

INTERNAL ORGANIZING

OREGON LABOR LAW CONFERENCE-2018



Solidarity, June 30, 1917. The Hand That Will Rule the World—One Big Union.

OVERVIEW

- Quick History of American Labor Movement
- Evolution of Representation
- Practical Application
- Exercise



QUICK HISTORY

- The US labor movement roots go back to the mid 1700's.
- First recorded strike is the journeyman tailors' union in NY, in reaction to a wage reduction.
- Craft unions and skilled trades unions began to grow and flourish.
- This paved the way for other industrial unions to form.



THE MOVEMENT

Throughout the 19th and 20th century, unionized, American workers fought for and won basic rights and protections*.

Achievements include:

- Work place safety
- Living wages
- Pensions
- 40 hour work week
- Health insurance
- Industry-wide standards
- Apprenticeship programs



*primarily for white men.

AND... Solidarity



DECLINE OF UNIONS

**Union Membership
Percent of All U.S. Workers
1948 to 2010**



Why?

Laws were enacted to break unions

Bosses actively worked to break the unions

The economy changed

Workers got complacent/
hopeless

SERVICE VS ORGANIZING MODEL OF REPRESENTATION IN CURRENT UNIONS

1. Service Model = Transaction



2. Organizing Model = Transformational



	Organizing Model	Service (or Business) Model
Attitude toward employer	Defending members is most important.	Good relationship with management is most important.
Attitude toward members	Inclusive. Tries to reflect workforce in composition of union leadership.	Exclusive. Little turnover in leadership. Suspicious of newcomers.
Grievance handling	Tries to involve all members in the department.	Tries to settle without involvement of members.
Settling grievances	Make immediate supervisor settle by showing solidarity of workers.	Settle at highest level with company or through arbitration.
Selection of stewards	Election by co-workers.	Appointment by union leadership.
Bargaining	Large bargaining committee, constant flow of information to members.	Small committee, negotiations often kept secret until a settlement is reached.
Strategy and tactics	Encourage initiative and creativity of members.	Reluctant to involve members in bringing pressure on employer.
Organizing the unorganized	Union represents all workers - organized and unorganized. In a constant state of organizing.	Unwilling and unable to organize. feels threatened by newly organized.
Members view of the union	Take personal responsibility for success or failure of the union.	An insurance policy or a "third party" to call on when they have a problem.



WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN REALITY?

Scenario:

You have a unit of 500 workers. You want to increase membership by 10% (50 workers) .


How do you do that in a service model union?

1. Call or meet with all 50 people
2. Talk about what the union can do for them and why they should want to be a member
 - Dues are tax deductible.
 - Union members get cheaper car insurance and discounted Blazers Tickets.
 - If they ever get in trouble at work, they are going to be glad that they have a union!

Does this method build power for workers?



HOW IS SERVICE MODEL PROBLEMATIC

- It's inefficient.
 - It creates a whole system that is outside of the workers.
 - The power of the union is not the staff or lawyers, it's the power of the people that do the work, working together.
 - Staff's job is not to fix the problem directly (many times you can't), it's to empower, support, train and challenge the workers to fix their own problems.
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THE ORGANIZING MODEL

Example: OHSU Nurses

