



Identifying Workplace Leaders

How do we identify workplace leaders? Spend time talking to workers in a given workplace or area and ask them who people 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 identify who the new leaders will be. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Who do people go to when they have problems or questions?*
- Who organizes workplace birthdays or celebrations?*
- 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 is well-respected for the work they do?*
- Who is a leader in social circles or groups? Who is part of multiple social circles or groups?*
- Are leaders respected and trusted by coworkers?*
- Who has followers and can recruit more leaders?*

Recruiting and Developing Workplace Leaders

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.

Make a leadership plan for this person based on their skills and interests. Ask new leaders to do something for their union, and follow up. This will help you gauge their commitment and give them opportunities to build confidence and experience. Great leaders will help develop more leaders.

Representative Leadership

Keep lists of members in each area, and track where you have strong leaders. Where do you have gaps in leadership? This goes for work areas as well as workplace demographics. Does leadership reflect the age, class, race, sexual orientation, and gender of our membership? Are there areas or groups without a leader engaged in our union? If so, talk to members and actively recruit a leader in that area. Our union is strongest when all members are represented.

What barriers to participation need to be addressed? What can we do to make leadership roles more accessible for our members? For example, would access to childcare or interpretation make it possible for members to get involved?