



SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

TURNING AN ISSUE INTO A CAMPAIGN



A GOOD ORGANIZING ISSUE

- **Is widely felt.** How common is the problem? How many workers face this situation? Many people must feel that this is a real problem and agree with the solution you're pursuing.
- **Is deeply felt.** Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to actually do something? It's not enough that many people agree, if none are really hot under the collar.
- **Is winnable.** It's hard to know for sure whether you *will* win, but it's possible to have a good idea whether you *can*. Your group should match your demand to the power you've already got.

To win, you'll need to make it harder for the decision-maker to keep saying no than to say yes. The more pressure you can bring to bear, the more issues will become winnable.

- **Builds the union and builds leaders.** Consider how this fight will build your capacity for future fights. Will the issue attract leaders or groups who haven't been very involved? Will it build solidarity between groups? Will it give you the chance to try an action that's one step beyond what you've done before? Will the solution lay the groundwork for future improvements?

Each fight should build off the last. It often happens that we don't win the concrete gain wanted, but we do come out smarter and better organized—which makes it more likely we can win next time.



MAKE A GAME PLAN

Once you've identified a good organizing issue, you need a plan of action.

THE THREE BASICS OF A PLAN

- 1. What exactly do you want?** It's amazing how far along folks can be in a campaign without having identified what solution they're after, and whether or not it's winnable.

- 2. Who has the power to fix the problem?** It's not enough to say "management." Figure out which person in management could say yes to your solution.

- 3. Which tactics can work?** Aim your actions to build the pressure on the decision-maker you've identified. Consider how much pressure it will take to win, and where your leverage is.





CHECKLIST: CHOOSE TACTICS THAT FIT

Your escalating campaign is made up of many tactics. A tactic could be mild, like a survey, or militant, like a work slowdown. It could be traditional, like a picket, or it could be a creative stunt a member just dreamed up. When your group is weighing what tactic to try next, here are some factors to consider:

- Does the action relate to your issue?
- Will it increase the pressure on the decision-maker?
- Is it simple?
- Is it visible?
- Is it timed for effect?
- Is it new and different—or tried and true?
- Are enough people ready to do it?
- How will others react?
- Will it unify people?
- How will management react?
- Could it backfire?
- Does it violate the law or the contract?
- If so, are you prepared for the consequences?
- Will it be fun?

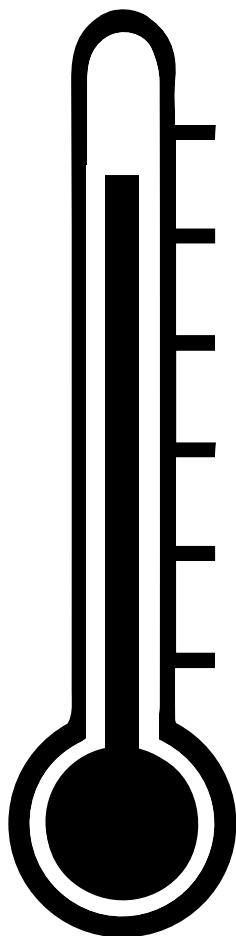




TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

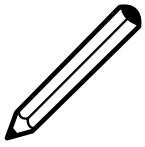
Don't bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn't succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don't leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

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





EXERCISE: ARRANGE THESE TACTICS ON A THERMOMETER

Here's an assortment of tactics that workers have used and loved. Pick an issue in your workplace and imagine you're planning an escalating campaign. Use the blank thermometer, and write in the tactics you might use, beginning at the bottom with the mildest ones.

Which tactics are "hotter" might vary from one workplace to another, and some tactics will be unique to a particular workplace. Can you think of actions you might try that aren't on this list? Place these on your thermometer, too.

Bombard the boss with phone calls and emails

Put up posters

Wear T-shirts or hats with a slogan or cartoon on a particular day

Visit the boss in a small group

Strike

Wear buttons or stickers

Distribute leaflets

File a group grievance with signatures

Hold an informational picket line

Rally in the parking lot and enter the building at the same time

Circulate a petition

Set up a Facebook page for your campaign

Write and sing a song about the boss

Barrage management with tweets and Facebook comments

Invite a giant inflatable rat to sit outside the workplace

Do a survey

Meet with outside supporters; get them to take action, too

Visit the boss in a large group

All take breaks at the same time

Spill the beans to the media

Call the boss out in front of other workers

Everyone gets "sick" on the same day

Work to rule

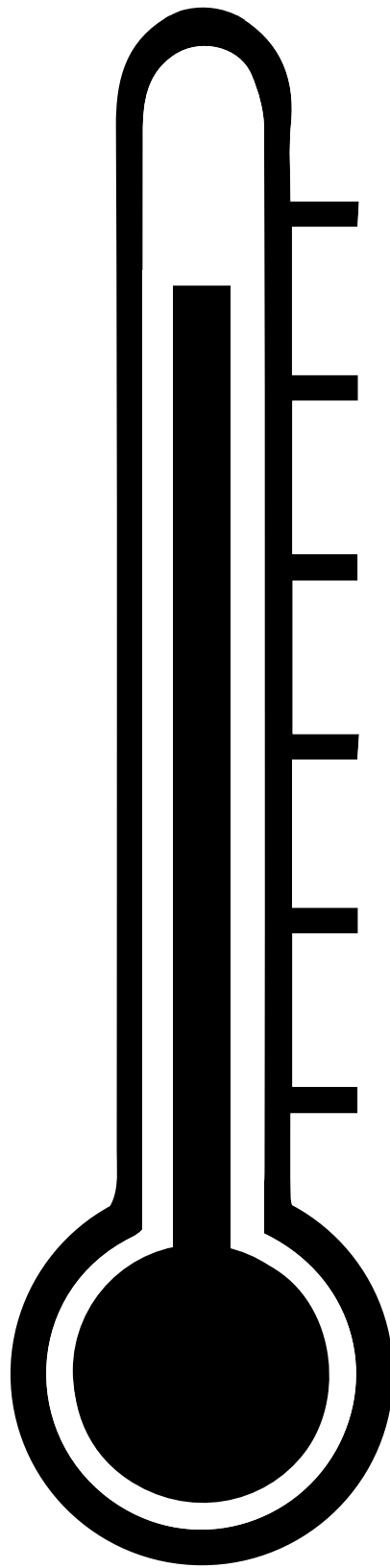
Make up wallet cards that define workers' rights

Do a skit or other creative action at a picket line, shareholders' meeting, or public place

Rally at company headquarters or another target

Stop working overtime, all together





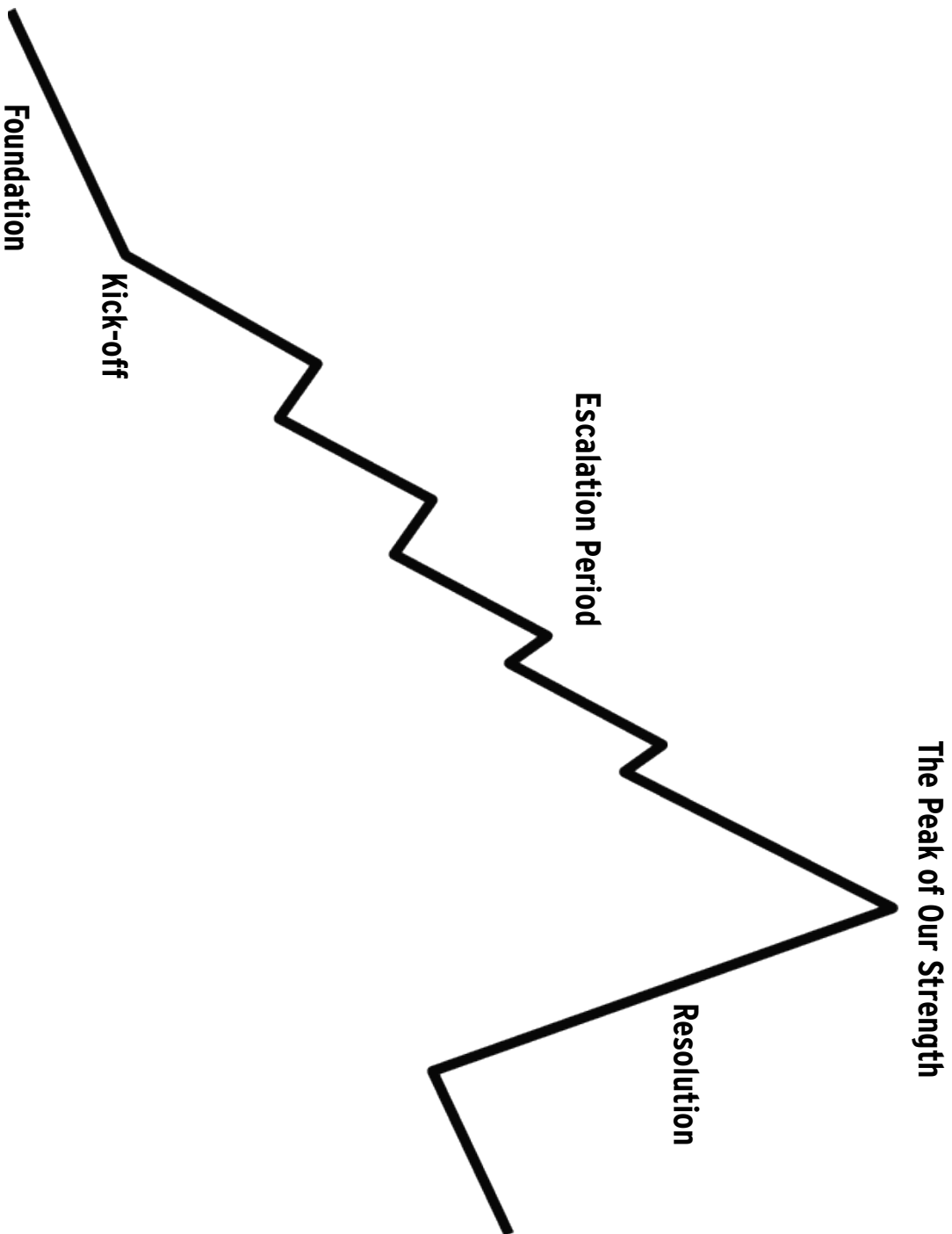
CAMPAIGN PLANNING TEMPLATE

Our Issue What is our deeply and widely felt issue? What is our demand to fix the problem?	Targets Who has the power to fix the problem?	Tactics What do we think will move our target? Which tactics fit this situation? What tactics do we start with? [warm] What tactics might we move to if necessary? [hot]



CAMPAIGN MOUNTAIN

Phases of a Campaign



COMMUNITY MAPPING SURVEY

Name: _____

Date: _____

Facility: _____

Shift: _____

Members are often the greatest resource for connecting a union to community allies. We are not just workers—we're also community members, parents, people of faith, and members of many kinds of organizations. By mapping out rich web of connections we can start to build a broader movement.

1. Do you or your family attend any kind of religious institution?

Name of religious institution:

Address:

Name of pastor/imam/rabbi/other:

2. What groups or clubs are you or a member of your family involved in? (Be specific)

Faith Group:	Professional Association:
Parent Teacher Association:	Neighborhood Group:
Sports League or Team:	Immigrant Association:
Kids Athletic Club:	Board:
Civic Organization:	Fraternity/Sorority:
Other:	

3. Do you or members of your family volunteer for anything that you have not already listed?

4. Which of your family members live in the area? What do they do? What union affiliations do they have?

5. Do you have any other connections to anyone in your community who has some kind of community profile or connections? Judges, journalists, elected officials, etc?

Worker cell phone:

Worker email:

Filled in by: