



How to get

Yes
for an
Answer

**A Guide for Recruiting Non-Member
Letter Carriers into the NALC**



Dear Branch Officers,

The membership *is* the NALC and *it is its strength*. To stay strong, NALC works tirelessly to recruit non-member letter carriers into the union. You, the local branch officers, are a crucial part of this process.

How to get YES for an Answer will help you talk to non-members during new employee orientation and later to others who may not join at the first opportunity. This booklet will assist you in convincing both new carriers and older non-members that to join the NALC is to take charge of their future.

You may have some longtime non-members claiming that they have never been asked to join the union. So first you must ask, and then you must continue to pursue potential members in a positive way. This booklet also contains specific tips on dealing with skeptics, on how to make your best pitch and on how to show NALC to its best advantage.

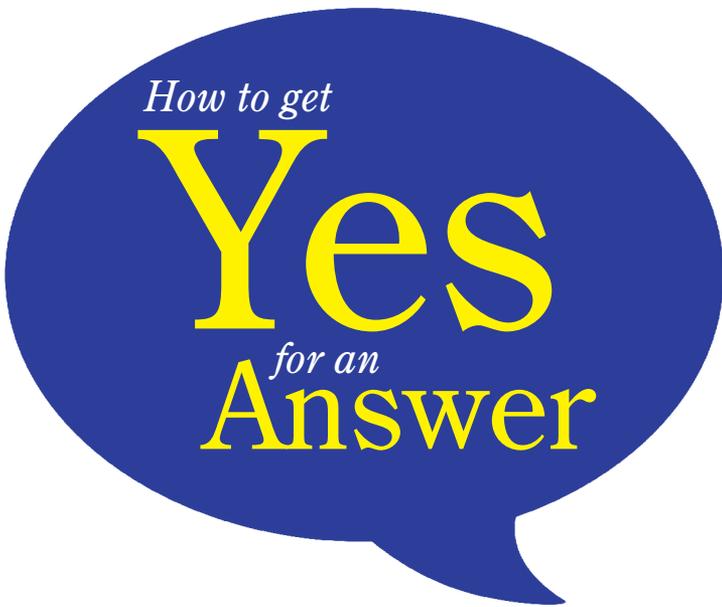
You will also need to listen in order to learn what approach will work best for each individual carrier. That's the most important tip in this booklet: *Listen well*, and non-members will give you the clues you need to get YES for an answer.

Good luck!

Sincerely,

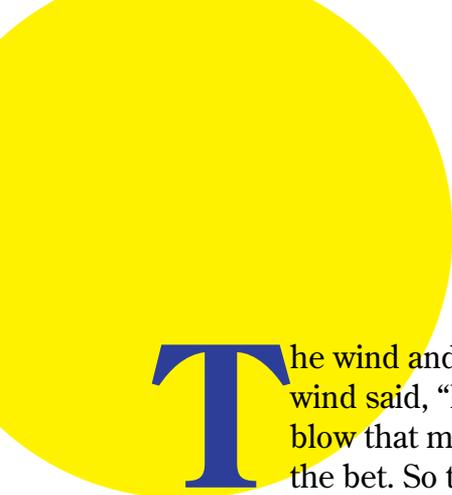
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fredric V. Rolando". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Fredric V. Rolando
President



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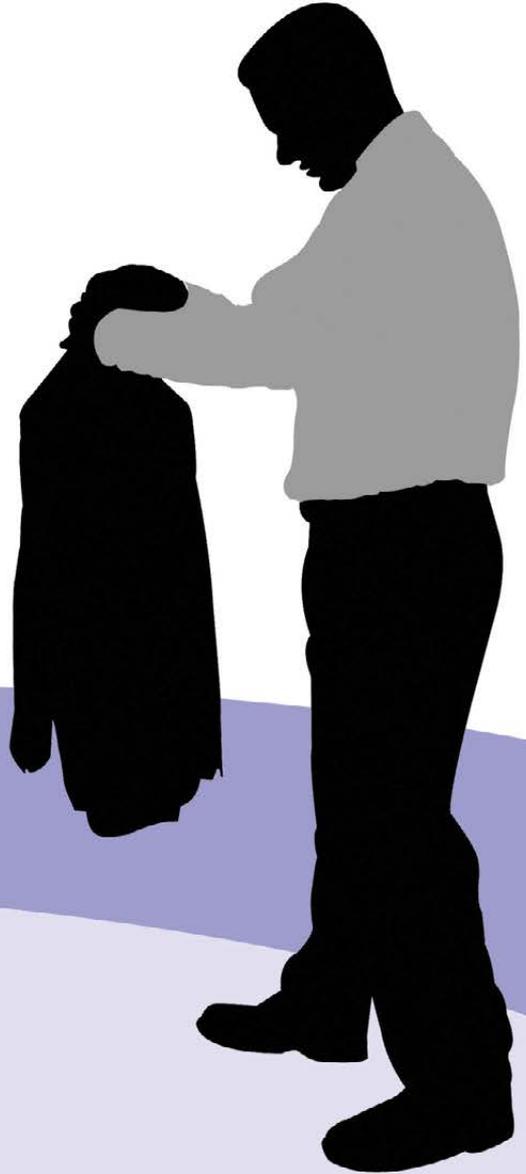


The wind and the sun made a bet one day. The wind said, “I am SO strong, I’ll bet you I can blow that man’s cape off.” The sun agreed to the bet. So the wind blew and blew, and the sky grew dark, and the air grew cold. But the man just pulled the cape around him tighter and hurried on. The wind kept blowing until it could blow no more.

Then the sun said, “Let me try.” The sun shone warmly. Birds sang, the air grew calm and the man let go of his cape. Soon, he was hot. So he took off his cape, slung it across his shoulder and walked over the hill, whistling a happy tune.

The moral, of course, is that you will get a lot farther with sunshine than wind. When you are warm and friendly and make each discussion a pleasant experience, people will be more willing to listen. And you will be more likely to get “yes” for an answer.

Remember: It's a free country. Everyone has a right to his own ideas. If you pressure people or otherwise make them feel angry at the way you are asking them to do something, they will turn you off. People have to WANT to do something before they'll do it. Your job is to make letter carriers who presently do not belong to the union WANT to join the NALC.





Getting Started

Convincing people is easier than you might think—after all, **you know the NALC is a great union to belong to.** So review the reasons why you think the union is an effective organization for letter carriers. Ask yourself these questions, and you'll discover different selling points you can bring up with non-members:

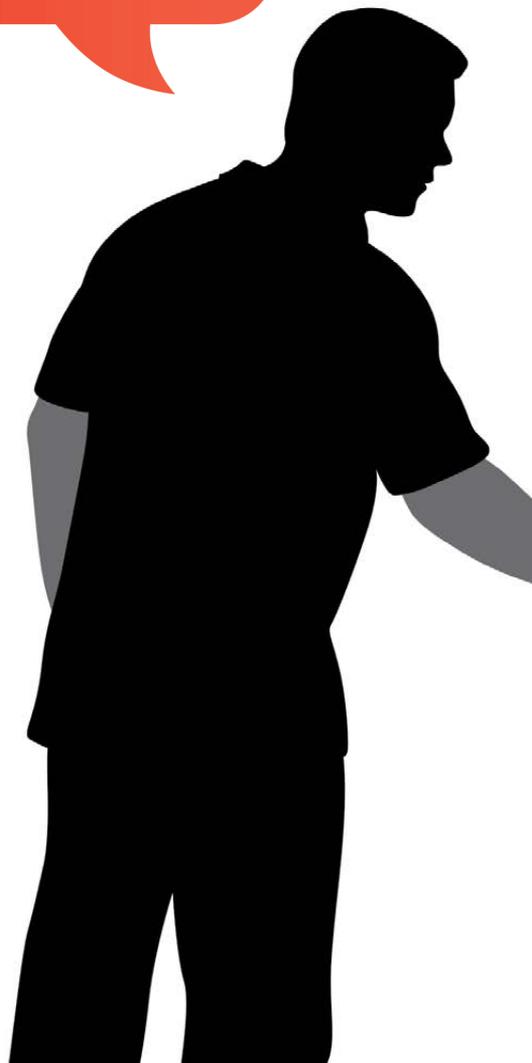
1. What was my first impression of the NALC?
2. What got me involved in union activities? Did I like the other members? Did I like the sense of unity?
3. What are the three best examples I can think of where the union's strength has made a big difference on the local level and on the national level?
4. What are some examples of differing viewpoints within the union?

When you've answered these questions, you'll have completed your first interview! Give yourself a few minutes to think about your answers—**you'll be more convincing to non-members if you can relate to what's on their minds.** They are on the outside, looking in. You have to think about what that feels like so you can anticipate some of their questions and be ready with good answers.



Your **Attitude**
Speaks **Louder**
Than **Words**

This membership drive should be carried out in person. After all, the NALC isn't a big, impersonal institution. It's hundreds of thousands of individual letter carriers who all have something in common: the same employer, the same job and the same pride and sense of duty in that job. You need to convey to non-members that **we're all in the same boat.**



The best way to show your intentions is in your attitude. Greet non-members as you would a friend of a friend, someone you assume you're going to like. Shake hands. Learn their names, their nicknames. . . find out how long they've been working in the station . . . see if you know any people in common. From the very beginning, say with your attitude: **“I am not the enemy. I am on your side.”**



Your Approach

“Hello”
and
more

After you’ve greeted the non-members—and have asked how he/she is doing today, what’s new, how’s the job going—see if you can pull them aside for a few minutes to talk. If they’re too busy, ask when they might be free for a few minutes. Show consideration for their responsibilities, but be **persistent**. Make an appointment if you have to.

Find out how each person feels. Ask them how they feel about the union. Why do you want to know what non-members think?

Ask
Questions

Because they will give you the answers you will need if you are to convince them that **the union’s the right place for them**. If you don’t know why they’re not members, how are you going to persuade them to join the NALC?



Listen

Let the non-members do most of the talking at first. Don't disagree or argue or interrupt them while they're talking; smile, nod and **show that you understand their concerns**. Perhaps no one has ever asked them to join and they are feeling ignored and left out. Perhaps they had a bad experience with another union. Perhaps they have the idea that NALC membership is filled with time-consuming obligations.



Show Respect

After you've listened, let the other person know you heard what he or she said. Even if you don't agree, show him/her that you **respect a different opinion**. Say

something like, "I can appreciate your feelings," which

means you understand the value of them. And mean it!

Everybody is entitled to a personal opinion.





Keep Cool

If the non-member is unwilling to talk to you or is openly hostile, don't react. **Be patient.** Until your attitude convinces them that you come in friendship and brotherhood, expect some hostility.

But you *can* overcome anger by not reacting. Show them that you respect their feelings, but repeat that you'd like to return to discuss the union with them another time. Anger needs anger to fuel the fire, so don't react in kind. Nothing dampens anger faster than a friendly response.



Ask questions that get “yes” for an answer right away. (See examples of conversations on pages 18-20.) There is no point in giving them practice saying no!



Be Positive

Show them what's in it for them. Don't use threats of what will happen if they don't join—instead, **put things in a positive light:** Not “Did you hear how Joe Morrison was fired?”, but instead, “Did you hear how the NALC helped Joe Morrison get his job back?”



Note that we say **“discuss,”** and not **“argue.”**

While it is true that arguments are not always hostile and often can be friendly, it’s not the best way to convince someone you don’t know very well. The **WORST** thing you can say when you’re trying to change someone’s mind is: “You’re wrong.”



Instead, in a friendly manner, respond to an opposing viewpoint with something like this: “I understand how you feel, and I used to have doubts myself. But since I’ve been in the union, I’ve seen and heard of so many instances where the union really made a difference that I changed my views.” Then, provide them with specifics.



The
Pitch



Here's where you have the most freedom in your discussion. **Your own experience is the strongest weapon you can use** because you can also tell them what it's like to be an NALC member: what the meetings are like, what the union's main concerns are today.

If the non-member says he doesn't agree with the union's politics, tell him there is room in the NALC for different opinions. Also tell him that if he were a member, he could promote and vote for policies he preferred. But explain that **the union has a responsibility to support political candidates who understand the needs of letter carriers and other postal employees.** Since many issues brought before Congress might affect letter carriers' jobs and benefits, it's part of the NALC's job to educate letter carriers on vital political issues.

If the non-member says he doesn't like your branch's officers, tell him they're elected by the members, but that he can't vote unless he's in the union. Explain that you welcome a different viewpoint, and encourage him to come to a local meeting and express his views. By making his views known and rallying the support of other branch members, **he can influence what the branch leadership does.** Tell him his participation in the union gives him greater control over his own life—he can simply vote for the officer he likes, or he can run for office himself!

The Sell



If the non-member thinks the NALC is strong and stands up to the USPS like it should, but he doesn't see any personal benefit to being a member of the union, tell him that **the union is only as strong as its membership**. When a union lacks the support of the people it represents, it loses a great deal of clout when it comes to negotiations, lobbying

Congress and defending letter carriers on the job.
And if letter carriers won't share the burden of helping each other, then who will?

Avoid preaching or sounding like a fanatic! If you come across as “off the wall” when it comes to the union, you're not going to convince anybody. Remember the story of the wind and the sun—nobody wants to hear a lot of hot air! It's the little things, the small signs of respect, that can make all the difference.

Remember the non-member's name and use it often. It's said that a person's own name is the most pleasing sound to his or her ears. It also shows that you see that person as a human being.

If you need to, **keep a record on each person you talk to**—but DON'T take notes in front of them! List the major points they brought up during your first discussion, so you can follow up the second time you visit.

Make them feel important: Tell them you are pursuing them because they can make a difference. Make any choice they make seem like their decision, so avoid saying, “I knew you'd see it my way!” Instead, when you begin to get positive responses, nod your head, smile, and say, “That's true! I agree!” Everyone loves getting the “right” answer.

Thank each person you visit for his or her time. Show respect for their time and they will be more likely to respect your efforts.

If you are rejected the first time you visit a non-member—and you very well might be—keep things on a friendly level. Thank the non-member for his or her time. **Tell them you'll be back again** to talk.

Leave materials with them. Make it clear within each station that non-members are not to be shunned by NALC members but made to feel a part of the group.

Keep
That Door
Open





Summary of Helpful Hints

ASK QUESTIONS.

Why haven't you joined the union? What do you think of the union? What do you think of the union's services? Let them do a lot of the talking.

LISTEN. You may have answers to all their objections, but you'll never know unless you listen.

SHOW RESPECT. Everyone has an opinion, and most of us are quite proud of our views. Make each person feel important by taking the time to listen to his or her ideas. He or she will be more likely to listen to what you have to say.

BE PATIENT. Don't react to anger or hostility. Keep your cool at all times.

BE OPEN. People are interested in firsthand information. Share some of your own experiences.

SMILE. Make this a friendly meeting. You may have to come back and try again at a later date. To do this, you've got to keep open the lines of communication.

BE POSITIVE. Put your comments in a positive light. Remember, you have to make non-members WANT to join the NALC. Another tip: Ask questions in such a way that non-members answer "yes" from the beginning.

Imaginary Conversations

...on Benefits

YOU: Ben, how's it going? How's Alice and the kids?

HIM: Fine, just fine.

YOU: Great. Listen, the NALC is doing a membership drive and I'm supposed to talk to people about the union. Got a minute?

HIM: Sure . . .

YOU: Let me ask you some questions: How long have you been a carrier? What do you think of the union?

HIM: I've been here 10 years next winter. About the union? I think it's a waste of time and money.

YOU: Well, at least you're honest! Do you think the union helps letter carriers at all?

HIM: Sure, but . . .

YOU: Do you know that NALC and the other postal unions are the only unions in the government allowed to negotiate for wages and benefits? The rest of the government workforce is back where we were 50 years ago—waiting for Congress to grant them a raise. The NALC can fight for better wages and working conditions, and that's unique in the U.S. government.

HIM: Yeah? So how does that affect me?

YOU: Well, all the contracts, grievance procedures and better working conditions that we've seen in recent years were won for us by the union. So it's important to keep the union strong. We can't take the victories of the past for granted. When the NALC lobbies Congress or goes to the bargaining table, the support of letter carriers is vital. The union is weaker without the support of all letter carriers. And it might not be able to

win wage increases and benefits that it has in the past. If that happens, we'll all be affected.

HIM: You got a point there.

YOU: Anyway, I'll let you get back—here's some materials on the union. I'll come back in a few days to see what you think. Say hello to Alice for me.

HIM: Sure. Take care.



...on Local Union Officers

YOU: Hi, Sue, you got a minute?

HER: Hello, Tom.

YOU: The NALC's doing a membership drive, and I'm supposed to talk to people about the union. Let me ask you: What's

your impression of the NALC? How come you've never joined?

HER: You know why, Tom. You local officers act like a bunch of dictators, always throwing your weight around. And still nothing's being done about conditions in the station . . . [goes on about the local leadership].

YOU: Well, that's a good point. It's not the first time I've heard people say that they don't know what the branch is doing. I'm going to tell the other members at the branch meeting Thursday night that we need to keep people better informed of our activities. And I'm going to mention the suggestions you made about problems in the station. We can always use new ideas. You know, you might make a good officer yourself.

HER: [Laughs.] Yeah, sure!

YOU: You don't have to run for office tomorrow, but you might think about it someday. You know some of the guys in the branch, right?

HER: Yeah. . .

YOU: For now, why don't you come to a meeting, meet the rest of the folks in the branch? Tell us what you think the

branch should be doing. We'll listen. It really is a democracy, everybody has a say. You can stand up and be counted. The other day somebody got real ticked off about . . . [gives example of members speaking out with differing opinions].

HER: Yeah, well, maybe . . .

YOU: Well, it's something to think about. Here's some stuff about the union I'd like to give you. We can talk about it some time next week. Thanks a lot.

HER: Sure . . . see you around.

...on Politics

YOU: Joe Franklin?

HIM: Yes . . .

YOU: Hi, I'm Ned Smith, president of NALC Branch 6410.

[Shake hands] How're you doing? Have a minute?

HIM: Yeah, I guess. A minute . . .

YOU: The NALC is doing a membership drive, and I'm supposed to talk to people about the union. Let me start by asking, how come you never joined the union? What do you think of the NALC?

HIM: Well, I never got around to it. And the NALC is too liberal; I don't like the NALC telling me what to vote for . . . [goes on about his ideas on the union].

YOU: Okay . . . I understand what you're saying. I think the NALC wants letter carriers to help elect people who support policies in the best interests of letter carriers. What happens in Congress can really affect our jobs. We could be voting for someone who would vote against us in Congress. I'd be pretty upset if the senator I just elected voted to wipe out the Private Express Statutes—and with them, my job! But I can prevent that if I get the facts ahead of time.

HIM: Yeah, I see your point . . .

YOU: Anyway, listen—here's some stuff on the union that might interest you. I'll stop by in about a week to see what you think about it. Thanks a lot.

HIM: See you later.

National Association of Letter Carriers (AFL-CIO)

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