

RESEARCH

The success or failure of an organizing campaign depends on a variety of factors: hard work or laziness, the personality of the organizer, good luck or bad luck.

But, in the long run, the unions which have had the most organizing success have been those that researched and planned their campaigns most carefully. A prerequisite for an intelligent plan is research. Before the local can plan, it must know as much about everyone involved in the campaign as it can possibly find out.

By choosing the target to be organized, the local union has already begun its research. But now, with a specific target, the organizer must become a good detective. Research is the gathering of information. Before the union and the organizer can begin to plan the campaign effectively, they need to know:

1. More about the employer than his accountant.
2. More about the workers than they know about themselves.
3. Whether they will be facing competition from another union or an association. Some of the IATSE's traditional competitors have been the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, and the Carpenters Union. If a competitor is involved, you must develop a thorough understanding of this competitor.

Research has two important components. The first is getting the information; the second is recording it. It must be written down and put in order so that it can be used by the organizer effectively throughout the campaign. Good files and records must be kept right from the start.

In researching the employer, the employees and the competition, the following points are of maximum importance.

The employer:

1. Do you have all the information possible?
2. Do you have a complete labor history?
3. Do you know who is running the business?
4. Do you know with whom you will have to deal?
5. Do you know everything possible about the workings of the business?
6. Do you know everyone connected with or having an interest in the business?
7. Do you know how the employees are treated?
8. Wages?
9. Hours?
10. Fringe benefits?
11. Do you know enough?

The employees:

1. How many of them are there?
2. Where are they?
3. When are they at work?
4. How educated are they?
5. What is their general background?
6. Ethnic differences?
7. Sex?
8. Age?
9. Special problems?
10. Do they like unions?
11. Have you spotted any leaders among them?

The competition:

1. Is there another union, association, or company-front hiding in the woodwork?
2. What do you know about the union opposition?
3. Can you compete with them?
4. Do you have copies of their organizing material?
5. Do you know what wages and benefits they have achieved elsewhere?
6. Where will the Central Labor Council stand?

Once you have chosen your target and done your research, you are ready to make a preliminary plan. If you have done the research well, you will already have begun to formulate that plan in your mind.

Remember, once you get into the campaign, you've got a lot of the union interested. It is seldom a good idea to start anything you can't finish.

Right here is the last chance to change your mind. The decision to go ahead depends on the research. The success of the campaign depends on how you use that research in developing a plan and following through with it.