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

MARGARET MEAD

Contents

Why talkto? 2
Why should I take part in talkto? 2
How to start a conversation 3
Helpful responses to potential questions 4
FAQs 5
Contact forms 7
What happens next 9
Dear member,

There has never been a more important time to build a union in your workplace.

In these uncertain times union recognition brings stability to workplaces and the confidence of knowing that, no matter what, you have your fellow union members to stand with.

The path to union recognition is not short. It takes time, commitment and perseverance but the rewards a recognised workplace can bring make all the effort worthwhile.

The starting point for any union campaign must be to build a robust membership. Everything we can achieve is based on union members. Most people will join a union if someone talks to them about it.

To assist you with your recruitment activity we have produced this guide. Take a few minutes to read through it, get in touch if you have any questions and let us know how you get on.

Andy Kerr
Deputy General Secretary (Telecoms & Financial Services)
**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. It is important that people who work beside you understand why they should be in the union and the best placed people to do this are you, the union members. In addition, the more members taking part, the more effective the union will be.

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

A campaign for recognition needs as many union members as possible. Getting people to join the union is a key factor in winning union recognition in your workplace.

Emails and newsletters only get us so far – most people become motivated to do something after a conversation. This is even more the case if it’s a conversation with someone they know and trust.

Use this booklet with our *Guide to Mobilising in Contact Centres* to build your recognition campaign. It is available through your local Field Organiser.
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 know about union recognition?

• What would make you consider getting involved in the CWU?
Helpful responses to potential questions

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

We don’t need a union... we already have an employee forum

"Any employee forum, unlike the union, is not independent of your management. It is there to be consulted but it is likely that a number of managers sit on the forum which brings about an unfair influence. A recognised union can put forward ideas, alternative proposals and negotiate real improvements. A forum cannot do this."

Unions cause problems like redundancies, closures and strikes

"A union represents the best interests of its members. Unions try to prevent redundancies employers often propose. Unions fight against closures to protect members’ jobs and unions only go on strike if members vote for it and members believe they have no other choice but to take industrial action."
It’s not worth the money!

“CWU membership costs start at less than 30p per day. It brings numerous benefits including individual representation at work, free legal advice, 24-hour personal accident insurance cover and a range of services including low cost motor and home insurance.”

I’m not going to be working here very long...

“...You might be here longer than you expect, and even if that is not the case, the union will still be making a positive difference to your working life through pay and protection. Whether you are here a month, a year or a decade there is still mutual benefit to you being in the union.”

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 chat won’t take that long – you can talk to someone about the union in less than five minutes.
Q. What will my manager say if he/she sees me doing 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 they do remind them that there are agreements between CWU and the company in place.

Q. Isn’t it somebody else’s job to do union stuff?

A. Often people think that union reps and union staff should do it all but, quite simply, they can’t do everything! Taking part in talk will help out a lot and show non-members that we are all in this together! Branch officers and union reps are actively talking to people but can’t get to everyone.

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  

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 ________________________________

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  _______________________________________

05270
Published by the Communications Workers Union 2017
Join CWU online

email
joinunion@cwu.org

www.facebook.com/callcentreworkers

www.cwu.org

150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX | 020 8971 7200 | info@cwu.org
Dave Ward, General Secretary