

Outline from Jamie Dawson, RN
From Bringing Our Union Voice to Labor Management Committees
AFT Nurses and Health Professionals
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- I. **What NOT to do: Don't drink the Kool-Aid!**
 - a. Management has a sustained ideological offensive: this labor-management committee is a zone of cooperation, class harmony, Kumbaya, etc. Cut this short!
 - b. On the other hand, there are good ideological interventions: in the training and founding documents of the Kaiser Labor Management Partnership (LMP), it is explicitly stated that LMP is a "business strategy" for the company. That is, management uses the LMP processes to get access to our members' intelligence & knowledge, so that they can make money--and the documents acknowledge this, which is a good thing.

- II. **Why we do L-M committees: continuous bargaining to build the union and get power.**
 - a. We can recruit people to some committees whom we might not be able to recruit as a steward, for instance. This is an opportunity to train, connect, and develop our members.
 - b. In a multi-union setting, the L-M committee can be an opportunity to build a coalition.

- III. **For the safety committee we listed our priorities ahead of time:**
 - a. Primary goals: Build the union. (Management is against these things.)
 - i. recruit
 - ii. train/connect our members to one another
 - iii. communicate
 - iv. build coalition
 - v. which all amounts to getting power/changing our relationship to management.
 - b. Secondary goals: increase safety/reduce injuries.

This might seem like the primary goal; but until we get power, we have zero hope of getting safety. Management doesn't care about this but may have some shame about admitting this, which gives us leverage.
 - c. Tertiary goals: saving the institution money, regulatory compliance, etc. Management does care about these things, which gives us some common interests to work from.

- d. Our goal is to consolidate our forces and divide our opponents (eg, upper management doesn't care about safety, but some frontline managers may, which means that we can drive a wedge between layers of management, make it so frontline managers have to come to the union for accurate information, etc.)

IV. Some best practices on how to do this work:

- a. Remember, this is continuous bargaining: we do labor-management because it is a venue to NEGOTIATE PERMISSIVE SUBJECTS.
- b. We can lose it at the table, but we can only win it in the field. Communicate, engage, escalate.
- c. Prepare, prepare, prepare: We have to train people thoroughly before we toss them onto an labor-managment committee. Keep the "Five Meetings" rule in mind:
 - i. **Meet with yourself:** Take time to think through your baseline situation, objectives, and what people the union has engaged in the work.
 - ii. **Meet with your people:** Recruit and prepare your committee, one-on-one. Even if people decide not to join the committee, the time spent educating people on what the committee will do is worthwhile.
 - iii. **Meet with your committee:** Make a plan together for your meeting with management: demands, talking points, assignments, etc.
 - iv. **Only now do we meet with management.** Follow the plan.
 - v. **Meet with your committee again.** Assess, assess, assess. Our mistakes are a gift—if we assess our work and take steps not to make the same mistakes again. This is also a good time to decide on next steps and to update the plan.
- d. **Follow up, follow up, follow up.** Keep track of what the action items were, who is responsible for following up and what the timeline is. If there are a lot of items, it may make sense to create a spreadsheet or list. Decide as a committee how to bring pressure on management for failing to complete action items. Make a plan to engage members in actions to show management that members care about the issue and their inaction is noticed.

For example, if a manager is tasked with purchasing "panic buttons" or other safety equipment, that manager may slow-walk the process "...we are looking at vendors....we are going to get bids....we are going to pilot this product in Department A....we need to look at other vendors." You can tell the difference between reasonable delays and stonewalling.

Have a plan to communicate to members what is going in the labor-management committee through a newsletter, emails, Facebook, Hustle, robocalls, etc. If management is stonewalling on moving forward—and it's on an issue where you can and want to get members mobilized, make a strategic plan with escalating actions. For example:

- i. Bring members who work in the affected department to come share their stories in the committee.
- ii. Ask members to wear buttons saying, "Where are the Panic Buttons?"
- iii. Ask members to document every single unsafe situation where a panic button could have been necessary.
- iv. Create a Facebook page on the mini-campaign with regular updates.
- v. Ask people to send their stories of threats and assaults to the union and create a report to present to management. Bring a delegation of members to present the report to CEO, DON or whomever the best target is.