

HANDLING COMMON QUESTIONS

Formula for Overcoming Objections

When we ask someone to organize a union or get more active in our union, we sometimes hear objections from them (the “Yeah, but...”). This formula will help you overcome those objections and be successful at recruiting new leads and getting our current membership more involved.

1. **Empathize:** “I hear what you’re saying about... (bad union experience, dues are too much, etc.)”
2. **Briefly answer the objection.**
3. **Bring the conversation back to their issue and motivation:** “You were telling me that (issue) is a concern and that it’s negatively impacting (motivation).”
4. **Ask again:** “How will (issue) get better if we don’t act now? So are you ready to organize your coworkers and form a union?”

Examples of Objections and How to Answer Them:

Non-Union Community Member: “I’m not joining a union! Unions only support Democrats and don’t reflect my political values.”

Activist:

1. **I hear what you’re saying:** you don’t want our union to only support one party.
2. **Our union supports candidates only if they have strong records and positions on workplace issues that affect us as workers.** We support both Republicans and Democrats only if they support us.
3. That’s why it’s so important to continue to strengthen our union and the MNPL program. **Take the issue of raises, for instance** — you were just telling me that you think you deserve far more than you’re being paid.
4. **Do you think that’s going to get better on its own?** No, but if we elect people on city council who support us as workers, we can leverage their support in our contract negotiations if we need to. **So what do you say, are you ready to take the next step and organize a union with your co-workers?**

Non-Union Community Member: “I don’t want to join a union because I get my current wages and benefits without paying dues.”

Activist:

1. **I hear what you’re saying,** money is tight for a lot of us and it can be tempting to think of this as a way to save a little.
2. However, the truth is that unions are democratic organizations run by and for the members of the union. Dues help us run the day-to-day work of our organization and ally ourselves with other people working to build more power for working people in our town. Dues are what pay for the lawyers and the staff support we need when negotiating our contracts, and **without that support we’re unable to effectively negotiate for wage and benefit increases, working conditions, etc.**
3. That’s why it’s so important to strengthen our union. You were mentioning you’re frustrated with the **seniority system** in your department right now.
4. **Do you think that’s going to get better on its own?** No, but if we prioritize it in your first contract negotiation, we can improve that policy. **So what do you say, are you ready to stand with us and organize a union in your workplace?**