



HOW TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

- **Avoid distractions.** Look the other person in the eye, and put your phone away.
- **Slow down.** Our brains process thoughts four times faster than spoken words. It's easy to skip ahead in a conversation, using your assumptions to fill in the gaps and plan your response. Resist this urge. Focus on what is actually being said.
- **Don't interrupt.** Take the time to hear the full story.
- **Keep an open mind.** Don't assume you already know what someone cares about. People will surprise you.
- **Don't fish.** Avoid leading questions like "Don't you agree that..."
- **Practice empathy.** Sometimes people need to let off steam. Don't discourage them. Your immediate task is to hear what they have to say, not to judge.
- **Show that you hear what they're saying.** React, ask follow-up questions, and repeat back what you understood. If you don't understand, ask.
- **Find common ground.** You don't have to agree with every point, but look for areas of agreement, and acknowledge where you differ.
- **Don't feel you need to sell something.** An organizer is not a salesperson. You're genuinely looking to learn the other person's point of view and create something new together.





EXERCISE: MAKE A CHART, TOO

After making a physical map of your workplace, you can keep track of the essential information in a chart. Charts are easy to update and help you monitor your organizing progress and see where the gaps are.

Keep it simple. Create a spreadsheet, using a computer program such as Excel or Google Sheets. Enter one row for each worker, even people you don't have much information about. Make a column for each bit of information you want to track, such as:

- First name
- Last name
- Cell phone
- Email address
- Job title
- Work area
- Shift
- Date of hire
- Wage tier
- Language
- Top issue
- Union member?
- Steward?
- Contract action team member?
- Completed bargaining survey?
- Attended training on X issue?
- Attended rally on Y date?
- Signed up or recruited a new member?

Keep it up to date. Charts are only as useful as they are accurate. Print out a copy of your chart to carry around with you. Continually update it, and enlist co-workers to help. This can include filling in gaps in contact information, adding people who are missing from your list, and removing those who have quit, gone on leave, or changed assignments.

Make a wall chart. Also make a big version of your chart to display on the wall, with all the names grouped by work area, job, and shift. Color-code it to show your organizing progress, so you can see at a glance where your union is weak and where it's strong. For instance, highlight everyone who has committed to attend a rally, signed a petition, or worn a button. Put a dot beside the name of each steward, activist, or contract action team member.

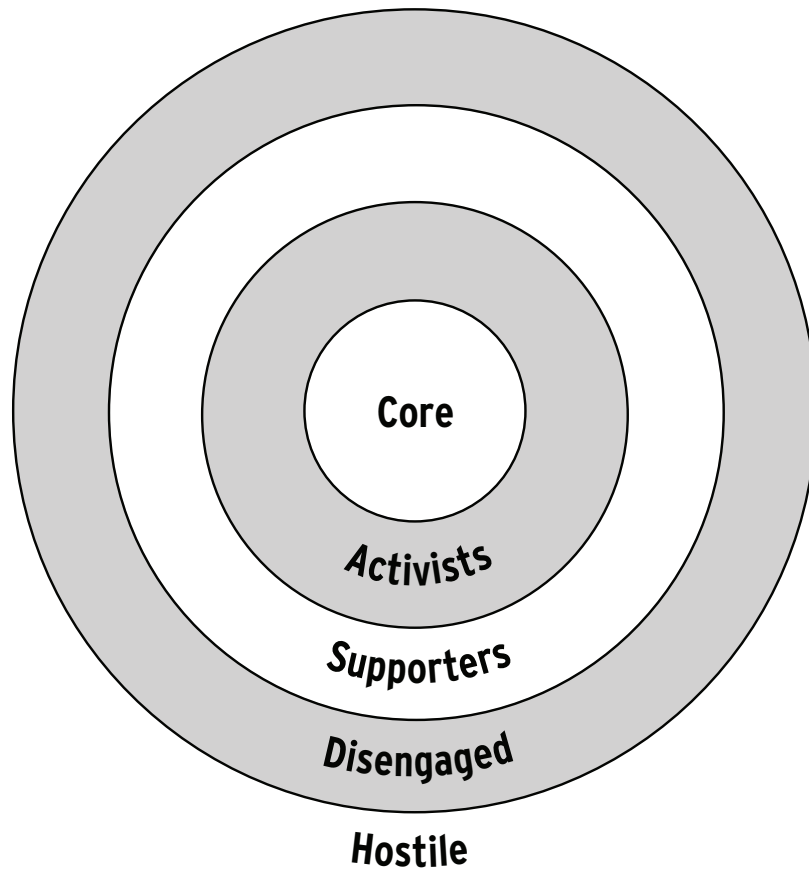
SAMPLE CHART

First	Last	Work area	Job	Shift	Cell phone	Email	Wage	Steward	Safety petition 10/31	Grievance training 11/10
Wanda	Smith	X-Ray	Tech	Day	123-456-7890	wandasmith@123.com	\$15.02	X	X	
George	Hernandez	Med Rec	Clerk	Eve	234-567-8901		\$16.73		X	X



AIM FOR THE BULLSEYE

From the organizer's point of view, think of your fellow members distributed on a dartboard. Your goal is always to move people one step closer to the center of the circle.



- **Core group:** These people are always thinking about organizing and how to get others involved, even on their time off. They might be elected leaders or shop stewards, or not.
- **Activists:** These people can be counted on to help when an issue heats up. They will take responsibility to get the word out and will ask other people to take action, too.
- **Supporters:** These people will wear a button or sign a petition, but don't take responsibility for getting anyone else involved.
- **Disengaged:** These people don't see the union as a factor in their lives, so they don't participate.
- **Hostile:** There are also people outside the circle who aren't just uninvolved—they're hostile to the union. Don't waste your time arguing with the haters. Maybe one day something will open their eyes, but it'll probably be an experience, not a debate, that does it.





TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

Don't bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn't succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don't leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action "hotter" than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:



14. Walked out of a meeting en masse
13. Spoke to the media
12. Pulled a publicity stunt
11. Called a meeting of supporters
10. Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
9. Filed an information request
8. Reached out to parents
7. Published a newsletter
6. Formed a grievance committee
5. Developed a communication network
4. Conducted a health survey
3. Gathered signatures on a grievance
2. Defined their issue: air quality
1. Met as a small group

