

Get the facts!

Q- *How does the union work?*

A- A union is a democratic organization of a majority of the employees in a facility. The basic idea of a union is that by joining together with fellow employees to form a union, workers have a greater ability to improve conditions at the worksite. In other words, "in unity there is strength."

Q- *What will be in our contract?*

A- It is for the union employees to decide what to negotiate for. Your co-workers are already talking about many issues that are important to them at union meetings. After you win union recognition, you will select a negotiating committee from among your co-workers. Then, with the assistance of union negotiators, the committee will sit down with management to negotiate a contract.

The law says that both sides must bargain "in good faith" to reach an agreement on wages, benefits, and working conditions. The contract will only take effect after it is approved (ratified) by a majority of the workers.

It is not possible to know exactly what will be in the first contract. Our goal will be to win improvements with each contract.

Q- *Who runs the union?*

A- The union is a democratic organization run by the members. Members elect the local officers. You vote on many issues of importance to you. You vote on your contract. Union members elect delegates to national conventions, where delegates elect national officers and vote on major issues affecting the union such as constitutional amendments. The union is the people themselves.

Q- *Won't it cost the company a lot money if the union comes in?*

A- In the short run, it's true that unions cost employers more in terms of wages and benefits. But in the long run, that doesn't necessarily hurt the employer. Many unions are good for the employers as well as for the workers.

The reason is simple. With a union there is higher morale, and there is a mechanism for workers to have a voice in how the workplace operates.

Satisfied employees are more productive, and less likely to quit, so there is less turnover. Also, management benefits when it gets input from the workers on how the operation could be run better.

Q- *Can I be fired for participating in the campaign?*

A- First of all, the law prohibits any employer from discriminating against people in any way because of their union activity. If an employer does harass or discriminate against a

union supporter, the union files a charge with the Labor Board, and prosecutes the employer to the fullest extent.

The best safeguard against the employer harassing anyone is for everybody to stick together and win their union. Without a union, management has a free hand to treat people as they please. But with a union, everyone has the protection of a union contract.

Q- What can the union do about favoritism?

A- Fairness is the most important part of the union contract. The same rules apply to everyone. If any worker feels that he or she is not being treated fairly, then he or she, of course, still has the opportunity to complain to the supervisor, just like before. But under a union contract, the supervisor or manager no longer has the final say. They are no longer judge and jury. If the worker is not satisfied with the response of the supervisor, the worker can file a grievance.

The first step of a grievance procedure is for the steward to accompany the worker to try to work it out with the supervisor. If the worker is not satisfied, the steward and the employee, with help from the Union Business Manager, can bring the grievance to higher management. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be placed before an outside neutral judge called an arbitrator.

Q- Management is hinting that we could lose the benefits we now have. Is that true?

A- The purpose of forming a union is to win improvements in wages and benefits, not to lose them. We start with what we have and go up. On average, unionized workers earn a third more than non-union workers in wages and benefits. Occasionally in organized facilities workers agree to grant concessions to aid an ailing company, but this comes after years of winning improvements.

The employees vote on whether or not to accept a contract. Would you vote to accept a contract that took away your benefits? Think about it. If having a union meant that the employer could reduce your benefits, why would the employer be fighting the union so hard?

Besides, it is against the law for the employer to retaliate against the union by taking away wages or benefits.

Q- What about all those meetings we're having where management talks about the union being bad and corrupt?

A- The employer would like you to think that unions are corrupt. The truth is that unions are decent, honest organizations dedicated to improving the lives of working people.

Nothing is perfect, and there have been examples of union officials who have not been honest. But the same is true of government officials and business leaders. There are a few bad apples in any group of people.

Telling you not to vote for a union because there have been some corrupt officials is like telling you never to work for a company because a company official has been corrupt.

Q- *The employer says the union can't guarantee us anything. Can you?*

A- The union can guarantee this: that when workers stick together as a union they have more bargaining power and more of a voice than they do as individuals.

When the union wins, you will negotiate a contract with the employer. We can make no promises on what the contract will contain. That is for you to decide when you vote on your contract. We can guarantee that the contract will be legally binding, and the union will make sure the contract is enforced.

Q- *Management says the union is just after our dues money. Why should we pay money to the union?*

A- Dues are used to run your union and keep it strong. The dues are divided between the local union and the national union. The money is used to provide expert services to your local union, including negotiators, lawyers, economists, and educators; to pay the salaries of officers and staff, including organizers; to provide newsletters and conferences. The local union's money is used for reimbursing stewards for lost time, for the union hall, and for other expenses of your union.

Did you know that the employer also pays dues to organizations? Employers have their own "unions" - such as the Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers. They pay for representation-why shouldn't you?

Besides, since when is the company so concerned about your money?

Q- *How much are Union Dues?*

A- The dues will depend upon what the local needs to operate efficiently and effectively. However, the dues will be set by you, as a local union, with the exception of the International portion of the dues, which is set and voted by all Local Unions at the International Convention every five (5) years. However, no dues are paid until the majority of workers vote to accept a contract they helped to negotiate. All initiation fees will be waived for members in newly organized units.

Q- *Management has hinted there will be a strike if we organize.*

A- Management talks a lot about strikes during an organizing drive. Did they tell you that over 98% of union contracts are settled without a strike? There could only be a strike if the employees vote for the strike. And it's only smart to vote for a strike if you know you can win. The employer doesn't want a strike any more than the workers do, so everyone has an incentive to reach a compromise during bargaining.

Unions have developed a lot of other tactics that can put pressure on management to

reach a fair agreement. For example, unions use boycotts or corporate campaigns or community support, rather than necessarily having to resort to striking.

Q- *How do we go about getting a union here?*

A- We've already taken the important first steps in forming a union. We've formed a voluntary organizing committee of which many of you are members. This committee was formed to investigate and to inform of the ways that a union may help us. We've held meetings to inform other employees as to what their rights are now and **the rights they gain by forming a union.**

Now it's all up to us to vote Union and to ask others to **vote for their future by VOTING UNION .**

Q- *What does signing the authorization card mean?*

A- It means you want the union. The card is a commitment of support. And, it gives us the legal support for an open and free union election.

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