



THE EHRHARDT FOUNDATION

Labor-Management Workshop on Issues Management and Industry Advancement

*Highlights and Summary of
Issues and Recommendations*

Summer 2005

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Labor-Management Summer Workshop

Labor-Management Workshop On Issues Management and Industry Advancement

Contents

Highlights

- Summer Meeting 1
- Focus Groups Identify Issues 2
- Recommendations Based on Issues Identified 3

Expanded Discussion

- Workshop Methodology 7
- Discussion of Issues and Recommendations 9

About the Ehrhardt Foundation 22

About the Workshop Facilitator 23

Sample Project Timeline 24

Notes 25

Feedback Form



Summer Meeting

- Joint meeting to conduct an issues management and industry advancement workshop.
- Attendees introduced to the practice of “strategic issues management” as a strategic planning activity.
- Attendees reviewed three interrelated issues that involve challenges to and opportunities for long term industry advancement.
- Attendees broke-out into focus groups impaneled to identify a list of emerging issues they believe requires action on the part of the organization as a whole.
- By “organization” attendees asked to think of the union and contractor organizations as one organization with common industry advancement objectives.
- Following the meetings of four focus groups (two contractor groups; two union groups), leaders shared respective lists of issues.

Focus Groups Identify Issues

- Promotion of the Industry Among General Public
(more detail provided on page 9)
- The Bidding Process *(p. 11)*
- Unauthorized Migrant Labor *(p. 13)*
- Local Political Action / Government Relations *(p. 15)*
- Federal and State Labor Law and Safety Provisions
(p. 16)
- Promotion of Union Affiliation *(p. 17)*
- Appreciation for the Union-Contractor Relationship
(p. 17)
- Member Awareness and Appreciation *(p. 19)*
- Employment Placement *(p. 19)*
- Training and Technological Adaptation *(p. 20)*

Recommendations Based on Issues Identified

Recommendations Involving Communication with the Public:

1. Design and implement a marketing campaign directed at developers and end-users that seeks to create a demand for union contracting and generate attractive public image that challenges negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and the costs of union contracting.

Recommendations Involving Communication with External Organizations and Political Entities:

2. Design and implement a comprehensive initiative to improve the performance of union contractors during the bidding interaction, particularly in dealing with objections related to labor costs, through the development of materials and guidance to assist contractors during routine marketing interactions.
3. Design and implement a continuous, team-driven issues management initiative focusing on development planning, targeting discussion and debate at the regional economic development and zoning levels of government.

Directives Requiring Communication with External Organizations and Political Entities (con't):

4. Design and implement a continuous, team-driven issues management initiative focusing on government relations specific to the enforcement of federal and state labor laws and occupational safety provisions.
5. Form a legal and public policy advisory council to research new case law, legislation (emerging, proposed, and adopted), and business practices, and create information briefs and guidelines for organization leaders and interested members. This initiative might include the identification and hiring of postgraduate students to function as legal and legislative interns to provide research and writing support.

Recommendations Involving Internal Organizational Communication:

6. Design and implement a recruitment campaign directed at non-union contractors that challenges negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and promotes the practical advantages of affiliation with the union and the contractor association.

Directives Requiring Internal Organizational Communication (con't):

7. In conjunction with an initiative directed at non-union contractors, design and implement an initiative directed at contractors to convey advantages and responsibilities associated with being a union contractor and promote the services of union and contractor organizations.
8. Develop training modules to facilitate improved interpersonal interactions and organizational representation, as well as recommend and support the development of procedures designed to improve information exchange between contractor and union staff and management.
9. Design and implement an initiative directed at members to convey advantages and responsibilities associated with union affiliation (working for a union contractor and being part of the union).
10. Design and implement an initiative directed at affiliated contractors that encourages placement of the most experienced members over apprentices, and conveys and justifies existing rules and

Labor-Management Summer Workshop—Highlights

regulations intended to protect the industry from disadvantages caused by loss of qualified tradesmen.

Directives Requiring Internal Organizational Communication (con't):

11. Design and implement initiative directed at members that explains any existing or newly developed placement policies and programs, and the rules and regulations intended to protect the industry from disadvantages caused by loss of qualified tradesmen.
12. Design and implement initiative directed at members to promote opportunities for journeymen to advance skill level, adapt to technological advancements and innovations within the industry, and increase knowledge of safety measures. Initiative should explain and promote any incentives or changes in policies related to recognizing different levels of skill.
13. Form a “technology task force” or “standing committee” to research new technologies and devise strategies for exploiting such innovation to the advantage of the industry.



Workshop Methodology

Strategic Issues Management

Strategic issues management focuses attention on specific challenges and opportunities and uses organizational advocacy to control the effect such issues have on organizational performance. Issues management begins with issues identification, wherein leaders isolate concerns that can be addressed through research and creative programming. Once a list of issues is assembled, an organization can articulate its goals, devise appropriate strategies, implement programs designed to manage the issues, and evaluate the effectiveness of such programs.

This workshop included a frank and detailed discussion of issues of common concern among members of a community seeking mutually beneficial outcomes. The discussion began with a presentation that shared research into three interconnected *example issues* (the decline of union membership at the federal and state level, the growth of new housing construction in the Midwest, and the challenges of unauthorized migrant labor in the construction trades) and used this information to encourage additional dialogue regarding these and other concerns. *Break-out focus groups* were used to allow for a more nuanced discussion among smaller groups of leaders, and to generate a list of issues that can function as a *customized agenda for strategic planning*.

Assumptions

In keeping with the notion that proactive management of these issues will be mutually beneficial, programming designed to manage the issues should be supported and/or sponsored jointly by both the union and contractor organizations via an arrangement that is acceptable to both parties. However, if joint action to address these issues is not possible for whatever reason, the recommendations might still be pursued independently. Independent efforts could be prioritized to emphasize one or more issues and/or exclude attention to issues that are more or less relevant to union or contractor concerns, depending on the prerogatives of either entity.

Labor-Management Workshop—*Expanded Discussion*

Continued Discussion and Feedback

It is important to continue the discussion regarding the issues identified in the workshop, in order to (1) streamline or amend the list of issues based on the original intentions or revised thinking of leaders, (2) add new issues that did not emerge in the original discussion or that emerge during a review of the workshop, (3) define more-specific goals for suggested programs designed to address issues, and (4) prioritize issues in terms of importance, available time, and resources.

Enclosed is a Feedback Form to allow for additional comments and analysis by readers of this summary. This form is designed to solicit constructive commentary and desired amendments along the lines of the above four objectives, but may also be used to cover more comprehensive feedback sent to the workshop facilitator. Unsigned feedback is welcome and names will not be connected to amendments; however, for the purposes of clarity and continued dialogue, identifying yourself might be especially useful.



Discussion of Issues and Recommendations

The issues discussed at the Workshop provide a good deal of detail about the concerns of the *organization*. This summary can function as a baseline for where the organization “was” before undertaking efforts to improve its performance and standing within the industry. It is important, however, to keep in mind that just because organizational leaders identify a list of challenges does not mean it is in the best interest of the organization to spend its resources addressing each *directly*. How these issues fit together, what factors cause certain organizational challenges, and how much the organization can expect to accomplish over a specific period of time are matters of organizational priority and prerogative.

The issues raised during the focus group interactions are issues that can be addressed through public communication, through communication with external organizations and political entities, and/or through internal organizational communication. This summary orders the issues and subsequent recommendations along these lines and within these categories. Some of these issues can be (or may be already) addressed at some level through more traditional methods of organizational advocacy (such as political action, organizing, and through the collective bargaining process); however, this summary assumes there is a desire to expand existing efforts and/or adopt new methods of approaching the identified issues. Naturally, the wider the target audience the organization seeks to reach with any of its messages, the more complex and costly the program may be to implement. A sample project timeline is provided (page 24) to illustrate the steps involved in implementing a single recommendation

Promotion of the Industry Among the General Public

Five concerns expressed a desire to develop an effective marketing campaign to promote the trade and challenge negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and the costs of union contracting. One of those concerns addressed the particular belief that anyone can do the

Labor-Management Workshop—*Expanded Discussion*

work performed by the trade, suggesting a need for marketing campaign targeting both end-users of housing and regional commercial developments and residential consumers. Generating public appreciation for union contractors can be accomplished by increasing quality expectations among end-users and making it clear that using non-union services is a gamble with one's biggest investment. The organization must determine the scope of the campaign, and how best to reach target publics. Here are some suggestions:

- A larger-budget advertising campaign in partnership with the International Union, other district councils, and contractor organizations in high production regions.
- Reality programming on networks that focus on home improvement that demonstrates what can trade accomplish and/or sponsoring a promotional challenge in partnership with regional contractors and suppliers.
- Opportunities to promote the industry in routine communication exchanges, especially directed toward regional press (a “fair” to promote work for general home-buying and remodeling public, etc.).
- Promotional material to supplement developer sales literature and assistance to developers in marketing specific developments within the region.
- Information campaign to alter perceptions of new housing consumers and the small business community using specific number ranges for services, in concert with a referral service (with appropriate referral fee to cover costs of add campaign) – “Did you know the costs of hiring an expert to... can be quite reasonable?” Promotional materials concentrating on the practical benefits of hiring someone over doing it yourself (the “hidden costs” of doing it yourself: the costs of supplies, physical exhaustion, and emotional stress).



Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

Recommendation:

Design and implement a marketing campaign directed at developers and end-users that seeks to create a demand for union contracting and generate attractive public image that challenges negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and the costs of union contracting.

The Bidding Process

Four concerns expressed a desire to improve the performance of union contractors in the bidding process. In particular, union leaders expressed a desire to cooperatively diagnose and correct factors leading to lost work opportunities and address situations when union contractors are unable to provide a bid. Contractor leaders expressed interest in programs that address competition concerns in situations when large-scale projects could be secured (“off-setting” the differences through some method of funding was specifically mentioned) and union leaders expressed a desire to address instances when non-union contractors claim to pay the “prevailing wage” when they, in fact, do not. Contractors also expressed a general desire to keep costs down in terms of wages and benefits, which is here categorized as a matter related to the bidding process. Additional concerns regarding the use of unauthorized, underpaid migrant workers appear to relate to the bidding process as well. The relationship between this practice and lost work opportunities for union contractors is obvious, and both contractor and union leaders expressed a desire to activate available resources to discourage the practice (see “Unauthorized Migrant Labor” below). These concerns can be raised as a matter of practical importance (the disadvantages of using a contractor that engages in this practice in terms of work quality, safety, liability, union action, public opinion, possible negative media attention, etc.).

Situations when the bidding process is not functioning to the benefit of the organization require a wide range of actions. The organization needs to provide guidance and materials to support contractors presented with



Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

objections or when given an opportunity to offer reasons why their bid is superior to one coming in at a lower total cost. Compelling advocacy should address distinctions, concentrating on *practical matters* such as quality of work, safety of workplace, reliability of employees, ability to meet deadlines, etc. Guidance should be provided on how to manage the typical non-union challenges, as well as a reporting and investigation procedures for when violations to the collective bargaining agreement are suspected. Support materials should be available, such as a “Why Use a Unionized Contractor?” brochure that draws from any larger public effort of promoting the trade. An articulate defense of unionized labor that addresses the practical concerns of developers should also be consistent with any larger public effort to reach end-users, and the organization should provide additional support for developers wishing to promote the high quality of contracting services in their sales materials. Contractor and union leadership need to work together to generate competency in communicating advantages of union contracting. In addition to the development of written material and talking points, contractors should develop workshops in partnership with union leaders to work through contractor concerns and develop advocacy skills.

Recommendation:

Design and implement a comprehensive initiative to improve the performance of union contractors during the bidding interaction, particularly in dealing with objections related to labor costs, through the development of materials and guidance to assist contractors during routine marketing interactions.



Unauthorized Migrant Labor

The infusion of unauthorized migrant labor into the construction trades was introduced by the workshop facilitator as one of three interconnected issues that warrant the attention of the organization. An “unauthorized migrant” is not the same as an “immigrant” worker, or a “newly arrived immigrant,” and *isolating the challenge of “unauthorized migrant labor” is not the same as calling into question the practice of labor exploitation as a general concern.* “Unauthorized migrants” enter the United States illegally for the primary purpose of working and may or may not remain in the country to achieve legal status or eventual citizenship. Debate over what constitutes exploitation in the workplace is certainly not settled; however, from the perspective of the union, an unauthorized migrant worker paid well-below union scale is considered within the same competitive framework as a non-union tradesman.

The facilitator introduced the organization to the recent trends in unauthorized migration because (a) the rate of increase is alarming many political, economic, and social organizations and institutions who monitor workforce trends (thus, there is a strong possibility that future public policy measures will emerge to address the trends); and, (b) based on the economic data and research available, these workers are providing a low-cost alternative to unionized labor, including trades represented by the union (thus, the practice likely contributes to competition that adversely impacts union contractors and members). It is highly likely that these trends will require the attention of the organization; however, the exact nature of that attention is for the organization to decide.

Four concerns expressed a mutual desire to address the “exploitation” of workers, but the range of activities covered by this term was not discussed by those who used it. The facilitator argued at the meeting that the term “exploitation” should be adopted by the organization to refer to the practice of employing unauthorized migrant workers for substandard wages, specifically advocating that the organization “frame” the issue this way to marginalize contractors whose business practices are consistent with the

Labor-Management Workshop—*Expanded Discussion*

described behavior. Contractors expressed a desire to see more activity targeting these workers by union agents who speak Spanish; union leaders expressed a desire to reverse the trends that make this practice possible combined with an effort to educate the affected workforce on their rights. Both also expressed concern over *union* contractors employing workers within this demographic and paying them significantly less than required under the collective bargaining agreement (union leaders expressed a desire for more aggressive action against “cheating” union contractors and the union members who work for them; contractors expressed a desire to “clean up our own house” before making demands on the non-union contractor community). Some attendees considered the matter to be a “social” or an “ethical” concern that would be difficult to address as an organization. Some viewed the issue as a major strain on the success of unionized labor within the industry.

Recommendation:

Considerable concern has been expressed since the meeting related to this issue by both contractor and union leaders. At this time it does not seem wise to move more directly toward the unauthorized migrant worker issue, as there exists no consensus among organizational leaders that this practice can be effectively discouraged simultaneous to the promotional programs recommended in this report.

This realization should not cause the organization to ignore the matter as it relates to other issues discussed in this summary; and, to the extent that relationships are obvious, this summary does include consideration of the issue under other headings. Analysis of this issue suggests that the practice of hiring unauthorized migrant workers for substandard wages is, at least at some level, a result of changes in the industry that can be brought under some control by improving the standing and performance of the organization. As these efforts to improve standing are launched, the organization should ground their communication in values that encourage a fair wage, excellent performance, and proper labor practices. These values crowd-out contractors that rely on unauthorized, underpaid migrant



Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

labor. Moreover, the same values promote the unionized industry among those who share similar values (including perhaps the affected workers themselves).

Local Political Action / Government Relations

Three concerns expressed an interest in cooperative political action, two expressly calling for interaction with the level of local government involved in economic development and zoning. Current monitoring efforts focus on construction projects that have already begun, through the use of information tools such as “Dodge Reports,” and networking with other union organizations involved in job action. An issues management approach would encourage earlier interactions – scanning, monitoring, and forecasting, as well as targeted interactions with local elected leaders and officials involved in decisions affecting economic development. Visibility for the organization is an immediate advantage, as well as what can be learned about the process of bringing development plans to fruition. Targeted and well-timed inquiries can lead to more cooperation between developers and the organization, improved networking leading to successful project bidding, continued preference for union contracting, and better monitoring of regional construction activities. Moreover, leaders and members of the organization will develop a more intimate and precise understanding of the relationship between political action and employment, encouraging more political participation and appreciation for the organization’s influence among members and employers.

Recommendation:

Design and implement a continuous, team-driven issues management initiative focusing on development planning, targeting discussion and debate at the regional economic development and zoning levels of government.



Federal and State Labor Law and Safety Provisions

Two concerns involved a desire for more effective enforcement of federal and state labor laws and occupational safety provisions, specifically regarding daily oversight of job sites. The organization might solicit the support of high-ranking federal and state legislators to sponsor a state-wide construction safety initiative (a state “summit” on construction safety). A public campaign could provide a platform for raising public awareness of safety issues as well as introducing the public to distinctions of quality between union and non-union contracting. Research must be done to account for safety trends and the organization should exploit isolated instances that illustrate flaws in the system that are remedied by organization-sponsored skill and safety training. Matters related to labor law – rights of workers – must be managed more carefully due to the complexity of legal controversies that are difficult to translate for public discussion.

Government relations surfaced also as a concern over “inappropriate federal government intervention” in the collective bargaining processes, which suggests that the organization wishes to learn more about recent trends and legal and legislative matters, as well as business practices, related to labor disputes and how such trends might affect the future of unionized industries. The organization should support a monitoring and forecasting initiative to educate leaders about these matters – and other similar developments – so that long-term planning can benefit from accurate knowledge of such occurrences.

Recommendations:

Design and implement a continuous, team-driven issues management initiative focusing on government relations specific to the enforcement of federal and state labor laws and occupational safety provisions.

Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

Form a legal and public policy advisory council to research new case law, legislation (emerging, proposed, and adopted), and business practices, and create information briefs and guidelines for organization leaders and interested members. This initiative might include the identification and hiring of postgraduate students to function as legal and legislative interns to provide research and writing support.

Promotion of Union Affiliation

Two concerns expressed a desire to promote the contractor organization in an effort to expand into new markets and recover markets lost to non-union contractors. The organization should emphasize practical, business-centered advantages of affiliation with the Union and contractor association. This initiative should seek to inform and impress potential affiliates, and be managed in conjunction with any operational changes designed to attract new contractors. Appropriate professional development will be needed to support leaders representing the organization.

Recommendation:

Design and implement a recruitment campaign directed at non-union contractors that challenges negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and promotes the practical advantages of affiliation with the Union and contractor association.

Appreciation for the Union-Contractor Relationship

Several concerns expressed a desire to see more cooperation among union contractors, and between the union and the contractor organizations on matters such as coordinating political action, bidding on projects opened as a result of job action, diagnosing and correcting factors leading to lost

Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

work opportunities, violations of the collective bargaining agreement, and “spin-off” of union contractors under suspension. Many of these concerns appear to be related to routine interactions among contractors and between union leaders and contractors, and some belong to the realm of bargaining interactions which are normally – and naturally – competitive (and are likely to remain so regardless of improvements made in regard to daily business interactions).

The organization should attempt to improve relations by jointly communicating shared values and promoting the advantages and responsibilities of the union-contractor partnership. Additionally, each community should welcome the discovery of more precise knowledge regarding the types of situations that cause conflict, and the implementation of efforts to improve communication among parties. The organization should assess (through survey research) the current level of satisfaction among management and key office staff of union contractors regarding what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of business agents and leaders. Simultaneously, the organization should survey union business managers and leaders regarding what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of management and key office staff of union contractors and the contractor association, and learn which settings/situations they find most challenging. This data should drive the design of modules to train leaders in effective organizational advocacy.

Recommendations:

In conjunction with an initiative directed at non-union contractors, design and implement an initiative directed at contractors to convey advantages and responsibilities associated with being a union contractor and promote the services of union and contractor organizations.



Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

Develop training modules to facilitate improved interpersonal interactions and organizational representation, as well as recommend and support the development of procedures designed to improve information exchange between contractor and union staff and management.

Member Awareness and Appreciation

Three concerns involved desires to improve member knowledge and appreciation of advantages of union affiliation and what the organization does to improve the lives of union members (specifically in terms of political action). Included in the three concerns is a concern over members' awareness of their local affiliation and what responsibilities they have to these regional union associations. The organization should assess current member knowledge and perceptions of what union affiliation provides members, and should endeavor to produce materials specifically addressing Hispanic membership based on a separate assessment (focus group research is ideal for this purpose). Second, the organization should articulate the practical advantages and responsibilities of union membership.

Recommendation:

Design and implement an initiative directed at members to convey advantages and responsibilities associated with union affiliation (working for a union contractor and being part of the family of local unions).

Employment Placement

Three concerns involved job placement, specifically of three profiles of members whose inability to find work produces strain on the industry – journeymen who lose opportunities to apprentices due to pay scale distinctions, apprentices who “fall out of the trade,” and new members who cross over from non-union employment. Failure to place union members



Labor-Management Workshop—*Expanded Discussion*

is a significant threat to the industry because it feeds an alternative marketplace with high-quality tradesmen. The organization should maximize its ability to break the system that allows this to occur through the development and/or enforcement of, rules and regulations designed to prevent the transfer of well-trained and/or experienced tradesmen. A “cross-over program” can assist organizing efforts, simultaneous to an improved new contractor recruitment program. The organization should endeavor to remove barriers to cross-over that relate to wages and benefits eligibility for those whose experience and skill level is high.

Recommendations:

Design and implement an initiative directed at affiliated contractors that encourages placement of the most experienced members over apprentices, and conveys and justifies existing rules and regulations intended to protect the industry from disadvantages caused by loss of qualified tradesmen.

Design and implement initiative directed at members that explains any existing or newly developed placement policies and programs, and the rules and regulations intended to protect the industry from disadvantages caused by loss of qualified tradesmen.

Training and Technological Adaptation

Six concerns expressed at the workshop involved issues related to training and skill level assessment of journeymen geared toward recognizing those whose skill and safety training continues to advance. Comments included calls to encourage more participation in journeymen upgrading courses and some method of communicating individual skill levels as members cross employers and district councils. Some support was expressed for a sliding pay scale that recognizes skill level of work performed and the increased expense to the union and member of more specialized training (as well as higher risks associated with more complex work). The organization should consider more corporate training



Labor-Management Workshop—Expanded Discussion

partnerships to achieve technology-specific certification in conjunction with journeyman upgrading training. Leaders expressed a desire anticipate future technology likely to enter the industry and to prepare the organization to adapt to such changes. In terms of skill levels, much can be accomplished through an identification card. The organization should develop a certification program that allows for a qualifications schedule that can be amended and accessed (printed) from an on-line database connected to the existing organizational website (perhaps drawing from the “Integrated Membership System” (IMS) data collected by the International Union). Materials will be needed to explain new incentives, encourage participation in existing and new training opportunities, and use new technology to store and communicate skill level information.

Recommendations:

Design and implement initiative directed at members to promote opportunities for journeymen to advance skill level, adapt to technological advancements and innovations within the industry, and increase knowledge of safety measures. Initiative should explain and promote any incentives or changes in policies related to recognizing different levels of skill.

Form a “technology task force” or “standing committee” to research new technologies and devise strategies for exploiting such innovation to the advantage of the industry.



About the Ehrhardt Foundation

The Ehrhardt Foundation is a non-for-profit organization devoted to improving the labor community through creative innovation. Based on the vision of Allen A. Ehrhardt, the Foundation's mission is to strengthen the multi-employer community by focusing on strategic communication, issues management, organizational development, and administrative resources.

The Foundation's approach to strategic communication and research initiatives is unique in that its programs and services are developed specifically for the multi-employer community with two paramount needs in mind: the need for sophisticated and thoughtful approaches customized to organizations that are unique in terms of organizational culture and member expectations, and the need for cost-effective management of organizational objectives.

Additionally, because the Foundation seeks to empower multi-employer organizations – not simply perform services for them — Foundation communication services afford organizations the following advantages:

- Communication efforts are the product of a diversity of thought and a collaborative work process. The Foundation uses multi-disciplinary teams to provide the intelligence and talent resources required for each project.
- Communication efforts are the product of a sophisticated approach to message development that considers long-term strategic goals in addition to immediate informational objectives.

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About the Workshop Facilitator

John Butler, Ph.D. is Director of Strategic Communication and Research Initiatives at the Ehrhardt Foundation. John holds degrees in Political Science (B.A.), Rhetorical Studies (M.A.), and Public Argument (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh). He served for seven years as a professor of Communication at Northern Illinois University, where he was also appointed the Director of Debate. John has taught courses such as “Argument and Debate,” “Corporate Advocacy and Issues Management,” “Political Communication,” and “Theories and Uses of Argument.” In addition to his work as a teacher and consultant, he has engaged in pro bono consulting with civil rights organizations and local politicians.

As a consultant, John specializes in issues management and professional development of organizational leaders. On behalf of the Ehrhardt Foundation, John has worked directly with plan administrators, union leaders, and fund trustees, offering strategic communication services for health & welfare, pension, and joint apprenticeship training programs. This work has included the development and management of website content; writing of announcement letters and member surveys; and facilitating issues management, effective communication, and industry advancement workshops for union and contractor association leadership. More comprehensive projects include the design and coordination of campaigns to encourage member involvement and perceptions during major policy changes and “in-house” initiatives geared toward implementing longer-term industry advancement, professional development, and organizational advocacy objectives.

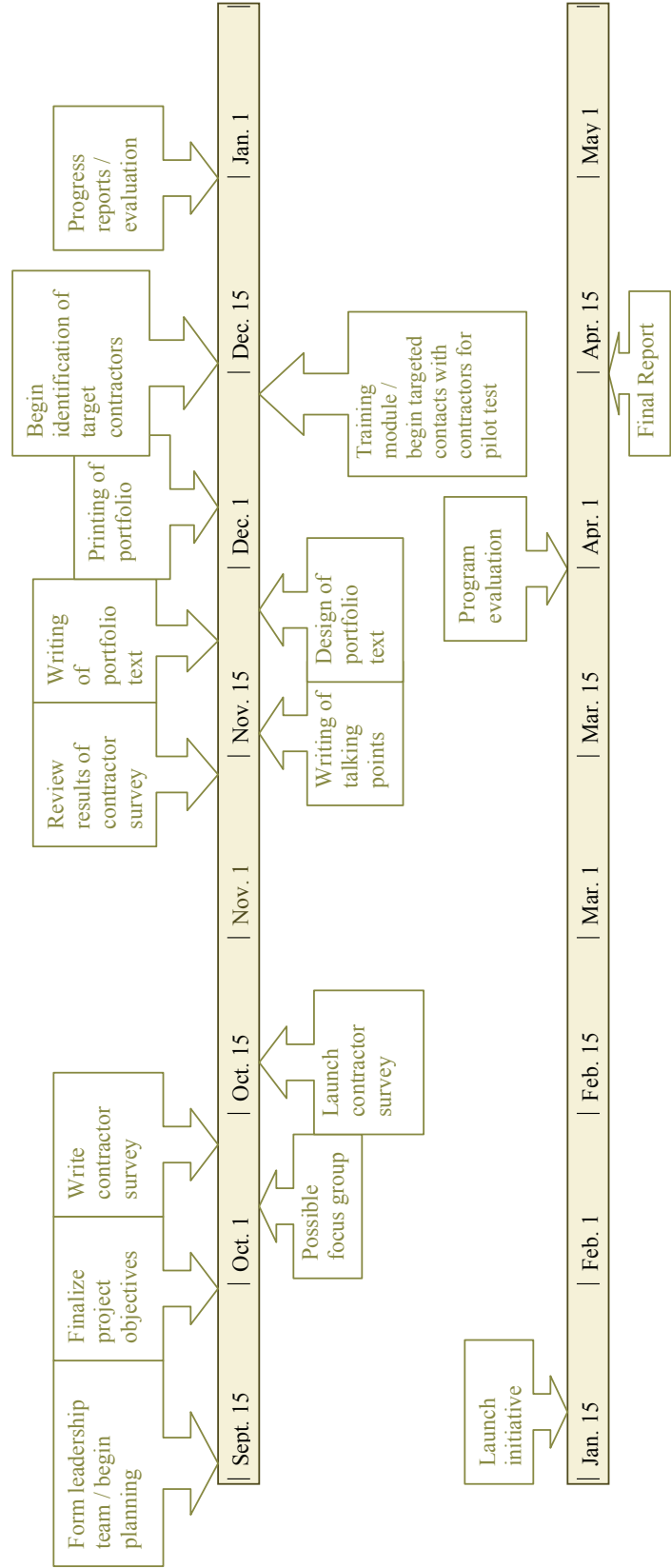
Sample Project Timeline

Timeline for Contractor Recruitment Initiative:

Design and implement recruitment campaign directed at non-union contractors that challenges negative and inaccurate perceptions about unions and promotes the practical advantages of union affiliation.

Tactics:

- Formation of Leadership Team
- Research – Focus Group / contractor survey (possible)
- Development of Talking Points for Leadership
- Development of Organizational Portfolio
- Training Module
- Pilot Test of Target Contractors / Evaluation of Pilot
- Identification of Target Contractors
- Launch Initiative
- Program Evaluation



Notes

- 1 The specific concerns relate to promoting the trade are as follows:
- reverse negative public perception about unions as organizations (U).
 - work in partnership to improve the perception of unions in general through marketing and public relations, perhaps even by changing the terms we use to describe unionized contracting (avoiding the term “union” altogether) (C).
 - address the incorrect public perception that anyone can do the work performed in the trade (initiatives that seek to educate the public on why union contracting adds value to a project, specifically listing the reasons why it is better to use union contracting, were mentioned as approaches to addressing this perception) (C).
 - address the incorrect public perception that using a union contractor means having to pay “above-market costs” (initiatives that seek to educate the consumer and more rigidly certify/license contractors were mentioned as approaches to addressing this perception) (C).
 - develop an effective marketing campaign for the trade (U).
- 2 The specific concerns related to the bidding process are as follows:
- improve communication between employers/contractors and the union leadership, especially regarding knowledge that would be useful in diagnosing and correcting factors leading to lost work opportunities (guidance on how to protect the work) (U).
 - address situations when union contractors are unable to provide a bid (U).
 - develop programs that address competition concerns in situations when large-scale projects could be secured by “off-setting” the differences through some method of funding (C).
 - reduce the prevalence of non-union contractors claiming to pay the “prevailing wage” when they are, in fact, not doing so (how to determine/verify that they are not paying the prevailing wage should be easier) (U).
- 3 This concern was worded as follows: work in partnership to keep costs down in terms of wages and benefits (C).
- 4 “Unauthorized migrant” is the term used by Jeffrey S. Passel, in his recent report, *Unauthorized Migrants: Numbers and Characteristics*, (Washington: Pew Hispanic Center, June 14, 2005, www.pewhispanic.org).
- 5 The specific concerns related to the exploitation of workers are as follows (the bottom two are repeated below where they are also included in the discussion titled, “Appreciation of the Union-Contractor Relationship” (see note 9):
- address the exploited worker problem on the ground, necessitating the need for more organizers that can speak Spanish (C).
 - reverse the trend of increased exploitation of non-union laborers in the construction trades combined with an inability to educate exploited workforce on their rights (U).
 - be more aggressive against “cheating” union contractors and the union members who work for them (U).
 - “clean up our own house” before making demands on the non-union contractor community, especially in regard to the exploitation of workers (C).

Labor-Management Summer Workshop

- ⁶ The following specific concerns are considered together regarding issues management at the local government level:
- generate more support for unionized work among economic planning commissions, zoning boards, and city councils and address recurrent perception that unionized laborers are “better off” than most, including the decision-makers themselves (U).
 - reduce lost work opportunities through more effective networking with local political leaders whose responsibility it is to identify growing markets within the jurisdiction of the Union (included in this was mention of decision-makers involved in zoning) (U).
 - improve cooperation among union and contractors in pursuing political action initiatives (U).
- ⁷ The following concern involve a desire for more effective enforcement of federal and state labor laws and occupational safety provisions:
- push for more effective federal labor legislation and enforcement (takes too long put into effect federal provisions designed to hold offending parties responsible) (U).
 - push for more effective federal and state health and safety regulations and enforcement provisions (takes too long to get someone on a job site to hold offending parties responsible) (U).
- ⁸ The specific concern was worded as follows: resist inappropriate federal government intervention and bias toward corporate interests in collective bargaining processes (United Airlines case was cited as an example) (U).
- ⁹ The following concerns are considered together regarding promoting union affiliation among non-union contractors:
- promote contractor organizations and make better use of contractor organizations to target expansion into and/or among new markets (C).
 - develop strategy to recover lost markets, including perhaps developing a tiered benefit structure (C).
- ¹⁰ The following specific concerns are considered together regarding a desire to improve relations and communication among contractors and between the union and contractor organizations:
- reduce the prevalence of a “them” vs. “them” mentality among contractors about one another (U).
 - reduce the prevalence of an “us” vs. “them” mentality among both union members and contractors about one another (U).
 - find common ground politically, especially in raising and maintaining the exploited worker issue with developers and end-users in the housing market (C).
 - address difficulty of getting union contractors to bid work that opens due to job action (successful protest leading to opportunities for unionized contracting) (U).
 - improve communication between employers/contractors and the union leadership, especially regarding knowledge that would be useful in diagnosing and correcting factors leading to lost work opportunities (guidance on how to protect the work) (U).
 - better monitor and arrest the “spin-off” of union contractors who are found in violation of the collective bargaining agreement into subsidiary companies (Company X becomes Company XX) in order to continue doing business (monitoring business practices while contractor is under probation) (U).
 - be more aggressive against “cheating” union contractors and the union members who work for them (U).
 - “clean up our own house” before making demands on the non-union contractor community, especially in regard to the exploitation of workers (C).



Labor-Management Summer Workshop

- effectively address exploitation of the collective bargaining agreement by employers (C).
 - work in partnership to keep costs down in terms of wages and benefits (C).
- ¹¹ The following specific concerns are considered together regarding member awareness and appreciation of affiliation with the union and contractor organizations:
- improve organization's ability to educate (communicate what the union does for its members) Hispanic membership due to language barrier and limited number of Spanish-speaking personnel (U).
 - improve level of political participation of union members (lack of registered voters) (U).
 - change the perception among members that once their "local" is affiliated with the Union, that involvement and participation in "local" issues and functions (U).
- ¹² The following specific concerns were mentioned regarding placement:
- reduce the loss of membership among journeymen who are no longer finding employment due to their higher pay scales/tendency of employers to hire union apprentices over journeymen (U).
 - effectively retain and place apprenticeships so that they do not "fall out of the trade" or go to work for non-union contractors (may be addressed through the collective bargaining agreement through ratios of apprentices to journeymen) (C).
 - improve placement of new union members who have decided to transition from "non-union" to "union" (U).
- ¹³ The following specific concerns were mentioned related to training:
- improve adaptation among unionized industry to technological advancement and innovation in the trade (U).
 - more organized method of communicating qualifications when union members cross district councils – a "swipe card" that would contain information on what members were trained to do was mentioned as an example (U).
 - encourage member participation in safety programs (STARS was mentioned specifically) (C).
 - improve/adopt pre-screening measures and develop methods to test skill levels for all union tradesmen (C).
 - consider the manner in which the organization will manage varying skill levels of tradesmen (how skill level relates to pay scale and apprenticeship placement was mentioned) (U).
 - encourage more participation in journeymen update courses and programs seeking to improve skill level and safety (C).

Report Feedback Form

This form may be filled-out and sent to the Ehrhardt Foundation. A separate letter or E-mail is also welcome, if readers wish to provide more detailed feedback:

300 S. ASHLAND AVENUE, SUITE 306
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607-27406
BUTLERJ@EHRHARDTFUNDATION.ORG

1. Did you attend the workshop and participate in one of the focus groups?
 Yes No Attended workshop but did not meet with a focus group
2. Are you primarily affiliated with an industry contractor and/or the contractors association or the Union?
 An industry contractor / contractor association The Union
3. Are you *satisfied* that the labels and descriptions of “issues” in this report accurately reflect the content of the workshop discussions and the issues emerging out of the focus groups?
 Entirely For the most part Only to a limited extent Not at all
4. What is your overall impression of the *analysis* provided within the report (the way the report author grouped and worded the issues and the information provided for each):
 - The report appears to be the product of careful thought and I found it useful.
 - The report *may be* thoughtful, but I found it too lengthy or wordy.
 - The report provided some useful information, but was not especially thoughtful or helpful.
 - The report did not impress me as well-thought-out and offered little useful information.
 - Other or additional comments:

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5. Are there issues *you recall being discussed* that do not appear within the content of this report? If so, please describe these issues as clearly as you can below (please use back of page to continue if you need more space):

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6. Are there issues *you believe should be added* to the list of issues appearing in this report? If so, please describe these issues as clearly as you can below (use reverse if needed):

Please provide your name and phone number if you would like us to contact you by phone to discuss further your thoughts about this report or the issues discussed within it: