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Blueprint for Change: A National Assessment of Winning Union Organizing Strategies

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Blueprint for Change: A National Assessment of Winning Union Organizing Strategies

Abstract

In the last seven years the AFL-CIO has put forth an immense effort to facilitate, support, and encourage organizing initiatives by all affiliates. Although to date progress has been much slower than the leadership of the labor movement had hoped, more recently there have been some signs that those efforts are beginning to bear fruit. A growing number of unions are putting more resources into organizing, recruiting and training more organizers, running more organizing campaigns, winning more elections and voluntary recognitions, and winning them in larger units.

Yet, despite all the new initiatives and resources being devoted to organizing and all the talk of "changing to organize," American unions today are at best standing still. Massive employment losses in manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and airline industries have eliminated hundreds of thousands of union jobs, raising the bar even higher for the number of new workers needed to maintain current union density, much less grow. At the same time, the political climate for organizing has become ever more hostile as the threat of terrorism and the fog of war have been used to justify a full scale attack on civil liberties, federal sector unions, immigrant workers, and organizing and collective bargaining rights.

Even in this climate, some unions, in some industries, have still managed to make major organizing gains, despite intensive employer opposition. In just the last several years we have witnessed significant victories such as CWA at Cingular Wireless, IFPTE at Boeing, UAW at New York University, PACE at Imerys, SEIU at Catholic Healthcare West, UNITE at Brylane, and HERE in the Las Vegas hotels. Although there was great variation in the industry, workforce, union, and company characteristics in each of these campaigns, still a pattern becomes evident—the unions that are most successful at organizing run fundamentally different campaigns, in both quality and intensity, than those that are less successful.

In this paper we focus on these fundamental differences in the nature of winning and losing campaigns which provide us with a blueprint for the kinds of comprehensive organizing strategies that are required to win across a wide range of organizing environments and company and unit characteristics. We also look at the strategic, organizational, and cultural changes the U.S. labor movement must make in order to be able to mount these more comprehensive campaigns and make the gains necessary to significantly increase union density and the political and economic power that goes with it.

Keywords

labor movement, union organizing, organizing strategies, worker rights

Comments

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BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF WINNING UNION ORGANIZING STRATEGIES

Kate Bronfenbrenner and Robert Hickey

VOLUNTEER
ORGANIZER

UNION AUTHORIZATION CARD

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This report was funded by the AFL-CIO Organizing Department

Stewart Acuff, Director

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INTRODUCTION

In the last seven years the AFL-CIO has put forth an immense effort to facilitate, support, and encourage organizing initiatives by all affiliates. Although to date progress has been much slower than the leadership of the labor movement had hoped, more recently there have been some signs that those efforts are beginning to bear fruit. A growing number of unions are putting more resources into organizing, recruiting and training more organizers, running more organizing campaigns, winning more elections and voluntary recognitions, and winning them in larger units.

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RESEARCH METHOD

The primary source of data for this research is a study commissioned in May 2000 by the United States Trade Deficit Review Commission to update Bronfenbrenner's previous research on the impact of capital mobility on union organizing and first contract campaigns in the U.S. private sector.¹ Using surveys, personal interviews, documentary evidence, and electronic databases, we compiled detailed data on election background, organizing environment, bargaining unit demographics, company characteristics and tactics, labor board charges and determinations, union characteristics and tactics, and election and first contract outcomes for a random sample of 412 NLRB certification election campaigns held in 1998 and 1999. Descriptive statistics were calculated for a wide range of variables in order to capture the nature and extent of union and employer organizing activity and the broader context in which they operate. In addition, we used binary logistic regression to determine whether the number of comprehensive union-building strategies has a statistically significant impact on certification election outcome when controlling for the

influence of election background, company characteristics, bargaining unit demographics, and employer opposition.

The findings from the survey data are supplemented by national data on employment, union membership, union density, workforce demographics, and trade and investment for the period from 1997-2002, compiled from published and on-line reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Department of Commerce, and the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA). In addition we utilized data from a customized NLRB database on NLRB certifications from 1997-2002 compiled by BNA Plus.²

CHANGING CLIMATE

Although the late 1990s has been generally hailed as a period of robust economic expansion and extensive job growth, this expansion was much less universal than has been claimed. Instead, by the end of the decade employment trends followed the well-established pattern in the U.S. economy of declining employment in manufacturing and expanding employment in the service sector, public sector, and most other sectors such as communications, construction, retail and wholesale trade, and transportation.

As described in Figure 1, the loss of 814,000 union members in manufacturing accounted for 40 percent of the more than 1.9 million jobs lost in manufacturing between 1997 and 2002. At the same time employment growth among unorganized workers in the service sector (4.8 million) and government sector (1.1 million) entirely outstripped the 364,000 new members gained in the service sector and the 604,000 new members gained in the government sector during the same period.

Between 1997 and 2003, in all sectors combined, total employment increased by 8.108 million at the same time union membership declined by 6,000, leaving a net gain in the unorganized workforce of 8.114 million. As a result of these trends, unions faced a continuation of the steady decline in union density levels that began a half a century ago, falling to 13.2 percent by 2002. The private sector accounted for all of the loss in union density as unions in the public sector held a fairly consistent density rate of 37.5 percent over the last decade. In contrast, private sector union density fell below 10 percent in 1997, reaching just 8.5 percent by 2002. Under these circumstances the U.S. labor

The U.S. labor movement has to organize hundreds of thousands of workers just to stand still, and millions of new workers to make any significant gains in private sector union density.

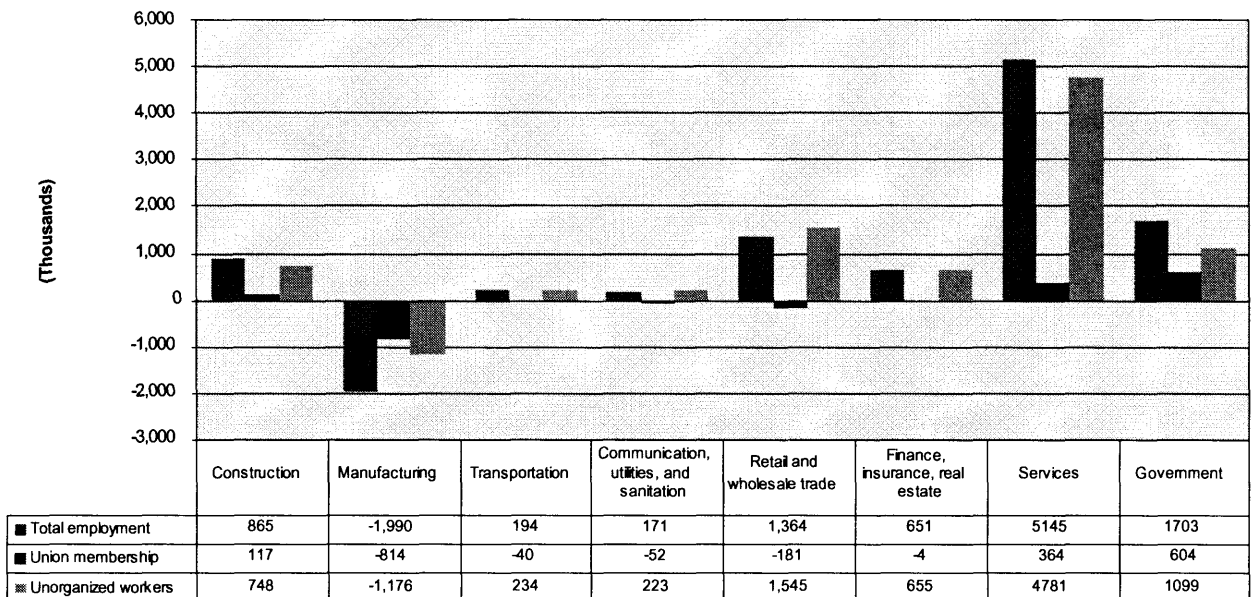


Figure 1: Changes in employment and union membership by industrial sector, 1997-2002

movement has to organize hundreds of thousands of workers just to stand still, and millions of new workers to make any significant gains in private sector union density. But for unions in some sectors the bar is much higher. Industrial unions need to organize more than 700,000 new members just to maintain their current density in manufacturing, much less grow, while unions in retail and wholesale trade need to organize more than 140,000 new members just to maintain current density.

The employment and union membership losses have been compounded by changes in the policies governing international trade and investment. The enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, and the passage of permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) with China in 2000 have resulted in rapidly increasing trade deficits for the U.S. and have facilitated the shift of production to low cost regions of the world. With the increase of international trade and the spread of production networks throughout the world, corporate ownership structures have become far more complex and global. U.S. workers are increasingly tied into the uncertain world

of foreign direct investment. For unions organizing in this environment, particularly in mobile industries, the challenges have never been greater.

National NLRB activity 1997 – 2002

During this same period of increasing challenges in the economic, trade, and investment environment for organizing, U.S. unions have invested enormous staff and financial resources into private sector organizing in an aggressive attempt to reverse the tide of density decline. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, private sector organizing gains, particularly through the NLRB process, remain extremely modest, still insufficient to reverse the tide.

Despite new organizing initiatives, the number of elections held has hovered around 3,000 per year for more than a decade. After increasing in the mid-1990s, in 1998 the number of elections held began to decrease to as low as 2,361 in 2001, increasing slightly to 2,540 in 2002 (Figure 2). At the same time the number of elections won has fluctuated up and down each year, dropping to its lowest point, 1,265 in 2001 and moving back up to 1,414 in 2002.

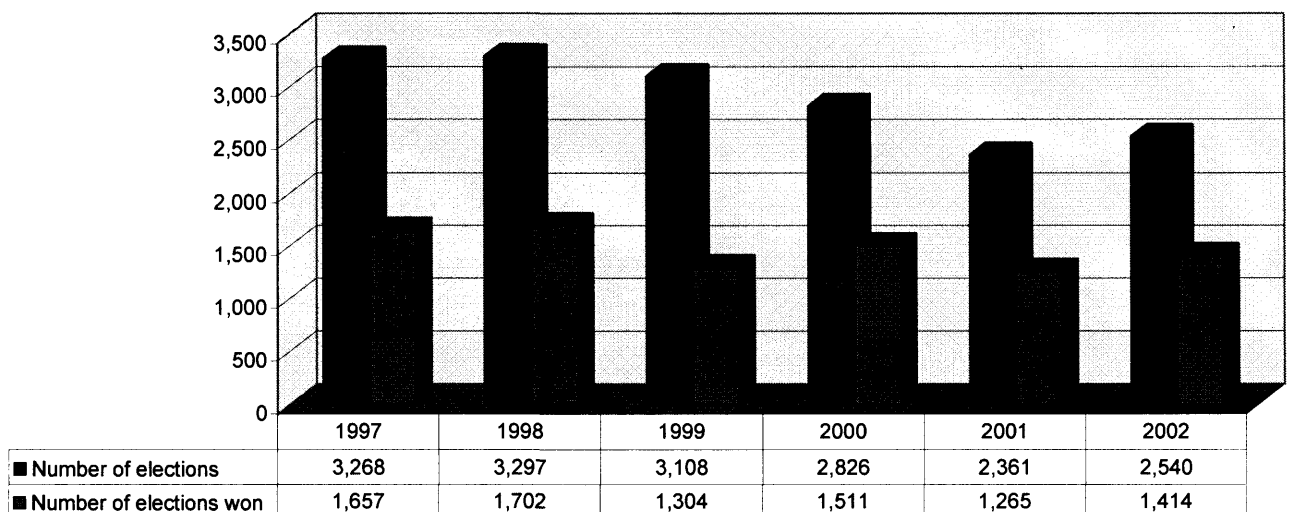


Figure 2: Total number of NLRB elections by year, 1997-2002

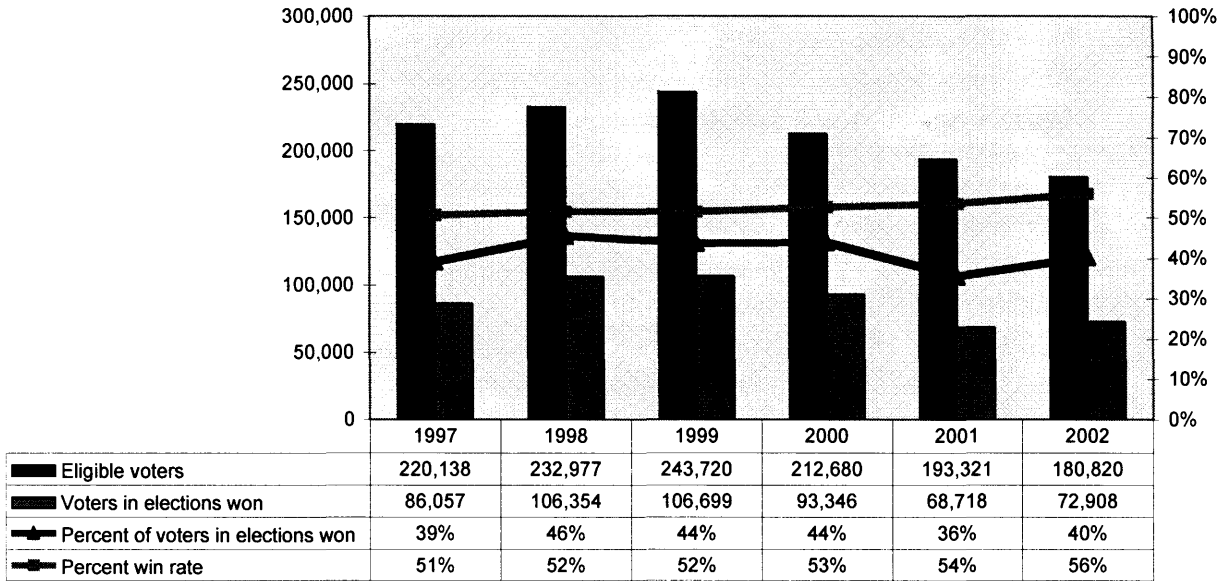


Figure 3: Number of eligible voters in all elections and elections won, 1997-2002

As described in Figure 3, NLRB election win rates increased from 51 percent in 1997 to 56 percent in 2002. While encouraging, it would be premature to see this as an indicator of organizing success and membership growth. For, while win rates have increased, the number of eligible voters participating in NLRB elections has dropped from a high of 243,700 in 1999 to 180,820 in 2002, a 26 percent drop. Even more

significant, the percent of eligible voters in units where the union won the election declined from 46 percent of eligible voters in 1998 to 40 percent in 2002.

The combination of fewer elections involving fewer eligible voters has led to a significant decline in the number of workers joining unions through NLRB certification elections. By 2002, only 72,718 of the 180,820 workers who voted in NLRB elections were

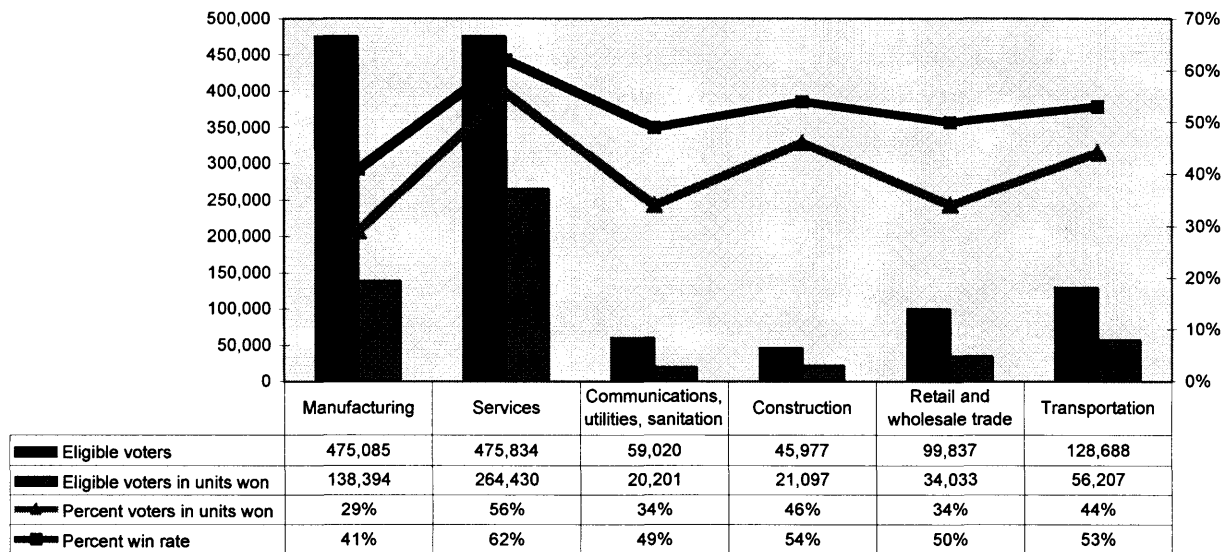


Figure 4: Eligible voters, win rates, and percent of eligible voters won, by industrial sector, 1997-2002

in units where the union won the election. There is also a great deal of variation in NLRB election activity and success across different industries and sectors (Figure 4). While organizing activity continues to be concentrated in both services and manufacturing, unions have been much more successful in service sector units, achieving an average win rate of 62 percent compared to a win rate of only 41 percent in manufacturing. Thus, although the same number of workers has participated in NLRB elections in the manufacturing and service sectors in the last six years, just over 475,000 eligible voters in each sector, the total number

of new workers organized is only 138,394 (29 percent of eligible voters) in manufacturing compared to 264,430 (56 percent of eligible voters) in the service sector.

As described in Table 1, in the last six years there was also considerable variation across unions both in terms of the number of elections and the number of eligible voters in elections won. For example, the IBT participated in 4,922 NLRB elections involving 259,540 eligible voters from 1997-2002. Yet due to a combination of relatively low win rates and small units, the Teamsters were able to gain representation for only 79,327 workers, less than a third of the eligible voters

Table 1: NLRB summary elections statistics by union, 1997-2002

Union	Number of elections	Percent win rate	Number of eligible voters in all elections	Number of eligible voters in units won	Percent of total eligible voters in elections won
AFSCME	456	68%	39,105	25,054	64%
ATU	114	61%	9,252	5,213	56%
BCTGM	157	44%	10,281	2,134	21%
CWA/IUE	426	50%	33,703	10,838	32%
GCIU	168	37%	14,959	3,500	23%
HERE	233	48%	15,206	6,281	41%
IAM	620	63%	49,430	14,810	30%
IATSE	128	59%	5,716	3,228	56%
IBEW	842	52%	41,596	17,051	41%
IBT	4,922	44%	259,540	79,327	31%
ILWU	112	67%	6,016	3,615	60%
IUOE	906	57%	31,391	11,672	37%
LIUNA	467	48%	28,881	9,229	32%
OPEIU	104	61%	11,527	5,710	50%
PACE	284	44%	25,629	7,820	31%
PAT	181	44%	3,631	1,664	46%
PPF	238	44%	5,952	1,672	28%
SEIU	1,362	68%	142,937	87,937	62%
SMW	257	35%	10,800	3,498	32%
UAW	510	55%	81,148	38,126	47%
UBC	421	39%	26,525	6,692	25%
UFCW	1,168	51%	104,088	36,447	35%
UNITE	147	61%	25,011	18,069	72%
USWA	753	43%	96,279	24,984	26%
Independents	1,140	67%	101,868	59,696	59%

who participated in IBT elections. A similar pattern is found for the USWA, IAM, UFCW, IUOE, and LIUNA, where despite a relatively large number of elections, low win rates in large units resulted in the percent of eligible voters in winning units 15 to 30 percentage points lower than the average win rate. In contrast, SEIU participated in 1,202 elections involving 124,539 workers, and, with an average win rate of 68 percent, was able to gain representation for 76,603 eligible voters during this period. Thanks to a combination of large average unit size and win rates of more than 60 percent, union such as SEIU, AFSCME, and UNITE were able to gain representation for more than 60 percent of the eligible voters in their elections.

Survey findings on election background: Corporate structure

The findings from our survey data suggest that unions organizing today are operating in a much more global, mobile, and rapidly changing corporate environment (Figure 5).

While a majority of private-sector organizing campaigns continue to be concentrated in

relatively small units in U.S.-owned for-profit companies, these companies are increasingly subsidiaries of larger parent companies (84 percent), including many multinationals (62 percent). This trend occurs not because unions are targeting large multinational companies, but because the U.S. private sector economy is increasingly dominated by multinational firms. Only one-third of all campaigns occur in for-profit companies with all sites and operations based in the U.S., while 23 percent take place in non-profit companies such as hospitals, social service agencies, or educational institutions.

Unions organizing today are operating in a much more global, mobile, and rapidly changing corporate environment.

Forty-seven percent of all NLRB elections are concentrated in mobile industries where production can easily be shifted out of the state or out of the country. Not surprisingly, win rates average just 34 percent in campaigns conducted in mobile industries compared to a 54 percent win rate in

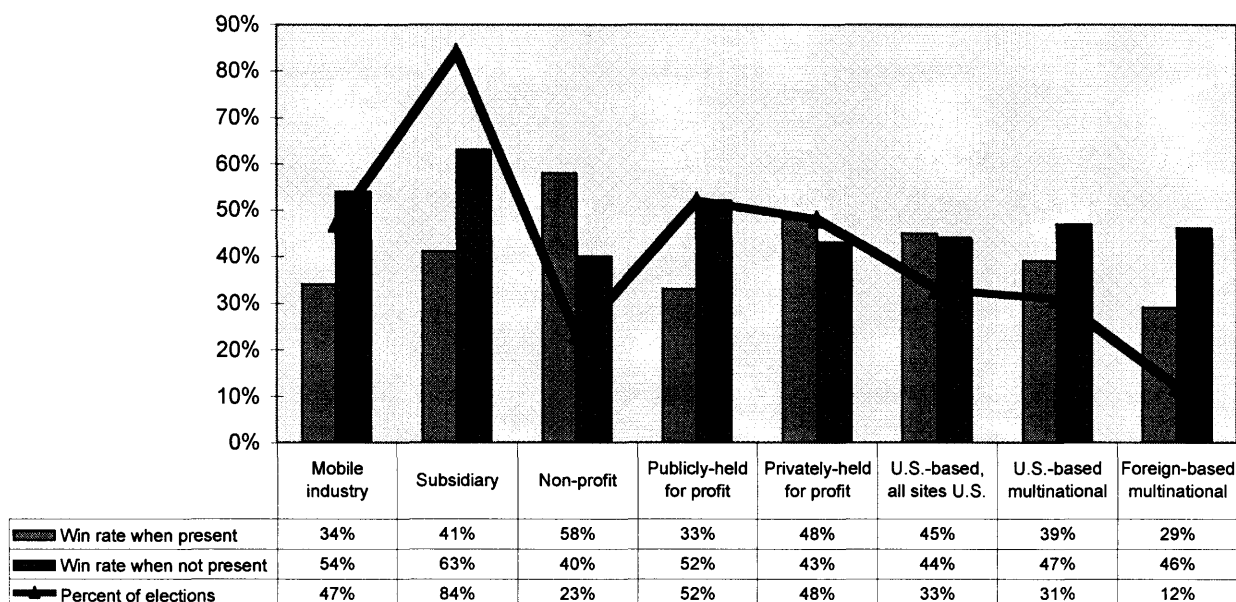


Figure 5: Corporate structure and election outcome

immobile industries. Organizing win rates average as high as 58 percent in non-profit companies, compared to a 40 percent win rate in for-profit companies. Among for-profit companies, win rates are highest for U.S.-based companies with all sites in the U.S. (45 percent), and lower for foreign-based multinationals (29 percent) and U.S.-based multinationals (39 percent). Win rates are also much higher (63 percent) in the 16 percent of the companies that are not a subsidiary of a larger parent company, compared to a 41 percent win rate for companies that are subsidiaries.

Company characteristics

As would be expected, given that all of these elections occurred during the period of high corporate profitability in the late 1990s, 65 percent of the companies in our sample were in good to excellent financial condition at the time the petition was filed (Figure 6). Overall, win rates are lower in companies in good to excellent financial condition (43 percent) than in units in fair to poor financial condition (47 percent), reflecting the fact that more profitable companies have greater resources

to improve conditions for workers and to devote to an aggressive anti-union campaign.

Fifteen percent of the elections take place in firms with other organized units at the same location as the unit being organized. A much larger percentage of companies (60 percent) have other organized units at other sites and locations of the company, either in the U.S. or abroad. Twelve percent of the campaigns are located in one of the fourteen communities where the Central Labor Council (CLC) has met the criteria to be designated a Union City by the AFL-CIO.³ For nearly half of the campaigns in our sample (46 percent), there was a previous, unsuccessful, attempt to organize the unit.

Union win rates are much higher in those campaigns with other units organized at the same site (65 percent) both because of the greater access and information available to the union and because the unorganized workers have a ready-made example of what a union can accomplish in their workplace. Win rates are only slightly higher at companies that had other organized units at other sites. Not surprisingly, given the higher level of successful organizing activity and

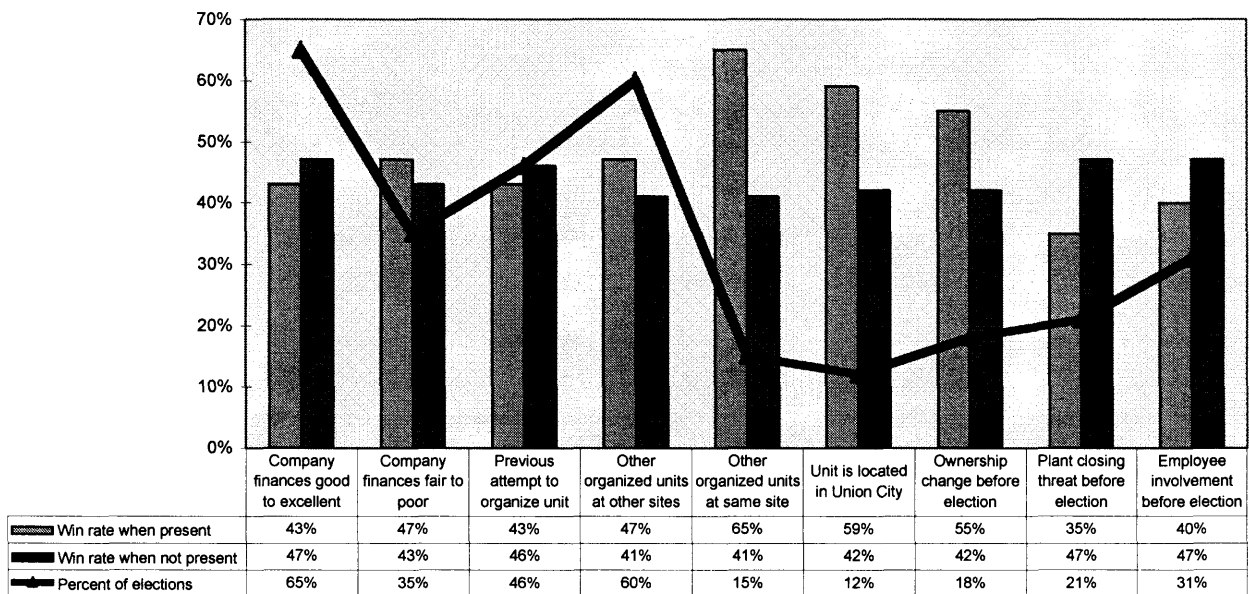


Figure 6: Company characteristics and election outcome

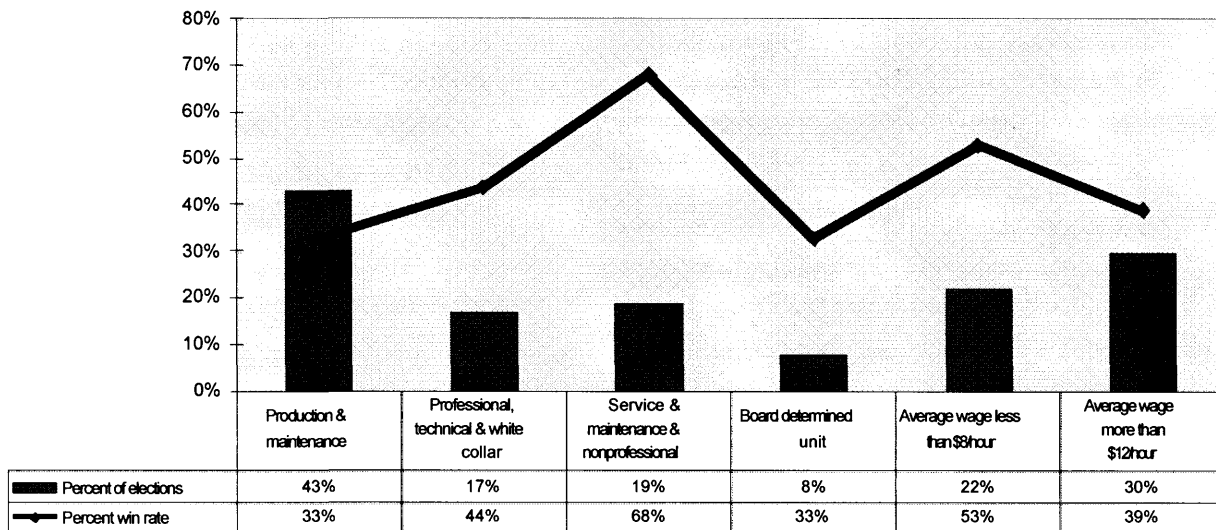


Figure 7: Bargaining unit characteristics and election outcome

labor-movement support for organizing activity in Union Cities, win rates go up to 59 percent in campaigns in Union Cities compared to a 42 percent win rate in other communities. Win rates are slightly lower in units with previous organizing attempts (43 percent) than in units where there was no previous attempt to organize the unit (46 percent).

Figure 6 also presents findings on company practices before the organizing campaign took place. Nearly a third of the units already had an employee involvement or team system in place before the election, while 21 percent had had threats of full or partial plant closure, and 18 percent reported changes in company ownership. Both pre-campaign employee involvement programs and pre-campaign plant closing threats are associated with win rates 7 to 12 percentage points lower than in units where they are not present. In contrast, changes in company ownership are associated with win rates 13 percentage points higher than in units where there had been no change in ownership prior to the campaign. This may be because a change in company ownership is more likely to be associated with practices such as job combinations, wage and benefit reductions,

and increases in the pace of work which, in combination, may motivate workers to initiate a union campaign and vote for a union.

Bargaining unit characteristics

The characteristics of the bargaining units where NLRB elections are taking place have also changed in recent years. Although 43 percent of all NLRB elections continue to be in production and maintenance units, 17 percent of all elections today occur in professional, technical, and white-collar units and 19 percent occur in service and maintenance and non-professional units (Figure 7).

Win rates are highest in service and maintenance and nonprofessional units (68 percent), compared to 33 percent in production and maintenance units and 44 percent in professional, technical, and white collar units. Win rates are lower (33 percent) in the 8 percent of elections where the NLRB determined the unit after the petition was filed. This reflects the fact that employer unit challenges leading to a board-determined unit are typically associated with more aggressive anti-union campaigns.

Win rates are also higher (53 percent) in the 22 percent of the units where the average wage was less than \$8.00 per hour, while win rates are lowest (39 percent) in units with an

Not only are women and workers of color participating in union elections in ever increasing numbers; but, because win rates are so much higher in these units, the vast majority of new workers coming into the labor movement today are women and people of color.

average wage of more than \$12.00 an hour. These higher-wage units tend to include more white, male, blue collar, white collar, and professional and technical employees, all groups less predisposed to unions than their non-white, female counterparts in non-professional, largely service, occupations. These are also workers more vulnerable to employer threats of

job loss and blacklisting because they tend to be more tied to company-specific benefits, training, and promotional opportunities.

Our findings on bargaining unit demographics also confirm that organizing is increasingly concentrated in units with a majority of women and people of color (Figure 8). Only 35 percent of the units have a majority of white men, while women make up the majority in 44 percent of the units and workers of color make up the majority in 39 percent of the units. Win rates increase substantially as the proportion of women and workers of color increases. While they average only 35 percent in units with a majority of white men, win rates are 53 percent in units with a majority of workers of color, 56 percent in units with at least 75 percent workers of color, 58 percent in units with a majority of women, and 62 percent in units with at least 75 percent women. The highest win rates are 82 percent for units with 75 percent or more women workers of color. The higher win rates in these units mean that not only are women and workers of color, in particular women of color, participating in union elections in ever increasing numbers; but, because win rates are so much higher in these units, the vast majority of new workers coming into the labor movement today are women and people of color.

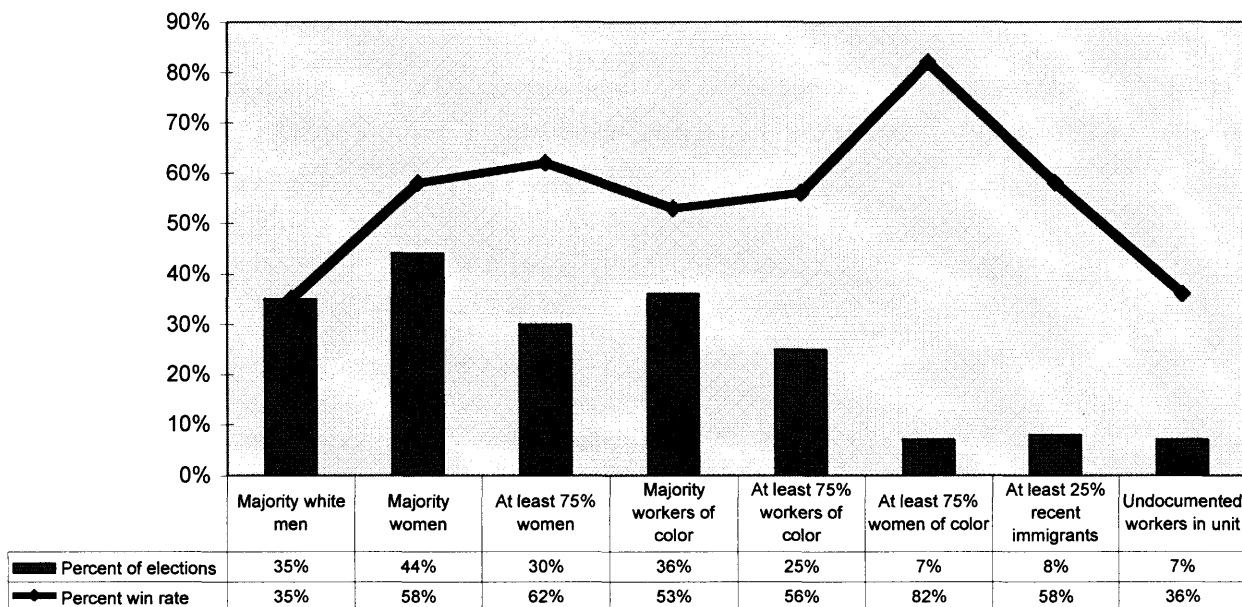


Figure 8: Bargaining unit demographics and win rates

Recent immigrants and undocumented workers have been involved in many of the largest organizing victories in the last five years in industries such as home care, hotel, laundry, building services, drywall, and asbestos removal. However, most of those campaigns have been outside of the NLRB process. In contrast, only 8 percent of all the elections in our sample were in units with 25 percent or more recent immigrants and only 7 percent of the campaigns had undocumented workers in the unit. The win rate averages as high as 58 percent in units with at least 25 percent recent immigrants, but drops down to 36 percent in units with undocumented workers. This reflects the ability and willingness of employers to use the threat of deportation to thwart organizing efforts among undocumented workers and also suggests one of the reasons why card check neutrality campaigns are so important in organizing industries with large numbers of undocumented workers.

Employer behavior

Consistent with earlier research, we find that the overwhelming majority of employers aggressively oppose union organizing efforts through a combination of threats, discharges, promises of improvements, unscheduled unilateral changes in wages and benefits, bribes, and surveillance. Figure 9 presents data on the most commonly used employer anti-union tactics, listed in order from those tactics used most frequently by employers in NLRB certification elections to those tactics which are used least frequently by employers. As Figure 9 shows, the use of traditional employer anti-union tactics has become quite pervasive, and, both individually and in combination, these tactics are extremely effective in reducing union election win rates.

Fifty-two percent of all employers and 68 percent of those in mobile industries made

threats of full or partial plant closure during the organizing drive. Approximately one in every four employers (26 percent) discharged workers for union activity, while 48 percent made promises of improvement, 20 percent gave unscheduled wage increases, and 17 percent made unilateral changes in benefits and working conditions. Sixty-seven percent of the employers held supervisor one-on-ones with employees at least weekly, 34 percent gave bribes or special favors to those who opposed the union, 31 percent assisted the anti-union committee, and 10 percent used electronic surveillance of union activists during the organizing campaign. Employers threatened to refer undocumented workers to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 7 percent of all campaigns and in 52 percent of cases where undocumented workers were present.

Consistent with previous research, we find that for the most aggressive individual employer anti-union tactics, win rates average ten to twenty percentage points lower in campaigns where the tactic is used compared to campaigns where the employer does not use the tactic. For just two tactics, promoted pro-union activists and used the media, the win rate is actually higher in units where those tactics are used compared to the win rate where they are not used. One possible explanation is that employers only bother to promote union activists out of the unit or run a media campaign when there is a strong chance the union will win.

As described in Figure 10, the majority of employers use a combination of tactics. Forty-eight percent of the employers ran moderately aggressive anti-union campaigns using five to nine tactics, 26 percent of the employers ran extremely aggressive campaigns using ten or more tactics, but only 23 percent ran a weak campaign using one to four anti-union tactics. Employers ran no campaign whatsoever against the union in

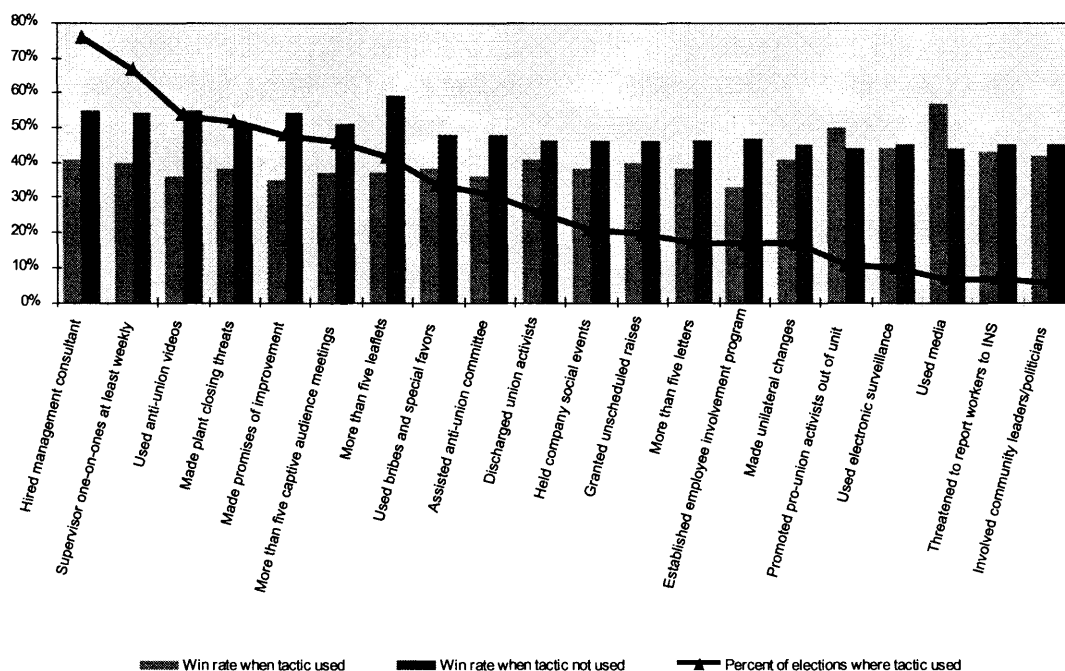


Figure 9: Employer tactics and election outcome

The overwhelming majority of employers aggressively oppose union organizing efforts through a combination of threats, discharges, promises of improvements, unscheduled unilateral changes in wages and benefits, bribes, and surveillance.

only 3 percent of the cases in our sample, 93 percent of which the union won. Overall, the

win rate drops to 55 percent for units where employers used one to four anti-union tactics, 39 percent where they used five to nine tactics, and 34 percent where they used ten or more. The fact that there is only a slight drop in win rates between moderately aggressive and extremely aggressive employer campaigns suggests that in some units

aggressive anti-union behavior by employers may reach a point of diminishing returns, particularly at a time when unions are running

more aggressive and sophisticated campaigns and workers' trust in corporations is declining.

Union organizing tactics

We have shown just how challenging the organizing environment has become for unions organizing in the private sector. Yet that does not tell the entire story about the current state of union organizing today. National organizing data also show that some unions have been able to win even against some of the nation's most formidable anti-union employers, even in the most mobile and most global industries. This raises the critical question about what role union strategies play in determining whether or not unions succeed in organizing large numbers of new workers in their primary industries.

When we first conducted research to examine these questions in the late 1980s, we found that unions were more likely to win

NLRB elections if they used rank-and-file-intensive tactics such as person-to-person contact, active representative committees, member volunteer organizers, solidarity days, and building for the first contract before the election.⁴ This research also found that union tactics as a group had a more significant impact on election outcomes than other groups of variables such as election environment, bargaining unit demographics, organizer background, and employer tactics.

We found this to be true not because employer behavior and organizing environment did not matter. As our research on public sector organizing has shown, absent employer opposition workers across a diversity of occupations, regions, and industries readily and eagerly choose unions when they can do so free of the coercion, harassment, and intimidation that is so prevalent in the traditional NLRB process. Instead, we found that union tactics mattered more because they are the one area where there was great variation from union to union, industry to industry, and campaign to campaign. And, even in the public sector, where we found employer opposition to be much less aggressive, and in a quarter of

elections not present at all, the use of rank-and-file intensive union tactics during the organizing campaigns is not only associated with higher election win rates, but with higher first contract rates and post-first contract membership rates as well.

However, as we have outlined in earlier sections of this paper, a great deal has changed in the economy, corporate ownership structure and practices, and the labor movement itself since we first started tracking private and public sector organizing campaigns in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Workers in almost every industry face more sophisticated employer opposition to organizing coupled with dramatic increases in corporate restructuring, foreign trade and investment, and shifts in work and production to other companies and other countries.

The use of traditional employer anti-union tactics has become quite pervasive, and, both individually and in combination, these tactics are extremely effective in reducing union election win rates.

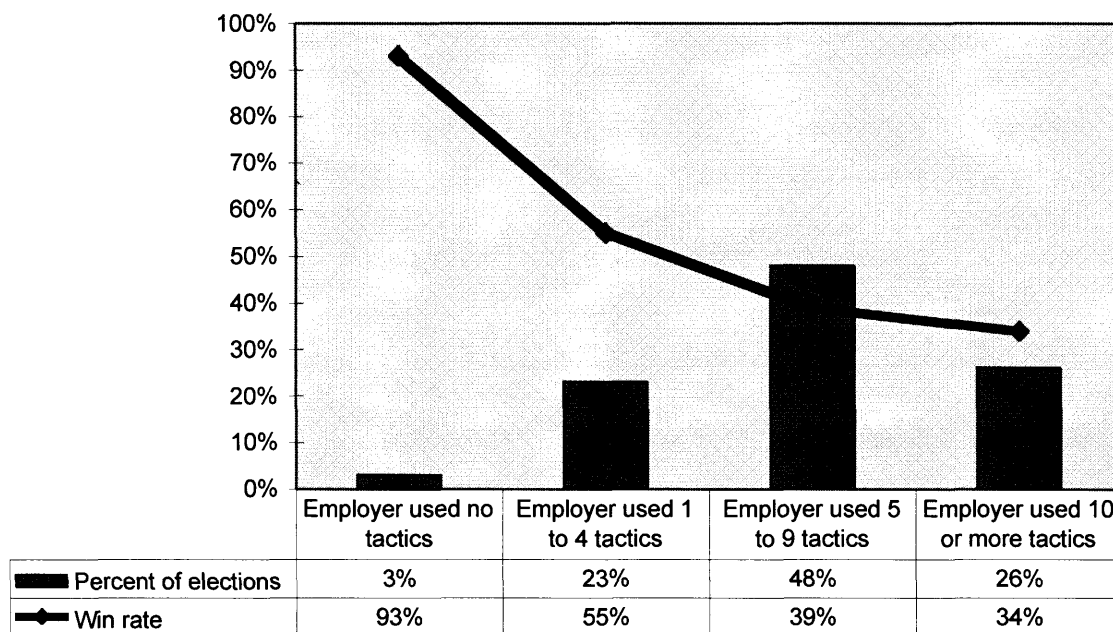


Figure 10: Election activity and outcome by intensity of employer campaign

This process did not happen all at once. By the early 1990s traditional organizing approaches and the isolated use of innovative tactics gradually decreased in effectiveness

By the early 1990s traditional organizing approaches and the isolated use of innovative tactics gradually decreased in effectiveness as the organizing climate became more complex and employer opposition more sophisticated.

as the organizing climate became more complex and employer opposition more sophisticated. Yet, when these variables were combined into a comprehensive union-building tactic variable, adding one unit for each additional union-building tactic used, the probability of the union winning the election increased

by as much as 9 percent for each additional tactic, suggesting that individual union tactics had become less important in determining

election outcome than a comprehensive union building campaign that incorporated person-to-person contact, leadership development, escalating internal and external pressure tactics, and building for the first contract.

Table 2 examines changes over the last decade in the use and effectiveness of some of the tactics that our research found to be key elements of a comprehensive union building strategy. Although many unions are running more effective and aggressive organizing campaigns than they were a decade ago, the majority of unions continue to run relatively weak campaigns. While the use of many of the individual tactics has increased by 10 to 20 percentage points, the use of some tactics, such as representative committees, ten or more small group meetings, or more than 70 percent surveyed one-on-one, actually declined by 1998-1999. Moreover, most of the key union-building tactics are being used in less than a third of

Table 2: Union tactics and election outcome, 1986-1987, 1993-1995, and 1998-1999

	1986-1987		1993-1995		1998-1999	
	Percent of elections	Percent win rate	Percent of elections	Percent win rate	Percent of elections	Percent win rate
Representative committee	23%	62%	41%	47%	37%	52%
More than 50% housecalled	28%	61%	38%	34%	41%	41%
More than 10 small group meetings	22%	39%	43%	36%	32%	52%
More than 70% surveyed one-on-one	53%	46%	44%	45%	18%	57%
Solidarity days used	12%	53%	17%	60%	45%	52%
Bargaining committee set up before election	15%	64%	16%	53%	19%	55%
Rallies held	3%	50%	33%	46%	30%	46%
Job actions organized in the workplace	2%	10%	15%	51%	16%	65%
Mass media used	11%	52%	14%	56%	18%	51%
Community campaign	8%	64%	13%	43%	24%	52%
Involved other unions	6%	53%	28%	39%	33%	43%
Union used five or more tactics	3%	100%	30%	50%	50%	51%
Union used ten or more tactics	0%	0%	6%	72%	3%	64%

all campaigns. The win rates associated with most of the individual tactics have either declined or remained relatively stable since 1986-1987.

Even unions that do use more innovative and rank-and-file intensive tactics tend to use them piecemeal rather than as part of a sophisticated, comprehensive, and consistent strategy. When we look at all tactics combined, starting in 1986-1987, only 3 percent of all unions used five or more tactics and none used ten or more tactics. By 1993-1995, 30 percent were using five or more tactics and 6 percent were using at least ten tactics. In 1998-1999 the percent using at least five tactics had increased to 50 percent but the percent of campaigns using at least ten tactics dropped to 3 percent, even though win rates averaged as high as 64 percent in campaigns where ten or more union tactics were used.

What is most striking about these results is the inconsistency in the use of the tactics both within campaigns and over time. Although organizer training programs and materials have been emphasizing the importance of these tactics for more than a decade, these data suggest that, even today, only a small number of unions are using these tactics in a consistent way, and even those that do, tend to use them in isolation, not as part of a comprehensive multi-faceted campaign. Most significantly, in light of labor's much touted effort at "changing to organize," there has been only a minimal increase in the use of these tactics, both individually and in combination, since 1995, far from what is required to increase union density and bargaining power.

Organizer background

A central component to labor's renewed commitment to organizing has been an effort to recruit and train a cadre of new organizers to staff and lead campaigns. Part of this effort has included an emphasis on developing a younger and more diverse pool of organizers who are a better match to the workers most actively organizing today. For many unions, this has not been an easy process, since their organizing departments tend to be woefully understaffed, and the staff they do have is neither young nor diverse.

Some unions have been able to win even against some of the nation's most formidable anti-union employers, even in the most mobile and most global industries.

Table 3: Characteristics of organizing staff in NLRB certification election campaigns

	Percent or mean of elections	Percent win rate when present	Percent win rate when not present
Staff resources			
Organizer ratio at least 1 to 100 workers	79%	44 %	46%
Women organizers			
Lead organizer female	21%	53%	42%
One or more female organizers lead or staff	44%	49%	41%
Percent female organizers	24%	—	—
Female organizers for units at least 25% female	56%	55%	44%
People of Color			
Lead organizer person of color	22%	58%	41%
One or more organizers of color, lead or staff	45%	50%	40%
Percent organizers of color	28%	—	—
<i>Percent African-American organizers</i>	13%	—	—
<i>Percent Hispanic organizers</i>	11%	—	—
<i>Percent Asian/Pacific Islander organizers</i>	2%	—	—
<i>Percent Native American organizers</i>	1%	—	—
<i>Percent organizers of other races</i>	1%	—	—
Organizer of color for units at least 25% workers of color	65%	52%	47%
Lead organizer woman of color	7%	69%	43%
<i>Percent women organizers of color</i>	11%	—	—
Spoke language of non-English speaking workers	71%	47%	50%

Table 3 provides some insight into the progress unions have made in both recruiting enough organizers to staff campaigns and developing a pool of organizers who better reflect the changing U.S. workforce. If we compare these findings with our earlier research, we find there has been some improvement in staff levels in NLRB campaigns. Today, 79 percent of the campaigns have the recommended standard of at least one organizer for every hundred workers, compared to 53 percent in 1995.

Unions have not just been increasing the number of organizers assigned to campaigns; they have also been recruiting a more diverse organizing staff.

Unions have not just been increasing the number of organizers assigned to campaigns; they have also been recruiting a more diverse organizing staff. In the late 1980s only 12

percent of lead organizers were women and 15 percent were people of color. By 1995 the proportion of lead organizers who were women had increased to 16 percent while the proportion of lead organizers who were people of color had dropped to 9 percent. Today, 21 percent of lead organizers are women, 22 percent are workers of color, and 7 percent are women of color.

Consistent with previous research we find that win rates are higher for lead organizers who are women and/or workers of color than they are for their white male counterparts. However, rather than suggesting that women and people of color make inherently better organizers, our earlier research has shown that the unions who hire more female organizers and organizers of color, such as UAW, SEIU, UNITE, CWA, AFSCME, and HERE, tend to run more aggressive and effective campaigns.

The increased diversity among organizing staff goes well beyond lead organizers. Forty-five percent of NLRB election campaigns have at least one woman as a lead or staff organizer and 35 percent have at least one person of color as lead or staff organizer. For all elections, 24 percent of all organizers are women, 11 percent are women of color, and 28 percent are people of color. In total, 13 percent of organizers are African-American, 11 percent are Hispanic, 2 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 percent are Native American, and 1 percent are other races. In units with at least with 25 percent or more women in the unit, 56 percent have at least one woman organizer on staff and in units with 25 percent or more people of color, 65 percent have at least one person of color on the organizing staff. Seventy-one percent of campaigns had

at least one organizer who spoke the language of workers in the unit for whom English was not their primary language.

Although these data suggest that unions are doing a better job of recruiting organizers who are a better match for the work force being organized, it still shows that in nearly half the units where at least 25 percent of the workers were women and a third of the units where at least 25 percent were workers of color, organizer demographics failed to reflect the demographics of the unit. Thus, despite progress, there continues to be a fairly significant, albeit shrinking, gap between the demographic make up of the workforce targeted for organizing and the demographics of the organizers who staff these campaigns.

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COMPREHENSIVE UNION STRATEGIES

What the data on organizing tactics and organizer background reveal is that in the current organizing environment it is not enough to simply utilize as many union tactics or recruit as many organizers as possible. Instead, for unions to make any significant organizing gains in the private sector they will have to mount organizing campaigns that are more aggressive, comprehensive, creative, and strategic and they will need to recruit and train enough organizers to effectively mount these more comprehensive campaigns. Based on our analysis of the evolution of successful union

organizing over time, a new model of comprehensive union strategies emerges that is based on two fundamental principles. The first is that union success in certification elections depends on a comprehensive union-building strategy that incorporates the following ten elements, each of which is a cluster of key union tactics that are critical to union organizing success (see Table 4 on page 20 for definitions of the key elements):

- 1. Adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources**
- 2. Strategic targeting and research**
- 3. Active and representative rank-and-file organizing committees**
- 4. Active participation of member volunteer organizers**
- 5. Person-to-person contact inside and outside the workplace**
- 6. Benchmarks and assessments to monitor union support and set thresholds for moving ahead with the campaign**
- 7. Issues which resonate in the workplace and in the community**
- 8. Creative, escalating internal pressure tactics involving members in the workplace**
- 9. Creative, escalating external pressure tactics involving members outside the workplace, locally, nationally, and/or internationally**
- 10. Building for the first contract during the organizing campaign.**

These strategic elements, which we call comprehensive organizing tactics, are each associated with higher win rates and/or have statistically significant positive effects on election outcome. However, given the hostile climate in which unions must operate, the use of these individual comprehensive organizing tactics is not enough. Instead, union gains depend on a multi-faceted campaign utilizing as many of the ten comprehensive organizing tactics as possible and the likelihood of the union winning the election significantly increases for each additional comprehensive organizing tactic utilized by the union.

The second principle underlying the comprehensive organizing model is that differences in the quality and intensity of the campaigns between unions are a better

While the majority of unions today run very weak campaigns with no underlying strategy, the majority of employers run very strategic campaigns, taking full advantage of the range of effective anti-union tactics available to them.

predictor of differences in election outcomes for those unions than employer opposition, bargaining unit demographics, or company or industry characteristics. We do not suggest that industry, corporate structure, unit type, worker demographics, or employer opposition do not matter. All of these factors have a very powerful and significant impact on union win rates. Indeed, it is more difficult to organize mobile industries, such as metal production and fabrication, garment and textile, food processing, and call centers, in the current global trade and investment climate. It is also more difficult to organize subsidiaries of large multinational

corporations that have the resources to launch full-scale counterattacks against union campaigns. Furthermore, higher paid, primarily white male, blue collar, white collar, and professional and technical occupations are more difficult to organize in the current climate because they tend to be more affected by the threats of job loss or blacklisting that are typical in employer campaigns today. Although industry, unit type, worker demographics, and employer characteristics and tactics matter, union tactics matter more, because unions have so far to go before they live up to their full potential. While the majority of unions today run very weak campaigns with no underlying strategy, the majority of employers run very strategic campaigns, taking full advantage of the range of effective anti-union tactics available to them, and adapting and tailoring those tactics depending on the organizing environment and the union's campaign.

If all unions were running aggressive comprehensive campaigns and win rates continued to vary across the organizing environments in which individual unions operate, then these differences in organizing environment would play the primary role in explaining the variance in organizing success between unions. Instead, the more successful unions owe their organizing victories to the nature, quality, intensity, and comprehensiveness of their campaigns, across a diversity of industries, companies, bargaining units, and employer campaigns. Similarly, unions with lower win rates lose more elections because of the lack of intensity, quality, and comprehensiveness of the campaigns they run rather than the organizing environment in which they operate.

Union gains depend on a multi-faceted campaign utilizing as many of the ten comprehensive organizing tactics as possible.

Table 4: Definition of elements of the comprehensive organizing model

Comprehensive Union-Building Tactics	Definition
1. Adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources	Unions have at least one organizer for every 100 eligible voters in the unit; one woman organizer for units with 25 percent or more women; and one organizer of color for units with 25 percent or more workers of color.
2. Strategic targeting and research	The union researched the company before the start of the campaign or the company was part of a union targeting plan and the union represented other workers at the same employer or in the same industry
3. Active and representative rank-and-file organizing committee	At least 10 percent of the unit is represented on the committee; there is at least one woman on the committee if the unit is 10 percent or more women; at least one person of color on the committee if the unit is 10 percent or more workers of color; and committee members met with workers one-on-one in the workplace and engaged in two or more of the following actions during the campaign: spoke at house meetings, spoke out at captive audience meetings, spoke at community forums, conducted assessments, assisted with preparing board charges, or helped organize job actions.
4. Active participation of member volunteer organizers	The union used at least five member volunteers from other organized units and they engaged in one or more of the following: meetings outside the workplace, one-on-one in the workplace, leafleting outside the workplace, speaking at community forums, or assessments.
5. Person-to-person contact inside and outside the workplace	The union housecalled the majority of the unit or surveyed workers one-on-one about what they wanted in the contract and conducted at least ten small group meetings or house meetings.
6. Benchmarks and assessments to monitor union support and set thresholds for moving ahead with the campaign.	The union used written assessments to evaluate membership support for the union and waited to file the petition until at least 60 percent of the unit signed cards or petitions.
7. Issues which resonate in the workplace and community	The union focused on two or more of the following issues during the campaign: dignity, fairness, quality of service, power, voice, or collective representation
8. Creative, escalating internal pressure tactics involving members in the workplace	The union used two or more of the following workplace tactics: five or more solidarity days, job actions, rallies, march on the boss for recognition, petitions rather than cards, and union supporters joined employee involvement committees.
9. Creative, escalating external pressure tactics involving members outside the workplace, locally, nationally, and/or internationally	The union involved one or more community groups during the campaign and also did at least one more of the following: corporate campaign, cross-border solidarity, involving other unions, using either paid or free media.
10. Building for the first contract before the election	The union did one or more of the following before the election: chose the bargaining committee, involved workers in developing bargaining proposals, or surveyed at least 70 percent of the unit one-on-one about what they wanted in the contract.

Elements of the comprehensive organizing model

Each of the ten elements of the comprehensive organizing model enhances the union's organizing power in a unique way. Unions that allocate adequate staff and financial resources, for example, make an institutional commitment to be more intensely engaged in the campaign, recruit an organizing staff that is demographically representative of the workers they organize, and run more campaigns. Unions that engage in strategic targeting tend to approach organizing as a means to build bargaining power within certain sectors and industries, in contrast to the non-strategic "hot-shop" organizing model.

Perhaps the single most important component of a comprehensive campaign is an active, representative committee that gives bargaining unit members ownership of the campaign, allows the workers to start acting like a union inside the workplace, builds trust and confidence among the workforce and counteracts the most negative aspects of the employer campaign.

The use of member volunteers to assist in organizing campaigns reflects a combination of greater institutional integration of current and potential new members, and an emphasis on a worker-to-worker approach to organizing. Person-to-person contacts made inside and outside the workplace enhance the union's organizing power by providing the intensive one-on-one contacts necessary to build and sustain worker commitment to unionization both at home and in the increasingly hostile election environment at work.

The combination of benchmarks and assessments allows unions to evaluate worker support for the union at different stages of the campaign in order to better adjust their strategy to the unit they are trying to organize and to set thresholds to determine when, and whether, they are ready to move on to the next stage of the campaign. A focus on

issues that resonate with the workers and the community, such as respect, dignity, fairness, service quality, and union power and voice, is essential both to build worker commitment to withstand the employer campaign and to gain community support.

Internal pressure tactics allow the union to start acting like a union before the election takes place, building solidarity and commitment among the workers being organized and restraining employer opposition. External pressure tactics that exert leverage on the employer both in the local community and in their national and/or international operations are essential to organizing in the increasingly global corporate environment. Finally, building for the first contract before the election helps build confidence in the workers being organized, showing them what the union is all about and signaling to the employer that the union is there for the long haul.

While each of the ten elements of the model are important in themselves, their ultimate effectiveness depends upon them being integrated as part of a larger comprehensive campaign using as many of the ten elements of the model as possible, with each tactic enabling and amplifying the effectiveness of the others. At the core are the three building blocks of any organizing campaign upon which all the other comprehensive tactics depend: adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources, active representative committee, and benchmarks and assessments. Absent adequate and

At the core are the three building blocks of any organizing campaign upon which all the other comprehensive tactics depend: adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources, active representative committee, and benchmarks and assessments.

appropriate resources, unions will be unable to staff and finance the labor-intensive, grassroots tactics that a comprehensive organizing campaign requires, from conducting in-depth research on company ownership, to recruiting and training staff, member volunteers, and organizing committee members, to engaging in escalating pressure tactics in the workplace and the community. Similarly, a representative and active committee is necessary to develop rank-and-file leadership, build the union inside the workplace, and make connections between workers and the community outside the workplace. And, without benchmarks and assessments, the union is flying blind, unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign tactics they have chosen and when, whether, and how best to move forward with the campaign.

Table 5 presents summary statistics for the ten comprehensive organizing tactics clusters that make up our strategic organizing

campaign model. Overall, only 14 percent of all the union campaigns devote adequate and appropriate resources to the campaign, only 19 percent engage in person-to-person contact inside and outside the workplace, and only 17 percent engage in escalating pressure tactics outside the workplace. Fewer than 30 percent have active representative committees or effectively utilize member volunteer organizers, while fewer than 25 percent used benchmarks and assessments, or focused on issues that resonate in the workplace and broader community. The highest percentages are found for strategic targeting (39 percent), escalating pressure tactics inside the workplace (37 percent), and building for the first contract before the election is held (35 percent).

All of the comprehensive organizing tactics are more likely to be used in winning campaigns than in losing ones. The results are particularly striking for the three core comprehensive tactics – adequate and

Table 5: Union use of comprehensive organizing strategies

	Percent of elections	Percent of elections won	Percent of elections lost
Adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources	14%	21%	9%
Strategic targeting	39%	45%	34%
Active representative rank-and-file committee	26%	33%	21%
Effectively utilized member volunteer organizers	27%	31%	23%
Person-to-person contact inside and outside the workplace	19%	23%	16%
Benchmarks and assessments	24%	35%	14%
Issues which resonate in the workplace and community	23%	25%	21%
Escalating pressure tactics in the workplace	37%	42%	33%
Escalating pressure tactics outside the workplace	17%	18%	16%
Building for the first contract before the election	35%	39%	31%

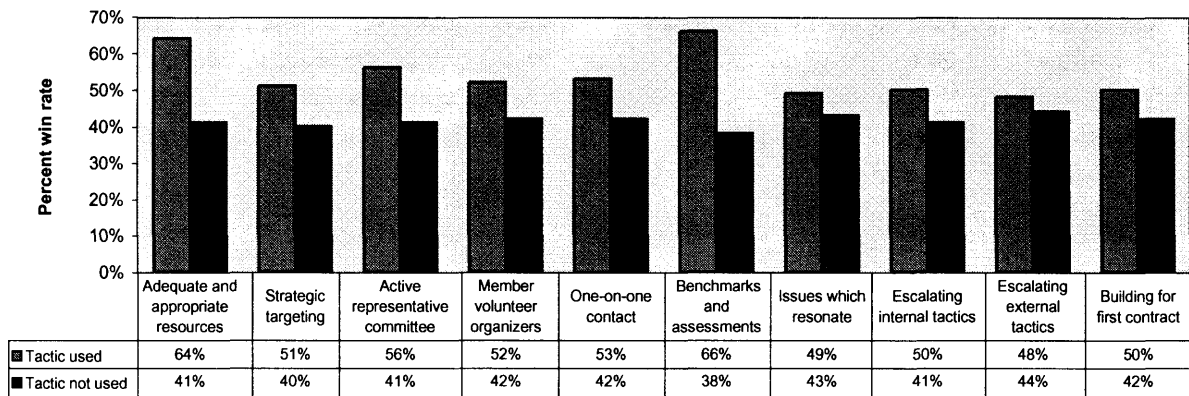


Figure 11: Percent win rate in campaigns using or not using comprehensive union tactics

appropriate resources (used in 21 percent of winning campaigns but only 9 percent of losing campaigns), active representative committees (33 percent of winning campaigns compared to only 21 percent of losing campaigns), and benchmarks and assessments (35 percent of winning campaigns compared to only 14 percent of losing campaigns).

As described in Figure 11, each of the individual elements in the model are associated with win rates that average between 4 to 28 percentage points higher than in campaigns where they are not utilized. Once again the most dramatic differences in win rates are associated with adequate and appropriate resources (64 percent when present, 41 percent when not present), active representative committee (56 percent when present, 41 percent when not present), and benchmarks and assessments (66 percent when present, 38 percent when not present).

The smallest differences are associated with issues that resonate in the workplace and community (49 percent when present, 43 percent when not present) and external pressure tactics (48 percent when present, 44 percent when not present). This is to be expected given that escalating external pressure tactics tend to be only used in campaigns with aggressive employer opposition, while the effectiveness of issues

is highly dependent on the tactics unions use to get their message across.

In our survey of organizing campaigns we found that win rates increase dramatically for each additional tactic used, starting at 32 percent for no comprehensive

organizing tactics, and then increasing to 44 percent for one to five tactics, 68 percent for more than five tactics, and 100 percent for the 1 percent of the campaigns where unions used eight tactics.⁵ At the same time, the percentage of campaigns where the

tactics were used steadily declines as the number of tactics increases (Figure 12).

Fourteen percent of all campaigns use no comprehensive organizing tactics, 54 percent use fewer than three tactics, while only 10 percent of all campaigns use more than five tactics and none use more than eight.

Win rates increase dramatically for each additional tactic used, starting at 32 percent for no comprehensive organizing tactics, and then increasing to 44 percent for one to five tactics, 68 percent for more than five tactics, and 100 percent for the 1 percent of the campaigns where unions used eight tactics.

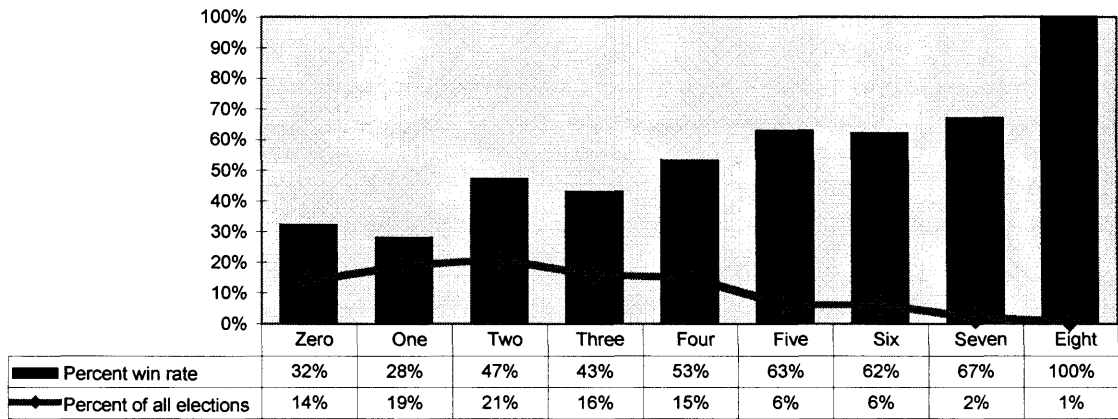


Figure 12: Percent of elections and election win rate by number of comprehensive tactics used

Across all industrial sectors, percent win rates are much higher in elections where unions use a comprehensive organizing strategy incorporating more than five comprehensive tactics, compared to campaigns where they use five or fewer tactics (Figure 13). In manufacturing, the win rate averages only 20 percent in campaigns where unions use no comprehensive organizing tactics, increasing only slightly to

associated with campaigns where no comprehensive tactics are used is 29 percent, increasing to 45 percent where one to five tactics are used, and 75 percent where more than five comprehensive tactics are used. Thus, we find that a comprehensive organizing strategy improves election outcomes substantially, across all sectors of the economy, even in the most mobile and global industries.

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29 percent when they use between one and five tactics, but then jump to 63 percent in the campaigns where they use more than five tactics. In the service sector, the unions win 44 percent of campaigns where no tactics are used, 57 percent in campaigns where one to five tactics are used, and 68 percent in campaigns where more than five comprehensive tactics are used. In all other sectors combined, (communications, construction, transportation, retail and wholesale trade, and utilities) the win rate

While these data are limited to NLRB campaigns, our interviews with organizers and union leaders who have been successfully organizing through card-check neutrality agreements paint a similar picture. The unions that have brought in the most new members through organizing outside the traditional NLRB process (SEIU in building services, CWA in wireless, HERE in hotels, and UNITE in laundries) have only succeeded in these endeavors because they have been following a more comprehensive organizing strategy, in particular adequate and appropriate staff and financial resources, strategic targeting, member volunteer organizers, a focus on issues that resonate with the workplace and the broader community, internal and external pressure tactics, and building for the first contract during the organizing drive. Those that have been least successful in winning non-Board campaigns have focused on external leverage

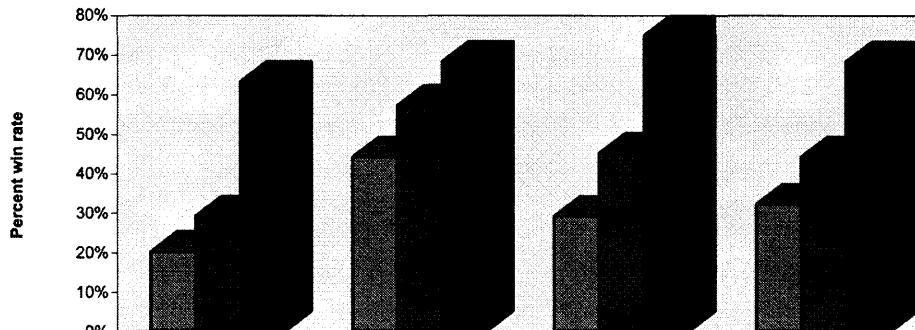


Figure 13: Comprehensive organizing tactics and election outcome by sector

The unions that have brought in the most new members through organizing outside the traditional NLRB process have only succeeded in these endeavors because they have been following a more comprehensive organizing strategy.

at the expense of building an active representative committee, person-to-person contact in the workplace and community, and escalating internal pressure tactics. Often

they have also failed to do the strategic research or commit sufficient resources to mount the kind of campaign necessary to make the cost of fighting the union greater than the cost of voluntarily recognizing the union and bargaining a first agreement.

Comprehensive organizing tactics and corporate structure

As difficult as organizing in the private sector has become, we find that unions are much more likely to overcome the negative impact of capital mobility and corporate restructuring if they run a comprehensive campaign incorporating more than five of the comprehensive organizing tactics in our

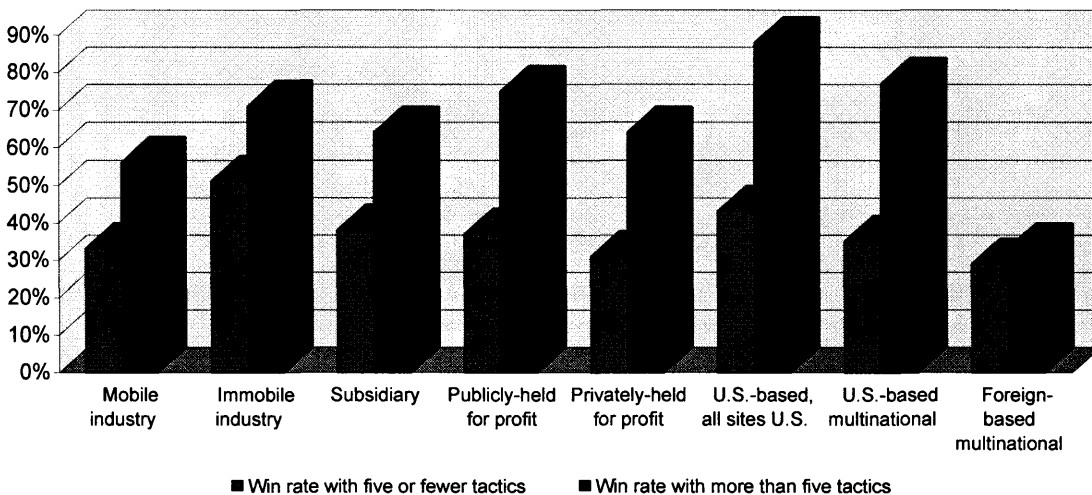


Figure 14: Comprehensive organizing tactics, corporate structure, and election win rates

model. As described in Figure 14, while the win rate is only 33 percent in campaigns in mobile industries when the union uses five or fewer comprehensive campaign tactics, it increases to 56 percent in mobile industries when the union runs comprehensive campaigns using more than five tactics. Even in immobile industries such as health care, hospitality, and retail, where there is typically a much less hostile environment for organizing, win rates increase from 51 percent to 71 percent when the union runs a comprehensive campaign.

Similarly, the win rates increase twenty to thirty percentage points where the union ran comprehensive campaigns in subsidiaries of larger parent companies, for-profit companies, U.S.-based companies with all sites and operations in the U.S., and U.S.-based multinationals. The exception is in foreign-based multinationals where we find just a minimal increase in win rates (from 29 percent to 33 percent) for campaigns where the union uses more than five comprehensive organizing tactics.

On closer inspection these findings are not surprising. Not only are foreign-based multinationals much more likely to run aggressive anti-union campaigns, but also

the very fact that the company is foreign owned, with sites and operations in other countries, serves as an unspoken threat to workers that their employer might readily shift operations out of the U.S. if they were to try to organize. Neither are foreign-based companies as vulnerable to the community-based pressure tactics that have been found to be effective for U.S.-based companies. Instead, they may require a far more global and extensive campaign that takes the union's cause to the country and community where the company is headquartered. Yet not one of the campaigns in foreign-based multinationals in our sample ran a global campaign and only 10 percent ran any kind of external pressure campaign.

Comprehensive organizing tactics and company characteristics

Comprehensive campaigns are also found to be effective across a wide range of other company characteristics including financial condition, unionization history and environment, and pre-campaign conditions. As we discussed earlier, win rates are lower in companies in good to excellent condition than in other units, reflecting the fact that those employers have greater resources to

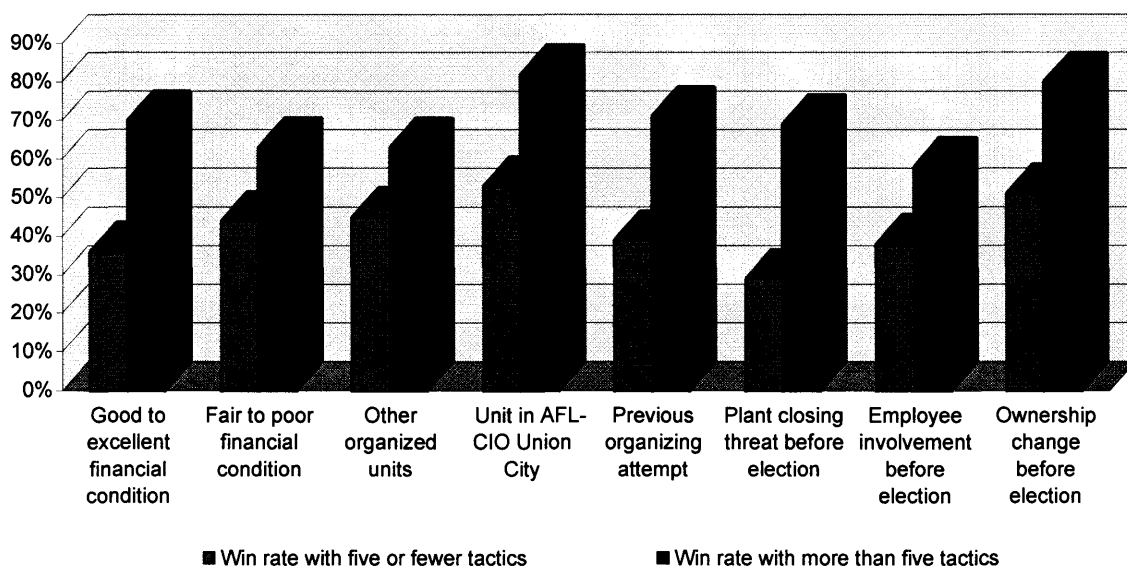


Figure 15: Comprehensive organizing tactics, company characteristics, and election outcome

improve conditions for workers and to devote to an aggressive anti-union campaign. However, this effect disappears entirely in units where the union uses more than five comprehensive organizing tactics, bringing the win rate up from 36 percent to 70 percent. Win rates also improve as much as 20 percentage points when the union uses comprehensive campaigns in companies in fair to poor financial condition (Figure 15).

Win rates are also much higher in campaigns with other organized units when unions use more than five comprehensive tactics (63 percent versus 45 percent), suggesting that unions are better able to capitalize on the greater access to workers, company information, and union representation record that already organized units provide when they run a comprehensive campaign. Not surprisingly, given the higher level of successful organizing activity and labor-movement support for organizing activity in Union Cities, win rates average 59 percent in all campaigns in Union Cities and increase to as much as 82 percent in campaigns with more than five comprehensive union tactics. This suggests that Union Cities create a climate that serves to support and reinforce the effectiveness of the tactics in our comprehensive organizing model – by offering more union resources available to organizing, more training opportunities for organizers, and more community and union support and leverage to embolden workers to vote for the union and discourage the employer from running an aggressive anti-union campaign.

Figure 15 also presents findings on company practices before the organizing campaign took place. As we explained earlier, both pre-campaign employee involvement programs and pre-campaign plant closing threats are associated with lower win rates. However, when unions run aggressive campaigns using more than five comprehensive organizing tactics, win rates increase to 58 percent for pre-campaign employee involvement programs and 69 percent for

pre-campaign plant closing threats, compared to win rates of 38 percent (employee involvement) and 29 percent (plant closing threats) in campaigns where the union uses five or fewer tactics. Comprehensive campaigns also allow unions to better capitalize on the worker dissatisfaction associated with changes in company ownership, with win rates increasing from 55 percent to 80 percent when unions use more than five comprehensive organizing tactics in campaigns where there was a change in company ownership in the two years before the election was held.

Comprehensive organizing tactics and bargaining unit demographics

A similar trend emerges when we compare win rates across bargaining unit characteristics for campaigns where unions use a more comprehensive organizing strategy (Figure 16). As expected, win rates average highest for service and maintenance units, low wage workers, and units with a majority of women workers, workers of color, and in particular women workers of color regardless of the quality and intensity of the union campaign, reflecting the greater propensity to support unions among these workers. Yet, for all these demographic groups the use of a comprehensive campaign increases win rates from 10 to 28 percentage points to as high as 70 percent for service and maintenance units, 75 percent of workers who average \$8.00 or less per hour, 67 percent for units with a majority of women workers, 77 percent for units with a majority of workers of color, and

Union Cities create a climate that serves to support and reinforce the effectiveness of the tactics in our comprehensive organizing model.

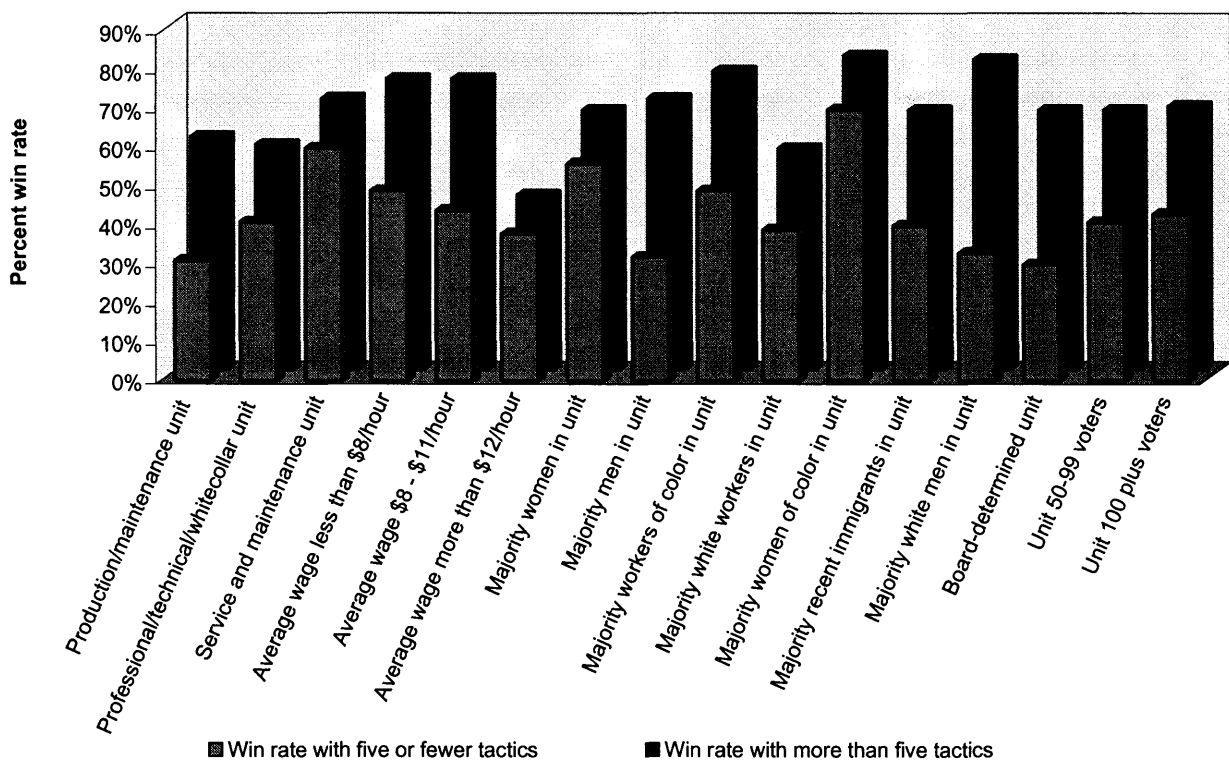


Figure 16: Comprehensive organizing tactics, unit characteristics, and election outcome

81 percent for units with a majority of women of color.

But it is not just campaigns involving these demographic groups that benefit from the use of a comprehensive campaign strategy. For production and maintenance units, where the overall win rate averages 33 percent, the win rate drops to 31 percent in campaigns where the union does not run a comprehensive campaign, but increases to 63 percent in campaigns where the union uses a comprehensive organizing strategy. Similarly, for units with a majority of white male workers the win rate averages only 33 percent when the union uses five or fewer comprehensive organizing tactics but increases to 80 percent when the union uses more than five comprehensive tactics. These data suggest that the relatively low win rates associated with production and maintenance bargaining units, or units with a majority of white men, may be a function of

the quality of the campaigns that unions are running in those units rather than anything directly relating to the attitudes and experiences of the workers themselves. Comprehensive campaigns are also effective in overcoming the special challenges faced by union organizing among recent immigrants, including undocumented workers, with win rates increasing from 40 percent in campaigns with five or fewer comprehensive organizing tactics to 67 percent in campaigns with more than five comprehensive organizing tactics.

Comprehensive campaigns are even effective among those private sector workers where unions have recently experienced some of the greatest difficulty in organizing, namely professional, technical, and white collar workers and higher paid workers averaging \$12 or more, dollars an hour. When unions run comprehensive campaigns, win rates increase from 39

percent to 46 percent in the 24 percent of the campaigns in these units with an average wage of \$12 or more and from 41 person to 58 percent in the 17 percent of campaigns which involve professional, technical, or white collar units. Of course, in any given campaign specific concerns and issues may apply, and tactics must be tailored and adapted accordingly. However, our data suggest that, when we look generally across the diversity of workers and occupations that make up the professional/technical workforce, from nurses, to engineers, to basketball players, win rates increase, rather than decrease, when unions run more comprehensive campaigns. In fact, unions might greatly increase the number of successful campaigns involving these demographic groups if they were to run more aggressive and comprehensive campaigns when organizing among these workers.

The findings also suggest that the negative impact on win rates in Board-determined units, where the election is delayed by the unit determination process and where the union ends up with a different unit than when the petition was originally filed, also can be overcome when unions run more comprehensive campaigns. In Board-determined units where the union did not use a comprehensive organizing strategy, the average win rate is only 30 percent. However, in Board-determined units where the union ran a comprehensive campaign using more than five tactics, the win rate increases to 67 percent. Comprehensive campaigns are also equally effective across different sized bargaining units increasing win rates from 47 percent to 67 percent in campaigns with fifty to ninety-nine eligible voters and from 43 percent to 68 percent in campaigns with one hundred or more eligible voters when the union uses more than five comprehensive organizing tactics.

Comprehensive organizing tactics and employer behavior

As we described earlier in the report, the overwhelming majority of employers aggressively oppose union organizing efforts through a combination of legal and illegal anti-union tactics designed to dissuade workers from voting for the union. Yet, as described in Figure 17, union win rates associated with all of the individual aggressive employer tactics increase between 10 and 40 percentage points when unions use a comprehensive organizing strategy using more than five tactics from our model, compared to campaigns where they used fewer than five tactics.

The smallest differences in win rates are in campaigns where the employer institutes an employee involvement program, and where the employer threatens to bring the INS into units with undocumented workers. This is consistent with previous research that the use of these employer tactics is particularly effective at undermining worker support for the union. When employers use these tactics it requires that the union use a much more comprehensive campaign than those run by the unions in our sample, one that uses eight, nine, or even all ten elements of the model, rather than just five or six.

In addition to examining win rates associated with comprehensive organizing tactics and individual employer tactics, it is important to assess the impact of more aggressive comprehensive union campaigns relative to the overall intensity of the employer

Across the diversity of workers and occupations that make up the professional/technical workforce, from nurses, to engineers, to basketball players, win rates increase, rather than decrease, when unions run more comprehensive campaigns.

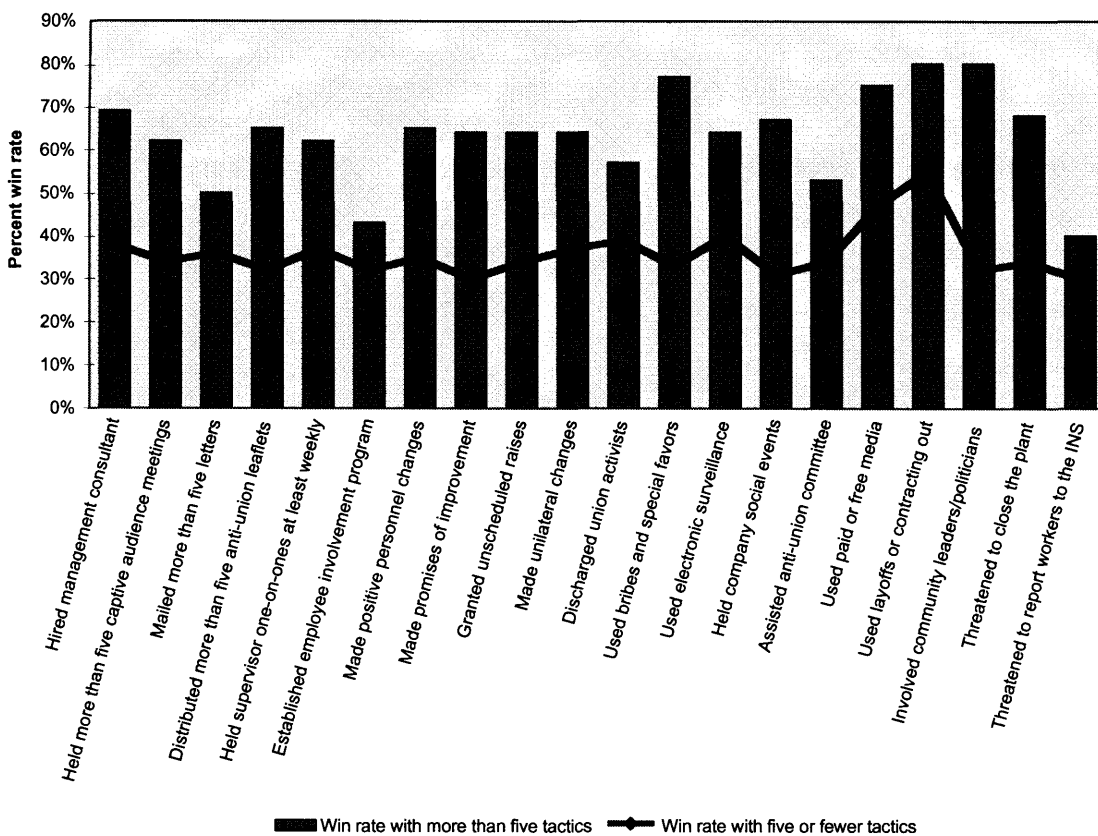


Figure 17: Aggressive employer anti-union tactics, comprehensive campaigns, and election outcome

campaign. Figure 18 compares win rates in campaigns with weak employer opposition, moderately aggressive employer opposition, and aggressive employer opposition in elections where the union ran a comprehensive campaign using more than five comprehensive organizing tactics versus elections where the union used five or fewer comprehensive organizing tactics (no comprehensive campaign).

The results are striking. In elections with moderately aggressive employer campaigns, win rates average 93 percent when the union runs a comprehensive campaign but drop to 35 percent when the union fails to run a comprehensive campaign. Even in campaigns with aggressive employer opposition, win rates average 52 percent overall in elections where the union runs a comprehensive campaign compared to only 29 percent in campaigns where the union fails to run a comprehensive campaign.

Overall, unions are running comprehensive campaigns in 20 percent of elections with aggressive employer opposition, 7 percent of elections with moderately aggressive employer opposition, and 5 percent of elections with weak employer opposition. These data confirm that while the majority of employers run aggressive campaigns taking full strategic advantage of a broad range of anti-union tactics, the majority of unions continue to run fairly weak campaigns, even when faced with aggressive employer opposition. Indeed, there were only two campaigns in our sample, where, when faced with aggressive employer opposition, unions used more than six comprehensive organizing tactics. Both of those elections were won. Thus, consistent with our model, although employer anti-union campaigns can and often do have a devastating impact on union organizing success, unions can increase their win rates, even in the face of the most aggressive employer opposition, if they run comprehensive campaigns.

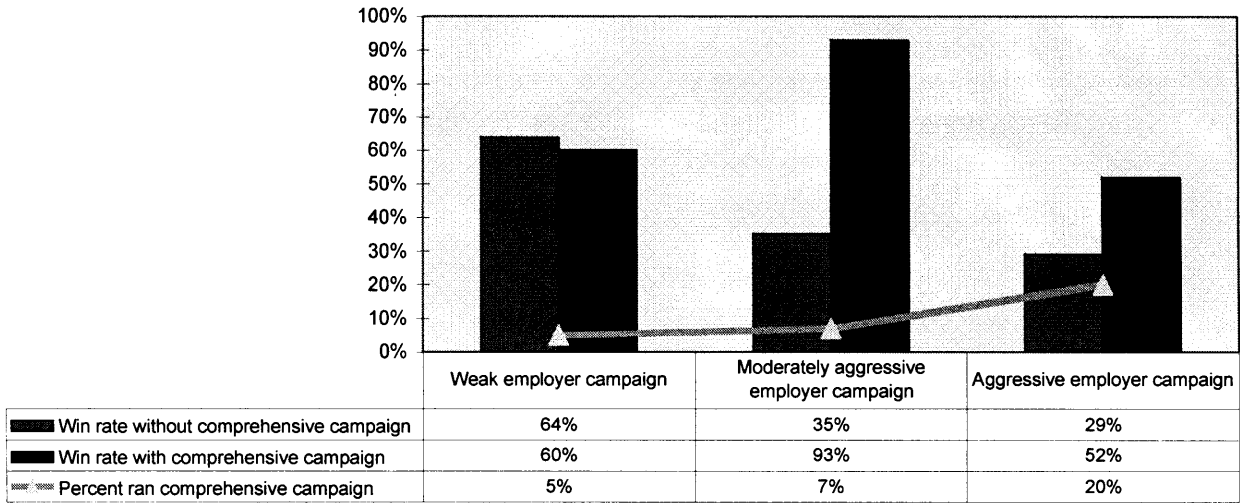


Figure 18: Intensity of employer opposition, comprehensive organizing tactics, and election outcome

Comprehensive organizing tactics and first contracts

The importance of this model goes well beyond the certification election campaign. As described below, campaigns where the union used more than five comprehensive organizing tactics during the NLRB election campaign are associated with higher first contract rates as well. As described in Figure 19 first contract rates average 74 percent in elections where the union ran a comprehensive campaign using more than five tactics, compared to a 66 percent first contract rate in units where they used one to

five comprehensive organizing tactics and only 58 percent where they failed to use any comprehensive organizing tactics.

These findings are also consistent with previous research on first contract rates in the public sector, where Bronfenbrenner and Juravich found that even in the context of extremely weak employer

Unions can increase their win rates, even in the face of the most aggressive employer opposition, if they run comprehensive campaigns.

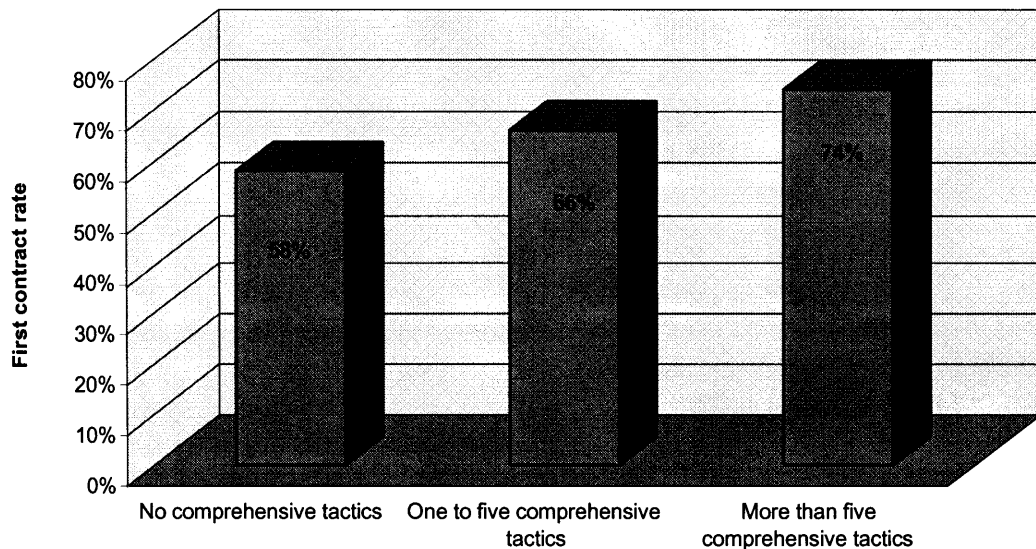


Figure 19: Comprehensive campaigns and first contract outcome

opposition, unions organizing in the public sector are more likely to win first contracts and to have higher post first contract membership rates in open and agency shops, when they run more aggressive comprehensive organizing campaigns. At the same time these findings further expand our understanding of the relationship between organizing tactics and first contract rates in the private sector. Previous research had shown that individual union tactics were not associated with higher first contract rates in the private sector, because they

Campaigns where the union used more than five comprehensive organizing tactics during the NLRB election campaign are associated with higher first contract rates as well.

were just one element in the very complex process of private sector first contract campaigns where continued aggressive employer opposition after the election and the nature and intensity of the union first contract campaign are the

primary determinants of first contract outcome. In contrast, our findings here suggest that the use of a more comprehensive strategy during the organizing campaign is associated with higher first contract rates because it is more likely to lay the ground work of strategic targeting, leadership development, community and labor alliances, and internal and external pressure tactics upon which a more effective and powerful first contract campaign can be built.

Unions and comprehensive organizing tactics

As we have discussed so far, there is no question that some unions, such as the UAW in auto-transplants and auto-parts, CWA/IUE in high tech and electronics, USWA in metal production and fabrication, UNITE in garment and textile, or the UFCW

in food processing, face much greater challenges organizing in their primary jurisdictions because they are confronted with more mobile, more global, and more powerful and effective employer opposition and, in some cases, a workforce less predisposed to unionization. Yet, as we have seen, even in the most adverse organizing environments, union-organizing success can dramatically improve when unions utilize a comprehensive campaign strategy. Given these differences, what is perhaps most striking about our findings is how few unions are actually running comprehensive campaigns, or even consistently using any of the ten elements of our comprehensive campaign model.

Table 6 summarizes the use of comprehensive organizing tactics by the unions most actively organizing today. In our examination of the use of comprehensive tactics by all the unions in our sample we find that they tend to fall into three main groups. The first group, which includes HERE, SEIU, and UNITE, averages four or more tactics in all of their elections. The second group, which includes AFSCME, CWA/IUE, LIUNA, UAW, UBC, UFCW, and independent unions, averages three tactics per campaign.⁶ The third group, including IAM, IBEW, IBT, IUOE, PACE, and USWA, averages two or fewer tactics in each campaign.

As described in Figure 20, only the unions in the first group consistently run organizing campaigns that combine at least four strategic tactics, representing only 18 percent of all elections but 26 percent of elections won. These unions use all the elements in the model in at least 30 percent of all their elections. The overall win rate for this group is 63 percent, the highest for any group, increasing to 74 percent when they run comprehensive campaigns using more than five comprehensive tactics. These unions, SEIU, HERE, and UNITE, have gained national reputations for effective organizing. Yet only 30 percent of their campaigns

Table 6: Number and percent of comprehensive organizing tactics, by union

	Number of tactics	Resources	Targeting	Rank-and-file committees	Member volunteers	One-on-one contact	Benchmarks	Issues	Workplace pressure tactics	External pressure tactics	Building for first contract
All unions in sample	2.60	14%	39%	26%	27%	19%	24%	23%	37%	17%	35%
At least four comprehensive tactics	4.07	34%	71%	37%	30%	32%	41%	34%	46%	39%	42%
Three comprehensive tactics	2.93	18%	44%	27%	27%	23%	27%	28%	44%	17%	40%
Two or fewer comprehensive tactics	1.75	4%	22%	22%	25%	11%	14%	14%	28%	7%	27%
Unions most actively organizing											
AFSCME	3.24	35%	53%	47%	29%	24%	29%	35%	41%	5%	24%
CWA/IUE	2.73	7%	60%	13%	27%	20%	20%	20%	33%	40%	33%
HERE	4.20	90%	60%	10%	20%	50%	40%	0%	40%	40%	70%
IAM	1.56	11%	11%	22%	11%	22%	11%	0%	33%	11%	22%
IBEW	1.33	0%	11%	11%	33%	22%	0%	0%	11%	11%	33%
IBT	1.41	4%	13%	12%	27%	5%	12%	12%	24%	6%	27%
IUOE	1.33	0%	0%	11%	0%	11%	11%	11%	56%	11%	22%
LIUNA	3.10	10%	50%	20%	10%	40%	20%	30%	40%	20%	70%
PACE	2.08	8%	61%	46%	0%	15%	8%	15%	31%	8%	15%
SEIU	4.02	23%	77%	39%	32%	26%	37%	42%	49%	40%	37%
UAW	2.92	8%	44%	32%	44%	8%	24%	32%	76%	16%	8%
UBC	2.63	0%	63%	0%	38%	25%	25%	13%	25%	13%	63%
UFCW	3.10	30%	40%	27%	13%	43%	37%	17%	33%	13%	57%
UNITE	4.22	44%	44%	56%	33%	44%	67%	22%	33%	33%	44%
USWA	2.38	3%	32%	43%	38%	16%	19%	22%	38%	8%	19%
Local and national independents	2.62	17%	28%	24%	28%	14%	17%	41%	38%	17%	38%

average more than five comprehensive organizing tactics, and, with the exception of targeting, these unions are using the comprehensive tactics that make up our model in fewer than half of their campaigns. Not only could an increase in the frequency (and quality) of the use of all the comprehensive tactics substantially increase

win rates for these unions, but it also might facilitate getting more campaigns off the ground and winning them in larger units.

The second group of unions, on average, uses fewer tactics and is less likely to combine them into a comprehensive campaign. Unions in this group average

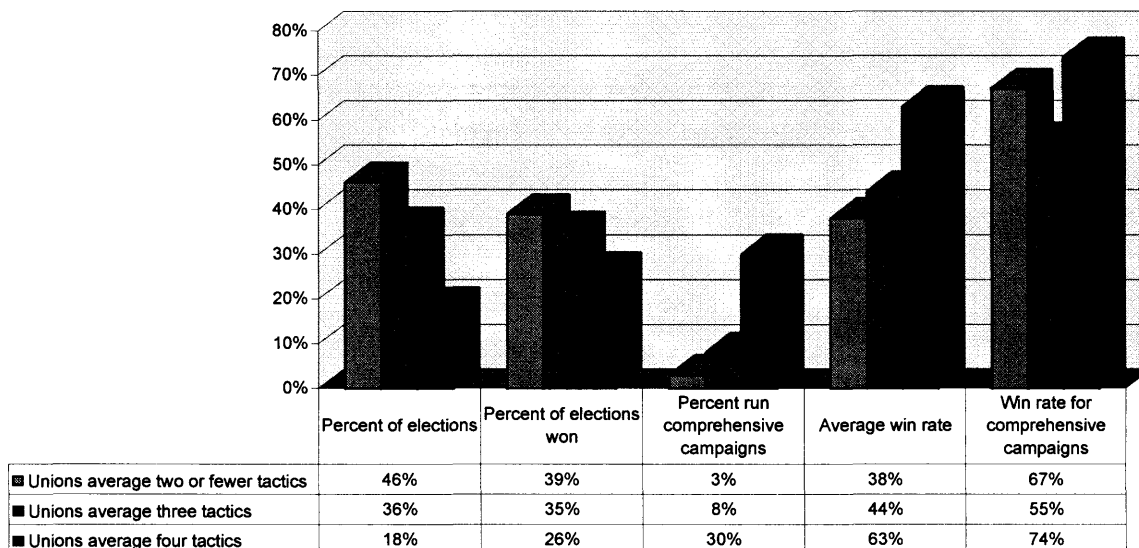


Figure 20: Unions, comprehensive tactics, and election outcome

three comprehensive tactics per campaign, and on average, use most of the tactics in fewer than 30 percent of their campaigns. With an average win rate of 44 percent, this group accounts for 36 percent of all elections and 35 percent of elections won.

Not only could an increase in the frequency (and quality) of the use of all the comprehensive tactics substantially increase win rates for these unions, but it also might facilitate getting more campaigns off the ground and winning them in larger units.

Only 8 percent of campaigns run by unions in this group used more than five comprehensive organizing tactics. This suggests that while these unions have been taking new initiatives and organizing more aggressively than in the past, they continue to use tactics in isolation, absent the interconnected, multi-faceted union-building strategy required in the current organizing

environment. Still, for those few campaigns when they do use more than five tactics, the win rate is 55 percent.

The third group of unions, which accounts for 46 percent of all elections, uses comprehensive campaigns even more rarely. Unions in this group average two or fewer comprehensive organizing tactics per campaign, and, not surprisingly, have the lowest average win rate (38 percent) of all three groups. Half of the unions in this group did not conduct *any* comprehensive campaigns using more than five tactics. Again, the win rate is much higher (67 percent) for the 3 percent of elections in this third group in which unions used more than five comprehensive organizing tactics.

The third group of unions averages below 15 percent for their usage of half the tactics in the model (resources, one-on-one contact, benchmarks, issues, and external pressure tactics) and below 27 percent for their usage of all the remaining tactics. This suggests that nearly half of the unions involved in NLRB certification elections run campaigns similar to campaigns in the late 1980s when we first started tracking the nature and success of union organizing efforts. The findings are less surprising given that, on

average, unions in this third group had adequate and appropriate resources in only 4 percent of their campaigns. Without such resources, it is difficult to pull together many of the other elements of the model.

Each of the individual tactics shows a different pattern of usage across the three groups, providing important insights into the “changing to organize” process. For

Nearly half of the unions involved in NLRB certification elections run campaigns similar to campaigns in the late 1980s when we first started tracking the nature and success of union organizing efforts.

example, the frequency of targeting and external pressure tactics varies widely among the three groups, while the use of member volunteers shows much less variation. This suggests that while more sophisticated tactics, such as targeting and external pressure tactics, have yet to be embraced by many unions, even the least successful are comfortable with more traditional tactics, such as having members assist with organizing campaigns. Yet, even the most successful unions still do not make consistent use of such key tactics as adequate and appropriate resources, active representative committees, person-to-person contact, benchmarks and assessments, member volunteers, and internal and external pressure tactics.

These data highlight three important trends. First, higher win rates are associated with campaigns that use five or more comprehensive organizing tactics for all three groups of unions. Second, the unions with the greatest organizing success are those that consistently combine comprehensive

organizing tactics. Third, there is a real mix of industries, companies, and unit types among the three union groups, yet comprehensive organizing tactics are consistently effective across the different groups.

Improving the odds of union organizing success

In combination, the survey data confirm that the use of a multi-faceted comprehensive campaign plays a much greater role in determining election outcome than individual union tactics and many other election environment variables such as company characteristics, bargaining unit demographics, and even employer opposition. As we found in our recent study for the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, the more comprehensive tactics used during the campaign, the greater the odds that the union will win the election,

even when we control for industry, corporate structure, bargaining unit demographics, and employer opposition.⁷ According to our findings, although each of the ten comprehensive organizing tactics are individually associated with higher win rates, the only tactics that were found to have a statistically significant impact on the odds of a union win were adequate and appropriate resources, increasing the odds of an election win by 119 percent, rank-and-file committee (89 percent), and benchmarks and assessments (162 percent).⁸

These findings confirm that these three variables are fundamental elements of a comprehensive campaign, building blocks that enhance the union’s ability to engage in any of the other tactics included in the

The unions with the greatest organizing success are those that consistently combine comprehensive organizing tactics.

model. Absent adequate and sufficient resources, unions will be unable to staff and finance the labor-intensive, grassroots tactics that a comprehensive union building campaign requires. Similarly, a representative and active committee is necessary to develop rank-and-file leadership, build the union inside the workplace, and make connections between the workers and the community outside the workplace.

Benchmarks and assessments are essential to evaluate when and whether to use each of the other tactics and when and whether to move on to the next phase of the campaign.

While these findings reinforce the importance of these three tactics, their individual impact was not as great as the aggregate effect of including the additive comprehensive

organizing tactic variable.⁹ Together, the descriptive and regression findings indicate that while resources, committees, and benchmarks and assessments are fundamental elements of a comprehensive campaign, they are not sufficient, in that they are most effective in combination with other comprehensive organizing tactics.

When individual organizing tactics are combined into a single additive comprehensive organizing tactic variable, each additional comprehensive union tactic used by the union increases the odds of a union win by 34 percent, even when controlling for the impact of election environment, company and union characteristics, and employer behavior. Thus, the unions in our sample that used at

least six comprehensive organizing tactics increased their odds of winning the election by 204 percent (six times 34 percent). Using the same logic, unions averaging four or more tactics increased their odds of winning the election by at least 136 percent, while those averaging three tactics increased their odds by 102 percent, and those averaging two or fewer tactics increased their odds no more than 68 percent.

In brief, we found that the use of multifaceted, comprehensive union campaigns plays a much greater role in determining election outcome than individual union tactics. Our analysis also confirms that the more comprehensive organizing tactics used during the campaign, the greater the odds that the union will win the election, even when we control for industry, corporate structure, bargaining unit demographics, and employer opposition. Lastly, we found that although employer opposition and election environment all have a significant impact on election outcome, the number of comprehensive organizing tactics has as much impact as employer opposition and more impact than election environment. Given the consistency and strength of employer campaigns and the great potential for improvement in the quality and intensity of union campaigns, these results lend further support to the argument that the nature and intensity of union campaigns, rather than the specific industry, company, and or unit type in which the campaign takes place, play the most critical role in determining differences in win rates among unions.

Each additional comprehensive union tactic used by the union increases the odds of a union win by 34 percent, even when controlling for the impact of election environment, company and union characteristics, and employer behavior.

The coming years will be a period of enormous risks and challenges for the American labor movement. Almost all unions, locally and nationally, understand that both their political power and their bargaining power will be severely undermined unless they organize on a massive scale across every sector of the economy. Yet, as we have shown, this is also a time of great possibility for American unions. While unions face enormous difficulties in changing in the present political, legal, and economic environment for organizing, the one area they do control, their own organizing strategy, has great potential for helping unions recapture power and leverage at the bargaining table and in the political arena. What follows is a ten-point plan for taking advantage of this potential and doing what is necessary to reverse the organizing crisis and rebuild the American labor movement.

1 UNIONS NEED TO COMMIT THE APPROPRIATE STAFF AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES NECESSARY TO TAKE ON NEW KINDS OF EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURES AND WIN AGAINST LARGE AND DIFFUSE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. Organizing campaigns in these firms and industries will require more staff, more member volunteers, and more supplies, equipment, vehicles, and facilities. At a time when many unions are faced with a rapidly declining dues base, finding and committing these resources becomes more and more difficult. But it is essential all the same. And, it bears remembering, putting out the resources to launch a large organizing drive still costs the union less than the devastating cost of losing units to decertifications, broken strikes, contracting out, or plant closings.

2 PART OF ORGANIZING STRATEGICALLY IS DOING THE RESEARCH AND POWER

ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYER BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN IS LAUNCHED, SO THAT UNIONS CAN BEST EVALUATE WHICH TARGETS THEY SHOULD FOCUS ON FIRST, which workers in which sectors/industries and firms will be most receptive to organizing, and where unions can best use their bargaining leverage either directly through already organized units in the same firm or indirectly through unionized customers, suppliers, and current or future investors. Moving into industries outside their primary jurisdictions in search of easier election wins does nothing to stop the erosion of density within their primary industries or strengthen their bargaining power in already organized units. Instead, it expends resources in an environment where they may be able to win elections more easily but have neither the density nor experience in the industry to effectively bargain for and represent the unit after the election is won, and distracts them from focusing on the critical task of increasing union density within their primary industries.

The nature and intensity of union campaigns, rather than the specific industry, company, and or unit type in which the campaign takes place, play the most critical role in determining differences in win rates among unions.

3 THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF U.S. UNIONS MUST CHANGE HOW THEY ARE RUNNING CAMPAIGNS. IT IS TOO EASY TO BLAME THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, LABOR LAW, AND EMPLOYER OPPOSITION FOR THEIR ORGANIZING FAILURES, when in fact many unions continue to run weak and ineffectual organizing campaigns and have mostly themselves to blame for their organizing failures. Unions need to take a hard look at the nature and intensity of the campaigns they are losing and determine what they could do differently to take on the same or similar employers and win. Most of all, it will mean doing the hard, slow work of developing representative rank-and-file leadership and giving them an active role in the campaign; recruiting, training, and effectively using member volunteer organizers from already organized units; identifying and mobilizing around issues which resonate with workers and the broader community; engaging in escalating internal and external pressure tactics to build commitment among the workers and constrain the employer anti-union campaign; and starting to act like a union and begin the process of building for the first contract before certification is won.

4 UNIONS NEED TO ESTABLISH CLEAR BENCHMARKS TO DETERMINE WHAT THEY NEED TO ACCOMPLISH WHERE THEY NEED TO GO BEFORE MOVING FORWARD WITH THE CAMPAIGN, AND AN EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM TO HONESTLY EVALUATE WORKER SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT TO THE UNION CAMPAIGN AT EVERY STAGE OF THE PROCESS. This requires not moving forward with the campaign unless and until a representative committee is in place, not filing the petition for the election or demanding recognition until they have a solid majority of the

broadest possible unit, and not moving forward to an election or to demanding recognition, until, through assessing a series of escalating tests, such as wearing a union button, attending a union rally, speaking out in captive audience meetings in the workplace and in public meetings with community and labor allies, they are certain that they have maintained majority support. In some cases, this will also require withdrawing from organizing campaigns before the election is held in order to avoid a devastating loss that emboldens the employer to brutalize the workers in the unit where the election took place, and undermines union organizing efforts, not just for their union, but other unions in the same firm, industry, or community.

5 UNIONS MUST BUILD ALLIANCES WITH OTHER UNIONS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, POLITICAL LEADERS, CLERGY, AND OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE THE ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN BEGINS. This is necessary both to create a more supportive environment for the workers who are organizing and to shine the light of public awareness on the employer campaign. For only by building these alliances and coalitions can unions engage other stakeholders in the company and community in bringing the leverage necessary to restrain employers from more aggressive opposition and encourage them to recognize the union and bargain a strong first agreement. And, in an increasingly global organizing environment, these alliances and campaigns must become global as well.

6 MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ARE CENTRAL TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ORGANIZING. RATHER THAN SHIFTING MONEY AWAY FROM EDUCATION INTO ORGANIZING, UNIONS SHOULD BE FINDING WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE THAT EDUCATION PLAYS IN THE ORGANIZING PROCESS. This includes using labor education programs to build membership and leadership support for organizing and to train member volunteer and staff organizers in comprehensive organizing strategies. It also includes using union and university labor education programs to bring more women and people of color into staff and leadership positions and to educate the community about workers' issues and the right to organize. Most important of all, it includes developing leaders among the workers being organized and teaching them how to build a union in their workplace that can withstand even the most aggressive employer campaign.

7 WHILE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE WORKFORCE MAY POSE A DIFFICULT CHALLENGE TO SOME UNIONS, THESE NEW WORKERS FROM DIVERSE ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND GENDER BACKGROUNDS CAN ALSO OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO JUMP START A MORE INSPIRED, COMMITTED, AND EFFECTIVE GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT to organize workers in all industries, just as they did in earlier union organizing struggles among textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in the early 1900s or during the rise of the industrial union movement in the 1930s. Capitalizing on those opportunities will require not only organizing more women, people of color, and immigrants into unions, but also providing the training and leadership

development to fully integrate newly organized workers into unions, and recruiting new organizers from the membership. Ideally this means pulling together a mix of organizers, some experienced staff and leaders, some member volunteers or members on release time, and some young and passionate organizers who have the energy, enthusiasm, mobility, and training required to organize in a more hostile and complex environment.

8 MANY UNIONS HAVE BECOME VERY EFFECTIVE IN PUTTING TOGETHER MULTIFACETED, ESCALATING, AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, GLOBAL CONTRACT CAMPAIGNS TO TAKE ON SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL MULTINATIONALS AND INVESTORS IN THE WORLD. Yet many of these same unions balk at launching equally intensive, aggressive, international, and comprehensive campaigns when attempting to organize workers in equally large, globally-connected, and anti-union multinational corporations. Transforming such comprehensive campaigns into offensive international organizing efforts could help mitigate the worst effects of global trade, international investment, and employer opposition. But it cannot be a one-sided relationship. If U.S. unions are going to seek the support of unions and non-governmental organizations around the globe, they are also going to have to become more engaged in supporting organizing and bargaining efforts by unions in other countries by contributing resources, using their bargaining leverage, and engaging in cross-border actions.

9 UNION DENSITY OFTEN SERVES AS AN INDICATOR OF UNION POWER, POTENTIALLY INCREASING ORGANIZING SUCCESS AND BARGAINING STRENGTH. Yet most U.S. unions, particularly in some of our highest density industries in the manufacturing, transportation, or entertainment sectors, fail to capitalize on union density in their primary industries when it comes to organizing new workers. Developing and implementing strategies that tap that potential strength will require greater coordination between unions' traditional core of activities—collective bargaining, political action, and organizing. Such coordination must include expanded use of bargaining leverage to gain card check neutrality in other sites, operations, and subsidiaries of the same employer. It also must include the integration of union activity, and coordinate activity throughout production chains to leverage customers and suppliers to pressure the employer to back off the anti-union campaign, recognize the union, and bargain a first agreement. It will also require taking on entire firms and industries in intensive multi-site campaigns comparable to those being run by HERE in hotels, CWA in wireless telecommunications, UNITE in laundries, and SEIU in health care.

10 THE TASK OF ORGANIZING IN MANUFACTURING, HIGH TECH, AND OTHER MORE MOBILE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY MUST BECOME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ENTIRE LABOR MOVEMENT. Unions in the service sector and public sector must make assisting unions with organizing in these more difficult organizing environments as much of a priority as organizing in their own primary jurisdictions. This assistance includes providing resources, contributing staff and member volunteers, and assisting with community coalitions, organizing actions, and pressuring the employer. But most of all it means working with all the unions in communities where unorganized firms in manufacturing, transportation, retail, or high tech are located to create the kind of "union city" atmosphere that effectively counteracts the fear, intimidation, threats, and misinformation that are so much a part of nearly every employer campaign in these industries.

CONCLUSION

None of these changes will come easily. At the same time labor has struggled to regroup, the economic, political, and legal climate has only grown more hostile. And for many unions, making these changes will require major changes in resource allocation, institutional structure, organizational culture, and leadership.

Even the country's most successful unions cannot rest on their laurels. Despite notable victories, they too have yet to organize on the scale necessary for labor's revival or to fully utilize the comprehensive strategies that will allow them to expand their gains. At a time when unions need to be organizing hundreds of thousands of workers just to maintain union density at current levels, they will need to organize millions, across every industry, if they are going to make any significant gains in union density.

Unions cannot wait—for labor law reform, for a more favorable economic climate, or a more favorable political environment—before they begin to utilize this more comprehensive, multifaceted, and intensive strategy in all their organizing efforts, inside and outside the NLRB process. Regardless of sector or industry, the challenge facing unions today is to move beyond a simple tactical effort to increase numbers, and to engage in the self-reflection and organizational change necessary to reverse the larger pattern of decline. Only then will “changing to organize” really bear fruit, and only then will American unions be able regain their power at the bargaining table, in the voting booth, and in the larger community.

ENDNOTES

¹ For a copy of the research conducted for the U.S. Trade Deficit Review Commission, see Kate Bronfenbrenner, 2000. "Uneasy Terrain: The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers, Wages, and Union Organizing," Commissioned Research Paper and Supplement to The U.S. Trade Deficit: Causes, Consequences and Recommendations for Action. Washington, DC: U.S. Trade Deficit Review Commission.

² For more detailed information on the sources and research method used in this report see Kate Bronfenbrenner and Robert Hickey, "Changing to Organize: A National Assessment of Union Organizing Strategies," in Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss, (Eds.), *Organize or Die: Labor's Prospects in Neoliberal America*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming and *Overcoming the Challenges to Organizing in the Manufacturing Sector* an unpublished report submitted to the AFL-CIO in December 2002.

³ Union cities include Atlanta GA, Cincinnati OH, Cleveland OH, Houston TX, Los Angeles CA, Madison WI, Milwaukee WI, New York NY, Quad Cities IA, San Diego CA, San Jose CA, Seattle WA, Syracuse NY, and Washington DC.

⁴ For more information see Bronfenbrenner and Juravich's earlier research on union organizing strategies: Kate Bronfenbrenner, "The Role of Union Strategies in NLRB Certification Elections," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 50(2): 195-221 and Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich, "It Takes More than House Calls: Organizing to Win with a Comprehensive Union-Building Strategy," and Tom Juravich and Kate Bronfenbrenner, "Preparing for the Worst: Organizing and Staying Organized in the Public Sector" in Kate Bronfenbrenner and Sheldon Friedman, et al. (eds.), *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1998.

⁵ In order to make sure that all of the elements of our model were critical components of organizing success, we also tested a series of different combinations of six comprehensive organizing tactics from the ten elements of our model, making sure to include all of the different elements in an equal number of combinations. We found that for almost every different combination of six tactics, win rates increased for each additional comprehensive organizing tactic used. The average win rates for all the combinations start at 32 percent, increasing to 38 percent for one tactic, 48 percent for two, 55 percent for three, 60 percent for four, 78 percent for five, and 93 percent for six tactics. Similarly, win rates range from a minimum of 29 percent and a maximum of 38 percent for elections where no tactics in the combination were used to a minimum of 67 percent and a maximum of 100 percent where the union used all six tactics.

⁶ As mentioned above, for several of the unions in our sample—most notably CWA, HERE, and some of the building-trades unions—NLRB certification elections increasingly represent only a small portion of their recent private sector organizing efforts. Our organizer interviews suggest that, for these unions, their NLRB campaigns are secondary and thus tend to be more locally based and involve smaller units, with less strategic and less comprehensive campaigns, while their non-NLRB campaigns are much more likely to follow the comprehensive campaign model. Thus, if we were able to include non-NLRB campaigns in our sample, unions such as CWA, HERE, and IBEW would likely display a higher average use of comprehensive organizing tactics.

⁷ Binary logistic regression was used to test for the individual and combined effect of elements of the comprehensive organizing model while controlling for the following organizing environment variables: manufacturing sector, subsidiary of a larger parent company, ownership change before the election, good to excellent financial condition, Board-determined unit, other organized units, professional/technical/white collar unit, 60 percent or more women, 60 percent or more workers of color, and number of employer tactics used. When individual elements of the model were included in the regression equation, among the comprehensive organizing tactics only adequate and appropriate resources, active and representative committee, and benchmarks and assessments were found to have a statistically significant impact at .05 or better on the odds of the union winning election. When the additive comprehensive organizing tactic is substituted for the

individual elements of the model, it has a statistically significant impact at .01 or better, increasing the odds of the union winning the election by 34 percent for each additional tactic. For additional information on the research method, model, and findings, please see “Changing to Organize: A National Assessment of Union Organizing Strategies,” in Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss, (Eds.), *Organize or Die: Labor’s Prospects in Neoliberal America*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming.

⁸ For both models we only reported the impact for those variables, which had an unstandardized logistic regression coefficient that was statistically significant at .05 or better. In both Model A and Model B the number of employer tactics was statistically significant at .001 or better, as was benchmarks and assessments in Model A and number of comprehensive organizing tactics in Model B.

⁹ Unfortunately, because only 2 percent of the campaigns in the sample (eight cases) used all three elements we were unable to test whether a comprehensive campaign variable which required those three elements in combination with other elements of the model would have an even greater positive impact on election outcome than the simple additive variable. However, because win rates increased in six of the cases where the union used those three tactics plus one additional tactic, and win rates stayed the same for the remaining two cases, we believe that the positive effects of the additive union tactic variable would be even stronger if those three elements were a required component of the variable.

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