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Ideas for a more effective committee

- Avoid pitfalls
- Building campaigns around health and safety issues
- Using bargaining techniques to resolve health and safety issues
- Submitting contact proposals to the bargaining committee
- Networking



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3 Serious Deviations from Best Practices

Pitfall 1: The Deep, Dark Hole

A union-management committee might have good discussions regarding health and safety problems and even discussions of possible solutions that would address identified hazards. But if nothing changes, if there are no real resolutions to identified problems coming out of these discussions, then the joint committee is little more than the deep, dark hole where health and safety problems go; never to be heard from again and never being resolved.




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3 Serious Deviations from Best Practices

Pitfall 2: The Fix-it Committee

If a union-management committee's meetings primarily deal with lists of maintenance jobs (repairs, etc.) and a discussion of which were completed and arguments over which were not, that committee is missing the boat on many other significant aspects of health and safety and improving conditions in the workplace. Mechanical repairs are important, but they should be done routinely (not saved for committee meetings). Discussion of lists of pending repairs should not dominate union-management committee time and discussions.



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3 Serious Deviations from Best Practices

Pitfall 3: The Employer-dominated Committee

All Canadian jurisdictions prescribe committee members, and **they don't allow employers to:**

- Choose bargaining unit members to serve on these committees (nor ask for volunteers);
- Disband the committee; or
- Unilaterally set the agenda, run the committee meetings, determine the length and times of when the committee meets, etc.



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Group activity

Let's talk about the 3 pitfalls:

Are any of these pitfalls familiar to your committees?

Why might these pitfalls serve to decrease the effectiveness of a union-management safety and health committee?

How might a committee avoid any or all of these pitfalls?



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Health and Safety Campaigns



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Health & Safety Campaign Examples

- Elliot Lake held a wildcat strike that led to the passing of Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act, and also required amendments to the Canada Labour Code since their workplace was Federally regulated.
- **USW celebrates this historic victory but does not recommend holding a wildcat strike!**
- Our Stop the Killing and Raising the Bar campaigns continue



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Come by Chance Local 9316



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National Steel Car Local 7135



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Issue in your workplace

Group discussion:

Identify an issue in your workplace and develop a campaign to draw attention to it with the goal of resolving the issue.

A campaign can be something as simple as wearing a button/pin, the same colour shirt, signs, distributing flyers, a petition, etc.

What type of campaign would you use and how would you build support within the membership?



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Using Bargaining Techniques



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What is the committee already doing?

How is your committee currently attempting to address health and safety issues?

Aren't written recommendations an example of bargaining?



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Bargaining Techniques

- Research around the issue (can include member surveys)
- Communicate ideas to Executive and membership to get support
- Provide clear demands/solutions and prioritize when more than one demand
- Determine leverage needed to succeed in achieving goal



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Submitting Contract Proposals



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Focus on the issue

- You don't need to know how to write contract language, but you need to state the issue clearly and what is needed to resolve it.
- The negotiating committee will then draft the contract language around the information that you provide.



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Patience and Persistence

- I think that we all know you can't get everything you want in negotiations and that the members usually dictate the priorities either through surveys or with their votes on the contract.
- Prioritize your proposals and resubmit them as necessary.



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Networking



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Who should you network with?

- Your Local Union Executive
- Members in your local
- Your Staff Representative
- Other USW health and safety activists
- Health and safety activists from other unions
- Labour federations and Canadian Labour Congress
- Labour allies and activists



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How should you utilize your network?

- Ideas to resolve issues
- Support for a campaign
- Provide support to them when possible
- Share knowledge



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Why should we do all of this?



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Research shows these are best practices

There's research that explored the style and effectiveness of health and safety representatives with the results showing that what we've discussed has been the most successful method to represent the members health and safety concerns.



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Styles of H&S Representation:


Technical-legal approach – obsessive rule following behaviour

Knowledge activist approach – problem-solving and mobilization

- Current trend is to download all the responsibility on the individual – ignoring the social context/responsibilities -> “responsibilization”

A Hall, A Forrest, A Sears and N Carlin, “Making a Difference: Knowledge Activism and Worker Representation in Joint OHS Committees,” *Industrial Relations*, Summer 2006, Vol. 41 Issue 3, pp. 408-436 <http://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ir/2006-v41-n3-ir1448/014184ar.pdf>

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LOARC
A Labour / Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc. /
Academic Research Collaboration
https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/labour_show_academic_research_collaboration/loarc/

Styles of worker H&S representation
Technical legal
Knowledge activist

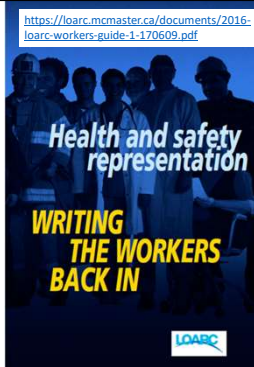
Research Article <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajim.22520>

Identifying knowledge activism in worker health and safety representation: A cluster analysis

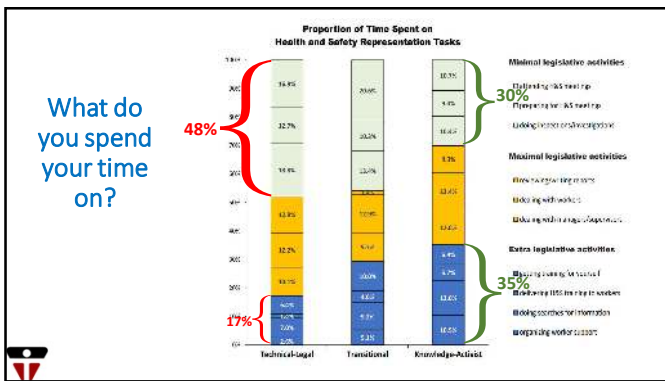
Alan Hall , John Oudyk, Andrew King, Syed Naqvi, Wayne Lewchuk

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<https://loarc.mcmaster.ca/documents/2016-loarc-workers-guide-1-170609.pdf>



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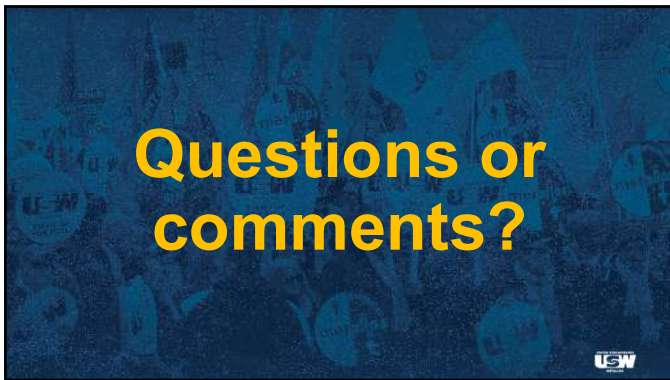
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10 Operating Principles:

- 1. Research
- 2. More than just meetings
- 3. Mobilize your influence
- 4. Listen to workers
- 5. Address authority
- 6. Build trust
- 7. Be assertive
- 8. Build solutions
- 9. Use inspections & minutes
- 10. Use the law strategically



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