USW NextGen Playbook

Building the future now:
How to start a strong and sustainable NextGen committee.



UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
DISTRICT 3


UNITED
NEXT
GEN
STEELWORKERS

WELCOME TO THE NEXTGEN FAMILY!

We're so happy to have you.

As the landscape of work shifts, it's more urgent than ever to support and develop the next generation of union activists and leaders.

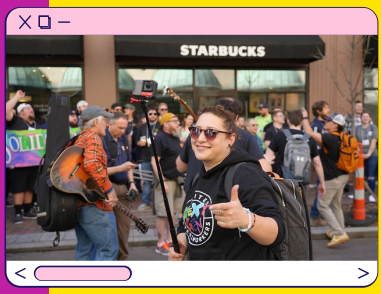
The NextGen program helps build real connection, skills and leadership among young and new members. It's not just about bringing youth in, it's about showing them the union is for them, with them and led by them.

This playbook is a quick guide to help you set up a NextGen committee at your local union.





THE MISSION



So, you've decided to create your own NextGen Committee... Now what?

Step 1 Recruit members

Step 2 Set a meeting time and place

Step 3 Choose a starting point

Step 4 Profit (just kidding)











RECRUITING MEMBERS

Who can I recruit?

- Coworkers that you have built a friendship – use these people!
- New hires
- Like-minded people

How can I get them to be a part of the NextGen Committee?

- Simply ask them to get involved. Explain what NextGen is, sell them on the idea.
- Be consistent in getting the word out to your coworkers. Follow up with them.
- Tell them your ideas and ask them for some of their own ideas.
- Tell them about all the good things the committee is doing or your plans.
- Inform them of all the excellent ideals that the union upholds.

Remember: a committee only needs 2 people.

GOALS

After recruiting members, you will come back fired up with a ton of ideas. Remember to stay calm and set some goals.

- Figure out what direction you want your NextGen Committee to go.
- Come up with goals starting from small to large – do not take on too much from the start.
- Talk to your executive board about your ideas, use their feedback.







PROJECT PLANNING 101

STEP 1

Prioritize your first project/event

Decide on what your project is going to be. For example, if you want to fund raise for a charity, decide on your charity of choice.

STEP 2

Brainstorm your attack plan

Do you want to donate cash money, items, time? What is the goal? If money, how will you raise the money – by selling tickets to an event? Auctions? Soliciting companies?

STEP 4

Work with other committees

Do you want to involve other people? Ask for assistance from your Executive Board or Servicing Rep

STEP 3

Figure out the logistics

If you're hosting an event, where are you going to hold it? Auctioning off items? Who are you asking to donate? How will you collect money?

STEP 5

Host the event

Host your event. Make sure to take pictures, write thank you letters to sponsors, send the money to the charity, etc.

STEP 6

Debrief

After your event, write an AAR (After Action Report). Explain the actions and experiences. How effective was the event? What are things to make the process better?

GET TOGETHER

- Hold a meeting at your union hall or a local hangout (e.g. pool hall, favourite restaurant, etc.)
- Explain to everyone what you want to do with the committee.
- Ask for feedback and decide what direction the committee is going to take. *Examples: charity work, fundraising, trainings and new hire orientation.*
- Most committees are more effective when people's voices are heard. Be a leader, not a dictator. Most decisions can be made by doing a vote and majority rules.





COME UP WITH A PLAN

Once you decide what direction your group is going, come up with an attack plan.

For example, if it's fundraising for a charity:

- Decide on the type of charity.
- How will the money be raised? e.g., selling tickets, auctioning off something, or even asking for donations.
- Work with your Local Executive Board on setting up a NextGen account.



KEEP ON KEEPING ON

Keep doing the great things your committee agrees on. DON'T GIVE UP.

- Continue bringing in new members. Eventually, some of the more seasoned members will realize what you are doing.
- Let the seasoned members get involved and embrace them. At the end of the day, NextGen is about bridging the gap. They have a lot of knowledge.
- Take your goals and begin making progress toward some of the bigger ones.
- Remember, start small and work your way towards bigger goals. Rome wasn't built in a day.





BE AN ACTIVIST

Try to educate members about the ideas that the union stands for and represents.

- Become a teacher and inform them about the basic structure of our union, your unit, the local, our District, the International. Share what grievers are, what is the grievance procedure.
- Inform them of all the committees they can be involved with: Emergency Response Team, political action, Women of Steel, Veterans of Steel, human rights & equity, organizing, health and safety, National Steel Pride Working Group, National Anti-Racism Committee, National Indigenous Committee and so much more!





REFLECT AS A GROUP

After you meet, take time to talk about your project.

- Write an AAR (After Action Report) and explain the actions and experiences that were effective as well as the problems or issues you encountered. Then, talk about how to make the process better.
- Develop a plan regarding how you may continue to build and expand your committee.
- Try to accomplish more with your committee than you have in the past by remaining engaged and never stopping.







GOING FORWARD

Here are some ideas to help you.

- Connect with other committees in your local or area such as Women of Steel, political action, Veterans of Steel (VOS), health & safety committees, human rights, SOAR (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees), etc.
- Host a PowerPoint party and dive into union histories or the labour movement today.
- Meet people where they're at and let people's talents shine. Not everyone wants to be hosting events or be at the front line of a protest.
- Find fun ways to get people interested in the labour movement like host a movie night about unions, book clubs, make playlists, follow and share social media accounts.
- Continue recruiting members, even after you've established a committee. More hands make light(er) work.
- Connect with your MLA and MP to advocate for workers' rights and government protections.

MEETINGS

Once you've started talking to people about NextGen and your vision, it's time to put it into practice.

Some friendly reminders about making effective meetings:

Make meetings accessible:

- Rotate times or locations.
- Consider childcare needs.
- Offer virtual options.
- And yes, always snacks. *We can't organize a movement on an empty stomach.*

Make meetings efficient:

- Create and share an agenda.
- Facilitate the meeting but encourage participation.
- Stay on track *(a.k.a. manage your time).*
- Create and assign actionable items with deadlines.
- Distribute meeting minutes.







STUCK? NOT SURE WHAT TO DO?

Feel free to ask questions!

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