



# The Dirty Dozen



**12** dirty  
company  
tricks you  
should  
know

In every union election, companies use tricks to discourage workers from joining together for a voice at work. These tricks defeat the workers' efforts and allow the company to maintain ultimate control over wages, benefits, and working conditions.

It is important to know how to recognize anti-union tricks. Otherwise you and your coworkers may be misled by the company's lies and false promises.

This booklet can help you anticipate how the company will respond to your demand for democracy in the workplace.



"YOU CAN'T VOTE TO UNIONIZE — YOU'RE ASSOCIATES  
NOT EMPLOYEES!"



# VOTE UNION

International Brotherhood  
of Electrical Workers®

# Dirty Trick #1

## Management Asks for a Second Chance

Management may ask you to give them another chance to solve your problems before voting for union representation.

You will hear how they did not know that you and your fellow workers were unsatisfied, they may terminate a supervisor or manager to show their concern, or they may merely begin to treat you better and to show more interest in you and your coworkers. They may even treat you to a pizza party or company-sponsored picnic!



## The IBEW

# TRUTH

Do not be fooled. These empty promises are no more than a ploy by the company to get you to vote no.

Without a contract outlining your wages, benefits, and working conditions, the company can make changes at will.

If you are still not convinced, ask the company to put their promises in writing in the form of a contract.

## Dirty Trick #2

### Don't Sign the Authorization Card

The company will attempt to portray the authorization card as a legal document that makes you a member of the union and requires you to immediately begin paying dues—without the right to vote on a contract.



*"...and stop smirking when I spread nasty rumors about the union. I have feelings too, you know."*

## The IBEW TRUTH

In order to have a secret-ballot election, the Labor Board requires a "showing of interest" from the employees. The authorization card indicates your desire to be represented by the IBEW and is what is used to prove to the Labor Board that the employees are interested in forming a union for their mutual aid and protection. The company does not want you to sign an authorization card **so an election can never be held!**

Membership dues are not collected until:

- The union is granted the legal authority to represent you
- A contract is negotiated and voted on by you and your coworkers
- An application for IBEW membership is completed

## Dirty Trick #3

### Management Talks About Closing the Company

Supervisors, managers, and other company officials may tell you that the company will close because of the union.

They may even tell you that the union is bad for business and your job is in jeopardy if you vote in favor of the union.



"THAT SOMETIMES HAPPENS WHEN THE BOSS TREATS HIS CUSTOMERS LIKE HIS EMPLOYEES."

## The IBEW

# TRUTH

It is illegal for the company to close down or threaten to close down because employees choose to join together for a voice at work.

Companies go out of business for a number of reasons, including economic recessions, changes in demand, and poor management.

The union wants the company to be profitable and share these gains with the workers.

If your company's financial situation is bad, management should prove it by showing you the financial records.

## Dirty Trick #4

### Management Talks About Union Bosses

The company may tell you that the IBEW will use your dues money to pay the IBEW bosses' high salaries.

They may tell you that you will never get any benefit from paying union dues.



*"You shouldn't have told the employees to 'work smarter.'  
They all went and joined a union."*

The IBEW

# TRUTH

By a majority vote, IBEW members decide how much they will pay in union dues and how their money will be spent.

Members decide what amount of dues will be necessary to provide the economic resources needed to achieve their goals.

## Dirty Trick #5

### Management Says They Will Never Sign a Contract

The company may tell you that it will never sign a contract, even if you choose to be represented by the IBEW.

It is illegal for the company to say this to you directly, so instead they may say something like, "Remember, we don't have to agree to what you want in the contract."



"Drop dead. Well that's a good start to our negotiations."

## The IBEW

# TRUTH

The law requires that the company negotiate with the union in "good faith."

This means that the company must make an honest effort to reach an agreement. Failure to do so is a violation of the law.

The IBEW has trained negotiators that will be there to assist you in reaching an agreement and will even train your bargaining team should you wish them to.

Don't let the company's loud voice scare you. Its main interest is to keep the job running smoothly, the profits high, and ultimate control of your wages, benefits, and working conditions.



Is your company playing games with you? Play Dirty Dozen Bingo to find out.

| <b>B</b>                        | <b>I</b>                        | <b>N</b>  | <b>G</b>                               | <b>O</b>                               |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Mandatory Company Meetings      | Fire an Unpopular Manager       | Anti-Union Literature   | Union Is a Third Party                 | Authorization Card Is a Legal Document |
| Union Dues                      | Closings                        | Union Officers' Salary  | Strikes                                | Negotiations Start at Blank Slate      |
| Supervisor Becomes Mr. Friendly | Threaten Employees              |  | If You Join, You Will Lose Your Rights | You Will Never Get a Contract          |
| Union Promises                  | Union Can Get in Without a Vote | Give Me One More Chance   | You May Lose Pay or Benefits           | Union Protects Lazy Workers            |
| Hard to Get Rid of Union        | Higher Wages, Fewer Jobs        | Company Spying on Workers   | Threaten a Lockout                     | Pizza Luncheon                         |

# Dirty Trick #6

## The Union Is a Third Party

The company will try to portray the union as a third party coming into your workplace to take your money.

They may tell you that you will not be able to speak with your supervisors or managers and that you will have no control over what is decided in your workplace.



"Management and labor working in tandem."

# The IBEW TRUTH

As a union member:

- You may speak to your supervisor at any time
- You will select who negotiates your agreement
- You will determine who represents your interests
- You will finally be treated with the dignity and respect that you deserve in the workplace

All with the support of over 700,000 IBEW members.

## Dirty Trick #7

### Management Talks About Negotiating from a “Blank Slate”

The company may tell you that you will lose your current wages and benefits when you negotiate your union contract.

Although illegal, the company will tell you that you will start with a blank slate.



"We know that communication is a problem, but the company is not going to discuss it with the employees."

## The IBEW

# TRUTH

When you negotiate your first contract, you start with your current wages and benefits and negotiate from there.

You and your coworkers decide what you want in the contract and vote to approve it.

Your strength, through participation and solidarity, determines the quality of the contract.

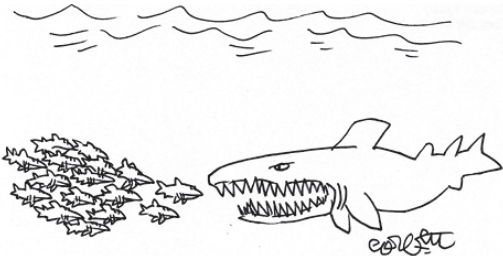
# Dirty Trick #8

## Management Promises

Promotions! Wage Increases! Open Door Policy! Sick Leave! Vacations! Pizza Party!

When management learns that workers are joining together they often make promises to some or all of the workers in an effort to divide support.

They may even claim that they were "just about" to hand out raises, but "because you are talking to the union it would be illegal to give you one."



"YOU DON'T NEED A UNION! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!"

## The IBEW

# TRUTH

Without a union contract, the promises made today can be broken tomorrow! The company can change or take away any of your working conditions, at any time, even if they have promised not to!

The only way to guarantee your wages, benefits, and working conditions is through a contract.

**P.S.** Be sure to let your organizer know if the company is promising wage increases! **We can help!**

# Dirty Trick #9

## Union Promises

The company will tell you that the union will promise to get you whatever you want.

They will claim that the union cannot guarantee you any better benefits, wages, or working conditions.

They will also claim that you could get more, you could get the same, or you could get less by joining the union.



# The IBEW TRUTH

The goals and priorities of what is negotiated into your contract depend upon you and your coworkers.

You will decide by a majority vote what is in your contract. However, a quick look at the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics clearly shows the advantages of being a member of a union.

Statistical data from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that union workers make on average 29% more than non-union workers.\*

In Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress reports that union workers make on average 19.3% more than non-union workers.

### Union Advantage Chart

|                               | Non-Union | Union   |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| U.S. Median Weekly Earnings   | \$729     | \$ 938  |
| Canada Median Weekly Earnings | \$856     | \$1,060 |

\* Reference: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members in 2011," January 2012, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf> (accessed June 18, 2012), and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employee Benefits in United States," March 2011, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/abs2.pdf> (accessed June 18, 2012).

# Dirty Trick #10

## Management Talks About a Strike

The company may tell you that the IBEW will force you to strike even if you don't want to.

They may tell you that while you are out during a strike you will be permanently replaced. They may ask you how you will support yourself and your family if you are forced to join the strike.



*"We're not asking you to sell your soul....  
we'd just like to rent it for a while."*

# The IBEW TRUTH

The IBEW will never force you to strike.

The decision to strike is made democratically by you and your coworkers. If the majority of workers don't want to strike, there will not be a strike. In fact, 99% of IBEW contracts are resolved without a strike.

If the company claims that the IBEW will force you to strike, they are violating the law.

## Dirty Trick #11

### Management Talks About Dues, Fines, Fees, and Assessments

The company may tell you that the IBEW wants your money. They may lie about the amount of dues you will pay as a member of the IBEW. They may also claim that there are huge initiation fees, fines for not attending union meetings, and assessments that are all reflected in the IBEW Constitution.



"OUR BIG BOSS IS ONE OF THE MOST UNDERPAID CEOs. HE ONLY MAKES 150 TIMES WHAT WE'RE PAID!"

The IBEW

# TRUTH

You will not begin paying dues until negotiations are finished and you and your coworkers vote by secret ballot to approve the contract that was negotiated.

If you are joining an existing local union of the IBEW, they can tell you exactly what your initiation fee and dues will be.

If you will be part of a new local union, you and your coworkers will determine both the initiation fee and dues rate.

Assessments cannot be charged without a majority vote.

No one is fined for not attending union meetings.

## Dirty Trick #12

### The Company Forms a Union-Free Committee

During the election process, a so-called "Union-Free Committee" may mysteriously appear or even be openly recruited by the company.

This committee will do the company's dirty work. They may distribute leaflets with lies about the IBEW, start rumors, or intimidate workers that support the IBEW.



*"Our anti-union message must be getting through. Nobody booted."*

## The IBEW TRUTH

The objective of the Union-Free Committee is to divide the employees so that the company can maintain complete power over your wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Don't allow the company to determine your future! Stand strong with your fellow workers!

**Know your rights.  
Secure your future.**

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