



## AEI Industrial Action Guidelines Manual:

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## 1. Preparation:

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- Financial aspects:

When planning any industrial action, an organisation should investigate and determine whether they can afford any action and if Yes, "what type of action and for how long?"

Question? Does the organisation have a financial advisor?

If no, the organisation should actively examine their finances, as well as, try to estimate how much a strike or any other proposed action will cost. The AEI guidelines manual should assist in giving you an idea on where you are going to need to spend your money. Attempt to cover all aspects and budget accordingly. Proper planning can effect the outcome significantly.

An organisation should consider setting up a strike fund coupled with clear guidelines as to how the funds should be spent.

- Activities for the Organisation:

Looking at organisations where successful strikes have been organised, we found that the majority had set up a strike board. This was not necessarily the official board of the organisation since that could have restricted possibilities when so called illegal or partly illegal activities are predicted. Within the Strike Board you would have a crisis management team consisting of (2-3 persons) to deal with specific crisis situations.

Items of consideration for the strike board are:

- a) Talk to your members in advance.
- b) Set up information points for members in one or more locations.
- c) See if you can co-operate or conclude non interference agreements with other Unions.
- d) Determine whether you control enough of the workforce to ensure effective action.
- e) Be aware of other key persons in the organization.
- f) Predict the counter actions from the Airline-MRO.

- What type of action do you plan to hold?: [Home:](#)

A clear strategy is required to be successful.

Most wild strikes do not achieve the desired result and in fact sometimes cause more harm than good.

If you foresee long term actions, employ a system of gradually increasing the pressure. Initial actions should be confined to causing internal disruption only.

Such actions could be:

- a) Go Slow.
- b) Take sick leave.
- c) Strictly follow procedures to the letter.
- d) No overtime etc.
- e) Create various happenings.

Should the public be affected, they need to be given advanced, clear explanations of why such action is being taken. A well informed public should help maintain their support.

- Communication plan setup:

Essential for any successful campaign is to be able to communicate your message to your members, your counterpart, other employees in the organisation, and last but not least, you must be able to communicate messages quickly and simply to the public. Typical messages could be:

- a) Why you are on strike.
- b) Connect the message to the safety of the flying public
- c) Use someone not connected to the union as a media contact.

Finally make sure you know your friends and your enemies

## 2. Legal:

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- Legal advisor's. If you do not have in-house knowledge you will need to have some kind of legal advice. Often strikes are countered with legal procedures by the company and if you are able to predict the management's next move, it could completely change the outcome. Check on this before the problem arises. In periods of non action you have both the time and the money to sort out your legal cover.
- Check your agreement before you plan anything. This is where mistakes are usually made as most people think they understand the agreement but are missing some of the key details. This could turn out to be disastrous.
- Check both national as well as international law. AEI's experience shows that in many countries the national law is not always what it's supposed to be. Many national government's have gone through the painstaking process of undersigning international agreements but then go on to overlook some sections converting the agreement into national law. The International Labor Office (ILO) of the United Nations based in Geneva allows for easy access to those agreements and AEI has gained not only valuable experience but also achieved some great results by using this approach.
- Be completely aware of your company structure. Due to the continually increasing use of national and international alliances, the structure and by that the rules of power in a company can change dramatically. Be aware of this as it is essential to address any demands to the correct person.

## 3. Action plan:

Several steps should be prepared and questions need to be asked prior to "going into battle".

- Does the union control enough of the workforce to have the desired effect on the production? If you decide upon action and yet only 5% of the workforce agrees to participate, you could end up losing much more than the fight. You will lose not only the workforce's confidence but also their trust in the union's ability to take action. You lose face.

Therefore involve as many members as you possibly can in the decision on whether to take action or not. A majority decision from the majority of the membership should be the basis for initiating strike action.

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- If the board decides to share tasks, it is extremely important to stick to that which was agreed. The aim is to prevent uncontrolled actions or statements towards the press, public, police or company representatives. There should only be clear controlled messages and actions to the outside world in order to maintain control on the situation.
- A Crisis team could be useful as situations can sometimes change within hours or even minutes leaving no time available to call and discuss a proper response with all the board members. The mandate of this crisis team should be clearly defined.
- How to deal with non striking colleagues is something that needs to be discussed well in advance. Various aspects such as Legal, Moral, Financial etc. should be taken into consideration. Every member should be well informed on how to act and should agree to abide by the strategy. This will help prevent uncoordinated, possibly even illegal actions that backfire resulting in a loss of public support.
- Scenario's for the various different possibilities from best case scenario through to worst case scenario should be discussed and prepared. The resulting plans of action should be widely communicated with the board, shop stewards and members. This will help ensure that you are prepared and have the ability to counteract any actions instigated by the company.
- Ensure that for each day you have a new item prepared for the media. This is essential to remain the center of media attention. If you have slipped to page 25 in the press, you have a big problem.
- Back to work agreement's are something that needs to be discussed before any actions can be officially terminated. The goal here is to protect the strike core groups.
- Before you leave or are forced to leave the company premises, attempt to have an independent authority the police or invited journalists / camera crew verify your surroundings were left in good working order. This will help prevent the company inflicting damage themselves and then attempt to pass the blame onto the strike force for illegal damage to company property.

#### 4. Communication Internally:

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- List of telephone numbers: Internal communication's could be essential to spread news immediately and prevent rumors disrupting your plans of action. One method is to create an SMS service. It is now possible in most countries to SMS a whole group of telephone numbers with just one call. Prepare this in advance.
- websites should be used as a means of updating information in real time. This enables mass up to date communication directly from the place of action. Having a laptop available at the place of strike and someone to enter the changes on the website is helpful.
- Have an up to date list of Tel/ fax/ Email numbers /addresses of media, radio and television companies. Consider setting up a 24 hour communications center.
- Talk to your members on a daily basis. A lack of information creates a breeding ground for rumors.
- Good communication's with members and non members about the reason's why you have decided to go on strike or why you have decided upon a particular action may just give you the benefit of the doubt.
- Set up information points for members in one or more places. This should be kept separate from the media information point.
- Know your friends and your enemies, before you take action. This sounds easy but could be essential. Prepare yourself for overnight changes between the 2 group's especially when the going gets tough.
- How to deal with non striking colleagues. When you go on strike or have other actions you will be faced with non-striking colleagues. Some don't strike because there is no support for your demands, Some don't join in because of religious or some other reasons that could have nothing to do with the fact they might support your ideas. Some use the strike to show off to the boss that they are loyal to the company for their own short or long-term benefit. When you develop your strategy to deal with this situation you might have to adjust your counter action depending on these differences. **What to do, what to say or how to behave when confronted, must be determined in advance.**

- Issue daily safety bulletins to passengers and the public, as a means to sustain support for your campaign. This is essential. Sometimes non-striking colleagues can still be a useful source of internal information.
- When organizing Picket lines or protest marches “Feed the strikers” using friends and family. Organize assistance for picket line staff: offer communication possibilities, moral support visits by friends and family, organize media attention etc.
- Pay strong attention to the Morale of the colleagues. If morale drops due to various misinformation fed to them by company officials, the situation could easily collapse and all could be lost.
- How to deal with strike breakers from outside. During long strikes the risk of having external strike breakers is always there. Prepare yourself. See if you can use company procedures to make life difficult for them or question their legal status when they perform maintenance or inspections. See that you check if these temporary staff are properly licensed, have proper knowledge of company procedures and systems. If in doubt questions should be directed towards the media and the authorities.
- Make sure before you end a strike that nobody has been fired.

## 5. Communication Externally:

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- The use of a PR Agency to help you set-up your external communications has proven to be very successful and well worth the involved costs. We are technicians and like to fix things but are not always good in promoting ourselves. Realize that and act accordingly.
- Have your contacts local, national and international. Use the channels you have, the more the better and create pressure on the company on a worldwide scale.
- To stay in the headlines you should come up with new-different ideas for press attention Every day. This is hard work but pays off in the end. **It should be top priority.**
- Connect – Relate your action to safety. When you want to reach the public you have to, wherever possible, relate you actions to safety. You should claim to be the guardian of safety in the eyes of the public. You could issue daily safety bulletins to public and passengers.
- Contact other company involved unions and see if you can co-operate with them or at least attempt to obtain a non interference deal.
- Depending on local legal situation there may be a need for someone, not connected to the union, to be the union spokesman. If there is no direct relation between the spokesman and the union it will be more difficult for the company to sue the union for their actions during the strike.
- Have leaflets etc to hand out to passengers, inform them via direct contact. Get into discussions if required but make sure to instruct those involved to adhere to the basic story. What to do, what to say, must be determined in advance
- Letter to creditors and banks. One option could be to write letters to companies creditors and banks In order to generate support. They have their investment in the company to protect and stability is what they prefer.
- Use the website on the spot to set up fresh update of the website as it happens.

- Use children if policy action is expected, Such actions provoke. Using children who walk amongst the strike forces will prevent display of power by for instance the local police force. Nobody wants to be responsible for hurting children.
- To be able to keep the public on your side, it is considered wise to plan a gradual increase of pressure step by step, instead of going on strike immediately. If public opinion turns against you this usually benefits the company more and they will use this to the extreme. If the public is warned of expected delays, cancellation etc in advance they can take re-planning into consideration. Create various happenings to continuously attract attention. Long strikes are page 1 headline news on day one and if care is not taken, move to page 25 left-hand bottom corner within a few days. No news is bad news for the strikers. With or without a full strike the public must know, why, where and when the public can expect to be disturbed.
- To get attention without completely disrupting the organization, initial surprise strikes lasting not more than 1 hour can have big affect and draw enough attention to wake up the company's management. They don't drain the unions finances too much but effect is ensured.
- When having any form of action, attempt to connect this action if possible to reduced safety for the flying public. Since Safety is the essential product we deliver, bringing doubt about "reduced safety" when the unions goes on strike can be very productive. This is because of the introduction of temporarily hired (outside) staff or strike breakers who are not always familiar with company procedures and aircraft types. It is not always necessary to have the proof, Reasonable doubt often work just as well. When doing this, the story you bring out should be as correct as possible to prevent legal counter action and accusations.

## 6. Evaluation:

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- Whenever an action comes to an end the organization should evaluate this action. Be Realistic and Honest examining what went right and what went wrong before, during and after the strike. This will help you learn many lessons. Once you have done this, Share your conclusions with the rest of the affiliates. We could all learn from your experiences and possibly update this manual at the same time as well.
- It might be useful to have a logbook to keep track of what went well and what didn't go so well. Also useful is to keep track of how much money was spent on what during the action.

Action items if you had strike manual send to Fred.  
If you had strike and evaluate it send it to Fred.  
Send historical info to us.