Building a stronger union in EE
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

MARGARET MEAD

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Dear member,

Since BT bought EE you have told us that you want a real say in your pay and conditions of work, the same as all other BT employees. To achieve this, the union needs to convince BT/EE and we need to demonstrate that a majority of the workforce want that.

At the moment we face obstacles to union reps being on site to explain the benefits we bring, but even so, the best way for the union to grow its influence is if members talk to colleagues. There is nothing more powerful than members convincing their colleagues of the value of their union.

Not all members feel confident about explaining the benefits of being in a union, so we have produced this booklet for you to keep in your pocket or desk, to help you talk to colleagues about the CWU. Many of them will not have been asked or might think that they are not allowed to join the union. It is likely that there are people you talk to who want to know what membership can mean for them.

This is about your union and your workplace. We can’t always access non-members but you can – they are sitting right next to you!

John East
Assistant Secretary T&FS Department
**Why talk**?

*talk* is a simple guide to give CWU members like you tips on talking to colleagues about why being a CWU member is valuable to them now and in the future. It is important that people who work beside you in EE understand why they should be in the union. The best placed people to do this are you, the union members working for EE already.

**Why should I take part in talk**?

The CWU is a union where working people come together to resolve common issues and common problems.

Talking positively to people about your union is a simple but vital contribution to growing union membership. With a strong union membership comes a strong influence over company policies and procedures which can only improve everyone’s working life.

If every union member contributes a few minutes of their time to talk to a non-member then the outcome will make a massive and positive impact on the union campaign for recognition.
How to start a conversation

It is important to be friendly, open and to check if it is convenient to chat with this person. If the person is in a rush, let them know that they can talk to you another time. Most people will appreciate that you are showing interest in them and will spare a few minutes of their time. Starting the conversation with an ‘open’ question demonstrates this well and shows that you are interested in their opinions.

You could ask questions like:

• What are your thoughts on the CWU?

• What has stopped you from joining the union in the past?

• What do you think the current Employee Representative Forum will be able to achieve in the future?

• BT has 90% union membership, a good relationship with employees and is one of the strongest communications companies in the world. Would you like the same thing?
Helpful responses to potential questions

Some non-members may have preconceived ideas about the union that appear a little negative at first. Below are some helpful responses.

We’ve got the Employee Representative Forum, it’s just the same

“" The Employee Representative Forum, unlike the union, is not independent of EE management. It is there to be consulted but ultimately management can do what they want. A recognised union can put forward alternative proposals and negotiate real improvements to your working life. ""

EE doesn’t recognise a union, why should I join now?

“" The Telecommunications sector is constantly changing. What’s in the pipeline for the future? Increased process automation through Albert? More weekend, bank holiday and antisocial hours without the premium payments? Stricter performance, disciplinary and sickness absence hearings? If there’s no union to fight for you, it’s very easy for EE’s managers to make massive changes to your working life, and without a union you won’t even get a say. ""
The union can’t make any difference!

“Until we get more people to join, the union can’t negotiate with the company for us regarding terms and conditions, pay parity with our BT colleagues and shift patterns. In the meantime, being in the union still means that you can get advice over matters at work, and a union rep at any disciplinary, grievance and sickness meetings who represents you, not the company. As we get more members, our voice gets louder and louder.”

It’s not worth money... the Employee Representative Forum is free

“CWU membership costs less than 17p a day in the first year and only 27p a day after that. It brings numerous benefits including individual representation at work, free legal advice, 24-hour personal accident insurance and a range or services including low cost motor and home insurance.”

FAQs

Q. When is the best time to talk?  
A. Try to speak to people when they are on a tea break or just before they start work.
Q. How long will the chat take?
   A. Having a talk chat won’t take that long – you can talk to someone about the union in less than five minutes.

Q. Am I allowed to do this?
   A. If you are on a break or outside of working time then your manager should not say anything about what you are doing. If you are challenged contact your local union rep or union branch.

Q. Isn’t it somebody else’s job to do union stuff?
   A. Taking part in talk will help out a lot and show non-members that we are all in this together! At present on site reps only get time off for representation. We are actively handing leaflets out at CWU recruitment days but we simply cannot get access to everyone – you can!

Q. What should I do if the talk doesn’t go well?
   A. Don’t worry about it and don’t let one bad experience put you off. It has probably gone better than you think!
Contact form for colleague 1

When you have spoken with your colleague, please complete the form below and return to us in the freepost envelope provided.

About you

Name  

EE workplace  

About your colleague

Name  

Job title  

After speaking with your colleague, would you say his/her views on the CWU are

☐ Positive  ☐ Negative

Would your colleague like more contact from the CWU?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
Contact form for colleague 2

If you have spoken with a second colleague, please enter the details here.

About your colleague

Name ____________________________

Job title __________________________

EE workplace ______________________

After speaking with your colleague, would you say his/her views on the CWU are

☐ Positive  ☐ Negative

Would your colleague like more contact from the CWU?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
What happens next?

If you have any questions please contact your local rep or local Field Organiser who have provided their contact details below.

Local Field Organiser / Union Rep

________________________________________

Email  ____________________________________

Mobile __________________________________

Date  _____________________________________