FIGHTING TODAY for a BETTER TOMORROW

2018 Contract Campaign Manual
Sisters and Brothers of the APWU,

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service expires on September 20, 2018. Negotiations for a new contract will begin on June 26, 2018. The National union will be well-prepared for this critical battle. However, we cannot win a fair union contract solely by making persuasive arguments at the bargaining table.

The level of membership involvement, as well as our relationship with the public, will have a direct impact on how well we do in negotiations. In the last round of the 2015 negotiations, our Good Service! Good Jobs! Good Contract! Contract Campaign — along with the enthusiastic participation of so many local leaders and members — greatly contributed the positive outcome.

This 2018 Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow Contract Campaign Manual addresses the importance of a member-mobilization approach to winning power and building the strength of our union.

We thank the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), whose manual served as the basis for ours. In turn, the AFGE had adapted much of its guide from the SEIU’s Contract Campaign Manual.

This manual should be used as an important tool in building a member-driven contract campaign, capable of ensuring a good Collective Bargaining Agreement that advances our cause for workplace justice.

In Union Solidarity,

Mark Dimondstein
President
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Building Worker Power</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a Contract Campaign and Why Engage in One?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Have a Campaign?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a Contract Action Team?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Basics: Building a Campaign</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting an Objective</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Strengths &amp; Weaknesses</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Clear Target</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a Plan</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilizing Members</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounding Up Resources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Stronger: Building Organizational Power</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map Your Workplace(s) and Membership</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Your Workplace Leaders</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1 Organizing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting Potential Members Into the Union</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Organizing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shop Steward in the Role of Agitator and Mobilizer</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Internal and External Communication</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Communication</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Communication</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Allies</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrapping Up</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION: BUILDING WORKER POWER

As we progress further into the 21st century, postal workers are confronting significant challenges. How can we build our own power and triumph over unrelenting attacks by postal management, the corporations, and the politicians whose aim is to undermine and privatize the United States Postal Service? It is ironic but we, the APWU, must fight for the USPS to serve the people in order to accomplish our goals.

The 2015 round of bargaining showed how we have a fighting chance to achieve our goals. The Good Service! Good Jobs! Good Contract! campaign contributed to the National Negotiation Committee’s (NNC) ability to secure bargaining demands such as: wage increases, more job security, maintaining the no-layoff clause, creating a pathway to career employment eliminating, and in some cases limiting expansion of the Postal Support Employee (PSE) category.

The successful Stop Staples fight is another example of what is possible with member involvement. During these campaigns, members made their local and state unions stronger while accomplishing the union’s objectives. Part of the plan for strengthening the APWU is contained in this manual.

Campaigns Strengthen Collective Bargaining

A contract campaign is a method of fighting for change that is rooted in mobilizing union members. It requires engaging our members like never before, while at the same time reaching out to our numerous (and potential) allies for mutual support. This means broadening the way we think about the union’s relationship to management; extending our scope beyond grievances and unfair labor practices. With a contract campaign, the heart of bargaining is the rank-and-file member challenging the employer at the worksite and in the community.

Using the contract campaign approach means thinking about the union as an instrument to bring about significant changes, including not only a change in the relationship between the union member (and potential member) and the union, but also the union and its relationship to the Postal Service, and the Postal Service’s relationship and duties within the community.

This manual will take you – the reader – through the basics of a contract campaign.

We will break down the idea of a contract campaign into various components. You will probably conclude that much of what is written here can be applied to nearly any campaign, not just bargaining.
We encourage you to act on that conclusion, because the bottom line is that a contract campaign is not only about winning our bargaining demands — it is also about changing the relationship of the member with the union.

Some members treat union involvement as a spectator sport or an employment insurance policy for working people. In other words, since dues are vital for adequate representation and are paid like insurance premiums, some people view the process as a transaction that gives protection when something goes wrong on the job.

While the union does serve this function, the best perception of a union is not of a third-party organization that only provides individual service, but of a group of similarly situated individuals banding together to fight for common interests. Individuals in the union must be equipped and united so that the union can be considered a worthy advocate fighting on behalf of the shared interests of all workers represented.

We have often said, “The Union is You,” yet all too often members act as though the union is a few elected officers whose job is to do everything. We have to change that pattern or the union will fail. The union is all of us, operating like partners in the struggle, taking on different roles that contribute to achieving our collective objectives.
WHAT IS A CONTRACT CAMPAIGN AND WHY ENGAGE IN ONE?

When you think about the word “campaign,” you probably think about elections, because that is how the word is most commonly used. However, an election campaign is only one type of campaign.

A campaign is a concerted effort that aims to achieve a specific objective and becomes a priority focal point for an organization. They usually have a specific duration. In that sense, a campaign is not the same as the organization’s main mission or purpose.

If you think about campaigns as time-limited, concerted efforts to achieve a specific goal, then this approach can be used in any number of settings – organizing an unrepresented workforce, recruiting a wave of workers into an existing union, organizing to expand postal services, or mobilizing our members and allies in a collective bargaining fight.

*Stop Staples* is an example of an effective campaign. The purpose of the campaign – stopping the employer from giving postal jobs away – motivated dedicated activists and strategic leaders to fight for three years. While a campaign has many uses in the labor movement – and much of what you will read here is applicable to various settings – we will focus on building a campaign around collective bargaining. This is known as a “contract campaign.”

**Why Have a Campaign?**

Before we go too far it might be worth asking, “Why conduct a campaign at all, particularly at bargaining time?”

Traditional methods of collective bargaining are meeting with fewer and fewer positive results. Management has little interest in negotiating an agreement. So we must figure out what other vehicles can be used to pressure them.

In any negotiation, there are different interests at stake. Even with the best of intentions, they often clash. The willingness or unwillingness of one party or the other to fight for what they believe to be correct can make or break a negotiation.

In collective bargaining you are not negotiating with a friend, even if you happen to like the management team on the other side of the table. The two sides have different interests
that might overlap at certain points, but they are never identical. Make it clear through our actions what’s at stake, and that significant compromise by the other side is essential.

In developing a campaign, it is important to understand your strengths and weaknesses. The stronger our union, the more likely we will succeed. This doesn’t mean that internal weaknesses will stop us from organizing a campaign. To the contrary, a campaign can be an important tool for strengthening our organization as a whole.

**What is a Contract Action Team?**

In most traditional bargaining situations there is only a negotiating team. The APWU constitution specifies who is on the National Negotiation Committee (NNC) and these officers lead the negotiation process. When you organize a contract campaign, however, there is an additional component that needs to be put in place: the Contract Action Team (CAT).

The CATs are groups whose focus is on mobilizing the membership and conducting outreach to community-based organizations and the media. Part of their job is to set up volunteer committees in various workplaces. It is also their responsibility to communicate with the National Contract Campaign Committee (NCCC) to let headquarters know what the members are doing (so we can promote your efforts and the overall campaign).

**What Do CATs Do?**

First and foremost, CATs are the principal means of informing and mobilizing members around the contract campaign. So, the more members involved, the better! Here are a few examples of what CATs might do:

- Share flyers with updates about negotiations and upcoming activities.
- Establish a text messaging group, email list, or newsletter.
- Conduct outreach to potential community allies to explain what's going on in negotiations and why support is needed.
- Organize actions (e.g., T-shirt/sticker/button days or informational pickets) to publicize the issues.

Develop new ideas to build support for our goals to share with the NCCC.

Each CAT needs a coordinator. In order to be successful, the CAT coordinator’s primary focus (within the union) needs to be the CAT. This responsibility cannot be one of many other responsibilities. For that reason, we recommend that the local president appoint the coordinator and does not serve as the CAT coordinator. The coordinator will act as the liaison between the CAT and the local president, making sure that activities are in line with the national strategy and local/state goals. The president will make the decisions and guide the CAT in a fashion similar to directing the constitution, budget, or safety committee(s). The president should be able to rely on the CAT coordinator to make sure that campaign objectives are met and tasks are completed.

As we will discuss later, CAT activities need to be coordinated with the NCCC, who works directly with the NNC, so that the activities help with rather than distract from what is happening at the bargaining table.
THE BASICS: BUILDING A CAMPAIGN

This section of the manual will address what can be done and how to think about adding a campaign approach to the negotiation process. So, what’s involved in building a campaign?

- **Educating members on negotiation objectives:** It’s important to know from the beginning what you want to get out of the campaign. In other words, why are you doing this? The National Negotiation Committee (NNC) is responsible for setting bargaining objectives after reviewing resolutions and other input from members. Members and allies need to know what objectives the NNC has established and how to assist with achieving them on local, state, and regional levels.

- **Assessing our strengths and weaknesses:** Understanding what works and what does not work in the national, state and local, is vital. This allows us to plan and best use our resources.

- **Having a clear target(s) for actions:** Knowing who our friends and opponents are.

- **Developing a plan:** Working out a strategy to have a successful local/state contract campaign and an effective Contract Action Team (CAT).

- **Rounding up the resources:** Figuring out what is needed in order to get members and the community involved. Also, identifying what resources (either volunteers or materials) are needed to accomplish CAT goals.

- **Building internal organization:** Building our union’s capacity to mobilize members in order to win.

- **Building our internal and external communications:** Developing a solid line of communication between members, locals and state organizations, and the National, keeping everyone at all levels informed. Also reaching out to the public with a clear and consistent message.

- **Mobilizing the members:** Getting our members involved so that they know what this effort is and how it must be their own.

- **Developing allies:** Identifying organizations outside of the APWU that have a potential interest in our victory. This includes considering members of A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service (AGA).

- **Wrapping up:** Know when and how to close.
**Setting an Objective**

Before starting a campaign, have an idea of what you want to accomplish. As the saying goes, “Unless you know where you are going, then you will not know how to get there.”

In setting an objective, or a group of objectives, it is important to be concrete. So, while you can have a goal of conducting a good contract campaign, that alone doesn’t tell anyone very much.

To set objectives, you will need to know something about the strengths and weaknesses of your local/state, and have an idea of what opportunities and challenges you will face over the coming period. When preparing to conduct a contract campaign and build a CAT, it is useful to conduct a **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. This is a process where the local/state leadership looks at the union’s condition and makes choices based upon the results. In other words, don’t come up with objectives off the top of our heads, but instead think about the union’s needs. Setting objectives actually involves more than sharing bargaining goals with members and the public.

Let’s use an example. Suppose a local is 75% organized. Local leaders might decide this is a weakness that can, and should, be addressed through the contract campaign. So, an objective might be to increase local membership to 80% organized. This goal is very specific, and would be developed as a result of identifying an actual situation facing the union.

One objective of the National APWU leaders is for the majority of local/states to build CATs. With this in mind, the National is prepared to assist local/state officers in many capacities to facilitate the CATs’ creation as well as providing training and assistance to those teams once formed.

To summarize, the local leadership needs to develop a specific set of objectives to guide the local campaign. Developing the objectives should take place early in the process.

**Assessing Strengths & Weaknesses**

Putting special emphasis on assessing our strengths and weaknesses early in organizing a campaign is important. The campaign’s success depends on this foundational step being completed honestly and accurately. The Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu put it best:

> “It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.”

One weakness of the labor movement is failing to really understand ourselves and our opponents. Whereas management regularly tries to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the union – also assessing their own strengths and weaknesses – unions often operate on the basis of anecdotes and general information. We sometimes exaggerate the strengths and weaknesses of both ourselves and our opponents.

When we incorrectly assess the strengths of our union or management, we lose. As Mahatma Ghandhi said: “The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.”
In thinking about our strengths and weaknesses, ask the tough questions:

- What percentage of the bargaining unit(s) are union members?
- Was there a local/state CAT during the 2015 Contract Campaign? What worked and what didn’t work? Who is available for the 2018 Campaign?
- Who can be relied on in the local/state to complete tasks, or make sure tasks are completed?
- Who has experience with effectively mobilizing members?
- What can we afford to pay for?
- What other members should be asked to directly participate in the contract campaign? Consider experience and special skills of our bargaining unit members and their families and friends, whether or not they are active.

With regard to our opponents:

- What attitude has management generally taken toward the union when workers were mobilized?
- What resistance do we anticipate from management?
- Are there differences and tensions within management that could have an impact on the contract campaign?
- How is management viewed in the larger community?
- How popular is management with the bargaining unit employees? Does it vary significantly by worksite within the local/state?
Having a Clear Target

In the context of contract negotiations, having a clear target may seem like an obvious point, but it is not always that easy. Targets are identified with many different variables.

In any circumstance, it is important to identify the “face” of the opponent. This is applicable to any campaign, but let’s take negotiations as an example. When we refer to “management” we are speaking of a broad category that often includes a lot of people. Sometimes it is worth using that term, but more often than not “management” is too unfocused. It is useful, in other words, to describe or identify an individual or group of individuals who truly represent our opponents. For example, the NNC could determine that the target is the Postmaster General, the Board of Governors, or members of Congress. This makes it much easier for multiple local/state organizations to organize around a specific target.

The target, however, may not be an individual. It may be an issue we are trying to oppose. An example would be a privatization scheme. The “target” might be the individuals and organizations behind the privatization push, like the Heritage Foundation, or it might be the process of privatization itself. By making the target “privatization,” the aim is to make sure that people keep their eyes on the goal, which in this case is keeping and enhancing our national treasure – the public Postal Service.

Developing a Plan

Once strengths and weaknesses of the local/state and the opponent are identified, and objectives are established, you are in a position to develop a full-blown written plan (a “planning document”).

A plan or strategy outlines the course of action you are choosing to follow in order to accomplish the campaign’s objectives. A plan can be more or less comprehensive; it might be one or several pages. The type of questions it should answer include:
• What bargaining goals did the NNC establish and how can we design our local/state contract campaign to explain them?

• What are the priority goals and overall objectives that we wish to achieve through the local/state contract campaign? Are there any that resonate more with our membership?

• What activities will complement the campaign’s theme?

• Who are the APWU’s friends and who are our opponents?

• What steps do we need to take to achieve local/state campaign plan objectives?
  • In what order?
  • What is the timeline for implementing each step?
  • Who is responsible for implementing each step?

• What resources will we need and how will we obtain them? This is directly related to our priority goals, because there must be sufficient resources to dedicate to them. Pursuing many goals is understandable, but setting many goals without having enough resources makes achieving the goals practically impossible.

• At which points will we evaluate how things are going and make any necessary adjustments in the plan? When will we assess how well the steps we planned are being completed? A successful campaign includes making evaluations throughout the process; not just at the end.

These questions must be answered by the local/state union’s leaders. This can come as the result of a planning session, or it might be the result of polling the members/bargaining
unit employees. In either case, at some juncture there will need to be a leadership discussion. A plan should not be developed by one individual who then presents the plan to others for a vote. When that happens, it can often pass, but it ends up having little buy-in through the local/state. Therefore, make sure that the implications of the plan are understood and supported by many members.

Establishing who is responsible for various tasks is an important part of the plan. Otherwise, everyone can walk away from the planning meetings and only later realize that implementation has been left in the air. Therefore, you must make sure at the end of planning meetings that all decisions are reviewed and accountability established.

Mobilizing Members

To build a contract campaign, there must be coordination between the bargaining table and members in the field. The National Contract Campaign Committee (NCCC) facilitates this coordination. Actions taken in the field must serve to advance the NNC objectives. At the same time, the NNC and NCCC must know what’s going on in the field, including how members feel about negotiations and the contract campaign.

Mobilizing members and keeping them active and informed is principally the responsibility of the CATs. The CATs’ work must follow a plan with clear objectives and timelines.

The National will take the following steps to assist in mobilizing members:

- Establish a national-level contract campaign committee, which will coordinate the internal and public “campaign” aspect of our fight for a good contract.
- Gather data and member contact information to ensure effective two-way communication during the campaign.
- Set the theme for the campaign.
- Help establish CATs at the local/state levels; if possible, CATs should set up sub-committees, e.g., media, recruitment, etc., and remember to assign people who will be responsible.
- Share materials, including union gear, talking points and how-tos for CATs to use.
- Train Regional Campaign Liaisons to assist local/state CATs.

Local/state CAT recruitment: To establish your CAT, you will need to recruit members to participate. This is the first task and obviously it is essential. To begin, you will need a fairly clear idea of what will be involved for people who participate in a CAT and what they will be doing.

Think about some examples for tasks beforehand but remember that the local/state leadership, with input from the CAT and others, should set the basic direction of the campaign.

*Begin with where the members are at, not where you want them to be:* One of the dangers with any manual is that we can suggest things for people to do, but those suggestions may not correspond with what the members are prepared to do at this time.

What does this mean?
It means you must consider what members are generally prepared to do to express their differences with management.

- Have the members been willing to wear buttons or T-shirts? If not, do we know why and how to change that?
- Has your local ever organized an informational picket?
- Have the members ever handed out flyers to the public or to postal employees in the breakroom on an issue?
- Do the members (and potential members) generally care about contract negotiations?

The best strategy is to propose actions and activities which will garner the greatest amount of support and involvement. Actions should not be treated as a matter of principle. They should be treated as activities that help advance the campaign strategy.

**Test ideas:** If, for example, you have decided to have a button day, try to get an idea in advance of roughly how many people you expect to wear a button. Keep in mind that management is always watching to see whether there is real strength within the union or if we will bluster. If you do not have sufficient support to take an action at any given time, it’s better to hold off until you build strength than to proceed with an action that will have low participation.

Also, make sure the members understand the issues. Even with the CAT, which will tend to appeal to the most active and pro-union members, make sure all members understand our objectives, so that they can be comfortable, public advocates for our issues.
Tactical Choices: Tactics should advance a strategy or a plan. When you think about what should be done next, don't adopt a grab-bag approach. Local/state leaders must evaluate the tactics that have already been attempted and whether or not they have been successful.

Ask yourself what the members are prepared to do now. You and other leaders may be frustrated with management and how they are conducting negotiations, but are the members? You may also need to come up with a creative tactic (action) that members believe will actually influence management.

The overuse of a tactic can weaken its effectiveness. In one union, a group of workers marched on the Personnel Department to protest some unfair disciplinary actions. This step was completely unexpected and management was thrown for a loop. Management regrouped and proposed meetings to discuss the problem. The second time a group of workers went to Personnel about the same problem, fewer participated. Over time, the energy and interest dried up.

This experience pointed out a few things. The first was that although marching on the Personnel Department was a powerful statement, it did not bring immediate results. The meetings that management proposed were not taken seriously by a number of workers, so interest dissipated. By the time of the second action, the energy had begun to evaporate.

Yet there was another important lesson, the initial action was led by a few workers who were widely respected as “leaders” within the workforce. When THEY did not take the lead in continuing to put the pressure on management, interest declined.

So, certain tactics can work IF the real leaders among the workers (those individuals who have a demonstrable following) embrace the action and take the lead to make it happen. The same tactic can fail if the real leaders ignore or dismiss it.

Additionally, if the tactic does not seem to bring results, continuing it will probably lead to decreased support, even if there was a broad response to its initial use. Something different may need to be done in order to re-energize member interest.
It is essential to engage the real leaders in a discussion about what is being considered, as well as evaluating what has already been attempted. If the workplace leaders believe that a particular tactic no longer has value, it should not be pursued. This does not mean caving in to cynicism, but rather analyzing what worked and what didn’t, and then making a determination for the next steps.

**Workplace actions:** Concerted activity is lawful. Here are some things to consider when planning an action:

- What types of workplace or near-workplace actions do your members have experience with?
- Are the members prepared to make their feelings public about contract negotiations?
- What will the impact be on potential members?
- Can you hold a picket line or demonstration near enough to the workplace to make a difference?
- How many members do you expect to be willing to engage?
- If the proposed action is a rally or picket, is there a public location where you could hold it that would get good attention, particularly from the media?
- What is the anticipated reaction by local management?
- Will the action tend to attract, scare, or antagonize allies?
- Are there actions that can be taken at the workplace that will make a point clear? What are the potential ramifications of the action, if any?

There are a range of actions you can take, but always consider the questions above when making plans. Pressure tactics should never begin with the maximum or most militant tactic. The basic principle is escalating pressure, using each action as a method of both educating the membership, as well as showing management that you are not backing down.

**Rounding Up Resources**

To implement a campaign, you must have resources. This means figuring out how many people are needed and a budget. Do this after the full plan is developed. While you are working on your plan, consider what resources – including, but not limited to, money – the local/state has on hand.

When developing a budget, think about the different aspects of the plan that may have a cost and do your best to estimate what it will be. For example, if you are planning to send participants to contract campaign training, what will be the anticipated cost? Another example is figuring out how much purchasing T-shirts for Gear Day will be. Then, compare projected expenses with available resources.

Coordinating a contract campaign relies on an immense amount of volunteer labor.
For example, there will be activities that must take place outside of work hours. There should be no expectation that these activities will be compensated. In some locals and state organizations, this will represent a real culture change. If that’s the case, then the request for volunteer work should be accompanied by an explanation of why the change is taking place and what it represents, so that members don’t think it’s “personal” or the union is just being cheap.

An example of what you can say is, “We’ve learned from past national negotiations that getting management to agree to our demands requires pressuring them in every way we can, which is why we need volunteers to [organize rallies, contact elected representatives, etc.].” Your explanation should be genuinely compelling, so members understand why it is necessary to volunteer their time to work on the campaign.

If locals determine they will need outside resources, then approach the NCCC to see what is available. The NCCC may be able to assist with providing tools for interacting with the media, as well as other materials such as flyers, signs, stickers, buttons, etc. Locals/states may also be able to get various forms of assistance from their AFL-CIO central labor council(s) and state federation(s), assuming they are affiliated. For example, central labor councils and state federations may have people who can assist with mobilizing people for a rally. They, along with your local Jobs with Justice chapter (if there is one), have contacts in the communities and within the labor movement who can offer various forms of support to the contract campaign.

Members-at-large who do not have a local, or members whose local/state does not have a CAT, can still be involved in the national contract campaign. Contact the NCCC (nccc@apwu.org) for more information about what you can do.
GETTING STRONGER: BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL POWER

The strength or weakness of our union can be the deciding factor as to whether we win or lose our campaign. No matter how strong a local may think it is, if it has never engaged in a mobilization campaign, it will face significant, though exciting, challenges. Here are some suggestions for building/strengthening locals and state organizations:

Map Your Workplace(s) and Membership

There are two ways that Contract Action Teams (CATs), with the approval of local/state leadership, can use mapping to get a visual sense of your internal organization:

Diagram the workplaces you represent: Literally create a map of your workplace(s) and identify where you have members (and, if possible, note potential members) who may be willing to participate. Considerations are:

- A union member that attends union meetings [can be counted on to help];
- A generally positive union member [does not regularly attend meetings, will periodically volunteer to help];
- A passive union member [rarely if ever attends union meetings, does not really engage with the union];
- A potential member who is generally positive [someone who is not a member but is not antagonistic to the union], or
- A potential member who is generally negative, if not outright anti-union [someone who is not a member and is generally very contrary].

This gives you a good sense of what the workforce looks like, who you can count on, and who you will need to win over. You can see where your strengths and weaknesses are within the workplace(s) you represent. Approach everyone you can and do not count anyone out unless they request it.

Diagramming your membership: Another approach you can use is to pull out the membership roster and go through it name by name. The idea here would be the same, i.e., to figure out what the membership looks like. You can use this to figure out who could potentially be at the core of a contract campaign, but also who needs to be won over.

Know Your Workplace Leaders

In every workplace there are leaders. These are individuals who may or may not be union members or active in the local/state. Nevertheless, they are individuals who are looked to by others and are respected for their views and opinions. They may be individuals who are active in their communities (but not at work), they may be involved with religious institu-
tions and have a significant following, they may run carpools, or they may lead a club or informal social group.

Such individuals need not have a title in order to be real leaders. You probably know individuals like this and can identify them because they have followers! They are key to building and/or strengthening your local/state organization because they are often the people your members will listen to, regardless of whether or not they listen to you. These are the individuals people will gravitate to, seeking their advice and support.

If you have them on your side, you are well on your way to building a very strong organization.

Keep in mind, it is important to look for leaders among various social groups within the organization.

1:1 Organizing

Building a contract campaign means motivating members to get involved. It means beginning with the assumption that members need to be engaged, rather than taking their participation for granted.

Too often, we in the union movement assume all we need to do is put out a few flyers and that is enough to keep the members informed and call them into action. Too many things are competing for an individual’s attention to rely solely on this method.

Members must be approached about engaging. This is called one-on-one (1:1) organizing. It involves talking with members about contract issues. When you speak with other workers depends entirely on the culture of your local union or workplace (as well as the law and the Collective Bargaining Agreement).

In some cases, you can have lunch meetings to discuss the campaign. In other circumstances, you might want to arrange to meet people after work. In other circumstances, you might want to visit your co-workers at home, so that everyone can speak more freely. In any case, when conducting 1:1 organizing you must be:

- **A good listener:** Do not talk AT someone, talk WITH them. Make sure that there is a dialogue. You want to get feedback from the union member or potential member.

- **Responsive:** If someone raises questions, attempt to answer them. If you cannot answer their question on the spot, tell the person that you will be back in touch and **make sure you follow up**.

- **A good organizer:** Plan activities the person you are attempting to recruit can get involved in, whether it is handing out a flyer or getting contact information from their co-workers.

**Recruiting Potential Members Into the Union**

Contract time presents one of our best opportunities to recruit new members. The union is most relevant to potential members during negotiations. One task the CAT can always focus on is organizing.
To organize/recruit new members, the APWU National Organization Department and the Retirees Department specify a time-frame at the beginning of the contract campaign where there will be a major push for new members. During this time, local/state unions can also develop strategies to increase membership. There could be special outreach to potential members prior to or after their shifts, and/or a special email outreach to potential members. There could also be special appearances by friends of the union, local political figures, and others showing their support for workers joining the union. During these national organizational drives, local/state unions have the advantage of being able to add a personal touch to the sign-up process and should seriously consider customizing their message.

Try to reach out to potential members throughout the length of the contract campaign, and on an ongoing basis afterwards. Although decisions and votes are reserved for union members, information about negotiations and the issues involved should be circulated in a way that enables potential members to find out what’s happening. Perhaps in a local where enforcing safety standards is a constant struggle with management, the CAT may wish to have a copy of a PS Form 1187 on the back of contract campaign material. Negotiations should be a time for outreach and inclusion, rather than treating the union as if it is a club or clique.

**Electronic Organizing**

In this digital age, there are tendencies that often reflect different generational approaches to technology. Some activists over the age of 50 are reluctant to participate in the cultural change that has been brought about through the electronic information revolution. In some cases, senior members and retirees refuse to use computers, the internet, text messaging, etc., almost as a matter of principle. On the other hand, there is a tendency among younger activists, particularly those in their 20s and 30s, to ignore “tried-and-true” organizing techniques and focus almost exclusively on electronic communication. Both tendencies are wrong.

It has been documented time and again that the surest way to reach and win over an individual is through direct, one-on-one contact. No matter the age of the individual, looking someone in the eye and speaking with them is hands down more successful than any other form of organizing. At the same time, electronic communication and the internet offer new ways of reaching members and tapping into various “communities” and networks that are established in cyberspace.
Each type of communication channel has a purpose. The most effective method is to use a multi-channel approach in order to reach as many individuals as possible. Publications, newsletters, flyers, websites, email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), text messaging, or phone calls, are all instruments for linking with our base.

That said, the use of electronic organizing is best done if the people who are doing it know what they are doing and love it. Not everyone has to be an expert at digital media. If a member has basic technological skills, the local/state can make use of digital media to advance a campaign.

A few cautionary notes to offer regarding the use of digital communication:

- Electronic contact does not replace human contact;
- Do not overuse electronic organizing. If, for example, we send too many emails, people will tend to delete them without reading them;
- If you are using digital media, the content should be regularly refreshed (something new every couple weeks for a website, every couple days for social media platforms);
- Websites and emails (for mass audiences) should be attractive and engaging. Bland sites get bland results.

**The Shop Steward in the Role of Agitator and Mobilizer**

Since our stewards focus so much of their time handling grievances, there is often a tendency to think that their role is only to handle grievances. They are particularly needed for more during contract campaigns. Serving at the direction of the local leadership, there are many roles a steward can play during contract negotiations:

- **Steward as a resource:** The National does a good deal of research before bargaining begins. To obtain information on existing unresolved local workplace disputes, who is better to consult with than stewards? This becomes relevant if a particular unresolved issue presents a barrier to member involvement in the contract campaign. In this instance, the steward would be able to give information about progress resolving the issue, and also explain the necessity to fight for the collective interests.

- **Steward as an activist:** A steward should be a voice of enthusiasm and action in the workplace. Particularly at contract time, stewards must keep the members informed about negotiations and encourage them to get involved. The steward must translate workers’ concerns into a rationale about why they should be involved in the union and in the contract campaign.

- **Steward as a mobilizer:** Stewards can help the contract campaign run smoothly by being a key part of or simply assisting the CATs. The steward should participate in contract campaign activities and encourage action among members in the workplace. If the union calls for specific activities (e.g., union gear day; public leafleting; an informational booth at a local event), the steward should to take the lead in getting members involved.
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal and external communication strategies are essential; otherwise, the contract campaign disappears. We will look at internal and external communications separately. What applies to both is the idea that there needs to be a campaign theme and message. In other words, we must translate what we are fighting for into sound-bite(s).

An excellent example of a theme and message can be found in the 2015 Contract Campaign. The APWU resolved to fight to reverse the concessionary bargaining trend that was a catalyst for members to oust the majority of the top officers in the previous administration. After the National Negotiation Committee (NNC) determined bargaining objectives, the search for a contract campaign slogan resulted in adopting Good Service! Good Jobs! Good Contract! The slogan embodied negotiation goals and the intentional break from the traditional bargaining approach.

During the campaign, the National put out materials — flyers, articles and online actions — and the Contract Action Teams (CATs) ran with them. Information about the contract negotiations was given out internally on the workroom floor to members and externally to the public at local events, such as Labor Day parades. Members showed solidarity on the job by wearing union gear, and went out and protested on the streets for Good Service! Good Jobs! [and a] Good Contract!

Public support increased as it was understood that the APWU was concerned about maintaining and expanding postal services, in addition to bread-and-butter issues like pay raises. An example of the community’s effect was when over 80,000 people signed postcards during the “I Stand with Postal Workers” action.

The Northern Virginia Area Local handed out flyers on Tax Day 2015, reminding the community that the USPS runs on zero tax dollars! The local received the flyers pictured from the National to pass out to the public.
Under the reform leadership of President Dimondstein and the NNC, the APWU took a unique approach to the 2015 negotiation process by adding the contract campaign as mandated by the 22nd Biennial Convention delegates.

Another example of the success that can happen with coordinated internal and external communication is the successful Stop Staples campaign. During the campaign, The APWU membership came together with allies and fought against the secret deal between the Postal Service and Staples. The deal jeopardized public mail services, local post offices, and thousands of living-wage jobs.

APWU members and retirees were the backbone of the campaign, again spreading the key message on the workroom floor and to the community. Thousands of APWU members came together on the Stop Staples campaign’s National Day of Action, chanting the campaign’s theme — “The U.S. Mail is Not for Sale!” In half a dozen cities, teams formed to picket in front of Staples stores on a weekly or daily basis. Groups in the field passed out informational materials provided by the National and followed the campaign’s talking points when speaking to the public.

After months of stonewalling by the USPS, the APWU escalated the Stop Staples campaign by launching the Staples Boycott. With successful external communication and community outreach, the boycott was endorsed by the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, AFSCME, SEIU, and many other labor organizations, as well as the public.
Internal Communication

When we engage in a contract campaign it is important to conduct membership education about the issues. It is very important to talk WITH the members about the objectives of the campaign and get their support. If the campaign is focusing on issues of privatization, for example, members should understand the parameters of that issue, i.e., how privatization works, the ideology behind it, and what the union is proposing in order to block it.

Through this process we want to get the members talking about issues, including what they think about them and what they are willing to do to support the campaign. This means discussions need to be organized for the members. In order to assist locals/states, the National will develop some basic materials that can be used as guides for these discussions. Local/states are encouraged to produce local/state specific information materials. In some instances, the National may create handouts that can be customized.

Developing systems for internal information flow: One of the most important tasks of the CATs will be getting information to members. Accurate, timely, and informative material is essential during a contract campaign. This information can take many forms including but not limited to:

- **Newsletters:** Many locals/states have a regular publication that it distributes to members. Sharing information on contract campaign activities in every issue is a good way to spread information. They give the member a sense of the union as an institution and they help them stay up-to-date on the campaign, particularly what’s happening in the local/state. Negotiations are often very divorced from the day-to-day realities of our members in part due to the fact that they take a long time. Newsletters are a way to move negotiations to the forefront of members’ minds.

- **Flyers/Handouts:** You can use a flyer or handout to come out with timely information regarding a specific topic. A flyer is something short and visual encouraging a reader to either find out more information about a topic, sign up for an event, or do another form of action. A handout is a longer, wordier page with information about the topic, sometimes with an action included at the end or in a box. A flyer grabs a reader’s attention, a handout educates further on the issue. For either, you will need a distribution team that would typically be organized by the CAT. This might consist of individuals who agree to hand out flyers before or after a shift. Look for ways to make the process fun and enticing.

Another option is to mail out the materials – be it a flyer, handout or newsletter. Keep in mind that if you decide to do this, you run the risk of people simply throwing them away when they arrive. You also lose the opportunity for a one-on-one discussion with people as you distribute them. Another consideration is the cost of the mailing on your budget.

- **Email:** Compiling email lists is a communication strategy of nearly all unions. Locals and state organizations should get the private email addresses of our members and email information about upcoming actions and events. Some
CATs might find it is useful sending weekly emails, members can get used to the electronic update and look for it. When promoting a big action or event coming up, it is a good idea to send an email about it a couple times, one a week or so before the action and another closer to the date. This is because most people get tens to hundreds of emails a day, and you want to be sure yours gets through the “noise.”

Emails should be used carefully and be brief. When people get standard, mass emails, they tend to read the subject line and, perhaps, the first line. If that does not catch the reader’s attention, the email might be ignored or deleted and they won’t be inclined to read the next one. You have to get readers’ attention quickly, and recognize that their attention will not last long.

**NO CONTRACT CAMPAIGN MATERIALS SHOULD BE SENT FROM OR TO USPS EMAIL ADDRESSES.** There is no expectation of privacy when using an email address provided by an employer. That means management can legally read all emails in an usps.gov inbox and outbox. At no time should members or union officials ever use a usps.gov email address for union business, ESPECIALLY anything related to contract negotiations.

*Please share your email list with the National office.*

- **Websites:** More and more organizations are using websites as an important communication tool. If your local/state union has a website, it should include a link to apwu.org and provide a variety of information. Contact the APWU Communications Department if you would like to be added to their update list. When new content is posted online, the department will notify you.

  Websites also have to catch the attention of the viewer quickly. This means that the sites should be attractive, easy to navigate, informative, contain useful links, and be updated regularly. The website can function much like a newsletter, posting updates for members. A website can also include more visuals of members getting involved in the campaign, helping recruitment for the CAT. Well-designed websites should have core information about the union’s fight for a fair contract easily accessible for interested members, potential members, and the general public.

- **Text messaging:** This is a useful mechanism for brief updates and notes to members, especially for younger adults. Texts must be short, to the point and informative. Texting, or SMS, is a powerful tool for brief updates and notes to members, especially younger members. Text messages have a high likelihood of being read, but they should be used sparingly. Text too frequently, and members will unsubscribe rather quickly or block you because they will feel they are being “spammed.”

  Texting is a great way to remind people about a meeting or to participate in a coordinated action, such as wearing union gear. Messages should be short and direct. A simple “Remember to wear your union T-shirt tomorrow!” is enough. If asking to participate in a meeting or a call, texting them the details means they
have it right on their phone for easy access. Texting can also be a great medium for direct conversations with members if you have the time and ability to do so.

- **Social Media:** Social media is another way the CAT can engage in effective internal communication. A closed Facebook group could open up discussions about the contract and be a way for volunteers to educate and engage members. Instagram (a social media platform focusing on images and video) can be used to share pictures of members on a Union Gear Day and encourage other members reading (with hashtags) to participate in the next one.

If the CAT enlists a member familiar with basic social media platforms (e.g. personally uses them regularly), having that person push out a social media component of the campaign can really help connect with audiences who are more focused online (either via their phone or computer).

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**External Communication**

External communication concerns interacting with the public and the mass media, as well as methods for relating to allies and potential allies. Media methods such as websites, flyers/handouts, social media, and email can all be slightly altered from an internal to an external audience to build community support.

Do not ignore the importance of mass media and external communications in educating everyone about the relevance of postal worker struggles. It is important to remember that when the public sees others supporting our issues on TV, hear them on the radio, or come across them on the Internet, it has a positive effect on bargaining and the union’s goals.
as a whole. Members and family are also excited to see their issues highlighted in the news, and that leads to more of them to wanting to be involved. A sense of community is fostered.

Two terms to know when planning external communications strategies:

- **Local Spokespersons:** To be effective, all campaigns need good spokespersons. The spokesperson is the face for the local/state campaign. This does not have to be the CAT coordinator. They are the person the media contacts and is their “go to” for quotes and information (both “on” and “off” the record).

  The spokesperson must be comfortable interacting with the media. They must be prepared to handle complicated and hostile questions without losing their temper, able to explain the issues of the campaign without putting people to sleep, and able to cut to the chase, keeping the discussion focused on the campaign’s main issues. The ability to pivot from the question asked to a talking point is a useful skill for the spokesperson to have.

  The APWU National Communications Department can offer assistance preparing spokespersons. There are skills you can learn that will not only make being a spokesperson less nerve-wracking, but actually fun! The phrase “no comment” is useful when a spokesperson is not comfortable being interviewed at that time, when they need to find out more information about what the reporter wants to discuss, or when they feel ambushed/trapped.

- **Message:** The message of the campaign must be consistent. Among other things, this means the union must be careful about who is speaking for the organization and whether they are all “on message” – focusing on the issues the union wants to emphasize.

  An example of a problem with message is when different issues are emphasized in an unplanned or uncoordinated way. The union may decide that each week it will focus on a particular issue in negotiations. During that particular week the union may speak with the general public, including the media about that issue. If the messaging strategy is not planned, and one leader is speaking about one issue and another leader is addressing a different issue, the public will get confused, and may ultimately turn off to the union’s message.

**Cultivating the media:** Building a relationship with the media takes work, but it’s worth it.

Journalists like it when we make their job a bit easier. Therefore, we should provide them with background material on our campaign so that they do not have to do a lot of research. Second, we should be timely in returning their phone calls. Before returning the call, do your homework by reviewing talking points or other information. They may be calling for an interview or they may be calling for some basic information (also research the reporter and media outlet to see if they are “biased” to one political side). Make it a point to prioritize their calls. Third, when we have information we think they may be interested in promoting, we should reach out to them.
Outreach to the media is not just about press statements or releases (though these can be very effective). Rather, it is about calling to follow-up and, where appropriate, setting up meetings. It is well worth the effort to cultivate relationships with the media.

**Editorial board visits:** This is an underutilized technique that can often bring very positive results. One can generally request a meeting with the editorial board of a newspaper to discuss an issue of importance. The meeting with the editorial board can be aimed at trying to convince the media outlet to give greater attention to the issue or, ideally, to persuade them to write a favorable editorial on the subject.

It is important to prepare before going into a meeting with an editorial board. Here is a very real example of what NOT to do: An organization set up a meeting with the editorial board of a major urban newspaper about a particular issue. The organization sent in a team, including an ally. The first problem was that the ally arrived very late, well after the meeting had started. The second problem was that the newspaper had just written an editorial — actually a favorable one — on the subject, yet the team had not seen it and was, therefore, caught off guard.

There are two important lessons from this experience: First, you have to be very disciplined about such meetings. Arriving late is unacceptable. If a member of the team is late, it is probably better for that individual not to enter the meeting. It can be very disruptive. Your team will have to carry on without them. Second, stay informed about the media outlet so that you know how their thinking is evolving and are properly prepared.

**Letters to the Editor:** One of the most widely-read sections of newspapers are the “letters to the editor.” Throughout a campaign, you should read what’s in circulation in order to monitor whether people are writing about the campaign and/or the issues involved. [Note: You should generally monitor the media to see what sort of coverage you are getting, if any.] You should also submit letters in favor of our campaign.
There are different ways to approach letters to the editor. The union can organize to get letters written. You can develop some talking points that you encourage people to personalize and send out. You can also go to allies and ask them to do the same thing.

If one goes beyond letters to the editor, the same basic process applies to local/state talk-radio. Talk-radio has become a very key sector. The local/state union can find out when there are programs that may address our issues – or are open to addressing our issues – and then organize members or allies to call in. The thing to keep in mind is that whoever calls in needs to make sure they know the campaign’s message backwards and forwards.

Nationally syndicated talk-radio and TV programs will be handled by the APWU National President (or another assigned national officer). If a local officer or CAT member receives a request from a nationally syndicated radio station, TV program, or even a nationally distributed newspaper (Washington Post, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, etc.), direct them to the APWU Communications Director.

Websites (for external audiences): Websites will be viewed by union members, potential members, allies and opponents. For this reason, they should be welcoming and friendly, but should not display anything that might be confidential (unless there are protocols in place that restrict access to members).

You may wish to have sections that provide background for people who know absolutely nothing about the union and the issue. Journalists, for example, may want to access your site before they interview you or before they cover the issue at all.

You may wish to conduct a search for issues that relate to the ones we are raising in our campaign. Sites you come across may be interested in publishing pieces from our organization.

In writing anything for the public, keep in mind that readers again tend to have a short attention span, but also that they probably know very little about our union and the issues. This can get complicated. The fact that the reader may not know much about the union or the issues does NOT mean that they want to know everything about them. The average reader will want to know the basic issues and what we are asking THEM to do. This is very important, since simply informing the reader about an issue is not generally enough to motivate them to take action. We need to think about what we want the reader to do, and add that “ask” to the materials.
A n employer generally wants to isolate the union from the outside world. They want the members to feel that no one really cares about the issues that they, the workers, are raising and the union will inevitably lose as a result.

One thing to consider before reaching out to community and labor allies is for the relationship to be successful, it cannot be one-sided (asking for help but not giving much in return). We should never underestimate the value of helping a possible ally with their battles; a body on the picket line of a community organization helps that organization and keeps union members engaged in off-worksite issues that also affect them. Where alliances have actually worked, both sides have often walked away strengthened.

Developing allies is not rocket science, but neither is it necessarily smooth. The following are some suggestions about how you might want to approach the matter.

The purpose of developing allies: We want allies so that we can isolate our opponent and claim the moral high ground. In Boston during the 1980s, Local 26 of the Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union was masterful at building alliances and cultivating allies. In each of their contract campaigns, they sought out community-based organizations, religious institutions, etc., and brought them into the process. This often included inviting their allies to bargaining sessions. The impact of these alliances was so strong, the media was generally swayed to write stories related to Local 26 with a sympathetic slant. Local 26 was seen as a champion of justice.

The APWU did something similar when it invited actor and activist Danny Glover and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to the opening of the 2015 Contract Negotiations. They represented the public that the Postal Service is meant to serve. Immediately it was clear the people were on the side of the workers.

The bottom line is that you can never have too many allies, but you can have too few. When you have allies, your opponent is often forced to look over their own shoulder. The power dynamic changes and things that the employer might have thought about doing, they can no longer do.
Identifying potential allies: When we are constructing a contract campaign, we need to think about who (which organizations, institutions, and individuals) has an interest – however slight – in our success. Do not overlook family members and the groups they belong to. Are spouses, children, parents, or siblings members of another union or community group? Family is an asset because they have firsthand knowledge of your circumstances and are also affected by the union’s the collective bargaining agreement.

One source for potential local allies is A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service (AGA). The group is comprised of more than 80 national organizations that are taking a stand against efforts to dismantle and privatize the USPS (list is on page 32). Many of the national organizations have local counterparts that would be willing to help in the fight. It is worthwhile to review the list to see which local/state counterparts you should contact for support in your contract campaign. For more information, visit www.AGrandAlliance.org.

Identify specific individuals and organizations that may support our cause. Once we have identified a potential ally, there must be at least one person who reaches out to them. Ideally, the person who does the outreach already has a relationship that they can build upon, i.e., they are a parishioner in a church.

Cultivating allies: There are some individuals and groups that are almost automatic allies. These might be long-time friends, or in some cases, other unions. However, in most cases, much like any relationship, if you do not pay attention to your allies, the alliance can wither and die.

What does this mean? It all starts with a visit. One or two people from the union should visit the potential ally – at the potential ally’s convenience – and discuss with them the contract campaign’s issues. We should assume that we have 20–60 minutes to make our case. If the person is an elected official, you will have less. While it is good to be friendly, you cannot waste a lot of time on banter. Many of us have been in situations where we run out of time before we had a real chance to talk about what we need.

Introduce yourself and explain who you represent. Ideally, you will have sent some material in advance that explains something about what you are doing. However, do not assume that the person or group has read any material you have sent. Touch on relevant talking points.

Make sure to relay the facts the person needs to know. Do not get lost in the details. Keep in mind that you need to keep that person’s attention. If you offer too many details, you will lose them.

End – and sometimes begin – with a request or “ask.” Remember, you are visiting this person or organization to get them to do something, not just to provide them with information. So, make sure you have something in mind that you want them to do. You might ask them to write a letter or make a phone call. You might ask them to speak at a rally or talk to the media. Just make sure that you what you ask is simple and reasonable. If the relationship is relatively new, take that into consideration when formulating the request.

After leaving the meeting, follow up with a “thank you” and provide a way the person can contact you.
Cultivating the relationship does not stop there. You must periodically check in with allies to keep them up-to-date about what’s going on. You can send them an email, for sure, but a phone call every so often is even better. In fact, at some juncture you may wish to host a lunch or dinner meeting with key allies to discuss what’s going on with the campaign and to solicit their feedback. Also, remember that if they reach out to you about something you can help with, follow through.

**Use of community-based events:** There are all sorts of events that take place outside of work where the union can and should have a presence, examples include a county fair, film opening, block party, or school dance. The union can pass out information to the public, ask them to sign a petition or postcard, and help them understand the issues we are facing.

There are also community-based meetings of various sorts. Union members are frequently able to address religious congregations. Neighborhood associations could also welcome our attendance. Make a list of upcoming community gatherings and think about who could go and represent the union. See if you can get some time on the agenda, even if it’s just five minutes.

The designated union representative will have to figure out how to explain to people why they should care about the issues that our members are facing. So, it’s worth writing and practicing a short speech. If you go on too long, regardless of the audience’s response, you can count on never being invited back.
A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service National Signatories

A. Philip Randolph Institute
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Democracy
Alliance for Retired Americans
Amalgamated Transit Union
American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Postal Workers Union and Auxiliary
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Black Women’s Roundtable
Catholic Labor Network
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Center for Community Change Action
Center for Effective Government
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Rural Affairs
Center for Study of Responsive Law
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Color of Change
CommonSpark
Communications Workers of America
Communities and Postal Workers United
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
Consumer Action
Democracy for America
Essential Information
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Aid
Farm Labor Organizing Committee
Gamaliel Network
Greenpeace USA
Healthcare-NOW!
Hightower Lawdow
In the Public Interest
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Association of Fire Fighters

Jewish Labor Committee
Jobs With Justice
Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Ms. Foundation for Women
National Action Network
NAACP
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of Postal Supervisors
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Consumers League
National Council of Churches
National Education Association
National Farmers Union
National Nurses United
National Organization for Women
National Postal Mail Handlers Union
National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association
New Progressive Alliance
9to5
People Demanding Action
People for the American Way
People’s Action
Popular Resistance
Pride at Work
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Public Citizen
Railroad Workers United
Rainbow PUSH Coalition
Service Employees International Union
Sierra Club
Social Security Works
United For A Fair Economy
United Students Against Sweatshops
VoteVets Action Fund
Working America

All national and local signatories are listed at agrandalliance.org.
WRAPPING UP

You’ve got to know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em, know when to walk away, know when to run. – Kenny Rogers

The end of a campaign is always complicated and tense. Judgment calls need to be made, frequently under great pressure. When it’s all over, it’s important that we come up with a summation that helps put the pieces together for the long-term strength and unity of the union. It is important to describe privately and publicly what transpired, both the good and the bad.

What does this all mean? Here are a few things to consider when wrapping up a campaign:

Things start moving very quickly: In the final stage of bargaining, things often move very quickly unless the parties are at an impasse.

While in the field there will either be increased interest and motion, or if people are not engaged they will be sitting around and waiting. You want people engaged. This may mean that there are daily actions to bring attention to the bargaining.

Showing strength in numbers can send a clear message to management and apply pressure to move the negotiations along. At key moments toward the end of negotiations, you may wish to have a major rally before or after work. This will be a great time to invite community allies, as well as friends from the rest of the union movement. Management must understand, particularly at this stage in bargaining, that the union members have not been worn down but remain steadfast behind the bargaining team.

For this reason, a combination of pressure and symbolism remain important. A well-placed article/op-ed concerning the fight that’s underway and the justice of the union’s demands can be important. Getting stories in the media calling attention to both the nature of the work we do and what we are attempting to gain through negotiations can be very persuasive to our members, management, and the public.

Keep in mind that we are not just trying to influence the top-level managers and labor relations staff. We are also attempting to influence political figures in the state houses and on Capitol Hill, bringing to their attention the issues at the table.

Ratification: If we reach a tentative agreement, we will have to conduct a ratification vote. This means:

• Mobilizing members to participate directly with the National Negotiation Committee: Few people will be interested in reading the entire agreement. Therefore, hearing a summary directly from the negotiators that highlights the key measures of the contract, specifically changes, good or bad, will be necessary. Local officers, stewards and CATs should encourage members to attend nationally-led town hall meetings, teleconferences, etc., to get first-hand information.
• Organizing discussions with the members: It is not good enough to circulate a summary and await feedback. After the National leadership explains the negotiated contract provisions, the local/state leaders should spread the information to members and explain it. You can do this over lunch, after work, and at a meeting. The goal is for the membership to understand the proposed provisions of the contract in order to make an informed decision on ratification.

Stewards, CATs, and other members should understand the proposed provisions and be prepared to discuss them. Meetings to discuss the outcome of bargaining can be accompanied by a membership meeting, but we would recommend against only holding a membership meeting. As with any other campaign, you will need to get a good sense of where the membership is, their objections and concerns, and who from the contract campaign organization (whether from the bargaining team or CAT) might be good to speak with different individuals and groups.

If the contract goes to arbitration, the panel is empowered to impose a final agreement on both of the parties. The panel's language is not subject to ratification; it is the final word. If the parties went to interest arbitration, then the goal would be for members to understand the panel's decision and its impact.

• Public Relations: If a tentative agreement is reached, the National will get our message about it to the media. It will draft a press statement to be distributed to media outlets. It can also be used to inform the membership, as it will explain what is important about the agreement. The statement will put any major victories in the context of the contract campaign and the member mobilization we have conducted. If the CAT is asked by local media for any details, stick with the basic message. Do not go indepth until and unless you truly have sufficient time to explain what happened. We do not want the media cannibalizing our remarks for their own objectives. When in ANY doubt, direct them to the APWU National Communications Department.

**If the agreement is ratified,** we will need to discuss what the agreement means for the workers, for the Postal Service and for the public. It is of particular importance that we emphasize how it improves service to the public. The media is going to be less interested in how an agreement benefits the workers.

What to do with the field operation? If the contract campaign has been successful you will have a list of activists, including many who never before participated in union activities. The list will range from those who were very active to those who played a limited role. In either case, it will be important to recognize their contribution. Therefore:

• Celebrate your victory and honor your volunteers. Volunteers are often overlooked. Their work is taken for granted. So, at the end of the campaign it is important to acknowledge them. You might even want to give out a few awards for those individuals whose efforts went beyond the call of duty.

• Ask your volunteers if there is something else they want to do. The CAT can be used to accomplish other local/state objectives. While the focus on contract
negotiations will end, the CAT does not have to. Local/state leadership could
decide to charge the CAT with addressing other issues such as contract enforce-
ment or safety.

If the decision to continue the CAT is made, volunteers should be asked if they
would like to participate in achieving the new objective. Some people who
become energized through a contract campaign are very anxious to do other
work with and for the union. Get these people before they go back to their pre-
activism routines. Do you need shop stewards? How about an organizing com-
mittee to recruit new union members? What about a media committee? Have
you ever considered establishing a committee that can plan social events for the
union? Perhaps a community action committee that organizes members who are
interested in various forms of community service? There may be other activi-
ties you have not thought about that volunteers might be interested in doing.
Ask volunteers what interests them and note what they enjoy doing. Try to keep
them active at their comfort level.
• Prepare for the next campaign. This means everything from summing up this campaign (what worked; what did not; what we could have done differently) to developing new research capacity to stay on top of developments in the USPS, to developing new technology that can better position the union for the next campaign. Work for the next contract begins the first day the new contract is implemented.

Remember, it is one thing to rest; it’s another thing to collapse. While we shouldn’t expect everyone who was involved in the contract campaign to stay active, that doesn’t mean we should let things fall apart. Too much was invested in this contract campaign and, hopefully, so much was gained that we will now be looking at a different, stronger union.
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