

Editors' Weekend

October 18-20, 2024

Communication for power

Using literature to engage disengaged members.

- Building empathy, creativity and critical thinking.
- Creating shared language
- Promoting two-way dialogue
- Building trust

Some questions to ask oneself:

1. Are you writing about what interests you or a small group of people who are already engaged?
2. How do you decide what to post or publish for your members?
3. What platforms are you using to communicate with your members?
4. Where are you getting your information from and is it only union related?

Let's **think outside our normal box**, go **back to basics** and **get personal**. It will be difficult to engage, disengaged members if we don't know who they are.

Suggestion #1 - Talk to people you don't know. This covers building empathy, creativity and critical thinking, promotes two-way dialogue and build trust.

What are some reasons why you or people would avoid or just not talk to people they don't know?

- Scary, shy, nervous
- afraid to say the wrong thing
- don't know what to say
- don't know if people would want to talk to them
- just not comfortable

What are some things that can come out of talking to people we don't know?

- Learn things about people we never knew.

- Exposed to different ways to do things, especially in the workplace
- Discover new perspective which can trigger a writer's creativity
- Make an impact on one's life. Examples: whether it's discovering an issue at work or finding out that someone has a family caterer company and using them to cater for future events.
- Better listening skills. Which will help you find out what do members want to read about.

Now that you are getting to know your fellow members, find a creative way to show disengaged members that they've been heard and that they truly are a part of the union.

Possible examples: Spotlight column or post (weekly, monthly, quarterly)

Choose a member to spotlight and share with the workplace, local or region. This will require a buildup of trust. Start with members that are more comfortable being in the spotlight, perhaps newly elected leaders, or start with spotlight on the InSolidarity committee members and let the members know this type of column/posts will be featured in the quarterly magazine. Then make your way to the members who aren't as engaged. But keep in mind this is a process and it won't take one conversation with someone you don't know. It's about building trust and a genuine connection as fellow union member.

Possible questions to ask:

1. Name and how long they're worked in the workplace
2. Share something interesting that no one at work would know about you, but your friends and family do.
3. What are some future goals in the workplace or the union

Remember: If your employer doesn't recognize their employees or only recognizes individuals when they get promoted, this is an opportunity to show your members how the union is different from the employer.

You, as union leaders, can recognize your members. This creates unity where in most cases employers try to create separation amongst their employees. When and if there is ever a time to stand up to the employer, everyone will already be united.

Suggestion # 2 – Broaden your topics!

Take turns writing about topics that could peak the interests of your members or impact you members in different equity groups.

- Write about what's happening in the community, whether it's something positive like a fair or whether it's a small business who needs support.
- Let's take it a step further, what roles do some of your members play in the community? And you'll find this out by "Talking to people you don't know".
- Are we doing real research and writing about topics that impact members in different equity groups? And if we are who are we including in the process and where are we getting the information from. Also, how much "authentic" efforts are we putting into this. Members who are disengaged can sense when things are unauthentic and are just being done to say it's done.
- Acknowledging days to be commemorated besides the standard Provincial and Federal days. What days are important to you members? "Talking to people we don't know" will help.

Suggestion # 3 – Survey your members

We know that a lot of people don't like surveys, but that's because most of the time no one sees the results from them. We must strategically survey our members, which will be a process with multiple surveys. Find out what members want to read about, find out what communication platforms they use. Find out the level of social media knowledge that they have. Once you have this information, make changes, tell them you've made changes then do another follow-up survey, or tell them there weren't enough responses so here's another survey. But you must be transparent and tell your members why you want this information and how it benefits them.