Overcoming Objections to Membership

The Power of the Organizing Conversation
AN ORGANIZING CONVERSATION...

- Creates opportunities
- Establishes or strengthens personal relationships
- Draws out information that advances the union’s goals
- Provides information that builds support for the union
- Moves the unit member to take action that builds the union
DURING AN ORGANIZING CONVERSATION WE...

- Tell our own union story
- Inspire our colleagues to join us to take action in support of the union
- Assess support for the union
- Identify fellow leaders
- Inoculate against attacks on the union
- Practice the 80/20 Rule!
BUT... IT SOUNDS SO INTIMIDATING!

- We are all Organizers in our worksites
- We often have Organizing Conversations without realizing it
- Organizing Conversations are not hard, but they are deliberate – they have purpose and goals
- We make them a priority because we make our union a priority
- They can happen everywhere – in the breakroom, at the parking lot, at the café!
- As long as we are conscious and clear about our motive, we can have successful Organizing Conversations
- They are one-on-one, personal, and non-combative
- Anyone can have an Organizing Conversation! It’s as simple as ISAHUEY!

LET’S LEARN HOW!
The Anatomy of an Organizing Conversation

ISAHUEY!
[I] INTRODUCTION -

- Who are you?
- Why do you want to talk?
(Elicit their values and purposefully share your own) -

- (Elicit their values and purposefully share your own)
- (80% Listen/20% Talk)

Share your story, ask questions and prompt reflection

- “Why did you become an educator?”
- “What do you love about this work?”
- “How did you come to be here?”
- “What are you most excited about for this school year?”

NEA New Educator Campaign. 2018
[A] AGITATE -

▪ Validate their issues
  ▪ “I understand that.”
  ▪ “How does that make you feel? Is that frustrating?”
  ▪ “What is the impact on you? Your students? Your family?”
[H] HOPE -
Vision of the union/Plan to win -
- Why is the UNION the solution?
- What can we collectively do together to fix the problem?
“Clearly, these issues aren’t going to change on their own…it’s time for people like you who really care to start leading a change. The longer we wait, the worse it gets. What’s the impact of doing nothing?”
[E] EDUCATE -

- Explain what’s being done (or what can be done) to address or work on these issues. Educate them about the union, such as: mission, vision, purpose, dues, victories, benefits, etc.
[Y] YOUR ASK FOR COMMITMENT

Call the question/Make the ask -

- Don’t beat around the bush: Ask a Yes or No question!
  - Potential members: “Will you join the only association fighting for educators and our students?”
  - Members/ Supporters: Give them assignments.
    - “With your help, we can make a change…but we can’t do it without you.”
    - “Are you ready to take action to move a positive change forward?” (e.g.—meet again to continue discussion, join the union, sign a pledge card committing to further action, etc.)
What does an Organizing Conversation look like?

Modeling an Organizing Conversation
So... *that’s* what I was afraid of?
Role Play! Practicing the Art of an Organizing Conversation
Overcoming Objections to Membership

A-A-R: Affirm-Answer-Redirect
Let them know you’re listening, you understand, and their feelings are valid. Your new colleagues may be scared to speak up or upset by what they’ve heard.

Many have grown up without unions and have internalized the negative misconceptions about unions.

Don’t get mad at them—validate and educate them.
[A] ANSWER -

- Give a truthful, concise answer to the question.
- Do not be evasive or your entire message will be lost.
- If there is a grain of truth to the message, say that up front.
- If you don’t know the answer, don’t guess. Tell them you’ll find out and get back to them. Make sure you follow through, to maintain trust.
Once you’ve answered the question, don’t get bogged down in too much back-and-forth about it.

Instead, be ready with a question that brings the conversation back to your message.
Practicing the Art of the A-A-R

Pair Share & Debrief
Tips and Pointers of Effective One-on-One Organizing Conversations
Tips and Pointers of Effective One-on-One Organizing Conversations

- Listen 80%/Speak 20%
- Slow down
- Don’t interrupt
- Don’t sell
- Don’t fish
- Avoid distractions
- Be comfortable with silence
- Follow up: “How?” “When?”
- Avoid transactions
Remember:
Organizing Conversations build sustainable, transformative relationships.