

LiUNA! **BUILDS**
AMERICA 

Feel the Power

BASIC
POLITICAL
MOBILIZATION
FOR
LEADERS

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A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT TERRY O’SULLIVAN: LIUNA BUILDS AMERICA

LIUNA members deserve credit for the hard work they do everyday and they deserve respect from the politicians they elect.

Political action—a responsibility that comes with membership and leadership—is not a game to LIUNA. It is how the working men and women of our union have a voice to shape the policies that affect their lives and their families.

Like anyone, our members are moved to action not at once, but over time through ongoing communication and education. In fact, independent polling of our members shows that regular communication is the key to mobilizing members to action:

- *61 percent* of members who receive a high level of communication say they want to volunteer—*50 percent more* than members who receive little or no communication.

With frequent outreach and communication and the skills that develop by doing—organizing phone banks and precinct walks, distributing flyers and email newsletters, getting positive media coverage—we have the power to mobilize like never before.

We have the power to help ensure that the voices of those who build our country are heard today, in 2008 and beyond, and we have the power to elect candidates who will fight for us. That's what LiUNA! Builds America is all about.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terence M. O'Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terence M. O'Sullivan

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER ARMAND E. SABITONI OUR COMMITMENT TO POLITICAL POWER

When delegates to our International Union Convention gathered in the fall of 2006, we embarked on an historic course. Leaders unanimously resolved that:

- Every Local Union and District Council would regularly meet with elected officials.
- Every Local Union and District Council would implement a plan for ongoing voter registration.
- Every Local Union and District Council would communicate with members about important political issues.
- We would all strive to negotiate voluntary political check-off contributions in every agreement or establish check-off from vacation funds.

A measure of this International Union's greatness is in doing what we say we will do and there's never been a more important time to make our political program the strongest it has ever been.

The foundation of our strength is in our members in every Local Union. Starting today, we must mobilize like never before.



Armand E. Sabitoni

A LEGAL NOTE

Campaign finance laws place restrictions on how unions can communicate—and with whom—when using union resources for federal elections. *(State and local limits, which apply for state and local candidates, but not federal candidates, vary. It is important each local LIUNA leader consults with local legal counsel and understands their local laws.)*

Under federal election law, unions can use union resources to communicate partisan political messages with members and their families. Unions can explain issues, tell members about candidates and make endorsements during elections, including federal elections, as long as communication is only to union members and their families.

Expenditures of more than \$2,000 for any single federal candidate must be reported to the Federal Election Commission through a simple form. Direct mail, fliers and robo call vendors often exceed that limit. For details contact the LIUNA Legislative and Political Department.

It is illegal for a union to use union resources to communicate with non-members to support a specific candidate or political party.

Unions can participate in non-partisan election activity, such as voter registration drives and issue education, with anyone, whether a member or not.

“Union resources” include general treasury funds, political education funds, facilities or equipment, such as phones and copiers, paid staff during working hours and membership contact lists.

DO:

- 1.** Your Local Union distributes a flyer outlining the positions of a federal candidate on important issues and recommends his or her election. *This can only be delivered to union members and their families.*
- 2.** Your Local Union distributes a flyer outlining the union’s position on a key issue. It does not solicit support for a candidate or party. *This can be delivered to members and non-members.*
- 3.** Your Local Union assists in driving voters to the polls regardless of who the voters support. There are no partisan campaign signs, literature or buttons in or on the vehicle. *This is legal.*

DON'T

- 1.** Using treasury money, your Local Union hangs a large sign advocating the election of a candidate (example: LIUNA for Joe Smith for President) outside of the Local Union hall. Because this sign is communicating with non-members and is paid for by union funds, *this is illegal.*

There is sometimes ambiguity when dealing with election laws. In addition, Political Action Committee funds from voluntary contributions are treated differently than union resources, but they also have legal limits. If your resources are from a PAC, or you have questions regarding the use of union resources, contact legal counsel or the LIUNA Legislative and Political Department with questions.

Keep in mind that none of these rules prohibit full participation by individuals in politics. Union members may volunteer on their own time and at their own expense for any political activities in state, local or federal campaigns.

BASIC MOBILIZING

ON MESSAGE AND MESSENGERS

A good message persuades people to see things the way the messenger wants them to be seen. That's half the work: for a good message to be heard, it must be delivered by the right messenger.

Good messages—whether delivered on doorsteps during precinct walks or to reporters at a news conference—are about basic values everyone understands.

What's more effective? "The company committed an unfair labor practice," or, "The company broke its promise and the law."

Or consider, "The Davis-Bacon Act should apply," or, "We're fighting for community-supporting jobs."

The second messages are stronger because they appeal to values and emotion, use everyday language and avoid jargon.

The talking points in your LIUNA Builds America kit will help effectively tell our story.

Who tells the story makes a difference. Members and most Americans understand what it's like to work for a living and they believe messages delivered by workers.

By putting the foundation of our union—our members and prospective members who build America—out front beside leaders, our message will be heard and believed.

TEN RULES FOR TALKING TO MEMBERS ABOUT POLITICS

1. Issues come first, candidates and parties second.
2. Members want information, not voting instructions.
3. Present information credibly and objectively to overcome members' distrust of politics.
4. Downplay partisan rhetoric and stress the union's role as an independent voice for working families.
5. Stress that unions should be watchdogs that hold politicians accountable.
6. Members want unions to represent their interests as workers.
7. Union political action should always be "of, by and for" the members.
8. Information is key to increasing participation.
9. Members are best reached by face-to-face visits.
10. We're more effective when we address the concerns of specific union audiences, instead of relying on a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

KEEP A GOOD LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE

From Local Unions to the International Union, we must develop the ability to reach out through mail, phone, email, text-messaging, websites, and, most importantly, through face-to-face grassroots discussions.

Developing and maintaining an accurate list of member contact information, including home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, home addresses and email addresses is required for effective mobilization and activism. Make sure you get the details right, including name spellings and salutations.

If you can't reach someone, you can't inform, educate, persuade or mobilize them. Every form of communication counts, and no single method of communication alone will be successful.

Every Local Union needs current lists that include:

- 1.** *Home addresses*—you can't knock on a member's door or mail them information without it.
- 2.** *Home phone numbers*—you can't call or deliver a robo call without it.
- 3.** *Cell phone numbers*—you can't reach a member with a text message or a member who has no home phone without it.
- 4.** *Email addresses*—you can't provide rapid-fire, free and flexible communication without it.

Protect members' privacy. Don't share member lists with other organizations.

REGISTERING MEMBERS TO VOTE

We cannot have a strong voice in government without a voter registration program.

A successful voter registration drive requires planning at least a **year** in advance of an election.

- 1.** Learn the rules for your state, including deadlines, especially for third-party organizations so that your Local Union can collect and deliver voter registration applications. You can register, or find more registration information online at www.liuna.org.
- 2.** Lists of registered voters may be public. If so, match those lists to your membership list so you can determine who you need to persuade to register to vote. You may be able to obtain voter records from your local Board of Elections or from the LIUNA Legislative and Political Department.
- 3.** Your target list will be the list of voters who need to update their registration (because, for example, they moved) and those who are not registered.
- 4.** Obtain voter registration forms and reach out to your target list in each of these ways:
 - With a registration card in the mail.
 - With registration information by email.
 - With a robo call reminder.
 - With registration information and links to registration sites on your Local Union website.

- By flagging those on your target list so when they visit the hall, you can provide them with registration information.
- By making voter registration a topic in union meetings and for job stewards.
- With voter registration phone banks and neighborhood walks.

FLYERS

Flyers are, at minimum, a way to convey information—and at best, a way to have a conversation. The more local the messenger, the more effective the message—flyers customized to list your Local Union or District Council will be more effective.

While a flyer should stand on its own, flyers should also be a tool to spark a discussion at union halls, workplaces,* on jobsites and in homes.

Creating flyers for local races or local issues can be made with software commonly found on any computer, including basic word-processing software.

Customizable political flyers about issues and candidates in federal races will be available through www.liuna.org and many of your Local Union websites as elections draw closer.

DO:

1. Do keep it short and simple—a good flyer is 75 words or less and focused on one phrase, such as “Politicians should work for those who build America.” The rest is simply a handful of supporting facts and contact information.
2. Do use big type with a bigger headline so that it takes only a second to understand what the flyer is about, even from a short distance.

3. Do use words that people would use in everyday conversation.

DON'T:

1. Don't try to cram all the information you think is important into the flyer. A flyer is the title of your case, not the trial.
2. Don't forget the key facts: if it's an event, list the who, what, when and where, and a contact phone, email or address.
3. If hand-delivered, don't use a flyer as an excuse *not* to talk to a member or their family. Use it as a way to start a conversation.

*Public service employees should check with their steward about state and local guidelines that may govern the use of political material in the workplace.

An Important Message from Your Union

BEFORE YOU SHOP AT WAL-MART Know the Facts

As the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart is setting the standard for America's workplaces—and it's a standard of low pay, poor benefits and abuse of workers that working families cannot accept. Please read these facts before you shop.

Low wages: Wal-Mart's average full-time pay lands a four-person family in poverty. (Center for Strategic Research, AFL-CIO; BusinessWeek, 10/6/03)

No wages: Thousands of documented cases charge that Wal-Mart has forced hundreds of thousands of workers to work "off the clock." (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission)

Poor benefits: Because of long waiting periods for eligibility and high costs, less than 50 percent of Wal-Mart's workers are covered by the company's health plan. Wal-Mart deliberately works employees less than 32 hours a week so they won't be eligible for health coverage. (2004 Wal-Mart Associate Guide; www.walmartfacts.com; Open Enrollment News, 9/03)

Taxpayer burdens: Wal-Mart's low wages and poor benefits force many workers to rely on public aid. Taxpayers spend about \$420,750 a year on public aid programs for each Wal-Mart store with 200 workers because Wal-Mart workers often can't afford health insurance or food for their children. (University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, 8/04)

Discrimination: Women at Wal-Mart earn an average of \$5,000 less a year than men for doing the same jobs. Some 1.6 million women are eligible to join a class-action lawsuit charging Wal-Mart with discrimination. Wal-Mart also has paid more than hundreds of thousands of dollars to workers across the

EMAIL

At least 70 percent of LIUNA members or their families use email, making it an effective, coordinated, fast and inexpensive way to reach out to members.

With email, Local Unions can send brief reminders and messages or full email newsletters.

First, you must develop and maintain an accurate list of member email addresses. Email addresses should be collected from members whenever possible—at the hiring hall, during initiation, during trainings, at local meetings and through publications. New LIUNA per capita forms will require email, phone and cell phone numbers from members.

The LIUNA Action Network contains tens of thousands of email addresses of members, which are available for Local Unions, District Councils and Regions to use to mobilize, to organize and strengthen our voice in politics. Call or email the Strategic Communications Department for information about the network and known email addresses of members in your affiliate.

DO:

- 1.** Do send email updates when there is a reason to do so—for example, to urge members to register to vote, membership meeting reminders, or updates on contracts.
- 2.** Do send updates on a frequent basis—for example, once a month.

3. Do provide local information members can't get elsewhere—such as interesting news about their fellow members and their accomplishments.
4. Do ask for action—for example, remind members to participate in the LIUNA Action Network and to attend union meetings.

DON'T:

1. Don't send emails to members or recipients who ask to be removed from your list.
2. Don't send overly long emails—if the email is more than one-half printed page, it's too long.
3. Don't under-send or over-send email newsletters or updates—there's no magic number, but less than once a month and members will likely not be in the habit of hearing from you, or more than once a week without a compelling reason, members could grow tired of the emails.

ROBO CALLS

Robo calls are short recorded phone messages delivered to a list of phone numbers used to reinforce other communication, and allow communication in a coordinated, quick and assertive manner.

With a robo call, one voice can be delivered to thousands of phones. They are flexible, such as allowing a Local Union Business Manager to introduce a candidate or issue in a short phone message.

Robo calls can also be used to gather feedback from members by allowing them to take simple surveys and confirm attendance at an event using their phone's touchpad.

The short-term goal of the International Union is to provide the International, every Region, every District Council, and every Local Union with the capability to communicate with each of their members through robo-calls.

Because a robo call sometimes seems intrusive, they must be used sparingly, be short and go immediately to the message.

DO:

- 1.** Do skip chit-chat—it is hard to imagine a better first line for a robo call message than, “This is your Local Union calling.”
- 2.** Do work with a professional to ensure that calling equipment detects the difference between a person and an answering machine. Robo call technology that will be available at the International Union level will have this capability.
- 3.** Do use robo calls to reinforce timely information—e.g., turnout for a rally, for a union meeting, to vote, or other call to action.

DON'T:

- 1.** Don't robo-call anyone who has asked not to be called.
- 2.** Don't use robo calls too frequently or for non-timely information—people will begin hanging up before they hear the message.
- 3.** Don't try to substitute robo-calling for other forms of communication—it won't work.

MAIL

Both direct mail (mass mailing of brochures and literature) and simply mailing updates and newsletters can compliment other communication, such as one-on-one discussions, emails, phone calls and media coverage.

Members are much more likely to notice and read mail from their Local Union or at least customized by their local, compared with any other level of the union.

DO:

- 1.** Do consider working with a direct mail consultant who can help you design, print and mail a direct mail piece. Direct mail mistakes are expensive and a good expert can help prevent mistakes.
- 2.** Do keep in mind the time required for checking mailing lists, production and actual mailing so that direct mail arrives on time. Together, these items could take more than a month.
- 3.** Do ensure that your member address list is updated right before a mailing so postage and printing costs are not wasted.
- 4.** Do consider a monthly mailing to members which includes updates about politics and the importance of volunteers.
- 5.** Do consider mailing a simple postcard to members with voter registration reminders.

DON'T:

- 1.** Don't be shy about asking for help in doing direct mail—it's too expensive to not get it right every time. Contact a direct mail expert, or LIUNA Strategic Communications, for direction.
- 2.** Don't forget basic message rules—say it simply using words about values that everyone cares about, delivered by messengers members will relate to.



USING NEWS MEDIA

News media is the biggest influence on our members, public officials and the general public when it comes to politics. It is also one of the most significant opportunities we have to raise our visibility and add power to mobilization.

With some nuts-and-bolts work, every District Council and Local Union has the ability and opportunity to build support for members through the news media.

Here are some overall do's and don'ts:

DO:

- 1.** Do take advantage of natural opportunities—don't underestimate a rally or union endorsement as potential for positive news coverage.
- 2.** Do have rank-and-file members join leaders in public efforts.
- 3.** Do talk about values—fairness, hard work, families and democracy.

DON'T:

- 1.** Don't use insider jargon. Use the talking points in your LIUNA Builds America kit to help talk about issues, such as the Davis-Bacon Act in a way that everyone understands.
- 2.** Don't expect coverage every time—but over time, reporters will grow more accustomed to working with you.

3. Never lie to a news reporter—if something should not be made public, it's better to say nothing.

Off the Record? Unless you have a trusted relationship with a journalist, assume nothing is off the record. Even then, journalists will consider a conversation “on the record” and for use unless it is clear from the beginning of the conversation that what you say is “off the record” and not for use. Be clear about the ground rules before you talk.

A Calendar to Get News Media Coverage of Your Event

DO IT NOW

Notice who writes articles on issues important to members—jobs, construction, the economy, continuing education, stories about where members work or any other issues in which LIUNA makes a difference. Make a list of those reporters with their contact information.

Strategic Communications can provide you with a reporter list and contacts for your area, as well as other media assistance.

Make a brief introductory phone call about what kind of information you commonly have, followed by a 15-minute get-to-know-you talk over coffee. Then, when you have something you think is newsworthy, you'll know who to contact, and they'll know you.

DO IT 10 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF YOUR EVENT

- Line up spokespeople and potential resources for reporters to interview. It might be yourself, as well as a rank-and-file member whom you've prepared and an ally outside the union who supports the union's position.
- Begin thinking about how the event is newsworthy—if it's a rally, march, phone-banking or other type of activism, there is likely to be a reporter who is interested in the event, or the issues behind it.

DO IT 5 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Determine the best message. What would the headline be if you wrote it? How would a TV news anchor describe it?
- From your perfect message, draft talking points—the headline you'd like, and the key facts and statements that support it.
- Determine who delivers each part of your message.
- Practice, and help other participants practice.
- Draft a news advisory—a paragraph or so with the “who, what, when and where” and a contact name and number reporters can reach at any time. See the sample News Media Advisory Template on page 25.

DO IT 4 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Prepare background information for reporters—fact sheets, bios of workers and leaders who will participate, a Q&A—the more you repeat your message in different ways and put it in reporters' hands, the more likely it will become a part of their reports.

DO IT 3 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Confirm participants.
- Review your message.

DO IT 2 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Distribute the news advisory by email and fax to your list of reporters.
- Call each reporter to confirm they received the advisory.

DO IT THE DAY BEFORE

- Fax and email the news advisory again.
- Call each reporter to determine if they will be attending or reporting on your news.
- Prepare a news release to distribute the day of your news. See the sample News Release Template on page 26.

DO IT THE MORNING OF

- Call TV assignment desks and radio news directors before 8 a.m. and ask if they're covering your news.
- Fax and email advisory one last time.

FOLLOW-UP

- Distribute your news release to those who attend your event; fax and email it to reporters who are not there.

The single most important indicator of whether news media covers an event is whether they receive turnout calls—not just one, but at least two.

News Media Advisory Template

NEWS ADVISORY FOR [fill in date]

Contact: [fill in contact name and number where contact can always be immediately reached]

[Main Headline—e.g., Presidential Candidate to Meet With Workers Struggling for the American Dream]

[One sentence on what is going to happen—e.g., Presidential candidate Joe Smith will meet with workers who are struggling for a living wage during a visit to Anytown on Thursday, February 22.]

WHAT: [repeat what will happen]

WHEN: [insert time, day and date]

WHERE: [insert exact location]

[Insert a small amount of background—but don't provide so much that a reporter wouldn't have to attend the event to get the news.]

###

Sample News Release Template

For information: [fill in contact name and number where contact can always be immediately reached]

[Main headline—e.g, Union of Workers Who Build America Says to New Congress: “Listen to Those Who Elected You”]

[Sub-headline—e.g., LIUNA Asks Legislators to Fight for Strong Pensions, Health Care, the Freedom to Join a Union and Comprehensive Immigration Reform]

[Insert body of release. This is how you would want the story to be published if you could write it.]

Example:

Washington, DC (January 4, 2007)—The Laborers’ International Union—the fastest growing and most progressive construction and public service union in North America—on Thursday welcomed newly arriving members of Congress and called on them to join the fight on issues that matter most to working people.

“Millions of construction laborers—who work hard every day to build this country—helped elect the new Congress,” Laborers’ Union General President Terry O’Sullivan said. “The first 100 hours of Congress will

set a tone, but the next two years will show how much Congress has changed. We say, 'Listen to those who elected you.' "

Members of the Laborers' Union have embarked on an aggressive political and legislative program. Last fall, thousands of rank-and-file members volunteered to elect pro-worker candidates.

The effort continues with an internal issues education effort for both members and policy-makers. On Thursday, the union welcomed the new Congressional leadership with a full page ad in Roll Call calling for Congress to fight together with working people for:

- Retirement security
- Good jobs
- Accessible health care
- Strong enforcement of family-supporting laws such as Davis-Bacon
- The freedom to join a union
- Comprehensive immigration reform

LIUNA represents the men and women who go to work every day building America through construction and public service.

###

How to Write and Submit a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are a way for anyone to be published in a newspaper or magazine. You can use a letter to the editor to express an opinion about a current event, or to praise or criticize news coverage.

A letter to the editor should be very short—less than 200 words—and should say which article the letter is in response to. The letter should state the subject and the writer’s opinion, and must include the writer’s name, address and a contact phone number. Don’t forget to sign your letter and to mention your Local Union membership.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Your newspaper reported that our union donated \$5,000 to the Joe Smith for Governor Campaign—and that’s true. But there’s more to it. Members of LIUNA Local A voted not just to contribute to Smith’s campaign and endorse him; members voted to commit to being foot soldiers to elect him. That’s because he is fighting for what our members and all working people are fighting for: more jobs and better jobs, health care we can afford, corporate accountability and a voice for those of us who are hard at work every day building America.

Sincerely,

John Adams, President, LIUNA Local A

If you want help in getting letters to the editor to the right person, contact Strategic Communications.

About TV and Radio

TV and radio reports are more widely seen, but getting coverage requires additional approaches.

Tips:

- 1.** TV and radio news is decided the morning of broadcast. Send a news advisory to planning desks the day before an event. On the day of, send an advisory to assignment desks before 8 a.m.
- 2.** Clearly state what visuals will be present—signs, a giant rat or anything else that makes good TV.
- 3.** Follow up with phone calls to assignment editors. Repeated calls may seem like badgering, but in fact assignment editors are used to repeated reminders and respond to them. If you don't call, they won't come.
- 4.** Make sure visuals carry your message.

How to Blog

Blogs, short for “weblogs,” are websites where individuals or groups of individuals discuss recent news. The popularity of blogs has exploded in recent years—and some have become widely monitored sources of news.

Blogging is easy, free and democratic. If you have something to say, you will be published. If properly targeted, you can make known the issues that are important to our union.

Blogging requires Internet access, an email address and a commitment to be heard.

- 1.** Visit websites that have blogs and register with the site.
- 2.** Comment when and where you see fit. Be funny, be informative, be opinionated, be personal, but be appropriate. Remember that you are a representative of LIUNA in these online communities.
- 3.** Political activists, candidates and reporters look to LIUNA for our opinions and perspectives. By identifying yourself as a member and talking about your life and your work in communities, people will look to your comments for the insight and perspective only you can provide.

Some Blogs to Consider

POLITICAL NEWS BLOGS

- Political Wire (www.politicalwire.com)
- Hotline On Call
(<http://hotlineblog.nationaljournal.com>)

PARTY BLOGS

- Democratic National Committee
(<http://www.democrats.org/blog.html>)
- Republican National Committee
(<http://www.gop.com/Blog/>)

CANDIDATE BLOGS

- You can find blogs for all major candidates on their individual webpages.

ACTIVIST BLOGS

- DailyKos (www.dailykos.com)
- MyDD (www.mydd.com)
- AmericaBlog (www.americablog.com)
- Red State.Com (www.redstate.com)

GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATE MEETINGS

Candidates for public office must know that winning LIUNA's support is about more than a check or a mobilization commitment. It is placing much of the well-being, hopes and aspirations of members in that candidate's hands. Candidates have to earn the support and the commitment of the men and women who build America, and if elected they must work every day to keep it.

In addition to investigating the backgrounds and positions of candidates, union leaders often have the opportunity to meet personally with candidates. Below are some discussion guides to help form an opinion of a candidate beyond policy papers and speeches.

Two things should be kept in mind:

- 1.** The following topics of conversation are not a questionnaire to be graded. Candidates' staff generally put together questionnaire answers, providing little insight into a candidate as a human being.
- 2.** If you include one or two interested rank-and-file members in candidate discussions, you will quickly learn how well a candidate relates to, respects and values the work LIUNA members do.

Potential Topics of a Conversation with a Candidate

- Why are you running for office? What do you hope to accomplish with your campaign? What are your main goals should you be elected?
- Do you know what work our members do? Have you been to a member's worksite? If no, are you willing to visit?
- Which members do you know personally?
- What value will our members and our union add to your campaign? What role will LIUNA play if you are elected?
- What do you think a "good job" means to our members? What does it mean to you?
- How do you view the Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage law?
- What are your views on universal healthcare?
- Do you support the fundamental right of workers to join together in a union without employer interference?
- How have you supported organizing drives in the past? What will you do to level the playing field so workers can exercise their right to join a union?
- What are your plans for developing the nation's infrastructure in the coming years? Why do you think investing in construction is important?
- Do you support collective bargaining rights for public employees?

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the soldiers in any political army.

Here are some basic tips for developing and working with volunteers:

- 1.** Remind potential volunteers of the special skills or expertise they have (and being a member is one of those) so they understand that they are needed.
- 2.** Give people choices—a member who might not want to knock on doors, might be more than willing to phone-bank or stuff envelopes.
- 3.** Don't overload volunteers or you'll lose them. The solution to getting more work done is recruiting more volunteers.
- 4.** Demonstrate what you expect volunteers to do—for example, rehearse a phone bank script.
- 5.** Be clear from the beginning about the time commitment you're asking for.
- 6.** Make sure volunteers complete their assignments—that not only gets the job done, it sends the message that their job is crucial.

7. Always find a way to thank every volunteer. A thank you can be training for more complex assignments, a certificate or plaque, a thank you letter, sending a birthday card or recognition through your publications or at a meeting.
8. Remind volunteers to dress weather-appropriate, and provide them with food, beverages and restrooms.

Mobilization training for local leaders is available by contacting the LIUNA Legislative and Political Department.

NEIGHBORHOOD WALKS

Neighborhood walks have long been a key tactic in voter turnout efforts on Election Day. They are also crucial in everyday political and organizing efforts because they facilitate the most effective communication—member-to-member and face-to-face.

Here's a checklist for a successful neighborhood walk:

- 1.** Target your members and precincts. Which precincts have the heaviest concentrations of members and are most efficient to walk? Which precincts also have a high concentration of undecided voters?
- 2.** At least three weeks ahead of time, begin volunteer recruitment. Recruit every day and use every communication method available including mail, email, phone calls, and notices on your Local Union website and in the Local Union hall.
- 3.** Develop walk packets for each volunteer—a route map, a partner (never send volunteers out alone), names and addresses of members to be visited, an approximate length of time it will take to complete the route, and the materials to be used or distributed.
- 4.** Always pair an inexperienced walker with an experienced walker.

5. Include in packets, and review with walkers, a few bullet points on what kind of conversation to have with members, and remind them to only visit those homes on their lists.
6. Designate the Local Union hall or other gathering point as an operations center for walkers.
7. Collect a cell phone number for each pair in case of emergencies or if assistance is needed.
8. Collect information after walkers are finished, including a verbal debrief.

Let volunteers know that not everyone will be receptive to their visit. They shouldn't take it personally, but be polite and move on.

A Sample Neighborhood Walk Script

Hello, I'm Joe Smith, a fellow LIUNA member. I'm going door-to-door on behalf of [candidate name]. We work hard every day and we build this city and our country. [Candidate name] respects and values what we do and will fight for the things we and our families care about. I want to ask you to consider supporting [candidate name].

PHONE BANKS

Phone banks, a set of phones and phone lines dedicated to political mobilization, have become an increasingly potent tool in voter mobilization, but they can be used year-round to improve awareness and political action of union members. While phones can be leased to set up a phone bank, large quantities of phone lines are often available from other unions, or businesses, such as law offices.

- 1.** Develop and maintain an accurate list of member telephone numbers that reflect current home contact information. Depending on the size of your list, you may target members based on your goal—for example, only calling registered voters for election turnout, or only calling unregistered voters for voter registration.
- 2.** Recruit volunteers by getting the word out two-to-three weeks in advance through email, newsletters and member visits.
- 3.** Develop a system that includes regular call times, and packets which contain each caller's lists and report sheets.
- 4.** Use report sheets to monitor overall phone bank progress.
- 5.** Try to attract the most volunteers between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

6. Keep volunteer shifts short—no more than three hours.
7. Review the script with callers and encourage them to stick to it—lengthy conversations outside of the script are not helpful.
8. Have callers make a note beside names of those who seem enthusiastic so someone can follow-up and encourage them to volunteer.
9. Have callers only speak to those named on their lists.
10. Have callers available who can speak the languages that members speak.
11. Candidates or political parties who use union hall phones must pay fair market value for their use.

Let volunteers know that not everyone will be receptive to their call. They shouldn't take it personally, but be polite and move on.

Sample Phone Script

Hello, may I please speak to [name on list]? My name is [caller's name] and I'm calling from LIUNA. I want to remind you to vote for [name of candidate] because he/she understands how hard we work and how we build this city and our country.

RALLIES

Gathering union members together with political candidates, elected officials and other allies to proclaim your support for a candidate or policy by holding a political rally can be a powerful and highly visible way to energize members and earn free media attention.

A rally by its nature depends on turnout—a significant turnout shows strength, while a poor turnout backfires with weakness.

Turnout for a rally depends on personal communication—face-to-face and by phone. As a rule of thumb, one of 10 people you personally talk to will attend. That means even a modest rally of 100 people will require 1,000 contacts.

For internal use, develop an agenda and a list of key messages for all participants. Develop a schedule for the event that allows a brief time for each speaker. One person should be designated to welcome attendees and introduce the speakers. Walking through the event beforehand will help ensure everyone is comfortable.

Key rally planning tasks:

- Invite and confirm rally speakers.
- Reserve space for the event that is the right size—if it's too large, a crowd will look small.
- Secure local government permits if necessary.
- Get the word out several weeks in advance through flyers, email, robo calls, newsletters, and personal calls and visits. Make turnout at least one person's sole responsibility.
- Make sure there is sufficient audio equipment and for any crowd of more than 100, a riser for speakers so they can be seen.
- Podium signs and banners—for example, strategically placed signs reading, "LIUNA Builds America"—are essential.
- Assign security marshals and parking attendants.

PROVIDING RIDES TO THE POLLS

You got them registered, now get them to vote.

Some tips for a successful Get-Out-the-Vote program:

- Beginning many months in advance, start gathering the contact information of members and volunteers interested in working on Election Day.
- Know the hours and location of key polling sites.
- Arrange for vans and other vehicles to be available starting the night before Election Day.
- Develop an efficient route and call-in system for rides. A central office for the rides should be set up with drivers reporting in throughout the day.
- If the rides are non-partisan, publicize the offer of rides through the media, other organizations, paid advertisements, neighborhood walks and phone banks.
- Do not loan out union-owned cars or union drivers to political campaigns or political parties.

Do reach out to the International Union with any questions about raising money for the LPL and the LPL Education Fund.

POLITICAL FUNDRAISING

At LIUNA's 2006 Convention, elected delegates called for more political power, including a stronger voter registration program at the Local Union level and making every effort to include in every contract a provision for voluntary check-off for contributions to our political action committee.

Delegates wanted to build on an already strong political program:

- During the 2006 election cycle, LIUNA mobilized thousands of volunteers, placed nearly a half-million phone calls, helped send nearly 1 million pieces of mail and knocked on countless doors in voter turnout and information efforts.
- Over the past 10 years, LIUNA's political fund has been among the top 10 political action committees in the country, totaling \$2.5 million in each election cycle to elect federal candidates who will work for LIUNA members.
- Members take their donations seriously—every \$5,000 collected through members' voluntary contributions represents an average of 200,000 hours of their hard work.

To ensure the LIUNA political operation remains second to none, LIUNA needs to increase resources for political action.

DO:

- 1.** Do ensure a clause in each contract allowing a voluntary amount of money be deducted per hour for all compensated hours and sent to the Laborers Political League. LPL check-off can be negotiated like other contract demands.
- 2.** Do utilize vacation funds as an alternative check-off that will be forwarded to LPL at the time of normal distribution of vacation funds to members.
- 3.** Do have a program for collecting check-off authorization cards, possibly as part of the job referral process or through stewards.
- 4.** Do keep a signed authorization card from each member who decides to voluntarily contribute to LPL through check-off or vacation fund deductions.
- 5.** Do provide the International Union with the name and contact information of any member who has contributed to LPL either directly or through use of check off or the vacation fund. In many cases, the federal government requires this information.
- 6.** Do make contributions to the LPL Education Fund from treasury/dues monies, but this must be pursuant to a Local Union resolution in accordance with Local Union by-laws.

7. Do ensure that all funds consisting of \$50 contributions or less are received by LPL and the LPL Education Fund within 30 days of collection; individual contributions of more than \$50 must be received within 10 days.
8. Since all participation in political activity is voluntary, work with local auditors to ensure appropriate reductions in dues are made.

DON'T:

1. Don't be disorganized in record-keeping.
2. Don't arrange for informal political fundraising events, such as passing the hat or raffles. They are unregulated and these events can lead to long-term problems.

RESOURCES

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