

Setting Up a Contract Action Network

This is a guide for local union reps who want to set up an internal action network in their worksites. This network consists of:

- The local union representative,
- At least one member coordinator in each worksite,
- Member key communicators at each worksite, and
- Members

The guide is divided into the following sections:

- Laying the Groundwork
- Setting Up a Contract Action Network
- Assigning Roles: Local Union Rep; Worksite Coordinator; Key Communicator
- Mapping The Worksite
- Recruiting Members
- Getting Members Ready: Sharing Information; Communicating; Meeting with Contract Action Team; Creating a Phone or Text Tree; Face-to-Face Communication Tips

Sign-up sheets and forms are located in the *Take Away* section.



CONTRACT ACTION NETWORK

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

In preparing for contract bargaining, we must organize an effective network of informed and engaged members.

Setting Up A Contract Action Network

In contract campaigns, the goal is to reach every member in a worksite through a network of member activists. This network is one method for achieving our goals.

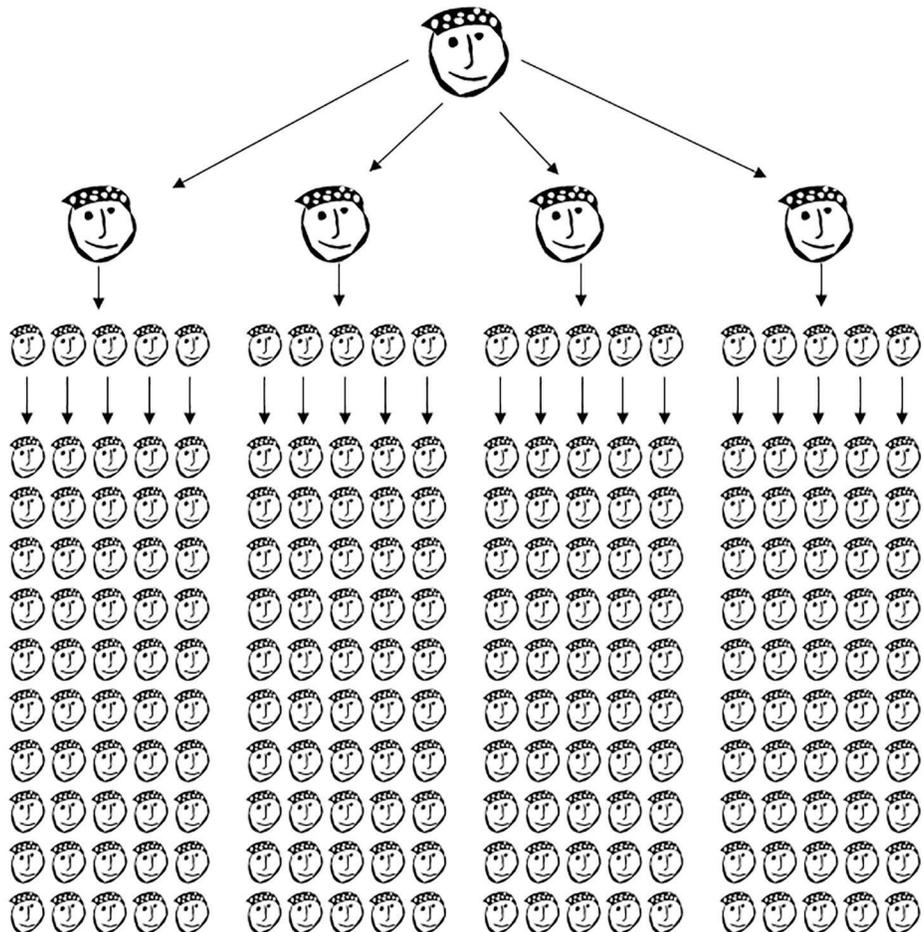
In the sample network shown below, the local union representative has set up a network in four worksites through four worksite coordinators. Each coordinator then contacts their five key communicators who, in turn, each contact ten co-workers. Each worksite in this sample has 56 members and reaches 225 people, yet no one has to contact more than ten people.

One local union representative contacts four store coordinators.

Four worksite coordinators each contact five key communicators.

Twenty key communicators each contact ten co-workers.

Network reaches 200 co-workers.



CONTRACT ACTION NETWORK

Assigning Roles: Local Union Rep, Worksite Coordinator, Key Communicator

Local Union Rep: The role of the rep is critical during bargaining campaigns. Who knows better about the internal structure of the store than the union representative?

To set up the worksite network each rep should:

1. Recruit a worksite coordinator for each store.
2. Create a contact list of worksite coordinators. Include worksite locations, home phone, cell phone, other contact information. **NOTE: A blank copy of the contact list of worksite coordinators is in the Take Away section.**
3. Set up an off-site, face-to-face meeting with all the coordinators.
4. Identify and recruit members in the worksite who will be key communicators.

Worksite Coordinator: The worksite coordinator is the union communication point person at their job site. They have the overall responsibility of activating the network in their store.

The store coordinator may or may not be a steward. Look for someone who is respected by fellow union members and who is able to circulate in the store.

Some responsibilities of the store coordinator include:

1. Identify and help recruit one key communicator for every ten members.
2. Create a list of key communicators. Include department, shift, home and cell phone numbers, e-mail address, and the names of the ten members each is responsible for.
3. Discuss the responsibility of the key communicators and possible time line of events.
4. Keep working on the communication structure to improve it.
5. Give feedback from key communicators to the union rep.
6. Provide ideas and identify the issues that members need more information on to understand or take action around.

Key Communicator: The role of the key communicator is an important part of the team and their responsibilities are:

1. Maintain strong and effective communication with their assigned co-workers by having face to face one-on-one conversations.
2. Keep a list of the ten co-workers they are responsible for contacting. **NOTE: A blank copy of the contact list of members is in the Take Away section.**

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3. Pass on the union message and learn what is on members' minds. Write down their comments or concerns on the members' comments sheet. **NOTE: A blank copy of the members' comments sheet is in the Take Away section.**
4. Help carry out collective actions involving co-workers and community allies.

MAPPING THE WORKSITE

Mapping is one approach to building a network of engaged and involved members. By tapping into the natural social groups and work areas, we can identify union supporters and member organizers to form the contract action team.

To find and use the natural leaders who already exist in every workplace, maps should include the following information:

1. Information on every worker: their name, location, shift, job classification and membership status.
2. Shifts and locations with and without stewards or activists.
3. People who have taken action at the worksite. This might include information such as who has worn a button, signed up for ABC, or volunteered to take on more responsibility.

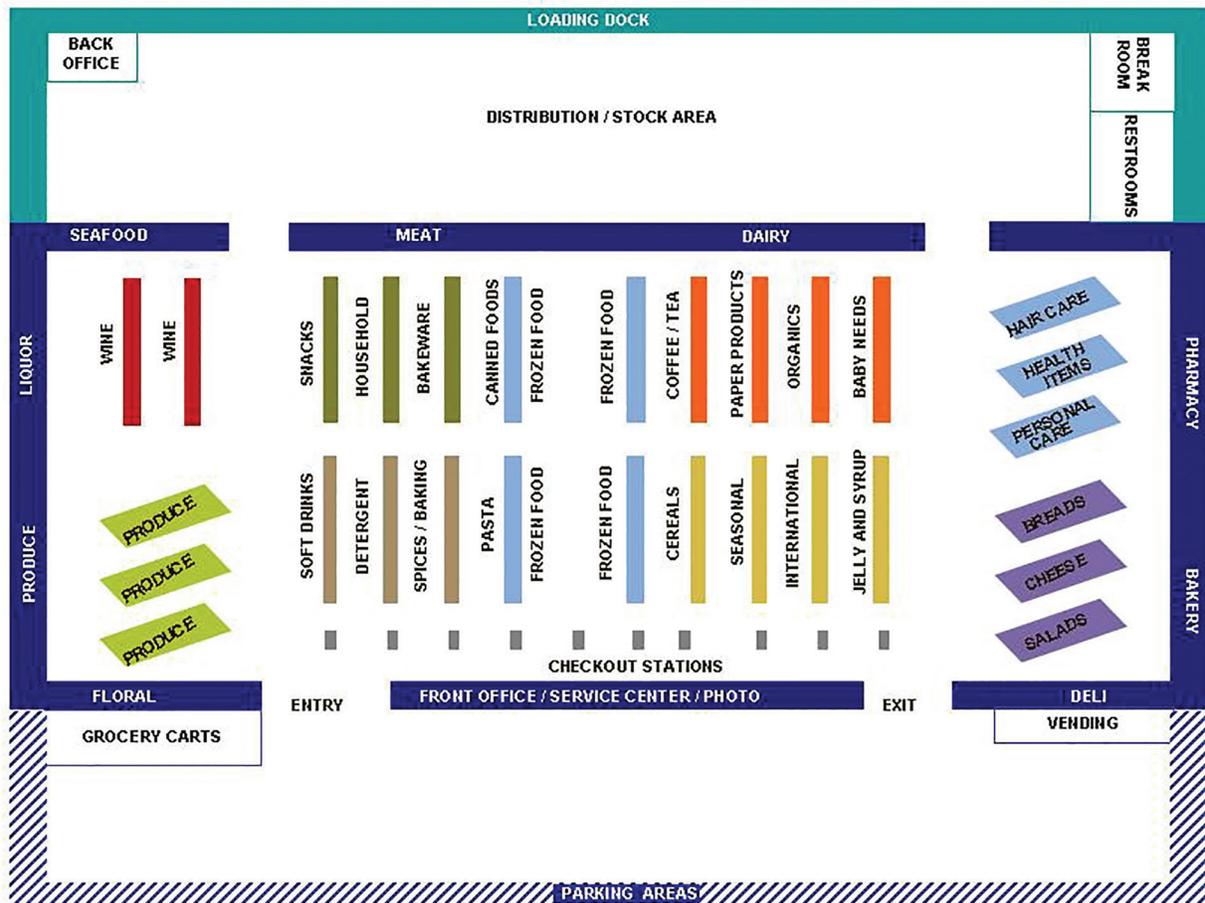
How to Map Your Worksite

1. **Diagram the workplace.** Draw an outline of the worksite, indicating key areas where people are likely to be working or socializing such as the front end, parking lot, break room, or smoking areas.
2. **Place a circle where every worker is usually stationed and write in their names.** Identify the activists, non-activists, and anti-union workers. Different symbols or colors for each of these categories may be used.
3. **Indicate stand out members.** These might be influential people, department heads, or informal leaders. Sometimes they are stewards, often they are not.
4. **Find the weak links.** Identify areas where the network must make extra effort to bring all members on board with the strategy. This may include members who are shy as well as the areas where new hires are placed.
5. **Mark where managers are usually stationed and their typical path through the store.** Mark those who are well liked, those who may be sympathetic (former members perhaps) and those who are anti-union.

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Using the Map

1. **Look at the map.** The workplace map can help to highlight how people are already organized and how communications naturally take place.
2. **Find natural leaders who already exist in every workplace.** Note areas where you will need to recruit more leadership as well as where your strongest leaders are.
3. **Identifying key communicators should now be easy.** Recognize that workers tend to stick up for those who are close to them, and ask those natural leaders to take on the responsibility of speaking with their social or work group.
4. **Mapping is an ongoing process.** Once a map is established, worksite coordinators should be asked to help keep the map current. **NOTE:** A *diagram of the supermarket layout below is in the Take Away section.*



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RECRUITING CONTRACT ACTION TEAM MEMBERS

Involving members is a key to building worksite networks. Your team should reflect the make-up of the members. A good balance by department, shift, type of job, age, gender, race, ethnic background, seniority, etc., will ensure that the team will be effective in reaching all members. Here are a few ways to recruit new activists to become worksite coordinators and key communicators.

1. **Ask people directly.** It is not enough to ask for volunteers through a union newsletter, website, or bulletin board. The local union rep should go over lists of members and identify workers who might be willing to take on certain tasks. Whenever possible, someone they know and respect at work should ask them to help.
2. **Involve new people.** This is a good opportunity to identify and develop new worksite activists and to share the workload. Try to identify new member, to take on a few tasks, not just the same few members who helped last time.
3. **Assure recruits that they will have the backup and support they need.** Members are more likely to agree to take on a task if it is not too big and if they feel they'll be supported.
3. **Tap into the natural social groups in the workplace.** Find out where people congregate, who with, and when. Identify union supporters and ask for their help first. This is called "mapping" and there are ideas on how to map a grocery store at the end of this section of the guide.
4. **Look for leadership qualities.** It is better to find the right people now than it is to remove the wrong people later.

GETTING MEMBERS READY

Never underestimate the power of our union when we talk to each other face-to-face at work.

Sharing Information

Sharing information about the issues we face together is a vital part of our campaign strategies. The reason is simple: members are more willing to get involved in their union contract campaign if they understand the issues and how their participation contributes to winning a good contract.

We have to be able to talk about the issues, find out what members' questions and concerns are, and respond to them. This can be done through newsletters, flyers, and bulletin board notices but the most effective way to reach members and get them involved is to talk with them individually using the one-on-one communication network.

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Communicating

Why is a one-on-one communication important? Because it personalizes our union and helps members see the UFCW as their union. One-on-one communication allows for every member to be contacted and educated on issues and to have an opportunity to offer their ideas or ask questions. It means that the union leaders, staff, and members can talk with each other face-to-face and one at a time about important issues and, in the process, encourage members to get involved.

Meeting with Contract Action Team

Direct contact with local union staff increases members' confidence in their campaign and gives union leaders and staff another way to get an accurate reading of membership attitudes and priorities. In addition to the rep's regular store visits, the rep should lead two important meetings at the onset of the contract campaign—one with the worksite coordinators and are with the key communicators.

Contract Action Team Meetings Led by Union Rep

Meet with: Worksite Coordinators (WCs)

Purpose: Opportunity for WCs to meet each other to go over the strategy of the campaign, the logistics of setting up a communication network, to share ideas about types of activities members would participate in.

Materials Distributed to WCs:

1. Timeline
2. Contract Action Team Network chart
3. Contact list of key communicators
4. Contact list of members
5. Members' comments
6. Worksite map
7. Flyers

Location: Off worksite at convenient location. Provide child care. Provide non-alcoholic drinks or light snacks.

Duration: Allow 2 hours.

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Frequency: Once, at the beginning of the campaign.

Meet with: Key Communicators (KCs)

Purpose: Outline strategy of campaign. Train KCs for one-on-one communication. Check KCs access to the internet.

Materials distributed to SCs:

1. Campaign timeline
2. Contract Action Network chart
3. Contact list of members
4. Members' comments
5. Website flyer
6. Flyers

Location: On worksite during breaks or between shifts. Provide non-alcoholic drinks or light snacks.

Duration: Allow 30 minutes

Frequency: Once, at each worksite

NOTE: *All materials for each of these meetings are available in the Take Away section of this guide.*

Throughout the campaign, union reps should continue to keep in touch with members not only through store visits, but by phone, e-mail, text messaging, printed materials.

Phone or Text Tree

We can call or text members to quickly communicate a message, an action, or ask an opinion of a high percentage of members. **Phone or text trees are most effective when one-on-one contacts have been made in person first, so workers know the caller.** Here's how to have an effective phone or text tree as part of your communication network:

1. Get accurate phone or text numbers. When you collect telephone numbers, ask "What number should we call or text you on if we have to get your immediate attention?" This will make the system more efficient and reduce frustrations.
2. Set up a phone or text tree structure assigning names to each caller and recipient.
3. Try out the system before an emergency hits so you can identify and resolve problem areas.

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E-Mail

E-mail is an essential part in building an informed and involved membership in the grocery store. Each member organizer should build their list of contacts in the workplace and include names, telephone numbers, home address, and home e-mail. **Always ask for an e-mail address.**

Printed Materials

Throughout the bargaining campaign, your local will likely create a number of different kinds of printed materials such as, stickers, buttons, handbills, pledge cards, postcards, door hangers, yard signs and picket signs. Use UFCW logos, fonts, and colors throughout the campaign. UFCW members' faces should be featured on every possible piece of material.

The Worksite Coordinator should keep the union bulletin board updated. Nothing shows the union as “out of touch” as a bulletin board with outdated materials. A Contract Action team member may be assigned to keep all union bulletin boards up to date.

The flyer features the following text and graphics:

- Header: **STAY INFORMED — STAND TOGETHER — FIGHT BACK at WWW.GROCERYWORKERSUNITED.ORG**
- Main headline: **WE are POWERFUL when we SPEAK TOGETHER**
- Text: 2006-2007 marks the start of a new retail food bargaining cycle. This cycle will affect the contracts of more than 400,000 UFCW members across the U.S. and Canada. We all work in the same industry—many of us for the same employers. Those employers come to the bargaining table with a national agenda to ratchet down wages and benefits.
- Text: **We need to stand together, 400,000 strong, to bargain for better contracts for UFCW members in the grocery industry throughout North America.**
- Section: **Stay Informed**
You'll be able to get the latest news and updates on our new website: www.groceryworkersunited.com. Also featured on the website:
 - Financial info about your companies;
 - The truth about the "Wal-Mart Threat";
 - Video, flyers, other multimedia, and lots more.
- Section: **Stand Together**
We all have a stake in what happens in each contract across the U.S. and Canada. Contracts in **Portland, Eugene, St. Louis, or Southern California** directly affect contracts in Boston, Houston, and Minneapolis.
- Text: Our employers come to the bargaining table with a national agenda—and they want to keep workers apart and unable to bargain nationally.
- Text: **They know that we are powerful when we speak together.**
- Text: **STAY INFORMED! STAND TOGETHER! FIGHT BACK!**
- Logo: **UFCW** A VOICE for working America
- Footer: **For more information, please visit the website at www.groceryworkersunited.org.**

Callout boxes highlight:

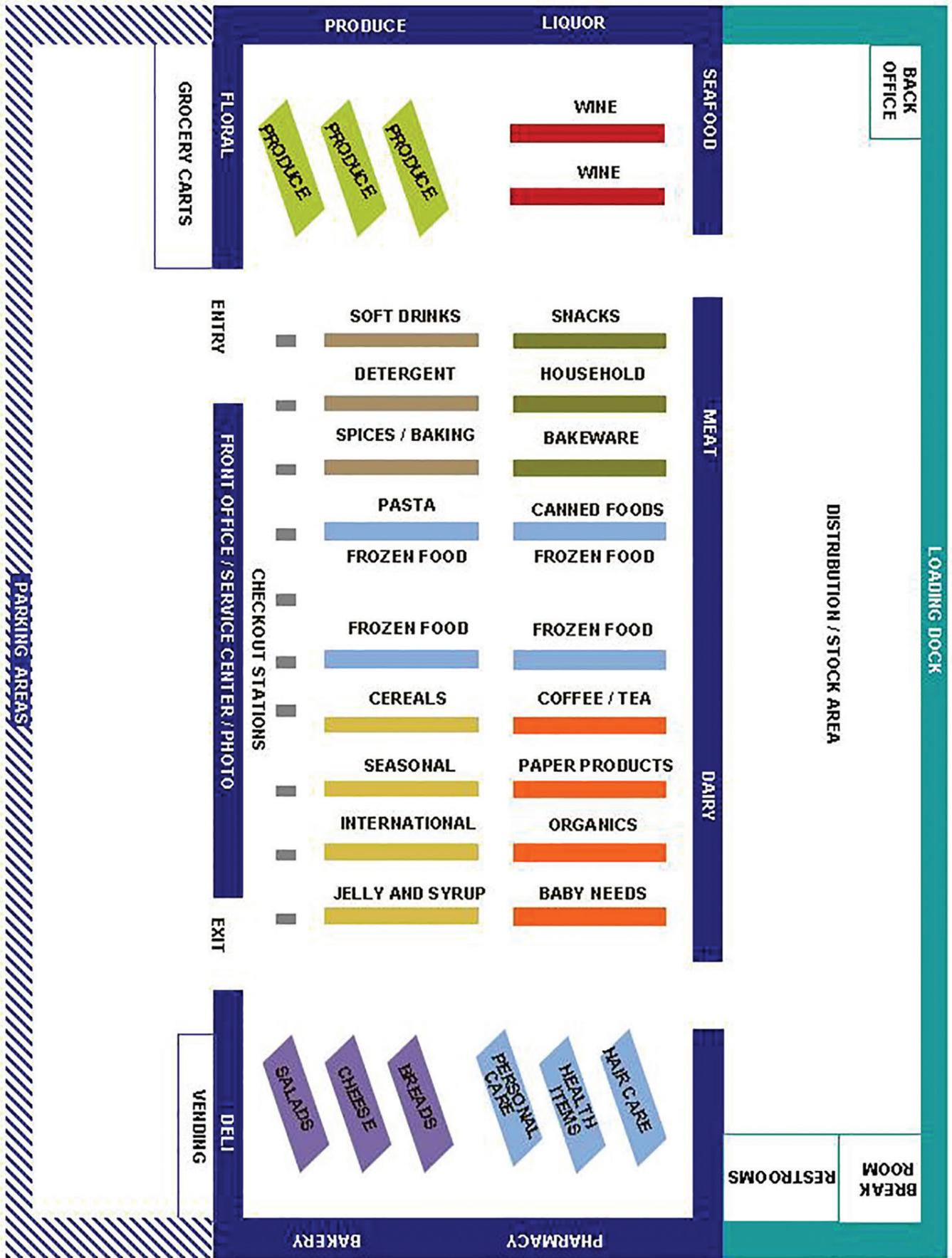
- Use UFCW logo and fonts** (pointing to the UFCW logo and header text)
- Feature members' faces** (pointing to the photos of three workers)

CONTRACT ACTION NETWORK

Face-to-Face Communication Tips

Hearing what union members are saying will allow us to target our message, end rumors and to understand their areas of concern during the bargaining campaign.

1. **Decide whether it is best to approach a particular co-worker face-to-face or to get one of their friends to help you.** With some people, involving a friend makes them feel more comfortable and also creates a positive kind of peer pressure. Other workers may not feel comfortable talking honestly in front of other people.
2. **Explain the purpose of the conversation.** For example, information about the campaign you need to relay, an action that involves their participation, etc.
3. **Give the co-worker a chance to ask questions or voice concerns.** Instead of jumping in to answer each question or objection, ask another question so you can learn more. For example, “What’s a reason for that?” or “How would you like to see the schedule changed?”
4. **When you do respond, emphasize your common ground, not your differences.** For example, if you are asking a co-worker to come to a demonstration and she says, “I’d love to but I really don’t have the time,” don’t respond with a lecture about union solidarity. Instead, start with something like, “I know what you mean. I know what it’s like to manage your work hours and take care of a family.”
5. **If your co-worker is cooperative, let them know what they can do to help.** Invite them to a meeting, ask them to contribute and talk to their friends about our union and ask them to find out more facts about a problem they mentioned to you.
6. **If your co-worker is not supportive, leave the door open for more discussion.** Promise to get back to them with more information on a problem they raised and follow up on your promise.
7. **If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t guess.** Tell your co-worker you will try to get the answer for them, or, if possible, get them to come with you to find out from someone who knows.



Contact List of Worksite Coordinators

Union Rep:

Name: <i>A. Sample</i>		Worksite: <i>Albertson's 101</i>
Home: <i>321.4567</i>	Cell: <i>321.5678</i>	Email: <i>asample@yahoo.org</i>
Name:		Worksite:
Home:	Cell:	Email:
Name:		Worksite:
Home:	Cell:	Email:
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Home:	Cell:	Email:

Contact List of Worksite Coordinators

Worksite Coordinator:		Worksite:
Name: <i>A. Sample</i>		Department: <i>Front End, Day</i>
Home: <i>321.4567</i>	Cell: <i>321.5678</i>	Email: <i>asample@yahoo.otg</i>
Name:		Department:
Home:	Cell:	Email:
Name:		Department:
Home:	Cell:	Email:
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Home:	Cell:	Email:

Contact List of Members

Key Communicator:		Worksite:
Name: <i>A. Sample</i>		Dept./Shift: <i>Front End</i>
Home: <i>321.4567</i>	Cell: <i>321.5678</i>	Email: <i>asample@yahoo.otg</i>
Name:		Dept./Shift:
Home:	Cell:	Email:
Name:		Dept./Shift:
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Members Comments

Key Communicator:

Worksite:

Name: *A. Sample*

Contact Date/Time: *2/3/15, 10:00 a.m.*

Comments/Questions/Concerns: *I loved the button day action. How can I get my church involved?*

Name:

Contact Date/Time:

Comments/Questions/Concerns:

Contract Action Network Phone Tree

Worksite:

Worksite Coordinator:

| Key Communicator |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Member | Member | Member | Member | Member |
| Member | Member | Member | Member | Member |
| Member | Member | Member | Member | Member |
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