

Organizing Conversations – 6 Steps

1) Introductions & Frame the Conversation

Introduce yourself, be confident and set the context for the conversation that relates to the specific situation of this group of workers.

- Who we Are
- Why we are there

2) Issues & Agitation

Figure out what issues are important to the worker through open ended questions about work and what they do. “If you could change three things at work tomorrow, what would you change?” The goal is to first find out what matters to the worker, then asking questions to agitate about the way things are now, have worker acknowledge that things need to change, someone has the power to change things and they won’t act unless pushed to do so. Get the worker excited about making improvements at work.

3) Hope: Our Vision & Education

This is about raising workers’ expectations and communicating the idea that in order to win significant gains workers need to get a stronger voice, they need to build high membership in their worksite, active participation by building site structures, involve members of the community and join with other members in other fights. Communicate our plan to win to build this kind of strength. Education is the technical stuff about what a union is, how you form it, what contract negotiations are, how problem solving will happen at work, etc.

4) Urgency

Ask the worker if we can wait for the kinds of changes needed or if management will do anything if they are not pushed.

5) You Make a Difference: Call the Question

Will you join us [in our action, sign a membership card, etc.?] Concrete ask. Wait for their response.

6) Inoculation

This is just what it sounds like. You give the worker a little bit of the “poison” they will hear from management about joining their union or participating in their union’s actions. This reduces some of the anxiety for the worker once it happens, and it builds workers’ trust in their union. **The key here is to get the worker thinking about management’s motives.** Make sure to reconfirm their participation in the “ask.”

Work, Assignment and Follow-up

“So this has been great. The first step was you [becoming a member or agreeing to take action, etc], the next step is making sure everyone signs up so we can be strong enough to win on [their issues].” Ask them about other co-workers they know and to meet with them about signing the petition. Set a date and time to follow-up with the member about next steps.