

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!

[1] INTRODUCTION -

- Who are you?
- Why do you want to talk?



[S] STORY/ISSUES

(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?”



[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?



[U] URGENCY -

- “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



Debrief

So... **that's** what I was afraid of?



Role Play! **Practicing the Art** **of an Organizing** **Conversation**

Pair Share & Debrief



Overcoming Objections to Membership

A-A-R: Affirm-Answer-Redirect

[A] AFFIRM -

- 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.



[R] REDIRECT -

- 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

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- 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.**



