



TIPS SHEET

TIPS TO START A SUCCESSFUL NEXTGEN COMMITTEE

- 1. Developing the Game Plan:** During the early stages, an in-depth look at the group you are trying to engage will assist your efforts in many different ways. Depending on your Local Union's size and structure, it will help determine obstacles and opportunities you may encounter. Take some time as you start your pre-planning to map out your workplace. If possible, identify all locations and breakdown the demographics as detailed as possible. This could include age, race, gender and geography of your local union. This allows you to quickly identify where your initial strengths lie and where to begin. Work with your local union leadership from the outset, they may already have the information you need to reach out to your younger membership or help you map out your workplace.
- 2. Recruit the Players:** It is essential to recruit and engage an adequate amount of participants that are demographically representative of the workers within the bargaining unit. Making sure that the group is inclusive will allow your participants to be more powerfully engaged in the program.
- 3. Determine Your Goals:** Create a clear objective that captures and reflects what you want to do. Creating this ahead of time will ensure that your goals and work in the future stay focused. Reasonable goals should be established and monitored periodically. Goals could be in the form of numbers of total participants, of certain demographics or maybe even how many were involved at a sponsored event. Make sure your goals are achievable and strive to make them happen. Afterward reassess and adjust accordingly, and use goals as incentives.
- 4. Find the Concerns:** Higher wages, better working conditions or seniority may be very important to those that have been in the labour community for years but is that what is important to the younger workers? As part of your internal strategic research the questions should be posed as to which issues within the younger workers are strongly felt and widely embraced. These issues will more than likely change but they are the themes in which to build your campaigns around.
- 5. Involving Leaders and Mentors:** Local Union Leadership needs to be included in the entire program, not only for full support but for knowledge transfer. A NextGen Program should be developed to be fully inclusive; older, more seasoned workers can be a huge asset to the program. Many times these workers hold years of experience and knowledge that needs to be passed on to the younger generation. As mentors, these older workers can assist in meetings, one-on-one's, as well as planned actions. Explaining what you want to do and

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why will go a long way in garnering support from your leadership. Explain why a NextGen Program will be good for your members, your Local Union and the IBEW.

6. **Networking:** Whether it is organizing, political campaigns or any other activity where you are trying to engage others, one-on-one contact is one of the most effective tools. After reviewing your internal strategic research, you should be able to identify which processes may be the most effective to communicate. This should be a multi-faceted communications plan that includes electronic communications including email, social networking and an active website. Although online methods may reach more people with the click of a button, do not desert one-on-one communications.
7. **Creating Action:** Creating opportunities for your members to get involved is a key part of the NextGen Initiative and there are a variety of ways to do it. Think outside the box and make sure you include community actions that can be held to improve others' lives outside of your union. Consider organizing solidarity days, job actions, rallies, petitions, and supporting other organizations by participating in their actions.
8. **Keep It Interesting:** If participants do not become and stay active, the chances are high they will not be engaged very long. Make sure there are plenty of activities lined up where volunteers can plug themselves in to continue to feel engaged. Encourage participants to communicate with others at the workplace, participate at meetings, get involved in other local union committees, community forums and help organize planned actions.
9. **Hook Up With Others:** There are other similar organizations in your area that have comparable goals in which you can partner with. These might include other labour sponsored programs through the Canadian Labour Congress or Provincial Federation of Labour, or community organizations like the United Way or Habitat for Humanity. These will offer a variety of other effective opportunities that will keep your participants engaged.
10. **Be Patient:** Almost all NextGen Programs take quite some time to fully develop. If the expectations are that the program will be a success over night, those initially involved will become frustrated and may even find other activities to become involved with. Having patience goes hand in hand with determining goals and readjusting when necessary. Have fun, be determined, but remain patient and have the ability to evolve.

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