

Guidelines for Independent Member-Led Digital Campaigns to Support Bargaining or Organizing

LATEST UPDATE: June 17, 2025

In This Document:

Before You Begin	2
Purpose, Messaging & Branding	2
Setting Up Your Campaign	4
Creating Safe and Effective Content	4
Protecting Yourself and Others	5
Red Flags to Avoid	5
Managing Your Campaign	6
When to Reach Out for Approval or Guidance	6
Example Accounts.....	6

Before You Begin

Starting a social media channel for your unit or workplace can be a great way to connect with co-workers and build support for organizing efforts—whether you’re just getting started, preparing for bargaining, or already enforcing your collective agreement.

UFCW 1518 understands that for many members, social media can be an easier and more comfortable way to get involved and stay informed.

When used thoughtfully, a member-led social media presence can also be a powerful tool to support organizing and strengthen your position at the bargaining table.


However, it’s important to post responsibly—certain content could unintentionally harm strategies developed with your colleagues and union representative. It’s also important to remember that posting defamatory or false content about individuals or organizations, including your employer, can lead to legal consequences.


The guidelines below offer tips on how to use social media effectively: what to think about before you post, how to keep your messaging strong, and what to avoid.

Purpose, Messaging & Branding

To make the most of your social media channel, start with a clear, well-defined **purpose** and share content that consistently supports that goal. Repeating key messages helps build recognition and keeps your campaign focused.


It helps to think about two kinds of purpose:


 **Internal purpose:** A detailed goal that guides the campaign team. This is your roadmap and helps you decide what to post and what not to post.

 **External purpose:** A short, positive statement you can share publicly in your bio or posts. This is what followers will see and remember.


Both should align, but they don’t have to be worded the same. Keep the external purpose broad and inclusive, while using the internal purpose to keep your team organized.


Examples:

 **Internal purpose:** “Support the bargaining committee by showing public unity around safe staffing and fair wages.”

 **External purpose (public):** “Workers in healthcare standing together for a fair deal with

UFCW 1518.”

 **Internal purpose:** “Keep members engaged and informed after ratification to strengthen solidarity for the next round of bargaining.”

 **External purpose (public):** “Union strong 🙌 Sharing updates and wins for Safeway #333 workers.”

What to Avoid

A purpose that is vague, negative, or risky can confuse your audience and even create problems.

- ✗ Doesn't explain the campaign goal
- ✗ Sounds negative and personal instead of collective
- ✗ Could be seen as insubordinate or defamatory

If you decide to keep your channel active once you've reached your original target date or objective, your channel's purpose will need to shift—such as moving from organizing to bargaining, or later, to keeping members engaged and strengthening solidarity.

That's normal. Just make sure you are clear on your **new goal**, define a new **timeline** (don't leave it open “forever”), formally designate a new **administrator**, and make sure your content evolves with your goal so your messaging stays clear and effective.

With a few exceptions, UFCW 1518 can't review or verify content shared on member-led channels. At the same time, we don't expect every unit to know the union's position on every issue. Since your channel is member-led, it's important to **clearly distinguish it from official UFCW 1518 communications**.

To avoid confusion—or potential legal issues—about what represents the union's official stance, please follow the guidelines below.

- ✓ You're welcome to mention that you are UFCW 1518 members (e.g., “fighting for fairness with @ufcw1518”),
- ✗ However, please do not use official UFCW 1518 logos in your content
- ✓ Feel free to tag @ufcw1518 in posts to show your union affiliation
- ✓ Create your own simple graphics that reflect your workplace rather than official union materials
- ✓ You can use free and simple design platforms like [Canva](#) to do this

This approach makes your campaign more effective —workers relate better to authentic, peer-to-peer voices than official union messaging. It also allows you complete creative freedom to develop messaging that resonates specifically with your coworkers and workplace culture.

Setting Up Your Campaign

Create a clear profile – Start with a recognizable, descriptive name (e.g., "Kiara Workers United") and brief bio explaining your purpose (feel free to mention that you're UFCW 1518 members!).

Clearly state opinions are your own, not your employer's - If you identify yourself as a company employee, or are identifiable as such, including using the employer's business name, be clear that the opinions expressed are your own and do not represent the opinion of the employer

- ✓ You could do this simply by adding a line to the account's "bio": "Opinions expressed are our own."

Designate one administrator – Define in writing who will manage the account for consistent messaging; make a plan to transfer administrator access to someone else if the current administrator leaves.

Plan your timeline - Decide how long the campaign will run (i.e. until your workplace is unionized or your next collective agreement is finalized) and who will maintain the account. Some members may want to create a "Social Media Committee" to share responsibility for managing the account.

Coordinate with your bargaining committee – If your campaign is intended to support your bargaining committee during contract negotiations, make sure your timing aligns with their strategy.

Build your following - Beginning with pro-union co-workers, invite people to follow your account. It can be a good idea to invite former workers if they have good relationships with your co-workers, as they can help with amplifying your message.

Creating Safe and Effective Content

- ✓ **Focus on worker experiences** - Personal stories are powerful and legally safer than broad accusations
- ✓ **Stay factual** - Only make claims you can document and support
- ✓ **Keep it positive overall** - Emphasize what you can achieve together rather than attacks
- ✓ **Avoid specific bargaining details** - Don't share exact demands (like "5% wage increase") that could compromise strategy
- ✓ **Make it inclusive** - Ensure content reflects the diversity of your coworkers

Protecting Yourself and Others

Does your employer have a social media policy that you have signed or have been made aware of? The Employer has the right to impose discipline when **technology and social media use is contrary to employer policies.**

In the absence of a social media policy, make sure you stick to the following guidelines:

- ✗ **Do not make false statements that are defamatory** (i.e. harm the employer's reputation) - Focus on your working conditions and personal experiences rather than accusations, where veracity could be contested, that could result in discipline and attract legal liability
- ✗ **Do not make statements that are insubordinate** (e.g. disrespectful, defiant, or undermining toward the employer, managers, or supervisors) or disparaging toward the employer and other employees.
- ✓ **Respect privacy** - Never share others' personal information or photos without permission or appropriate authorization (e.g. employees, employer, customers)
- ✓ **Document workplace** issues - Keep records of problems you're responding to in case of employer retaliation
- ✓ **Avoid work time and equipment** - Don't use employer resources or time for campaign activities
- ✓ **Monitor comments carefully** - Remove hateful speech; handle controversial discussions via direct message
- ✓ **Limit data collection** - Only collect information necessary for your campaign goals

Red Flags to Avoid

- ▶ Making threats or ultimatums
- ▶ **Sharing confidential bargaining information**
- ▶ Violating existing employer policy (for e.g. technology, confidentiality, unauthorized posting of photos)
- ▶ Making/posting remarks that may be considered insubordinate by the employer
- ▶ Making/posting disparaging and or derogatory remarks about the employer or other employees

- ▶ Making allegations that are defamatory, such as saying something that is false or cannot be proven which damages a person or the business' reputation
- ▶ Encouraging work slowdowns or other job actions without union coordination
- ▶ Making personal attacks on management
- ▶ Using official UFCW 1518 branded materials in ways that could be confused with official union communications

Managing Your Campaign

- ✓ Coordinate with your union - Share major developments or escalations with your Union Representative.
- ✓ Use secure, reputable, free and user-friendly platforms – For example: Instagram, Facebook, Discord, and basic form builders like Google Forms or Typeform
- ✓ Track engagement, even if informally - Note what issues resonate with coworkers to inform your organizing
- ✓ Monitor and respond to messages - Make sure there's a way for your followers to message you, but don't share sensitive information via social media messages
- ✓ Stay unified - Ensure all campaign participants align on key messages
- ✓ Be transparent - Make clear this is a member-led initiative

When to Reach Out for Approval or Guidance

- ✉ Questions about legal boundaries or content concerns
- ✉ If things become contentious at the bargaining table
- ✉ Major escalations or unexpected employer responses, such as accusations of defamation
- ✉ Need for strategic messaging or platform advice

Example Accounts

Below are some example social media accounts run by union members during bargaining and organizing campaigns, for reference and inspiration:

 <https://www.instagram.com/ouearnestunion/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/evergreenworkersunion/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/uwadvisersunion/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/reiunionsoho/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/mectorontounion/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/ouearnestunion/>

Remember: Your organizing energy and member leadership is what makes campaigns like this powerful. These campaigns work best when they are member-driven and independent, which actually strengthens your organizing skills and workplace leadership.
