



AVOID THESE 10 COMMON ORGANIZING MISTAKES

- 1. Pursuing a bad project.** Even if workers are interested in CWA, we should not pursue a project unless we do adequate preparation and research to determine whether we can actually win and maintain majority support and negotiate a contract.
- 2. Not building an active Organizing Committee willing to publicly support the union.** Without a broad-based, trained core group of public union supporters from within the unit, the campaign becomes a duel between the employer and the union organizer – with the employer holding most of the advantages, such as access to the workers and power over working conditions.
- 3. Distributing a petition or cards too soon.** Even when workers appear very eager to join IUE-CWA, petitions or cards should be used to call for an election after a solid campaign has been established.
- 4. Failing to develop specific issues.** A general campaign message – IUE-CWA is the Union for You – will not build the commitment needed to withstand the employer’s anti-union efforts.
- 5. Failing to prepare workers for employer tactics.** Unless workers know what to expect from the employer, they usually will be overwhelmed by the employer’s use of propaganda and power. It is far more difficult to repair workers’ confidence after an attack than to inoculate them ahead of time.
- 6. Not avoiding legal problems.** Some campaigns are doomed because of poor preparation at the NLRB or the public employee relations agency on who is in the unit, when or where an election will be held, and so on.
- 7. Failing to broaden the base of union support.** It sometimes is tempting to keep talking to key activists rather than setting up a system for personal contact with the workers throughout the unit. The result, however, may be that key issues are missed, individual workers’ questions are never answered, and the core group’s rosy predictions turn out to be unfounded.
- 8. Declaring, “I am the union, and I’m here to organize you.”** If IUE-CWA organizers convey that message in meetings, conversations and literature, everything the employer says about “outsiders who want your money” will ring true. The alternative attitude is, “You are the union, and I’m here to help you get the employer to recognize that.” Combating the “Third party’ anti-union message is a key reason for supporters to be publicly pro-union.
- 9. Running boring and unnecessary meetings.** For most people, time is precious. If committee meetings turn into lectures or “bull sessions” where nothing is accomplished, workers may be turned off to the whole campaign.
- 10. Making promises you can’t keep.** If you lead workers to expect an election, even though a decision hasn’t been made to seek one, or to expect an NLRB or public agency decision within a specific time period, or to count on certain improvements in their first contract, they may be demoralized and suspicious.