

## Developing Workplace Leaders

### Identifying Workplace Leaders

How do we identify workplace leaders? **Spend time talking to workers in a workplace or area to find out who are the natural leaders that others already respect and follow.** When a name comes up multiple times, you know you should follow up with this person. Talk with existing leaders to get their perspectives, too. Use the following questions in your conversations:

- Who organizes workplace birthdays or celebrations?*
- Who is a leader in social circles or groups? Who is part of multiple social circles or groups?*
- Who is well-respected for the work they do?*
- Whom do people go to when they have problems or questions?*
- Who is already in a position of leadership, such as a lead or trainer?*
- Who represents coworkers on workplace committees?*
- Who speaks up for coworkers to management?*
- Who knows the organizational history?*
- Who has followers and can recruit more leaders?*

### Recruiting and Assessing Workplace Leaders

Get to know your new potential leader by talking with him/her! **Start by making a simple ask**, such as:

- Will you come to our Local meeting next week, and bring two coworkers along?
- We are trying to get more people to sign this petition. Could you circulate this on your shift and return it back to me next week?
- I'm having a Lunch and Learn and would love to see you there. Could you bring two coworkers, too?
- There is a new employee in your area we haven't been able to reach out to yet. Will you chat with them and see how they feel about joining our union?

Their success with this ask will help you to know 1) If they are committed to our union (i.e., if they make an effort), and 2) if they are suited to moving from a strong supporter/activist role, to a leadership one!

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Remember, not all workplace leaders see themselves this way. Sometimes your role in recruiting new leaders is to show them the leadership they already possess. Additionally, you can connect new leaders with mentorship, training, and support to develop the skills they need to succeed. Finally, keep in mind that **not everyone has to lead in the same way**. A person who does not feel comfortable in large groups, may excel at one-on-one conversations. Help people find the areas where they can be successful!

### Promoting Representative Leadership

Consider - where do you have **gaps in leadership**? This goes for work areas, job classes, seniority, and shifts, as well as demographic groups. Does leadership reflect the gender, race, age, and general diversity of our membership? If not, talk to members (using the questions above) and actively recruit a leader in that area.

Also consider - what **barriers** to participation and leadership roles need to be addressed? For example, would availability of childcare or interpretation make it possible for less-represented members to get involved? Lowering or eliminating barriers can go a long way towards increasing the number and diversity of our leaders, and strengthen our power and solidarity at the worksite.