



#21 MAKE A MAP TO GUIDE YOU

Drawing a map will help you bring the work groups, social groups, and their leaders to light.

This visual tool will help you and your fellow organizers pool your knowledge to see who's where, who looks up to whom, who hangs out with whom, and who's facing the same problems. A map can help you set up a member-to-member network or identify where more stewards are needed. Most important, maps make power relationships visible.

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Bernard Pollack (CC BY 2.0) bit.ly/1TmhnsE

Making the map should be a group effort. You'll find it useful at any stage of organizing—whether you're a longstanding committee in mid-campaign, or a group of would-be organizers just thinking about how to get started. Because it's visual, the map can aid communication even when not everyone speaks the same language. And it's fun!

CAN YOU GET A LIST?

It's best to work from a list of all employees in your workplace or department (whatever you're mapping). Otherwise it's surprisingly easy to forget people, especially those you don't work closely with, part-timers, or those with unique jobs.

Maybe you can get this list from your union office, especially if you're a steward. If not, is there a list at work you can discreetly copy or take a picture of? The boss may distribute an emergency phone list, or post a schedule. Be resourceful.



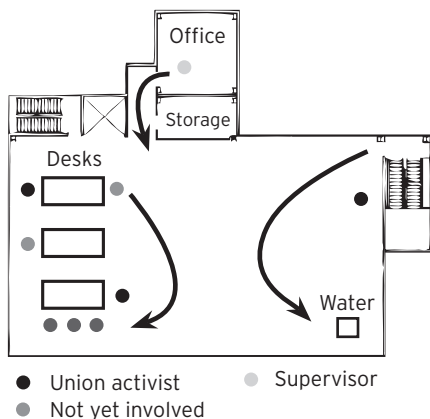
**EXERCISE:
DRAW YOUR WORKPLACE MAP**

You will need:

- Butcher paper
- Color markers
- Sticky dots

Start with the physical space. First, use a flipchart or large sheet of paper and a black marker to outline the area or building, showing entrances, exits, and windows. Label the offices, production lines, storage areas, shipping and receiving docks, lunchrooms, and bathrooms.

Add details such as machines, desks, and water coolers. If the building is large, make maps of different areas. Be sure the map is large enough to show the information clearly.



Add motion. Draw the flow of work or production, and/or the paths that different people take through the space regularly, in different colors.

Are there spots where the flow of work tends to get bottlenecked? These could be important pressure points. Who works there?

Are there places where people congregate, like the break room or the proverbial water cooler? These could be good places for outreach conversations, or group gatherings.

Add all the people. Sticky dots work well to represent workers. You might use different colors to indicate supervisors, union activists, various jobs, or shifts. Mark the dots with initials or names.



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**EXERCISE:
MAP OUT HOW PEOPLE CONNECT**

Mark the groups. Draw a circle around the people who form each work group and each social group, using different colors. If members of a group are scattered all over, indicate them some other way, such as with a certain color or checkmark.

Who works together?

Who are all the smokers?

Who carools together?

Who are the Spanish-speakers?

As you identify groups, discuss them.

How does this group relate to management?

What are the biggest problems affecting this group?

Keep your observations respectful and factual, not gossipy. The idea is to find insights that will help you organize with these co-workers, not repeat stereotypes or gripes about them.

Mark the leaders. Indicate each group's leader with an appropriate color.

Who's the main leader in this group?

Are there other leaders in this group?

Map out union support. Who's part of your organizing team so far? If there's not a formal group, choose some criteria.

Who gathered signatures on the latest petition?

Who's helping to make this map?

Also mark the wider circle of union supporters.

Who signed the last petition?

Who is a dues-paying member?



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**EXERCISE:
ANALYZE YOUR WORKPLACE MAP**

Discuss your map. You now have a great deal of information about interactions in your workplace. This is a good place to stop and ask yourselves:

What do you see?

Even when people know their workplace well, the map will help them see it with new eyes. Ask open-ended questions.

What's going on here?

Do we see any patterns?

How does news travel?

What new questions does this map raise?

The stories that come out will be about issues that are bothering people. Keep adding to the map, marking which workers are being harassed by management, for instance, and which are facing layoffs. If the map gets too crowded, start tracking the information another way.

Use your map to identify areas and leaders to focus on. Making workplace dynamics visible puts valuable information on the table.

See this group over here, the one we've never had contact with? Who can talk to someone in that group?

The next time you go to work, look around and compare the reality to your map.

Did we overlook anyone?



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