

The Steward as Organizer

Stewards also play a key role in recruiting new members. This is perhaps the most important thing the union does, because the more workers the union represents in your own industry, the more power the union has and the better it can represent you. The more workers that are organized in an industry, the higher wages and benefits will be for all.

And it's vitally important that you succeed. Your union will thrive only to the extent that other workers in your industry, your agency, or your geographic area are organized.

If you work in an open shop, you'll be doing "internal" organizing. This requires convincing the free riders to join the union. But if you've done all the other things you've read about in this booklet - especially your role in making the union a vital presence in the workplace - then you've already done most of the hard work. Build the union and they will come.

But whether you have a union shop or open shop, you're bound to get involved in outside organizing. Why?

Because as a worker and leader, you have the kind of credibility no paid organizer can match.

You know the work. You know the turf. You speak the workers' language. And you can see problems and potentials about which outsiders can only guess.