

The New Face of Labor

In a recent Intelligence Briefing, we predicted that unionization tactics would likely become more aggressive in the private sector in light of the recent Supreme Court Janus decision and the changing face of the workforce.

That prediction is already coming to fruition, with the emergence of a number of new mobilization tactics, many rooted in technology.

In this Intelligence Briefing, we examine a few of these new tactics, which were also highlighted at the recent annual American Society for Healthcare Human Resources Administration (ASHHRA) conference in Pittsburgh.

REINVIGORATION OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

Unions have had to rethink their entire business model post-Janus. In an effort to increase their ranks, they have latched onto hot-button social issues and campaigns like the #MeToo, Black Lives Matter and Fight for \$15 movements.

This activity has accelerated in a midterm election year. Unions are also tapping into the anger and emotion felt by many Americans, particularly younger voters who, as a QUARTZ article recently highlighted, “don’t remember the 1970s and 1980s, when unions were demonized by big business and politicians.”

The stigma that unions kill jobs is a thing of the past and experts have seen a parallel between the rise of unions and the resurgence of socialism.

“What was once a contentious issue is again becoming mainstream,” said Steven Pitts, a labor professor at the University of California.

Case in point: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s upset win in the Democratic primary in New York’s 14th congressional district covering parts of the Bronx and Queens. Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and has been endorsed by multiple unions, including the New York AFL-CIO.

Add to this that many union members feel like the Trump administration has not delivered in the way they thought it would, particularly regarding tariffs, and the low-hanging fruit for union recruitment efforts is plentiful as we head into the midterm elections.

Justice in the factory: how Black Lives Matter breathed new life into unions

As Black Lives Matter and other social justice campaigns focus more on economic inequality, unions see an opportunity

Been Harassed? Vote Yes. How Unions Are Leveraging #MeToo To Organize Female Workers

Biggest gains in union membership in 2017 were for younger workers

Economic Snapshot • By **John Schmitt** • January 25, 2018

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Unions are increasingly using technology and social media to recruit and mobilize. This approach is not only highly appealing to the younger generation of employees, but also easy to target and often difficult to track. Examples of these efforts include:

- Blast texts addressing employees by name
- Email spoofing of executives
- Canvasser SOS mapping app
- Broadstripes CRM organizing software
- Closed Facebook Groups and Events
- Targeted social media ads on Instagram and mobile Facebook newsfeed

When it comes to grassroots efforts on social media and elsewhere, union organizers are using digital strategists to leverage humor/memes, the use of influencers, trending topics and hashtags to fuel their efforts. We have also seen the use of live tweet events and other online efforts to influence new employees as soon as they come onboard.

Protect Your Organization +

- Monitor social media to gauge employee sentiment
- Ensure social media policy is compliant with the NLRA
- Train leaders on the rules regarding social media use
- Assess in terms of labor and union activity



+ Protect Your Organization

Salt Identification Training for
Recruitment and Hiring Managers

Employee Rights Education

Corporate Vulnerability
Assessment

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Another tactic increasingly being used by union organizers to gain internal information about organizations and influence employees is “salting of the workforce.”

“Salts” are union organizers who apply for employment at a targeted employer in order to gain access to employees and solicit their support for a union.

As long as the salt is genuinely seeking employment, an employer may not refuse to hire or consider a salt for employment based solely on his/her union organizing activities, beliefs or opinions.

An employer must be able to show that it would not have hired the applicant even in the absence of his/her union activity.

Unions are also actively recruiting current employees to work as internal organizers – replacing the more traditional organizers seen hanging out in parking lots and cafeterias.

These are just a few of the new tactics being used by unions to grow their base. And if the past year is any indication, they’re just getting started. Take a look at the full presentations shared at the ASHRRRA 2018 fall conference to learn more about what we’re seeing and what’s still to come.

[Millennials & Mobilization: Health Care Communications in the Digital Age](#)

[The New Face of Labor: How Unions are Using the Janus Decision to Reinvigorate Campaigns](#)