

Creating Connection and a Union Presence at Work

Create listening opportunities

- Create a simple, confidential survey to gather members' opinions and information on health hazards, supervisor behaviour, training needs, etc. Summarize and report the results back to the membership, with some questions on follow-up actions which might work for the members.
- Hold informal "kitchen table" conversations with members at lunch time or before/after shifts to find out what they think about wider social issues, like childcare, policing, the economy, and so on.

Reach out as a steward

- Give each member in your area a business card (home-made is fine) with your name, "Steelworker Steward", and contact information on it.
- On their first day of work, meet all new members who start in your area:
 - Introduce yourself and welcome them to the workplace.
 - Offer to answer any questions they might have.
 - Invite him or her to join you for a lunch or coffee break, to meet some other co-workers.
- Take time to get to know something about members' interests and lives outside of work.

Share information

- Work with local-union leadership to create Communication Action Teams or to re-energize existing ones.
- Encourage your local union to create a web page, newsletter, leaflet, or group email list to share news.
 - Go to www.usw.ca/members/local-union-resources/digital/laborweb for ideas for free web templates.
- Every USW local union receives regular mailings from the union's national office, including posters, conference registration forms, and other information. Post these on union bulletin boards or make copies to hand out
- Share USW information you find or receive, about scholarships, upcoming courses, conferences, as well as news and success stories



- Negotiate the right to one or more USW bulletin boards, and keep them up to date with USW information and logos.
- Use and post visuals, like charts of the different workplaces in the local, the number of members, the kinds of jobs they do.

Establish a new-member orientation

- Encourage the local union to develop a formal “new member orientation” program.
Request new-member kits from your district office or the USW Canadian National Office.

Show USW’s logo

- Produce and distribute USW buttons, mugs, t-shirts, posters, postcards, address books, day books, jackets, hats, anything with the union logo. You could gear items to a local campaign or issue. The district office can suggest unionized suppliers, or check out the on-line shop at www.usw.ca/member/store.

Organize social events outside work

- Encourage members to suggest social gatherings outside of work time that would be open to and comfortable to all members, such as an amateur night, theatre group, movies at noon, dancing/discotheque, sports team, etc.
- Encourage the local to organize seasonal activities, depending on the traditions of your members, and where you are. Ideas could include a sugarbush party, cricket, a horseshoe throw, soccer, picnics, fishing trip, photo contest, corn roast, bowling, family outings of different kinds.

Organize social events at work

- Encourage the local to organize a barbeque or dinner, noon debate, blood clinic, support to a food bank drive, support to a women’s shelter.