

How could the Union increase the sense of belonging with their members?

The issue of Unions increasing a sense of belonging with its members is a shared problem across the labour movement. Positive ways to address this would be for the Government Services Union (GSU) to provide members with the chance to give feedback, give ideas as to what the Union should be focusing on, publicizing how the Union is using their resources as well as what specific issues are most important to members in the workplace and in their communities. This creates a stronger relationship between members and the Union because it provides a way to express opinions to someone who can make change and gives an outlet for their ideas and solutions. As well, scheduled days set aside where Union members can come to a location and interact socially with their own local and regional representatives to create a team atmosphere would help members bond and create strong and lasting connections.

A larger GSU presence on mainstream and social media would also increase a sense of belonging. A more vocal media presence to spread the word about the Union is needed, for instance, the Union has an Instagram account but more resources and time on a digital presence would appeal to younger workers leading to learning and potential participation in their Union. Making public announcements and having media coverage on the Union will help the Union grow and let the membership, politicians and the general public know how many members there are in their area as well as their issues and concerns. Showing members how many others support them and what they are a part of is an important factor of feeling connected to something larger and having a sense of belonging. This would encourage a sense of knowing that members are not alone and that there are others who support the same things that they do. Social media connects people from across different groups of workers and may bring them into contact with Union members they have heard of but may never have gotten the chance to really interact which in turn creates spaces to unite people.

To create a sense of belonging the Union needs to keep promoting days and events like the Canadian Multiculturalism Day, Black History Month, Pride celebrations and the National Indigenous Peoples Day because these events give members a sense of appreciation and recognition of who they are and makes them feel valued as well as accepted. The Union should host events during these days to educate members on their peer's cultures, histories and religions to create a tighter bond between members of the Union. At these events inviting a guest speaker or elder, or even better, having a Union member from related group to speak, would benefit from these celebrations. Educating and creating understanding is one of the most important things the Union should do to increase solidarity.

There are multiple approaches that the Union can take to help create a strong sense of belonging and give members a feeling of unity. The points given above are some ways that the Union can increase morale and promote a feeling of inclusion. The first approach I mentioned was a chance for members to give direct feedback to decision makers. By being heard and by contributing to the direction in which their Union is going builds ownership and attachment. I feel that this is one of the most important points because it promotes a sense among members that they are recognized and being understood.

The second approach is media presence. This is important because technology has changed the way we communicate. By building a presence through multiple media formats and media outlets the

Union proves that its members are important to it. Also, a larger media presence helps promote an educated membership that is better equipped to appreciate the work that its Union does.

The third approach was about event and celebration days that represent member's divergent cultures and religion, this is important because the more the Union members can understand their fellow members the stronger the relationships they build. If the Union and its membership make further efforts to embrace members of different identities it will build a sense of common purpose and belonging that crosses differences.

In conclusion, if the Union can push to not only start these initiatives, but also to put concerted time and effort into them the Union will be stronger and members will feel a better and solid sense of belonging. If the Union appreciates its members' voices the members will appreciate what their Union is fighting for.

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