

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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Relationships: Stronger Bonds, Higher Standards

At the IBEW, our relationships—with employers, with customers and with one another—ensure that we remain the right choice for business. Good relationships translate into more work for IBEW sisters and brothers, more money in our pockets, and a safer, more efficient workplace. Strong relationships foster a strong workforce, and IBEW members are leading the way with the Code of Excellence.

It was the Code of Excellence that helped renew the business relationship between a wire company in Massachusetts and a transformer plant in Wisconsin. When Business Manager John Horak of Chelsea, Mass., Local 1499 learned that one of his employers, Rea Magnet Wire, used to have a contract with SPX Transformer Solutions, he reached out to his brother, Milwaukee, Wis., Local 2150 Business Representative Mike Bruening, with an idea.

Horak and Bruening used the Code as a selling point to grow Rea's business. SPX had implemented IBEW's COE around 2011 to great reception, so Bruening suggested that Rea adopt the program, too.

"It's the mark of quality," Horak said. "There's an assurance that you're getting something you can rely on. It's good branding."

The increased work led to a need for more people, and because Local 1499 members were delivering such



a high-quality product, Rea chose to invest \$5 million in their union plant in Connecticut instead of investing in Arkansas, which is a "right-to-work" state. Membership in the Connecticut local increased nearly 50 percent.

In Florida, utility company Florida Power & Light needed to turn things around. Relationships with workers were strained and the number of grievances filed was high. But when the company and its IBEW local unions rolled out the COE, those grievances dropped and OSHA-reportable accidents fell by 50 percent.

"It's a cultural change," said Miami Local 359 member and Line Specialist Laquanta Ransom. "If the company looks good, we look good, and if everyone gets on board [with the Code], we'll be a flawless company."

Other trades are also recognizing the power of the Code of Excellence. When the headquarters of Northwestern Mutual was built in Milwaukee, it was done under a multi-trade version of IBEW's Code called the Code of Distinction.

"It's truly the gold standard in what's going on in Milwaukee building-wise right now," said Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades President Dan Bukiewicz, who initially brought the idea to Northwestern Mutual. "The trades are blending wonderfully."

Effective relationships not only increase job opportunities—they help create the type of workplace that employees want to contribute to. Keep reading to find out how relationships are an essential part of the Code in your branch.



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



Relationships Pay Off in the Studio, on the Scene

Whether you're in the field covering a live sporting event or back at the studio collaborating on the local news, you understand a high-quality telecast doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's the result of talented, dedicated employees and managers working together.

Success in this business, as in many others, is defined by relationships: between management and workers; between reporters and sources; and between team members all pulling in the same direction.

Over the years, the IBEW has built relationships with a wide range of industry leaders, including PBS, Tribune Broadcasting, Univision and Telemundo, among others. We've had agreements with CBS going back to 1939. IBEW members earn the respect of television executives with their exceptional performance, and those relationships foster a sense of mutual respect when it comes time to negotiate the next contract.

It's those relationships that allow local union leaders to come to the bargaining table with positive expectations, and it's why IBEW members earn higher pay and better benefits than their nonunion counterparts. They're why, last year at CBS, IBEW and company executives were able to work together to negotiate a contract renewal a



whopping four months early.

But dealings with management aren't the only places relationships matter. Your relationships with your IBEW brothers and sisters on the job are important too. Positive relationships make for better morale in the workplace and make everyday problems easier to solve.

On the scene, your relationships with outside vendors, police and security personnel keep you safe when you're working in potentially dangerous conditions.

Developing positive relationships in all aspects of our work takes time and patience, but it's work that's always rewarded in the long run.

SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Local 37 members proudly wearing SPARQ T-shirts while taking a fitness break at their annual training conference.



Debbie Barry (pictured above right) and other COE volunteer trainers were recognized at the annual Local 37 Training Conference where the theme was "Celebrating Excellence."