



Do Formal Union Administrative Practices Promote or Hinder Labor Revitalization?

Results of a Survey of American and British Unions

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**Internal union
administrative policies and
practices rarely considered
in discussions of union
transformation and
revitalization.**



This paper:

- provides some insight into trends in union administrative practices**
- considers whether these trends contribute to, or detract from, union efforts at revitalization.**



Union internal practices have been studied and critiqued since their early days:

- The Webbs, Hoxie**
- Wilensky, Barbash,**
- Bok and Dunlop**
- Weil, Kelly and Heery, Strauss,
Fiorito, Clark and Gray**



Pre-1980's—ineffective, informal, amateurish, unprofessional, ad hoc

1980s—crisis of union decline forced unions to reconsider their administrative practices

1990s-2010—many unions moved towards more formal, systematic, modern administrative practices



Rational for adoption of more formal, more systematic admin. practices—

The need to make most efficient use of scarce and shrinking resources (\$\$\$\$\$, staff, membership).



Surveys of National Union Administrative Practices

1990—U.S. unions (n=48)

1993—U.K. unions (n=61)

2000—U.S. unions (n=42)

2010—U.S. unions (n=35)

2011—U.K. unions (n=46)



**Written Personnel Policies for Headquarters Staff,
U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 1990/1993, 2010/2011**
(percent)

	U.S. Headquarters		U.K. Headquarters	
	1990	2010	1993	2011
Discipline and Discharge	44	72	86	78
Hiring	48	56	64	67
Performance Appraisal	26	40	14	44
Promotion	26	40	50	44
Salary Review	37	36	40	67
Training	30	44	50	67



Union Hiring Practices, Qualifications and Recruiting Sources U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 2010/2011

<u>Percent of unions that:</u>	<u>U.S. 2010</u>	<u>U.K. 2011</u>
--require current membership as a qualification for appointment to the headquarters professional staff	29	11
--have hired headquarters professional staff who have no previous experience working for a union	88	89
--have hired field professional staff who have no previous experience working for a union	4	78
--have hired headquarters professional staff who have previously worked for other unions	92	89



Use of Outside Consultants in U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 2010/2011

	2010	U.S.	2011	U.K.
Percent of unions that use outside consultants to assist with:				
<hr/>				
--computer services & technology		79		89
--financial planning		25		11
--containment of union's benefit costs			46	
44 --personnel recruitment				21
22				
--public relations/communications		50		22
--training		29		67
--political work		33		11



Financial and Strategic Planning Practices in U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+, 2010/2011

	U.S.		U.K.	
	<50,000	>50,000	<50,000	>50,000
--develop an annual budget with planned expenditures by function or department	89 <i>n=9</i>	72 <i>n=24</i>	100 <i>n=36</i>	100 <i>n=9</i>
--employ a formal strategic planning process	75 <i>n=8</i>	64 <i>n=24</i>	94 <i>n=36</i>	89 <i>n=9</i>



Implications of More Formal Human Resource Policies on Union Revitalization

--enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness

--higher employee morale, commitment, and satisfaction, lower turnover

--larger pool, better employees, more women, higher level of education



Implications of More Formal Budgeting and Strategic Planning for Union Revitalization

- More efficient financial management,
budgeting, and targeting of goals frees resources for
other uses**
- More efficient and better targeted programs and
initiatives**
- Greater transparency**



Potential Problems Resulting from Hiring Staff from Outside the Union

**--negative impact on membership's
willingness to actively participate and
volunteer**

**-- questions about the relative value of
education and experience outside the
union versus experience within the union
and industry**



Potential Problems Resulting from More Formal Budgeting and Strategic Planning

--more bureaucratic, slower process

--less adaptive, slower to change

--less creativity

--less membership involvement



**Unions need to find a third way
between ad hoc, informal
administrative practices and
traditional Weberian
bureaucracy.**



A THIRD WAY OF UNION ADMINISTRATION

This third way would:

- allow unions to develop more efficient, more systematic administrative practices
- allow unions to adapt and react quickly to threats and opportunities
- be a TOOL of revitalization
- include member/staff involvement as much as possible



Future Research

**--measure/evaluate
contribution of adm. practices
to union goals of revitalization**

**--identify “best practices” in
union administration**



Hire from Outside

- see the union as an instrument for attaining broad social goals
- more likely to be liberal/left of center**



Benefits of Hiring Staff from Inside the Union

--more likely to be motivated by:

- **a commitment to making life better for fellow workers**
- **to achieving upward mobility for themselves**



Possible Benefits of Hiring Staff from Outside the Union

--recruit better employees from larger pool

--broadens opportunities for women

--increases % of women on staff

--staff hired have higher level of education



IMAGE=

**What attitudes/beliefs
members have about
•
PASS.**

(Member Commitment)=

PASS' UNION POWER



IMAGE=

**What attitudes/beliefs the
public has about PASS**



IMAGE=

**What attitudes/beliefs the
public has about PASS=**

Public Support



IMAGE=

**What attitudes/beliefs the
public has about PASS**

Public Support=

UNION POWER



Labor's Image Problem

What negative beliefs do people hold about unions in general?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Labor's Image Problem

*What negative beliefs do at least some
PASS members hold about unions in
general?*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



IMAGE=

**What the public thinks
about PASS**



IMAGE=

**What the public thinks
about PASS**