

I. Bill Gilbert: (Philosophy of Elections)

Organizing people is basic to the human race. Here we are talking about organizing people to an election.

You can lose an election even with a good in-plant committee, but you cannot win without them. You need good inside leadership. If you have good inside leadership, you can lose the election but you have not lost the Union.

Many tend to substitute pamphlets, slogans, radio, etc. in massive amounts for the hard work of inside leadership. Those can help, but they are no good without inside leadership.

Organizers will frequently say, "The workers are scared", and use this as an excuse for failure to organize them. How do you overcome fear, in a campaign? The answer to that question is the answer to the question, How do you communicate with the worker? You cannot communicate with a worker who is scared. If the worker is afraid, he or she does not even hear you.

You have to break down the fear. In doing so, recognize that fear is healthy -- nature gives it to us as a means to protect us, both as individuals and in groups. The way to overcome fear is to get people so angry and mad that they overcome it.

There are lots of ways to get the worker angry. The best way to find out is from the workers themselves. This is why an in-plant committee is so important! They know what bothers the workers, what to appeal to in order to get them angry -- steel pigeons, racism, favoritism, whatever. Getting them as a group to overcome fear is to develop militancy. You cannot be a good organizer if you are not first a good agitator. St. Thomas described Jesus as a great agitator.

The workers themselves have to be brought into the campaign as much as possible.

Frequently, one of the major mistakes in an election campaign is in timing. If you peak your campaign too soon, it is dangerous. The campaign gets away from you. You build expectations to a high point, and cannot sustain them.

II. Alan Kistler (Structuring the Campaign)

In talking about the structuring of a campaign, it is very difficult to be specific enough to be really useful, since every campaign has its own elements. You could have the same organizing approach in two apparently identical situations -- one succeeds, the other fails. The approach that worked last week may not work this week. The organizer, therefore, must have the sense of what is today.

There has to be a plan to have a program. And you need a program. All of this requires a great deal of insight, and of knowledge. You have to know your opposition, your own strengths, your liabilities and assets, etc. This Union already knows much of this.

But you have to systematize this knowledge. Hence, you need some kind of central coordination. This will assure a uniform knowledge of what is taking place, and a uniform understanding of what the Union policy and program is. It is different when planning for an election than when planning for a movement or a demonstration. Extremely important here is having an information gathering apparatus.

To get information, you need to locate and develop local leadership. This cannot be overstressed or overemphasized. You must dig in and find the local leadership.

Hence, in whatever training program you have, there has to be included a procedure for deciding if you have local leadership. Also, in training for house meetings, you need to ask what type of house meeting it is, what is its purpose -- this will determine your approach at that meeting. Some organizers mostly talk at house meetings. In our election campaign situation, it is awfully important to listen -- draw information, fears, etc. out of the workers.

In recruiting, you need to ask yourself what will cause local leadership to use their talent or knowledge for the Union. Ask yourself what prompted you to do it, what helped you to come to such a commitment. Most organizers talk about "dedication". It means "doing everything that you must do, and avoiding anything that interferes, especially getting rid of your personal goals and concentrating on Union goals -- the need, therefore, for discipline.

The following are some simple techniques that organizers use:

1) Limited Objective. You must analyse the situation -- find out the number of people working, what they do, their working conditions, etc. In the case of our election campaign we do not have a single objective as in many Union election campaigns - a single plant. But we can say our objective is the state.

Now you must begin to analyse. You use the same technique in analysing a state as others use in analysing a plant. You must find in the state your target areas. Within those areas, you must constantly break down needs. Analyse means to break down into the smallest component. You do this so you can make the task manageable -- you can concentrate on the target, roll up your sleeves, have something you can control and experience some success with.

This is especially true when dealing with full-time volunteers. An organizer cannot deliver on the impossible. You should give him or her a definite target, with some cut-off point - a manageable task. The reason is so they can have some sense of accomplishment.

The coordinator must then know the overall picture, so he or she can assign these tasks and measure the success of the volunteers.

2) Gimmicks. Gimmicks may add excitement to a campaign. They may be alright for short-term campaign. But they are dangerous if you rely on them rather than on the hard work of organizing.

3) Close to Workers. "There don't nuthin beat stickin close to people" -- especially if your goal is winning, and winning with them. You cannot learn the changing needs if you do not stay close to people.

4) Goal to Win. Everything that happens in the campaign should be aimed at the WIN. If it does not lead to the win, forget it.

5) Use authorization card honestly. The authorization card is a hazard, if it is used as a device to get people to agree to an election. It has to be used for what it means -- signing it says that "I recognize the Union to represent me". For a worker to sign it is a statement of his support for the Union. The only way signing an authorization card will mean that is if you make it mean that. The organizers have to have this clearly in their minds so the workers will then have it clearly in theirs. You can go anywhere and get 20% of the workers to say they want an election. What you want them to say is they want the Union. That is why many organizers make signing the authorization card the last step in a campaign.

6) Purpose. Every step in the campaign (putting out a leaflet, holding a house meeting, etc.) should be done with a clear understanding of what it has to do with the purpose of the campaign. Does it do its job? (You don't put out a leaflet because you haven't had one for awhile, or hold a house meeting that is not carefully prepared.)

7) Communication. A lot of elements of the campaign that you listed today come under the heading of communication. The goal of communication must be to create a bond among people.

8) Need for Detail. It is the detailed, tedious attention to detail that determines an excellent campaign. Whether or not an organizer can come up with a chart telling who is on the crew, who is the leader, what are the relationships, what are the fears, etc. is the measure of the organizer.

### III. Other Points Made By Gilbert and Kistler in Question-Answer Session.

1) People join Unions not because they are dedicated, but because they see a need and overcome a fear, and learn that they need to work with each other to get what they need. Sometimes they also learn to work together and God gives them a bonus -- they come to love each other.

2) Scared persons cannot hear. They need to become angry to overcome the fear. Some anger points are

a) company fink

b) boss has a favorite -- slipping him extra hours

c) "She gets 10¢ extra an hour -- you know why"

d) invasion of privacy -- what business is it of his how many children you have.

The workers themselves will come up with the things to get people angry. In our case we should probably hit the grower, but tie him with the Teamsters: "You don't know who'se on top, the Teamsters or the Growers."

3) Teamster strategy. They would probably concentrate their efforts on areas where they have contracts, strength. Then they would start a few brush fires to distract us.

They would point to the benefits in their contracts, and talk about the attempted raid by the UFW -- if you vote for UFW, you will lose your benefits.

They would say a vote for the Teamsters is a vote for a strong contract, and there won't be strikes all the time puttin' you out of work. They will also use individual intimidation of workers.

4) If the Teamsters raise the racial issue, that will be a big mistake. Our answer is simple -- generally our leadership reflects the work force. We have a strong record here. Probably they will not use this issue.

5) The answer to "If we join UFW, won't there be strikes?" is simple and direct: There will only be strikes if you, the workers, vote for it. We have a good record in this regard. Employees always use the fear of the strike to keep workers from joining a Union. You have to know how your people feel about the strike; that will determine whether you push it or not.

6) Combine your attack on the Growers and the Company Stooze -- the Company Union. How can you bargain with yourselves? Document what UFW has done, compared to what the Teamsters have not done -- in contract enforcement, providing services, etc. Use cases where Teamsters flopped (Gallo, busses in Baythe, etc.) and publicize them all over the state. State the UFW basic strengths --

Union of workers

Not owned/controlled by growers

Interested in grievances

The Teamsters are company stooges, grower finks -- a company union, run by the growers. Where the hell were they when the farm workers needed a Union?