

LABOR EDUCATION & TRAINING

A TOTAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

A cornerstone of a comprehensive labor relations program is the strength of supervisors and managers in promoting positive employee relations and communicating the benefits of a direct working relationship between management and employees.

IRI's Labor Education and Training series includes workshops, programs and tools to promote positive employer-employee relations and to create a firewall if a union organizing drive ever targets your organization. Our labor training is highly participative. We target delivery systems to the audience and intended outcome. Not only do we provide clients with what they need to know, they leave our training clearly understanding what they need to do when they walk out of the session.

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

This session is designed to provide boards of directors, senior management and administrators a brief yet comprehensive overview of union organizing activity and how leadership can effectively prepare and respond. The overview includes the most recent organizing trends, specific organizing activity updates of local regions, profiles of unions active in the region and industry, and a high-level overview of union organizing tactics.

MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Depending on client preferences, this workshop for managers and supervisors can range from a brief overview to an in-depth program that incorporates the principles of fostering positive employee relations. Participants learn to:

- Reinforce supervisory behaviors that reduce employees' perceived need for a union
- Understand union organizing tactics and issues
- Understand their responsibilities in order to comply with the National Labor Relations Act and National Labor Relations Board case decisions and rulings
- Legally detect and counter any union organizing within the strict confines of national labor law

Half-day or full-day training sessions typically include role-playing exercises, small-group discussions, a mock union organizing meeting, as well as issue identification exercises. Custom programs also can provide in-depth training on federal labor law and educate supervisors about the tactics and techniques unions use in organizing campaigns.

Participants are given a realistic preview of the kinds of messages unions use to influence employees and recruit members. The program also incorporates simulations and role-plays to illustrate the difficulties of managing in a union environment, reinforcing the point that it is often management that has the most to lose if employees vote for union representation.

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

IRI's trainers are some of the most proficient and experienced in the industry. At times, though, because of budgets or other considerations, clients choose to have their own personnel actually deliver labor relations training once they've been trained by IRI.

Our train-the-trainer process is highly customized. The basic elements typically include a thorough and well-documented presenter's guide, including scripts and talking points, tips for handling anticipated questions, presentation techniques to enhance adult learning, subject-matter specifics and other facilitation tools. The presenter's guide generally is written for the novice presenter, and assumes there is not a subject matter expert on-site.

Because labor relations training requires a balance of strong facilitation skills and subject matter expertise, we often conduct just-in-time, train-the-trainer sessions that immediately precede the delivery of presentations to management and employees. Follow-up support and individualized coaching can be provided as needed, including a summary of lessons learned after the first few rounds of presentation feedback from multiple locations.

E-LEARNING

Clients who have established e-learning systems in place typically rely on IRI to adapt material from Management Workshops and other training programs into an e-learning format to use as refreshers for managers. Our ongoing e-learning support ensures that critical labor relations knowledge stays fresh and useful, making it an excellent tool for continuous learning.

VIDEO VIGNETTES

Legal. Consistent. Effective.

Because it generally is easier for people to learn complex information by seeing something than by just reading or hearing about it, IRI produces Video Vignettes that show how to conduct engaging conversations with employees on union issues.

By watching modeled behaviors, actions and words in these three-to-five-minute video case scenarios, supervisors and managers can begin the process of developing their own words, actions and behaviors that are both legal and effective. Additionally, Video Vignettes provide consistency across teams of client trainers who are conducting multiple sessions with hundreds of managers and supervisors.

MEET THE UNION ORGANIZER

This simulation provides management with real-world perspectives of what it's like to be involved in a union organizing effort. Participants experience the approaches union organizers typically use with employees, as well as the union's approach to wages and benefits, key employee concerns and other business issues.

The accompanying dialogue is designed to illustrate the role of leadership in addressing the issues raised during organizing campaigns, as well as creating policies and communications that preserve the organization's position.

Participants learn:

- How to recognize unions' diverse appeals to stakeholders as part of a negative publicity campaign or "corporate campaign"
- How to leverage the organization's resources to build support in the community
- The best approach to manage a negative union publicity campaign

UNION ORGANIZING SIMULATIONS

These simulations are designed to provide human resources personnel and other key managers with the internal expertise necessary to promote positive employee relations and maintain a direct working relationship with employees. Participants learn methods to proactively eliminate issues and, if challenged, mount an intensive and persuasive communications effort that's key to addressing union card signing and, if necessary, win an NLRB representation election.

The simulation includes employee relations case studies that give participants an interactive exercise that requires them to apply their knowledge of labor and employee relations in a real-world case. The process includes legal considerations, with penalties for participants who answer in ways that would lead to an unfair labor practice. At the end, participants learn whether their organization won or lost the NLRB election.

Through active engagement, participants gain a better understanding of why employees become interested in third-party representation, learn their role and responsibilities during a union campaign, and gain a working knowledge of the labor laws that apply to unionization. The exercise creates a compelling argument for why effective leadership is so critical to organizational strength and effective team building.

LABOR RELATIONS READINESS TEAM TRAINING

A Labor Relations Readiness Team is a multi-disciplinary group of carefully selected leaders who receive in-depth training that prepares them to serve as internal labor relations and communications resources should union organizing begin.

Readiness Teams can be deployed in several ways:

- As a first-responder team that goes into action at the first sign of union organizing, Readiness Team members will have the skills necessary to support other managers and serve as an organizational resource
- Readiness Team members are trained to recognize early signs of organizing activity. They can assist in the development of campaign strategy, communications and other educational materials to be provided to management and employees
- As skilled, well-trained presenters and facilitators, Team members may conduct and/or actively participate in train-the-trainer sessions to deliver labor relations training

Readiness Team members attend an intensive 2.5 day training program to develop a working knowledge of organizing tactics, industry labor relations issues, and appropriate management roles and responsibilities in minimizing third-party intervention. Training topics and activities include:

- Introduction to organizational philosophy
- Current trends at the National Labor Relations Board, the U.S. Department of Labor, Congress and the White House
- Union campaign strategies and tactics
- Compliance with the National Labor Relations Act
- Campaign rules and policies
- Campaign communication
- Identifying organizational strengths and vulnerabilities
- Recognizing and responding to early warning signs
- Management campaign readiness
- Participating in a mock campaign

To ensure that the Readiness Team has current information, IRI will conduct quarterly labor updates and training sessions.

NEW EMPLOYEE & MANAGER ORIENTATION

There is no better time to explain why the organization favors a direct working relationship with employees than during the first few days and weeks on the job.

IRI helps clients prepare materials – scripts, employee handbook sections, videos, talking points, conversation starters, Q & A and more – that clearly state the organization’s position on third-party representation, and inform new employees and managers of their legal rights and responsibilities.



CONTACT IRI CONSULTANTS TODAY

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