

Facilitator's Guide

Communicating with Members: from PEOPLE to MAT (Member Action Teams)

Objectives:

- 1) Identify common communication methods
- 2) Learn advantages & disadvantages of 1-on-1 communication
- 3) Learn how to integrate an effective communication system within a local union to implement PEOPLE and MAT programs

Time: 90 minutes

Techniques: Large group discussion
Video & discussion
Individual / Small Group work

Materials: Flip chart
(VHS or DVD) Video - Power @ Work
TV/VCR (or DVD player, Projector & Screen)
Handout #1: "MAT Structure/Responsibilities of MAT Leaders"
Handout #2: "Five Steps of One-On-One Communication"

Part I (30 minutes)

Welcome participants and introduce yourself by sharing your name, title and how long you've been with the union. Review the workshop objectives briefly (by going over them on a pre-written flipchart or a power point slide).

1. Ask participants "What are some reasons or goals of communicating with our members?" **Record responses on flipchart.**

COMMUNICATION GOALS

Responses might include:

- *Inform members*
- *Educate members*
- *Listen and learn about issues*
- *Inspire or motivate members to take action*

During this brainstorm session, ask for examples, such as:

- *Come to a meeting*
- *Be on a committee or become part of MAT*
- *Help with a newsletter or leaflet*
- *Attend a rally*
- *Lobby a political body*
- *Sign members up for PEOPLE*

2. Summarize the discussion based on participant responses and emphasize that communication is about educating our members on an issue so we can move them to take action. Post the flipchart page on the wall.
3. Ask participants “How do we, as a union, communicate with members and non-members?” **Record responses on flip chart.**



Responses might include:

- *Bulletin Boards*
- *Meetings*
- *Newsletters*
- *Flyers*
- *Mailings*
- *E-mail*
- *Face-to-face / one-on-one*
- *Telephone/Phone-banking*

4. Ask participants: “When our goal is to move people to take action, which communication method is most effective?”

*Flip chart **one-on one communication** and circle it or underline it, if other answers are given.*

5. Ask participants: “What are the advantages of one-on-one communication?” and **record responses on a flipchart.**



Answers might include:

- *Able to read body language*
- *Listen to and respond to concerns*
- *Establish and develop relationships*

6. Ask participants” “What are the disadvantages of 1-on-1 communication?” and **record responses on a flipchart.**



Answers might include:

- *It's time consuming*
- *Access to workers is sometimes difficult*
- *Message may be inconsistent*

7. Ask participants: “How can we overcome these disadvantages of one-on-one communication?”

Time consuming – involve more people

Access to workers – learn the best places and times to meet with workers

Inconsistent message

Meet to go over message; develop talking points

8. Transition to a brief discussion about the intersections of our political PEOPLE program and our communication methods to build support for this important program.

Ask participants for a show of hands to indicate who is a supporter of PEOPLE. Ask for 1-2 volunteers to describe what this program is about and to share how they were recruited to contribute to the program.

State that PEOPLE is based on the principle that when many members contribute small amounts it strengthens our political power. The success of recruiting members to PEOPLE is focused on One-on-One conversations with them. They decide to contribute and become involved based on the issues that matter to them and because we communicate with them on a personal level.

9. Transition to the next segment and introduce the **Video: “Power At Work”** by explaining that this video was created about Member Action Teams (MATs).
10. Tell participants that the video goes back and forth between a simulation of a group of workers building a MAT structure and documentary footage of members who are MAT leaders in an AFSCME local at the University of California.
11. Warn participants that we will stop the video four times and discuss some questions raised by the video.
12. Show the video. At each stop, discuss the questions below.

Stop 1: Recruit MAT Activists

What accounts for Roy’s success in recruiting Vivian?

- ◆ *He listened*
- ◆ *Identified an issue she cared about*
- ◆ *Asked the member to do something specific*

What kind of person makes a good MAT leader?

- ◆ *Natural leaders in the workplace*
- ◆ *Good communicators*
- ◆ *Respected by other workers*
- ◆ *Able to motivate others*
- ◆ *Able to commit to doing the work*

Stop 2: Build the MAT Network

What is the structure of MAT?

- *Pyramid*
- *Each MAT leader takes responsibility for about 10 co-workers*
- *In large workplaces, a MAT captain takes responsibility for up to 10 MAT leaders*

Distribute **Handout #1: “MAT Structure/“Responsibilities of MAT Leaders”** (printed back to back) and review the contents.

Present the question “Why not use the existing steward structure to address the problem?”

- *Problem can't be resolved through the grievance procedure*
- *Problem may not be solvable through the grievance procedure*
- *MAT structure allows you to reach more workers more quickly*
- *Too much work for stewards alone*
- *MAT attempts to reach everyone, not just members*
- *Opportunity to involve more activists in the union*

Step 3: Mobilize the MAT

Why did Jim agree to sign the petition?

- *He was angry about the issue*
- *Vivian was persistent*
- *She agitated him*

Distribute **Handout #2: “Five Steps of One-On-One Communication”** and review the contents.

Step 4: Take It to the MAT

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the message developed by the MAT in this meeting?

Strengths

- *Touches on a number of issues*

- *Addresses the quality of care issue*
- *Arguments seem reasonable*

Weaknesses

- *No facts and figures on any of the arguments or points*
- *No clarity on how resources for more staff will be resolved*

Note: After this discussion, resume the video for its conclusion.

13. Mention that the Member Action Team (MAT) structure can be used as a communication vehicle – both to and from members – and as a way to mobilize members to take action.

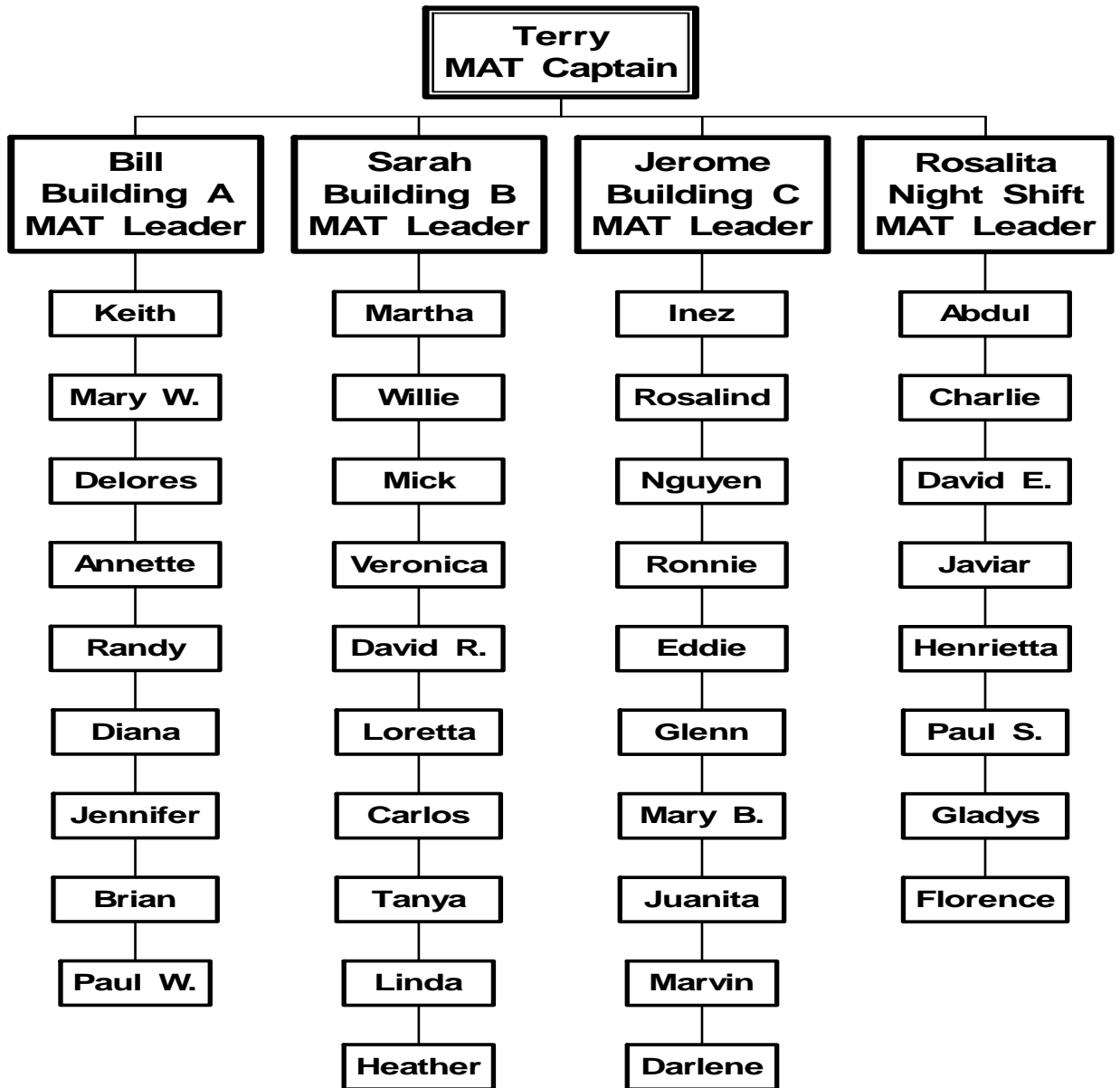
Summary Points:

- There are many different communication goals in our union work
- There are also many different communications methods we should use
- When we want members do something or take action, one-on-one is the most effective way to communicate
- We have to involve others to develop an effective one-on-one communication structure

HANDOUTS

MAT Structure

Local 123 Member Action Teams



Member Action Teams

A tool to communicate with members and mobilize members into action on issues they care about.

(over)

Responsibilities of MAT Leaders

- *Take responsibility for working with up to ten (10) co-workers in his/her department (less or more depending on the size of the department or work site).*
- *Sign up and involve members in their department, especially in their immediate workplace.*
- *Work together with council staff and MAT captains on tasks that contribute to building a stronger union.*
- *Have regular one-on-one conversations with co-workers and listen to their concerns and issues.*
- *Explain the basics to co-workers about why our union needs everyone involved and working together to solve problems.*
- *Help mobilize members when action is needed on an issue or workplace problem.*
- *Attend MAT meetings and training programs.*
- *Distribute union newsletters, flyers, surveys, and other information as needed.*
- *Support the goals, values and principles of our union.*

FIVE STEPS OF ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION

- 1. Introduce yourself and explain why you are talking with workers today.**
- 2. Use active listening skills to learn about the worker and his/her issues and concerns.**
 - ◆ Face the person you are talking with.
 - ◆ Maintain eye contact.
 - ◆ Nod and say "yes" at appropriate times.
 - ◆ Don't interrupt.
 - ◆ Don't jump to conclusions.
 - ◆ Ask clarifying questions.
 - ◆ Ask open-ended questions.
- 3. Educate about the union and what can be done to build power.**
 - ◆ If take up this issue as a group, the boss will be more likely to listen.
 - ◆ We're reaching out to you and your co-workers so that we can build a stronger union and make real changes.
 - ◆ Standing together, we can take an active role in improving our jobs.
- 4. Ask the worker to participate.**
 - ◆ Who else is affected by this issue? Will you introduce me to them?
 - ◆ Will you come to a meeting next Tuesday? Will you ask _____ to join us?
 - ◆ Can I get your address and phone number so I can keep in touch with you?
- 5. Get a specific commitment.**
 - ◆ Remember to follow up on the commitment!