain that sometimes we might need to use a few different charts or lists. In some cases, we may be able to contribute important information (like keeping members' contact information up-to-date) to our local union, so that it can be centrally organized and tracked.



Distribute and review the Box Room Handout. Explain that it is an example of a chart used in a so-called "right to work" state, where everyone is not a union member.

Observe that the names between the dashed lines are friends. The stars indicate the people who are union activists and the 1s, 2s and 3s reveal whether they are union members, undecided about joining our union or are anti-union.

Explain that the same type of chart could be used in a worksite where everyone is a union member, but where we want to track member's feelings about a political or worksite issue (similarly using 1s, 2s and 3s).

Ask what's missing from this chart (contact information, languages spoken, etc).



Charting our worksites is particularly useful for revealing where our union is strong and where it's weak—in terms of shifts, job classifications and among different groups of members. By identifying these weaknesses (for example, if we realize that there are no union activists on the second shift), we learn who we need to talk with and recruit.

Note that it's important to keep some information, such as numerical ratings of members, on charts in private files.

If there is a chart or form that the local union uses for tracking information about members, share this with the participants.

If you have extra time, distribute the Mapping Your Worksite handout and break the participants into small groups, with flip chart paper and markers (you can also provide different colored sticky-dots, for participants to use with their maps), asking them to begin the process of mapping their work areas according to the directions on the handout. This process will

take approximately 45 minutes, 25 minutes for the map making and 20 for report-backs.

VI. Moving Our Co-Workers to Take Action—10 mins

Explain that once we know who we want to approach, and what we want to recruit them to do, we need to initiate one-to-one conversations with our co-workers.



Distribute and review the One-to-One Conversations handout.

Ask for people's reactions to the handout and what they might add or change. Explain that the full outline might happen over the course of one or more conversations, but that it's important—since our goal is to grow our union's power—to never leave a conversation without asking people to take action.

VII. Sharing Our Story—30 mins

Explain that we're now going to focus on #3 from the outline: "sharing your story." Observe that many stewards find this part of a conversation challenging.

While we always want to listen more than we talk, it's important that when we are talking that we're not lecturing people.

By sharing our own short (2-3 minutes) stories, we invite others to do the same and inspire them to take action.



Distribute the Sharing Your Story Worksheet and ask for volunteers to read the three different story-starters.

Explain that they'll have ten minutes to work on their own, thinking about which story they want to share, making notes and preparing to share this story with another participant.

After ten minutes, ask people to pair up with someone they don't know well and to practice sharing their stories. Explain that you'll let them know when to begin and when to stop.

Once everyone's seated with their partners, announce when they should start, and, after three minutes, to stop.

Repeat this process, asking the pairs to switch.

After both people have shared their stories, ask them to discuss, for five minutes, how they think it went.

While constructive feedback about how the stories were told is welcome, ask the participants not to critique or question the content of each other's stories.

Bring everyone back together and ask what people's experience was like with this exercise. What was easy? What was difficult? How did it feel to share your story? How did it feel to hear someone else's story? What did you learn? Will you share your story with your co-workers?

VIII. Conversations with Co-Workers—30 mins



Divide the participants into small groups and give each group one of the four Member Profile handouts.

Ask the groups to read and discuss the handout together, and for one person in the group to take notes for the report-back. Explain that they have ten minutes for this section of the exercise.

After ten minutes, ask the groups to role-play a conversation with the person profiled on their handout (each group will need two volunteers; one to play themselves, a steward, and the other to play the worker they've just been discussing). Remind everyone about the outline on the One-to-One Conversations handout.

Give the groups a few minutes to decide who will volunteer and inform them that they'll have five minutes for the role-play. Let them know when to begin, and, after five minutes, when to end the conversation.

Bring the groups back together to de-brief. Ask each group to a) introduce the worker on their handout and to share highlights from their initial conversation about the questions on the sheet and b) to reflect on the role-play.

Ask if people had specific ideas for what they could ask the workers to do. Chart the responses.

If asking people to come to meetings is the primary action step mentioned, challenge the participants to brainstorm other possibilities (not because attending meetings isn't important, but because recruiting people is most effective when there are a variety of options). If this is difficult, encourage them to work with their union representatives to come up with other options (updating the union bulletin board, writing an article for the union newsletter, posting photos to the union's facebook page, organizing the kid's activities at the union's picnic, attending a public-hearing on an issue that affects working people, investigating a workplace issue that many people seem upset about, joining the labor-management safety committee, etc.)

Observe that the One-to-One Communications handout mentions "agitating" around a specific issue and asking people to take specific actions related to this issue.



Often, the best way to involve our co-workers, is to organize a worksite-related campaign, with concrete roles for members.

Note that for a co-worker like Juan, who many people look up to and who's "always on-board," his action step might be to become a steward/other type of leader within the union.

Identifying and recruiting other leaders is a key role for union stewards.

NOTES



Wrap-Up—5 mins

Refer back to the beginning of the workshop and the participants' stories of how they became involved in our union. Observe that it's now our job to recruit and encourage others. Through one-to-one conversations where we share our own stories and learn more about our co-workers, we can involve more members and build real worksite power.

HANDOUT: TALKING WITH MEMBERS

Talking with Members		Steward:
		Job/Shift:
Name	Contact	Comments / Questions / Concerns
A. Sue Groff	555-221-1111 (cell)	She's bilingual (Spanish & English). Loved the Tuesday actions. Interested in helping with organizing campaigns. Said she'd come to the June meeting.
B. Ernesto Sánchez	555-331-1313 (cell)	Had a bad experience with a union at a previous job. Upset that safety problems don't get fixed. He may come with Bob to June meeting.

BOX ROOM

Shift, Rating, Friendship Networks*

1=Union Member 2=Undecided 3=Anti-Union
 ★=Union Activist COUNT: 21 Members/48 Total

1st SHIFT	2nd SHIFT	3rd SHIFT
1 Sara Hayes ★	2 Thai Nguyễn	3 Carlos Zacapa
1 Hao Phan	2 Jeff Lee	3 Shawn Lee
1 Christy Brown	1 Rosa Miller	1 K.C. Hoag ★
1 Ana Ortiz ★	2 Vicky London	2 Louann Day
1 Joe Johnson	3 Juan Carrilo	1 Scott Frotman ★
1 Jason Parks ★	2 LaTonya Lewis	3 Chris Olson
1 José Sanchez ★	2 Shirley Eaton	2 Jody Fisher
2 Kwasi Saro-Wiwa	2 Donald Jones	1 Wayne Anthony
1 Karen Brand	1 Paula Harris ★	1 Aung San
2 Claudia Luna	2 D'Shauna Jones	3 Don Craig
2 Bob Bett	1 Rhonda Smith	2 Sharonda Wells
1 Maria Rios	2 Faizah Olanrewaju	2 Brian Atkins
1 Lien Lê	2 Joseph Oppong	1 Abdulah Sidran ★
3 John Scott	1 Maria Vera	3 Michael Duke
2 Bill Meyer	2 Nick Murphy	2 Anna Cortes
2 Iman Azikiwe	1 Jean Gombri ★	1 Kim Jung

**This chart reflects a worksite in a so-called "right-to-work" state where some workers are union members and some aren't. A similar chart could be used in a non-right to work state, to track how interested members are in becoming more involved, their feelings about political issues, etc.*

HANDOUT: MAP YOUR WORKPLACE

Mapping your workplace will give you a picture of where the union is strong and where it's not. You can then build on those strengths to develop more power. Mapping your workplace—and keeping it updated—is an ongoing process.

WHAT CAN A WORKPLACE MAP TELL YOU?

- How people are already organized, both formally and informally.
- How communication happens—and how worksite leaders can tap into this.
- How to identify leaders.
- Who gets to walk around and interact with most of the employees.
- How management is organized.

HOW TO MAP YOUR WORKPLACE

Begin with a large (flip chart size) piece of paper and different colored markers. If the workplace is a large facility, you may want to begin by mapping your department or shift and to then work with other worksite leaders to piece together a map of the entire workplace.

- Begin by drawing an outline of your department. Imagine that you are a fly on the ceiling, looking down. Note workstations, desks, machines, etc.—a floor plan.
- Place a circle where every worker is usually stationed and write in their names. Identify people who are active with our union, on the fence/unknown, and those who are anti-union. You may want to use different symbols or colors for each of these categories.
- Identify workers who can move around, if this matters.
- Indicate new hires.
- Identify and circle informal work groups. Informal work groups are workers who frequently interact with each other. They may spend time together on breaks.
- Mark the influential people or informal leaders. Sometimes these will be stewards, sometimes not.
- Indicate on your map where members of management are usually stationed.
- Mark where workers tend to gather (break areas, lunchrooms, bathrooms, water fountains). Identify who gathers with whom in these places. Identify who the leaders are in those groups.
- You may want to keep notes on each worker such as: date of hire, whether they have been active with our union, conversations you've had with them (their concerns and interests). These notes should be kept separately.

Your diagram may show that the workplace keeps some people divided; a good reason for map-making.

HANDOUT: ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS

The following is a guide for one-to-one conversations when the goal is moving workers to take action.

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you are talking with workers.

- If you don't know the person: "Hello, I'm Sylvia, I'm a steward with Local x."
- "We've been talking with workers about (whatever the identified problem is)."

2. Listen to the worker's concerns, and agitate around the issue.

- Ask basic questions like: "How long have you worked here?" "What shift do you work on?" "What kind of work do you do?"
- Get specific: "Has (the identified problem) affected you?" "How?"
- Agitate around the issue: "Do you think this is fair?" "Don't you think we should do something about this?"
- Don't interrupt or jump to conclusions. Keep asking questions.
- Ask what other concerns the worker has.

3. Share your own story.

- You became involved in our union for a reason and it's important to share why.
- By sharing your own story, you build trust and help others to see what you have in common.
- Your story can inspire others to take action; if you can do this, so can they.

4. Educate about our union and what we can do to build power.

- "If we act as a group, management will be more likely to listen."
- "We're reaching out to as many people as we can so that we can have a greater say in what goes on and make some real changes."
- "By sticking together, we can take an active role in improving our jobs."

5. Ask the worker to participate.

- "Will you wear a button, sign a petition, come to a meeting," etc. "Will you take part in whatever the action is?"
- "Can I keep in touch with you?"
- "Who else is affected by this problem? Will you introduce me to them?"

6. Get a specific commitment.

- Remind people: "Remember to wear your button, come to the meeting at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow," etc. (whatever the action is)
- "Thank you for being a part of this. I'm really glad you're on board."

WORKSHEET: SHARING YOUR STORY

Choose one of these and write some notes (you can use the back of the page as well) for yourself. Keep these notes in mind when you practice sharing your story. Remember, you will only have 2-3 minutes to share your story.

- 1. Why do you care about building the union power? What does being a union member mean to you? How does this relate to your decision to be a steward?**
- 2. What is a challenge you've had to face in your life and how did you overcome this? How does this story relate to your decision to be a steward?**
- 3. Is there a time when you stood up for something you believed in? What gave you the strength/ determination to do this? Did others join with you? How does this story relate to your decision to be a steward?**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

WORKSHEET: MEMBER PROFILE #1

MEMBER PROFILE #1: *Gloria: New Member*

Gloria is a new employee and you're not sure what she knows or thinks about her new job and/or about our union.

How will you build a relationship with Gloria?

How will you incorporate parts of your own story into the conversation?

How will you learn about her skills and interests?

What, specifically, can you ask her to do?

MEMBER PROFILE #2: *Tony: Active in the Past*

You've heard that Tony was active in our union in the past, but he hasn't come to any events or meetings this year. You're not sure why.

How will you build a relationship with Tony?

How will you incorporate parts of your own story into the conversation?

How will you learn about his skills and interests?

What, specifically, can you ask him to do?

MEMBER PROFILE #3: *Juan: Always On-Board*

Juan is always at union meetings and events. He seems to have good ideas and many people look up to him.

How will you build a relationship with Juan?

How will you incorporate parts of your own story into the conversation?

How will you learn about his skills and interests?

What, specifically, can you ask him to do?

MEMBER PROFILE #4: *Connie: Never Interested*

Connie's a long-time employee where you work and, as far as you know, she's never been interested in anything related to our union.

How will you build a relationship with Connie?

How will you incorporate parts of your own story into the conversation?

How will you learn about her skills and interests?

What, specifically, can you ask her to do?
