

**UNION  
BUSTING  
PLAY  
BOOK**

**Step by Step On What UNION BUSTERS Do  
and How They Run UNION BUSTING  
Campaigns**

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## CHAPTER I

### WHY EMPLOYERS JOIN UNIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### WHY EMPLOYEES JOIN UNIONS

Since the 1950s, the percentage of the private sector work force represented by unions has dropped dramatically - from approximately 35% to 11% with no end in sight.

The number of representation elections conducted each year by the National Labor Relations Board is close to 3,000.

Each year, between 180,000 and 235,000 employees vote to determine whether or not they want union representation.

Unions annually win about 48% of the representation elections conducted each year. Typically, unions win more representation elections in smaller units than in larger units. Union win rates are about 52% in units of under 50 workers, 45% in units of 50-99 workers, 39% in units of 100-499 workers, and 35% in units of 500 or more workers.

By industry, unions win 43% of representation elections in the manufacturing industry; 60% in the mining industry; 58% in the service industry - excluding health care; 56% in the health care industry; 55% in the finance, insurance and real estate industries; 53% in the

construction industry; 51% in the transportation, communication and utilities industries; 46% in the retail industry; and 45% in the wholesale area.

Unions can be formidable adversaries, but a union's success or failure to win an election depends greatly on the employer. With careful planning, management can substantially reduce the likelihood of a union organizing their employees, and can maintain a non-unionized facility.

### The Union Appeal

What sparks a union organizing campaign at a company? The answer will vary from one employer to another. Every union attempt to organize an employer will be different.

Historically, poor wages, long hours and oppressive working conditions were the primary reasons union organizational campaigns were so successful in winning supporters.

So what do employees want from their jobs? Employees want all they can get. If an employee feels that his or her job needs are not being satisfied, then he or she begins looking for a better way toward job satisfaction.

### Employee Economic Needs

Employees have economic needs, and they want to have their needs satisfied. An employee works to earn wages. Wages provide him with food, clothing and shelter for himself or herself and his or her family. The employee's economic needs are also manifested in his or her desire for working conditions that are safe, clean and pleasant. Some employees manifest their economic needs by wanting additional hours of work so that more wages can be earned. On the other hand, some employees want fewer hours because they wish to spend more time with their children.

Employees want better benefits to take care of their on-and-off-the-job needs. Paid holidays, paid vacations, paid sick leave, life insurance, hospitalization, and surgical coverage are examples of economic needs that promote the employee's job satisfaction.

Employees have the economic need for stable and continuous employment. Job security is normally thought of in these terms. The employer should have little difficulty in understanding the importance of the need for stable and continuous employment. For if this need is not met, then the other economic needs are of little significance.

A last basic economic need found existing among most employees is a desire for seniority rights and privileges. Employees want to have their length of service recognized in the form of certain rights and job privileges.

### Employee Personal Needs

Employees have personal needs, and they want to have their personal needs met on the job. Employees want and appreciate a "pat on the back" from someone in the ranks of management. More than ever, an employee wants to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Employees want to feel important. They want to have their work appreciated, regardless of their length of service, skill or ability. Many employees want to have the opportunity to advance, to be promoted, or to climb up to the next step on the promotion ladder.

This need for advancement does vary in degree with employees at opposite ends of the socioeconomic ladder. Lack of opportunity for advancement is noticed frequently as a reason for job dissatisfaction for foremen and middle line supervisors, as well as white collar employees.

There is a personal need to "participate" in company operations, particularly among white and gray collar groups. This is not the role of being a member of management. Rather, it is a desire to have one's opinion requested by a supervisor or a member of top management. Employees want to be asked how they feel, what the problems are, what can be done to improve the overall company and make it a better place to work for everyone. Employees want to "help create" and be a part of their own creation.

Furthermore, employees tend to support those areas of company policy in which they have had the opportunity to participate. If the personal need for participation can be regularly satisfied by the employer, the employer may notice a change in the degree of loyalty and dedication expressed by the employees. In consulting with companies which recognize the importance of employee participation, through informal group meetings with supervisors and top management, it is observed that employee attachment and loyalty to the company is certainly stronger than that observed in companies which feel that by giving employees a chance to participate, "management rights and prerogatives are being usurped."



If personal needs are not satisfied by management, then the company is certainly wide open to promises made by unions to employees concerning status, better recognition, and the opportunity to advance into union leadership with dignity, self-respect and importance.

### Employee Social Needs

The third major need for employees on the job is "social" or "group" needs. Employees have the need to belong to their work group. They want to be friends with their fellow workers on the job. They have the need to be looked upon as important by their co-workers. Employees desire to be part of a good productive group. They want to feel that they are looked upon with approval by their close friends in the productive group.

The social need is also manifested in the desire of the rank and file employees to visit with top management representatives. "Family nights" and husband and wife dinner meetings have always been well received by rank and file employees in companies. Certainly one reason is to satisfy the basic social need of the employees to meet and visit with people who make them feel important and appreciated.

### What Employees Don't Get From Their Jobs

The second category of reasons and motives causing employees to show an interest in unions can be described as "need frustration." This category consists of things they have wanted but failed to receive from the company. This category closely follows with the first category of basic employee needs from the job. Once basic needs are met satisfactorily, the employer should expect the morale and job satisfaction of employees to be high. If the needs are not met, the result is poor employee morale and job dissatisfaction. Through the use of Employee Opinion Surveys, employers have found a large percentage of employee dissatisfaction traced back to the complete lack of good two-way communications and misinformation.

In a recently unionized plant where the company thought everything was going along smoothly, one employee viewed the situation in the following way:

"It's not just the big things that rattle you. It's the many little things too, and the general attitude. Some employees who really don't like the union voted for it just to take a slap at the management. It was just their way of expressing resentment. The people here don't want a union. It's just that they feel frustrated and don't believe

that management cares about them. They feel insecure. They don't get any explanation in the company's plans. The management promotes people without regard to seniority, frequently overlooking the old-timers on the job, and too often pay several different rates for the same job."

In reviewing past union campaigns, we found many frustrations causing employees to look toward unionism with interest. Generally speaking, the employer had been primarily responsible. Through management apathy, management mistakes, poor personnel policy and practice, and poor communications, coupled with supervisors inadequately trained in the skill of meeting the needs of the employee on the job, employee morale had suffered with the result being job dissatisfaction and frustration. Specifically, employees have shown interest in union promises for the following reasons:

1. Unfair and harsh treatment by immediate supervisors -- employees believed they could get even with management for real or imaginary wrongs.
2. Little, if any, personal recognition -- employees believed they could at least get forced recognition from the company.
3. Lack of fair and firm discipline.

4. Fear of job security -- employees felt they would have greater safety and job security in numbers.
5. Failure of management to exercise confident leadership.
6. "Open Door" complaint procedure that didn't open.
7. Failure of management to help employees identify themselves with the company -- employees believed they would have the opportunity to "participate" in a personal need satisfaction through union membership.
8. Favoritism.
9. Lack of or inadequate employee benefits.
10. Substandard wages.
11. Failure to put company personnel policies and employee benefits in writing.
12. Lack of recognition for length of service on the job.
13. Cursing employees.
14. Failure to "sell" employees on the benefits and advantages of working for the company.

15. Employees believed that the union organization could relieve their feelings of frustration and boredom by giving them a chance to achieve prestige and social recognition.

Employees will almost always make the initial contact with the union by going directly to the union hall to seek representation. As indicated previously, where their needs have not been met effectively, and where they have become dissatisfied or frustrated, they feel that a union will help them overcome their frustration and dissatisfaction. Certainly, an employer should realize that one of an employer's first jobs is to discover and correct, whenever legally and economically possible, any condition which has caused the employees to seek outside union representation.

Past counter-union campaigns have pointed out very vividly that employees strongly resent favoritism, discrimination, unfair treatment, swearing by supervision and public reprimanding. These are examples of clear-cut violations of the employee's personal and social frustrations. As a general observation, whenever employees were frustrated in their efforts to have their personal needs satisfied, they had very few alternatives left to achieve personal satisfaction. It is extremely difficult for the employee to hold his head high after being

reprimanded in front of his fellow workers. Nor is it easy for the employee to overcome a barrage of harsh language from his immediate supervisor in front of his fellow co-workers.

### “Management Mistakes”

We have heard much of “management mistakes” as being one of several possible sparks that ignited an employee’s interest in the union. Consciously or unconsciously, management has made serious mistakes in its overall employee relationship. Often the reason for such mistakes has been that little, if any, short and long term planning was undertaken to meet the needs of supervisors and employees on a regular basis.

In our experience, we too have found that unionization is caused by management failure. It is not always a simple thing. But in every case of unionization activity and resulting representation campaigns and NLRB elections, we have found that management has either failed to understand and meet employees’ needs or has failed to act in a timely manner to find out what their employees were thinking and feeling about their job satisfaction.

Top management doesn’t always look upon supervisory and employee morale as equally important to the company’s growth and

success as sales, marketing and finance. Even where such policy is put in writing, top management does not always insist that the policy be administered and supported by all levels of supervision within the company. When this policy has been communicated to all levels of supervision, some supervisors do a poor job of carrying out and administering the employee relations policy because they have not been effectively trained in the art of human relations on the job. They do not understand, nor can they appreciate, the three basic needs of employees, simply because they have not been trained properly.

In addition to the idea of management mistakes causing an employee's interest in the union, there exists a general cause of employee dissatisfaction which often leads to union interest. We have found employee interest in unions to be tied in to the company's "bad image" as observed and felt by the employees.

Employers who have gone through previous counter-union campaigns and who have won will not hesitate to testify that it is much easier and less costly to take constructive steps to correct morale problems and employee dissatisfaction in advance of the union campaign. Before an employer can effectively anticipate the type of defensive and offensive counter-union campaign the company will go

through, the employer must first take a look at the company's image, which the employees see and feel each day.

How can a company's image be an asset or a liability to the employer in a counter-union campaign? A company's image as seen and felt by the rank and file employee is made up of employee needs and satisfactions -- economic, social, and personal. If most of these needs are satisfied on a regular basis, the company has a good image -- an asset to the employer. If, on the other hand, the employee's needs are not satisfied on a regular basis, the employee will become frustrated. If the employee cannot achieve satisfaction of his or her needs on the job within the company, the company in turn will have a poor image -- a liability to the employer.

A poor company image is a cause of employee interest in a union. Even more important, it is a major factor influencing the way employees will vote during the election. Some employees will put an "X" on the ballot as a vote against management.

### **Other Causes for Joining**

There are other causes of union organizing success in the United States. Some of these causes have been related to the employee's



interest in the union initially, but they are also found without initial employee interest. For example, many workers have been forced to join unions because of reasons beyond their control. The union shop has required union membership as a condition of continued employment on a job in states that do not have Right to Work laws and where labor and management have mutually agreed to a union shop clause in the labor agreement.

Some workers might join a union because they may be fearful for themselves and their families as a result of real or imagined threats and other tactics used by organizers in the campaign.

Some employees have signed union authorization cards for representation, not because they were sold on the need for the union, but because they had to satisfy their social needs of belonging to their work group and being accepted by their fellow workers.

### Union Promises

It can be seen that there exists rather complicated and varied reasons for an employee's interest in or joining a union. However, the union itself is certainly one reason for past and future organization drives. Unions have sold employees by promising many things to the

organized work force. Many promises have been based upon their past record of improving wages, hours and working conditions, as well as other terms and conditions of employment in various industries in different sectors of the United States. However, the past record of unionism hasn't always been good. Many unions have put employees out of work in the same year they have helped others improve their economic status on the job.

In working with employers during union organizing drives, we have found that union organizers have convincingly sparked employee interest in unionism by skillful promising of many things:

1. The promise of improving wages and employee benefits, fewer hours of work, and better working conditions.
2. The promise of better job security and more stable employment.
3. The promise of equal and fair treatment and job protection.
4. The promise to handle complaints and grievances by policing their negotiated labor agreement.
5. The promise of giving the employees a chance to participate in management policies and decisions.

It is important to understand that employees will continue to listen to these union promises with interest because:

1. Employees felt they could at least get forced recognition from the company.
2. Employees believed they could get even with management for real or imaginary wrongs.
3. Employees believed they would have the opportunity to "participate" and achieve personal need satisfaction through union membership.
4. Employees believed they would have the chance to be recognized as important so they could achieve prestige and social recognition.
5. Employees felt they would have greater safety and job security in numbers.
6. Employees felt that the union organization could relieve their feeling of frustration and boredom.

### Employees Want to be Loyal

We have found without question that the majority of working men and women want to be loyal to the organization that writes their paycheck. Why then do so many employees turn to unions? The basic

answer is "need frustration." They turn to unionization when their basic needs, wants, gripes and complaints go unheeded, unheard or unanswered by management. Studies have shown conclusively that employees will not usually show interest in a union until their "need frustration" has caused a low morale situation involving their daily work experience. In summation, the following list of employee attitudes is based on employee "need frustrations":

Employee Attitudes About Top Management and the Organization

1. Failure of management to help employees identify themselves with the organization.
2. Failure of management to reflect and exercise competent leadership in the organization.
3. Failure of management and the organization to create an organizational atmosphere in which employees feel their efforts are appreciated, vital and essential to the organization of which they are a part. Employees want to feel an important part of the team, contributing to the success of the organization.
4. Management apathy and lack of personal interest shown to employees in the organization concerning their on-the-job satisfaction.

### Employee Attitudes About Communications

1. Little, if any, effort by the company to keep employees informed on the plans and future of the organization and the employee's role in the future.
2. Lack of understanding of employee benefits programs for the employee and his family.
3. Failure to put employee benefits and privileges in writing for employees and their families.
4. Failure of immediate supervisor to keep employees informed of changes in job requirements and expectations.
5. Management failing to communicate with employees about things going on around the plant, fears of job insecurity and rumors, etc.
6. Management operating in a vacuum as far as employee complaints and opinions are concerned. Failure or refusal to listen to employee complaints, opinions or suggestions on how the organization can be a better place to work for them as an individual.

### Employee Attitudes About Pay

1. No formalized wage and salary program causing employees to know where they can go in satisfying their need for financial reward.
2. Internal wage classification inequities among employees doing the same job and different jobs.
3. External wage classification inequities -- wage rates that are not competitive in the community.
4. Failure to understand method of payment, incentive programs and raising performance standards on piece rate systems.
5. Failure to give opportunity for promotion and upgrading before outside hiring.

### Employee Attitudes About Supervision

1. Unfair treatment by immediate supervisors, favoritism, cursing employees.
2. Failure of supervisor to explain "why" when he or she gives orders, or makes changes on the job.
3. Supervisors failing to discipline other employees for the same offenses, being too tough and using inconsistent disciplinary methods.

4. Poor supervisors who don't know how to make an employee "feel important" or "needed."
5. Fear of immediate supervisor. Lack of confidence and respect for immediate supervisor.
6. Failure of management to take care of employee complaints and problems quickly.

#### Employee Attitudes About Personnel Policies

1. Failure to put personnel policies and work rules in writing so employees can understand what is required and what they can expect in return.
2. Failure to explain new personnel policies to employees before discipline is given.
3. Enforcing work rules inconsistently.
4. No formal complaint or grievance procedure to clear up misunderstandings, on-the-job problems and complaints.
5. No consistent effort made by employer or by employees' immediate supervisors to let employees know "how we're doing" or "how we need to do better." (Performance appraisal system.)

### Employee Attitudes About Status and Recognition

1. Employees do not feel that the work they do is important, believe that the union can relieve their feelings of boredom and frustration by giving them a chance "to belong," need for feelings of status, recognition, dignity, self-respect and importance.
2. Little, if any, personal recognition or appreciation shown by immediate supervisor for exceptional work performance. "No pats on the back around here!"
3. Failure of immediate supervisor to help employee develop to his or her fullest potential by further training and development on the job.
4. Failure to recognize employee length of service with appropriate gifts, awards, certificates, pins and other benefits.
5. Reprimanding, correcting and criticizing employee conduct and work performance in front of fellow employees on the job by immediate supervisors.

### Employee Attitudes About Fringe Benefits

1. Inadequate employee benefits program.



2. Hospitalization insurance not kept up to date to meet higher costs.
3. Failure to provide competitive paid holidays and paid vacations.
4. No retirement or pension plan.
5. Employer refusing to pay part of group insurance premium for employee and/or family.

#### Employee Attitudes About Working Conditions

1. Unclean, unhealthy and unsafe physical working environment.
2. Failure to provide the necessary tools, equipment and supplies to do the job that is expected of the employee.
3. Filthy restrooms, eating area.
4. Inadequate restroom facilities, break or eating facilities, poor parking area.
5. Poor ventilation and heating system.
6. Lack of workable drinking fountains and vending machines.

### Employee Attitudes About Job Security

1. Fear of losing job through lay-offs.
2. No written seniority program recognizing length of services as a factor in lay-offs and recalls.
3. Fear of job insecurity caused by failure to communicate with employees about the presence of new automation equipment and machinery. Some union campaigns started as a result of fears from charges that new automation would cut down jobs, cause them to lose jobs, that the company was planning to move its plant to another location, or that a merger was in the process and numerous employees would be terminated.
4. Employees believe that a union can guarantee job security through a union contract.

### Employee Attitudes About Co-Workers

1. Employees have signed union cards and attended union meetings because their immediate work groups did the same. Need to "conform" to the immediate work group wishes caused many employees to "go along with the crowd." (Peer pressure.)
2. Employee-friend being unjustly terminated, thus creating a "martyr" image for union to sell their "protection" package.
3. Favoritism being shown by immediate supervisor.

4. Failure of immediate supervisor to require same amount of effort and job performance by all employees -- "They don't do their fair share of work."
5. Failure to get rid of or "weed out" employees with bad attitudes, poor attendance, and poor performance records.
6. Rehiring former employees that were discharged for cause.

What is the real significance and meaning of all this for the non-union or the union-free business today? Ask yourself, if you had a union representation election today, would a majority of your employees vote for you or the union? What would happen in the secrecy of the NLRB ballot box? Would it be a vote for you or against you? Would you be surprised, shocked or pleased when the last ballot is counted? To answer these questions honestly and realistically, you MUST begin to LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN to your supervisors and employees on a regular basis.