

Quick Conversations Workshop

LAOS Organising Workshops

AMT Code

Workshops are available from learningandorganising.co.uk

Aims;

* To prepare stewards and activists to have initial conversations in the workplace.
* To consider how they will gain access to their colleagues to talk to them about the union.
* To build confidence in talking to members and potential members they don’t know and to establish a rapport.
* To develop approaches to following up on initial conversations.

**Who the Workshop Is Aimed At?**

This workshop is aimed at stewards, contacts and activists. Ideally it should be run just before you are doing a recruitment stall / walk around the workplace.

**Resources**

**Reaction Cards.** You will need to cut these up before the session. The reaction cards are in a health setting. You may want to write some cards which reflect the workplace you will be in.

**Timings – One Hour**

**Planning for the Session**

If you want to take a ‘learn and do’ approach to this workshop, you may want to think about planning some organising and recruitment activity just after the session.

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| **Workshop timings** |  |
| Introductions | Ten minutes |
| Step One | Ten minutes |
| Step Two | Twenty minutes |
| Step Three | Twenty minutes |

**Introductions**

Say to the group:-

This session will help us to plan for the kind of conversations we are going to be having in the workplace. This could be at a recruitment stall or a walk around the workplace talking to people at their desks or whilst they are working.

* We have to think about how to introduce ourselves.
* We want to try and establish a rapport with members and non members.
* Ask some good opening questions which will encourage people to chat.
* Find out a bit about that person.
* Leave a hook to go back to talk to them.

**Step One**

Ask the group put themselves in a line. At one end should be those who love talking to people they don’t know about UNISON and at the other end those who don’t really like it all.

Explore a bit further with the group.

Why do you feel OK about talking to people about the union?

What prevents you from doing it?

Things that may come out of the discussion:-

* Don’t want to seem to be too pushy / like a sales person.
* Quite like finding out about people / what their issues are.
* People always seem so busy.
* Get a knock back and it’s difficult.

This should take around **ten minutes**.

**Step Two**

Split the larger group into smaller groups of four.

You can even pretend that you are standing at a stall or doing a walk about. Agree between the group what the purpose of the chat is and how you will introduce yourselves.

Distribute each person one or two of the reaction cards.

One person should be the worker and the other person should be the activist trying to get the worker to stop and start a conversation.

The conversation shouldn’t last longer than five minutes and could last less. Go through all of the reaction cards. If someone gets the brush off make sure that next time they get a good reaction to have a conversation.

Ensure that participants understand that the aim of the practice is to:-

* Establish a rapport.
* Ask questions.
* Ensure they pick up on clues.
* Try not to talk at people and
* Get a hook to go back and have a longer conversation with the member or potential member.

Ask each group to have a go at it!

**Step Three**

After the practice session ask the participants the following questions:-

* How did you think that went?
* Anything missing?
* Next time?
* Did you manage to ask open questions and listen?
* Anyone get a hook to go back and talk to the person again?

Conclude the workshop by planning:-

* How you will go about having these conversations in the workplace.
* When?
* How?
* What organising materials do you need?

Emphasise the importance of having a way of reporting back anything you have learned during the conversations, for example, problems raised. Also ensure that firm plans are made to follow up the activity.

**Quickie Conversation - Reaction Cards**

**PORTER**

“I haven’t got time to talk.”

“I am on my way to take a patient to theatre.”

You have a break later on that day and are concerned about the impact that the increase in pension contributions will have on you. You would be prepared to meet for a chat.

**CLEANER**

“I can’t be seen talking to you.”

“My manager says trade unions are a bunch of troublemakers and I am not allowed to join.”

You are very afraid to be seen speaking to the union but you do have issues about your pay never being right. You could be persuaded to chat.

**NURSE**

“I am in the RCN”

**ADMIN WORKER**

“I haven’t got time to talk today. You lot are all the same anyway.”

You have been in a union before but dropped out because you never saw anyone from the union. You have a lunch break but you probably won’t be prepared to chat until the union establishes a firmer presence.

**Quickie Conversation – Reaction Cards**

**HR OFFICER**

“I am late for a meeting”.

You are a smoker and take regular breaks to have a cigarette in the smoking area.

You are concerned about the efficiency savings and the potential that you might be made redundant.

**HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT**

“I have been a UNISON member for 15 years. We hardly ever see anyone from the union here.”

You had a positive experience with the union on a Return to Learn course.

**HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT**

“I am interested but I haven’t got time to talk now”

You always lunch in the canteen with a group of your friends who are all HCAs. You are all concerned about the efficiency savings and the impact it is having on patient care.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WORKER**

“What is all this about then?”

You are interested in the union as you’ve just transferred into the NHS Trust from Local Government. You have ten minutes to talk. You are concerned about the new arrangement.

