



BMWED ACTS!

A Guide to Planning,
Conducting, and Coordinating
Effective Actions for BMWED
Members and Campaigns



A Joint Guide by the
BMWED Organizing Department
and the
BMWED Education Department



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BMWED Organizing Department

Tom Kirby, Director

Edits or Changes should be addressed to:

BMWED Education Department

education@bmwe.org

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AS A UNION, WE ACT!


Action is a bedrock principle behind all we do as a union. The levels of coordination, strategic guidance, and administration we have as a union all support **ACTION** by our members to achieve collectively-determined goals. The regulatory and legal frameworks we operate within were built, in part, to moderate our ability to act together.


Whether we bargain on a contract, research facts for a claim, help a family navigate their benefits, conduct a rally, or whatever we do as a union, all our work either sets the conditions for further action or implements decisions we have made collectively within the scope of our ability to act.


As a BMWED member, we depend on you to **ACT**. Our union is neither a subscription program, a service provider, nor a utility company. We are a community of members, continually fighting to create and sustain a better quality of life and dignity at work.


Any Successful Action will:


 Focus on an identified **OBJECTIVE**.


 Fulfill a well-defined **INTENT**.


 Work within the scope of a broader strategic **CAMPAIGN**.

 Effectively **COORDINATE** tools, resources, and people.

 **SUSTAIN** our union's mission and principles.

 **GENERATE** energy for follow-on actions.

 **ENGAGE** members, friends, and allies in our work.

 **CREATE CONDITIONS TO WIN!**



ACTIONS ARE A PROCESS

If you ask for examples of union action, most anyone you talk to will point to a strike, a rally, informational pickets, a phone campaign, a petition drive, or similar events.

As an active union member and leader, someone who organizes and coordinates ACTION, you know this is only part of the story!

Actions are a **PROCESS**. Any rally, picket, or petition drive is the culmination of hard work that takes place before and after any specific event. Our members will remember the time they stood together, got loud, and demanded change. Our job is to recognize all the work that occurs before, during, and after the “big event.”

When our members understand our work, and our actions, as a continuous process, they are better able to make each part of that process count!

“Plan your work and work your plan.”

- Coach Mark Levy



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

To better understand and navigate the process underlying all effective action, BMWED uses the **BMWED ACTION MODEL**. This model offers guidance to members and officers planning or preparing for a specific action. This model:

- ❖ Creates a common operating language and vision among BMWED members, enhancing our effectiveness.
- ❖ Empowers our elected and informal leaders, while not encumbering them with a restrictive, dogmatic approach to action.
- ❖ Encourages members to access all available support and resources within our Union.
- ❖ Provides tools to tie individual actions to broader campaigns.
- ❖ Supports scaling of actions.
- ❖ Creates conditions for further action and for winning our fight.

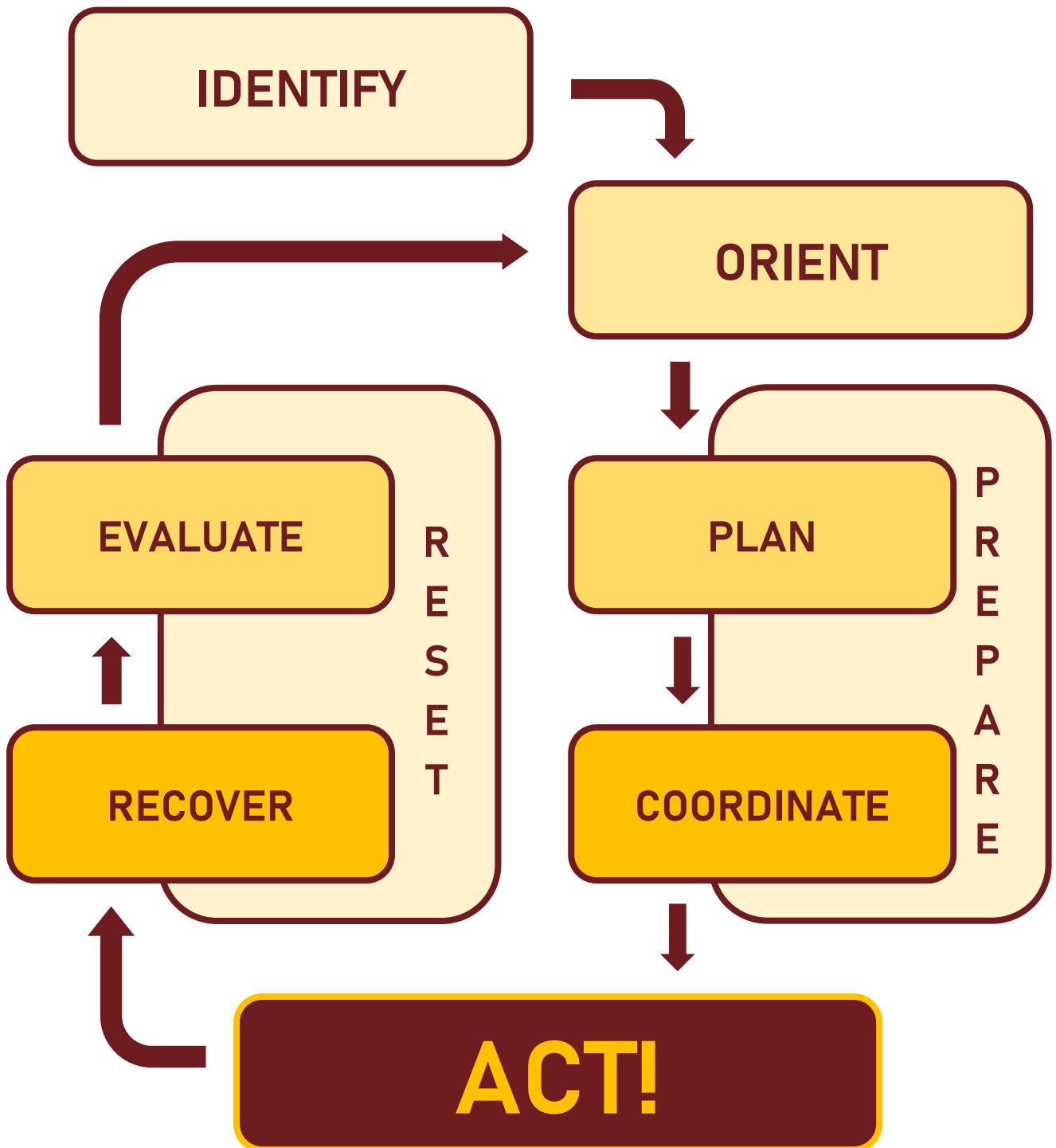
BMWED ACTION MODEL

The BMWED Action Model is a descriptive mechanism to align and coordinate the full spectrum of BMWED actions within a unified mission and campaign structure.

The BMWED Action model offers frameworks and guidance, not prescriptive rules and procedures. Its use will empower our union's leaders and members to take bold, creative, and continuous action in support of BMWED's missions and principles.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

You will **IDENTIFY** any issue, concern, or opportunity that can be addressed by mobilizing our members and resources to act!

Identification should provide you with a clear statement, understood by all, that can be used later within the BMWED Action Model. This identification will be important in later messaging, as you develop your **THEME, PURPOSE, and INTENT.**

Some example statements include:

- ❖ A railroad attempted to terminate BMWED members outside the provisions of their collective bargaining agreement.
- ❖ Direct bargaining has reached an impasse.
- ❖ Proper reimbursements for travel expenses are being unnecessarily held up by the railroad's payroll department.
- ❖ A nearby factory's workers are on strike and look for solidarity from our union.

IDENTIFY

When you identify an issue, concern, or opportunity, it may or may not already suggest the proper action to take. Deciding effective action can also take place later in the process.

Identification may already be done by someone else within our union. You may get this information from a member, from your Lodge, as an assignment from your System Division or Federation, or as part of a National Division campaign.

Use the Identify & Orient Worksheet in this Guide for help!



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

Once you have identified an issue, you will **ORIENT** that issue within our union's current work, capabilities, objectives, and resources.

Orientation includes communicating with other members of our union affected by the identified issue, or who could be affected by any action we take to address that issue. **You're calling a huddle to figure out the play.**

If the identified cause is a workplace dispute, other methods we use to resolve disputes must also be considered. **If we already have methods to resolve this issue prescribed within our collective bargaining agreements or within the Railway Labor Act (RLA), those methods must be followed.** Any action you take must not impair our ability to defend our rights or resolve disputes within the RLA. Your senior leaders can provide guidance on whether any action jeopardizes our position as a union or within our legal obligations.

ORIENT

Once you've identified a cause for action, orienting that cause helps you understand what you can do next.

Orientation means getting an idea of what we "can" do or what we're already doing, it doesn't quite get to the point of what we "should" do.

Orientation also includes getting more information about anything that could affect the issue we have identified and affect our action to address that cause.

Think of this phase as "recon" for future phases of your action.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

IDENTIFY

What is the issue we need to address?

Any issue you IDENTIFY should be restated as clearly and directly as possible.



ORIENT

Who is affected by this issue?

Gang? Seniority District? Territory? Railroad? System Division? Our families? Our hometowns? Our entire union?

Who can impact our action?

BMWED, IBT, other unions, local organizations, railroad officials, private security, municipal government, community groups, news media

What other tools do we have for this issue?

Claims/Grievances, legal action, public awareness, regulatory action, indirect pressure, informational picket

Is this part of an ongoing BMWED campaign?

If so, who is involved? Who is coordinating this work?

Refer to the BMWED ACTS! – Identify & Orient Worksheet in the Appendices for Guidance!



BMWED ACTS!

A Guide to Planning, Conducting, and Coordinating
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THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

You identified an issue that demands our action. You oriented that issue within the broader scope of what's at stake for our union and what we can do to address it. Now you start to **PREPARE!**

Preparing for action with the **BMWED ACTION MODEL** is really just like preparing for any other work you want to do (or party you want to throw). The process here is designed to offer guidance and “handrails” to ensure you don't leave anything out. Models also help us all speak the same language when working together.

The **PLAN** subphase is concept work. You're sharing ideas and information. It's during this phase of that you will start to put together a **TIMELINE** for your action, lists of what you need to get the work done, who you need to show up, and how you can develop the entire concept of the action. You will also figure out a **THEME** and develop **TASKS** in this phase.

This is also when you start gathering your tools and building your team.

PREPARE (PLAN)

Identify the **5 Ws** of your action. The **IDENTIFY** and **ORIENT** phases have already given you some of that, this phase tackles the rest.

This is also the phase where you will begin to formulate your **INTENT**. Your intent not only describes “what” you want to do, it puts it in context of our mission, vision, and values.

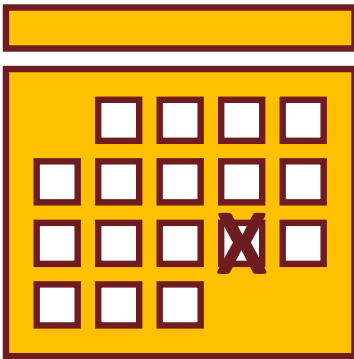
“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

– Abraham Lincoln



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

PLAN – MAKING THE CALL



Give yourself plenty of time to work! Ideally, you will have a date around 6 weeks away for your action!

YOU choose the date for your action!

Choose your date based on what you know, what you want to accomplish, and what you believe you can round up to accomplish your goal.

It's easy to “kick the can” here, or let momentum slip away while you wait for “just one more thing.” Do not decide this in committee; everyone on your team will have different commitments or availabilities and will want to settle on a different date or time.

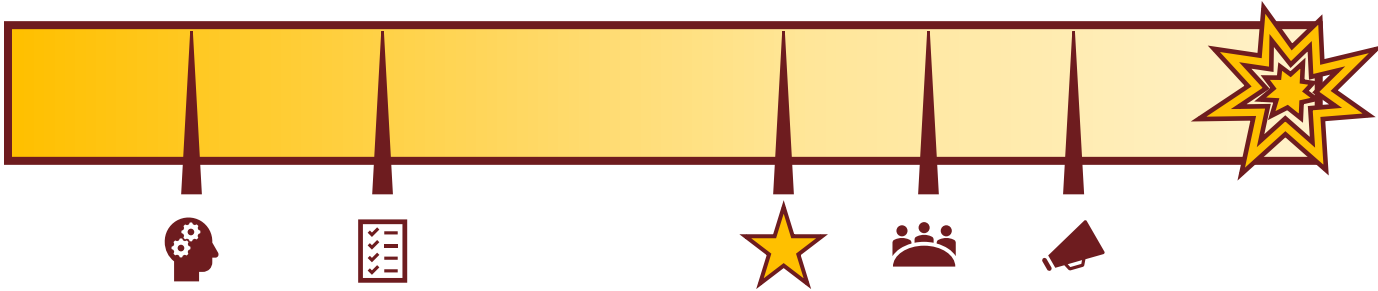
If your first choice for a date needs adjustment, then make adjustments. But don't start planning or preparing without a firm date in mind. Your work leading up to the action will depend on a target date.

YOU MAKE THE CALL.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

PLAN - TIMELINES



Managing your time will be an important part of the **PREPARE** phase, especially since this action will likely not be the only job you or any of the people working with you are doing right now.

An example timeline will be included as an appendix to this Guide. It is important to remember that each action, and each plan, will have its own unique variables and requirements. **Your timeline will look different, so don't get stuck in a template!**

When developing any timeline, the following concepts are useful:

- ① Give yourself as much lead time as you can afford! 6 weeks is ideal, if you can swing it.
- ① **Plan backward** from the date of your action. Think of tasks that need to be done working from that day back to the current date.
- ① If you are setting dates of completion for enabling tasks, don't just guess! **Establish realistic goals** and adjust where needed. Where others are helping out, check on the time they need for this work and their other responsibilities.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

PLAN - 1/3 - 2/3 RULE

PLAN YOUR
ACTION AND
THE TASKS
NEEDED TO
MAKE IT
HAPPEN! $\frac{1}{3}$

$\frac{2}{3}$



COORDINATE
THE WORK ON
THOSE TASKS
WITH YOUR
TEAM TO GET
READY FOR
YOUR ACTION!

As you organize work within the **PREPARE** phase, you will have to balance planning with coordination. If you have others helping you pull off your action, you must also give them time to take care of their own pieces of the entire event. Remember, everyone is already busy!

A good tool to manage time in this phase is the “**1/3 - 2/3 Rule.**” Once you have set a date for your action, during the **PREPARE** phase, 1/3 of the time should be spent planning, while 2/3 of the time should be spent coordinating actions the implement your plan. You should have 1/3 of the available time to figure out what you want to do, leaving 2/3 of the available time open for the work it takes to get there.

You will, of course, tweak and revise as you go, but keeping the 1/3-2/3 Rule in mind will help you from getting overwhelmed at the last minute!



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THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

Your plans have been made (subject to change). You understand the tasks that need done and have different members assigned to tackle them all. In the days leading up to your action, it is now time to **COORDINATE** the final preparations and set your action up for success!

There are a lot of jobs that need doing prior to the day of the event. Communications are vital here! You will not only communicate within your team, but with community stakeholders, service providers, authorities, and others who may impact your action.

We have put together a checklist as an additional tool you can use during this phase. Don't be afraid to reach out to your fellow BMWED organizers for tips, tricks, and further guidance here.

IN-PROGRESS REVIEWS are a great tool to “check in” on progress and adjust plans where needed. Finding some way to **REHEARSE** the event, even a tabletop rehearsal, will also be a great tool.

PREPARE (COORDINATE)

All the best plans you have will last about a minute or two into the actual event. You can build room and time to maneuver by effectively coordinating the final preparations.

This phase will allow you to build confidence in your team, which will help you all adjust to sudden changes and to “keep the fires lit” for future actions.

This phase is **CRITICAL** to the success of your action. Don't let a great idea slip away from you, and call for help if you're stuck!



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

COORDINATE – IN-PROGRESS REVIEW

By now, you have lots of plates spinning. You may be putting together flyers with your theme and messaging. Other unions may be asking about getting involved, or you may be working with the staff of a local politician about their visit to your action.



Your team might be rounding up people, ordering t-shirts, putting together a music playlist, or any number of other tasks.



There may be sudden changes, too! A permit you wanted may be unavailable. Your chosen site may have a conflict that needs addressed. You may get news of a development from your System Division or Federation that alters the conditions you identified in the first place!

The best way to keep track of all this work, and all these changes, is to schedule regular **IN-PROGRESS REVIEWS** with your team. Review what's been done, what needs doing, and if anything has changed in the plan, the conditions, or your schedule. Whether it's a phone call, a video-conference, or a sit-down meeting, **CHECK IN WITH YOUR PEOPLE!**



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

COORDINATE – CONTROL MEASURES



As a coordinator for your action, guiding your team through this final stretch should not be a matter of constantly telling them what to do next. **Each member of your team should have a clear idea of the plan and their tasks or roles.** So, now your job is to create the playing field for them, building the space where they can exercise their skills creatively and audaciously to make this action happen!

Think of your job here as to set “out of bounds” areas for your team, letting them know what limits you all must stay within to accomplish your goals. Be ready to offer guidance if they get stuck or a bit lost. Your plan and timeline will be your map.

Don’t “take over” your teammate’s task if they get stuck. Also make sure that checking on progress doesn’t feel like you’re hounding your people!

Control measures can include generating “talking points” for communications, setting budgets (for both time and money), coordinating tasks through the appropriate BMWED Departments, and proactively setting up liaisons with other stakeholders.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

COORDINATE – REHEARSAL

If you can accomplish no other tasks yourself before the action, as a coordinator you should focus on a good reconnaissance of the action area and on an effective **REHEARSAL** of the action itself.

While on-site rehearsals and walk-throughs are always the best, they may not be possible or advisable. When you can't conduct an on-site rehearsal or walk-through, a tabletop rehearsal with key personnel is also a good opportunity to identify any remaining issues, reinforce messaging, and give everyone a better understanding of the whole picture for the action.

Effective **REHEARSALS** inoculate your team against unexpected changes!

Prepare for the rehearsal or walk-through ready to review and discuss every aspect of the action! Don't end the rehearsal until all questions are answered! If there are follow-up tasks, make sure they are assigned. Don't allow an important job to be left undone because your team members all thought someone else was doing it!

If your resources allow, bringing food to the rehearsal and offering space for open conversation will also help your teammates relax a bit and gain confidence for the upcoming action. This is especially important when you may have folks who don't normally work together.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

COORDINATE – REHEARSAL

Key points for a tabletop **REHEARSAL**:

- 🔥 The **Action Coordinator** should “tell the story” of the action from beginning to end.
- 🔥 Any VIPs, media, or expected visitors should be announced, with their expected times of arrival given.
- 🔥 Boundaries, permits, or other restrictive controls measures should be reviewed.
- 🔥 Talking Points should be reviewed as a group, discussed, and key points reinforced.
- 🔥 Anyone with an assignment should brief the rest of the team, and the Action Coordinator, on their assigned role or duty.
- 🔥 Weather, safety, or environmental factors should be discussed.
- 🔥 Recovery, reset, and evaluation plans should be reviewed for after the action.
- 🔥 **All open matters or questions should be resolved.**



Plan your Work, then Work your Plan!



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

A lot of work already happened to get you to this phase, but now it's time to **ACT!**

The members participating in your action should be thoroughly briefed on their roles, expectations, possible events that may occur during your action, and how those events will be handled.

If you are coordinating this action, you will continually assess the energy and dynamic of your action and your crowd. If you have difficulty doing this while also being the spokesperson or “master of ceremonies,” you may want to delegate those roles. Having several people assigned as liaisons for media, police, passersby, or safety is important.

Your main focus is to sustain energy through the action. Here it is good to “know when to hold ‘em, and know when to fold ‘em.” More on that later...

This is your time to get loud, get inspired, and get our message out!

ACT!

Your Action should be energetic, engaging to participants and anyone passing by, and represent the ideals of our union.

Actions, by design, bring attention to our issues and our members. We need to **harness** this potential and use it to further our campaign goals and union mission, but we must **moderate** this energy as well to ensure we can always pass the “**Washington Post Test.**” If you are comfortable seeing what we do on the front page of the newspaper, that is a good sign!



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

You made noise. You raised hell. You have some good photos of your event and a sign-in sheet full of people who are looking forward to the next action.

Now it's time to **RESET**. This action, as important as it is, is not an end in itself, just a means to an end.

So, we collect our gear, return what we borrowed, send out thank you messages to **all** the folks who stood with us, and tie what we did into the broader work we continue to do.

The **RESET** phase is rather straightforward but should be considered in two parts; the **RECOVER** sub-phase and the **EVALUATE** sub-phase.

Because we're not off the track yet.

RESET (RECOVER)

If you used any special equipment (inflatables, megaphones, a PA system, flags, banners, etc.) ensure they're clean, dry, and ready for the next action.

There is still a lot of communications work to do, spreading the word about your action and any responses to it. Work with our **Communications** team to get photos, video, sound bites, or other good stuff out in our media channels.

We likely built some bridges with this action, so offer thanks and ensure we don't lose connections we've gained!



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

An action is not successful just because we pulled it off. Actions are tools, means to an end, part of a campaign we develop to achieve our goals as a union.

So, did this action move the needle? How will you figure that out?

It may be that your action enabled further internal organizing for our members, empowering them and offering more opportunities to get involved. If so, how will you assess that?

Were you trying to apply pressure to a railroad or change a policy? This action alone may not have created the change, but did it enable further action to keep up that pressure? What ways will you gauge your success there?

Actions must be impactful, sustainable, and do their job within the wider mission and campaigns of our union. Good evaluation will ensure that our actions serve their purpose or set conditions for the next steps.

RESET (EVALUATE)

If anyone within our union or from another organization contributed to pulling off this action, touch base with them afterward to get their input.

Keep an eye on the “splash” your action made in the news or on social media. What comments are you generating?

Was there an official response from the target of your action? If so, how does that impact future planning or communication?

Evaluation can come from any variety of channels.



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL

EVALUATE – THE AFTER ACTION REVIEW

An **AFTER ACTION REVIEW**, or **AAR**, is a formal tool to evaluate what you achieved in any particular action. AARs can also develop our skills in conducting actions, planning, preparation, and a variety of other tasks. They reinforce that our work is a continuous process, not a “one-off.”

AARs can be done in person, as a video conference, or in any other way that offers participants a chance to share freely.

During the AAR, you should have someone take thorough notes. Tailor discussion to cover the items listed to the right.

AARs should also include a restatement of the **PURPOSE** and **INTENT** of the action, so participants can remind themselves of their original goals.

Records of any AAR should be maintained as training and development tools for future actions at your level.

AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

What was supposed to happen?

What actually happened?

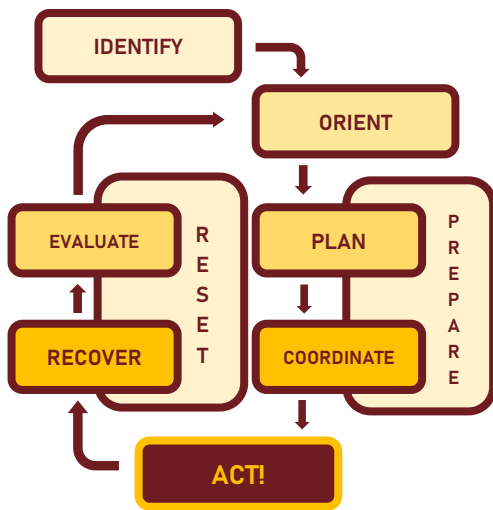
If what happened was different from what was supposed to happen, how can we explain this?

What went well with how we prepared or conducted this action, and should be maintained?

What could have gone better, and how can we improve it?



THE BMWED ACTION MODEL



**WE DID IT BEFORE!
WE'LL DO IT AGAIN!**

Actions are a **PROCESS**. Once the dust has settled, you've assessed the impact of your action, and identified the current state of affairs, it's time to ORIENT again and, **if more action is required, keep up the process!**

Our fights won't end after one informational picket, one rally, or one petition drive. Developing our ability to ACT is understanding this is a long fight. We must find ways to sustain energy for that fight. The **BMWED ACTION MODEL** offers a way to communicate the process effectively for you and your team, but translating this to effective work is up to all of us.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

FOR ACTION!



A model is great, but once you actually get to work you realize it won't fill in all the real details you want to know.

Every action will be unique, subject to its own conditions and limitations, and focused on its own goals. The good news is that there are some tools flexible enough to be useful in a variety of different actions.

This section offers a few tools and some specific guidance you can use when developing your own actions.

THEME, PURPOSE, & INTENT

TIMELINES

MAKING THE "ASK"

ASSIGNMENTS

GETTING HELP

MEDIA

GAUGING ENERGY

CHECKLISTS



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

THEME, PURPOSE, & INTENT



Everyone who participates in your action should go in with a clear idea of what you're trying to do. Afterward, everyone should have a similar understanding of what it was all about. These basic ideas actually come in three flavors; **THEME**, **PURPOSE**, and **INTENT**. Each is similar, but all serve unique purposes in your action.

THEME

This is a slogan. It's what goes on your placards and in your chants. It's your literal rallying cry!

PURPOSE

Your action's purpose lays out what you are actually trying to accomplish. It's a realistic, measurable goal.

INTENT

The intent of your action offers a deeper meaning than the purpose and ties your action into our broader campaigns, missions, and values.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

THEME, PURPOSE, & INTENT

THEME

You will often find a theme after you determine the purpose and intent of your action. Familiar themes include “**Enough is Enough! Fair Contract Now!**” or “**Healthcare, Not Wealthcare!**” Your theme should be punchy, offering meaning in a short statement or sentence. Use your theme to design flyers, media advisories, and signage.

PURPOSE

The purpose of your action frames your action as an event “**in order to**” accomplish a certain outcome. Your purpose should be a brief statement, often a sentence or two, detailing the “**why**” of your particular action. **Your purpose is realistic, measurable, and appropriate** to the conditions you found in your **IDENTIFY** and **ORIENT** phases.

INTENT

If your action is a tactical decision aimed for a specific purpose, your intent ties that into an overall campaign, mission, or vision of our union. **Your intent is a more thoughtful statement that incorporates our values**, connects your action to who we are, and informs how we can move forward after the conclusion of this action.



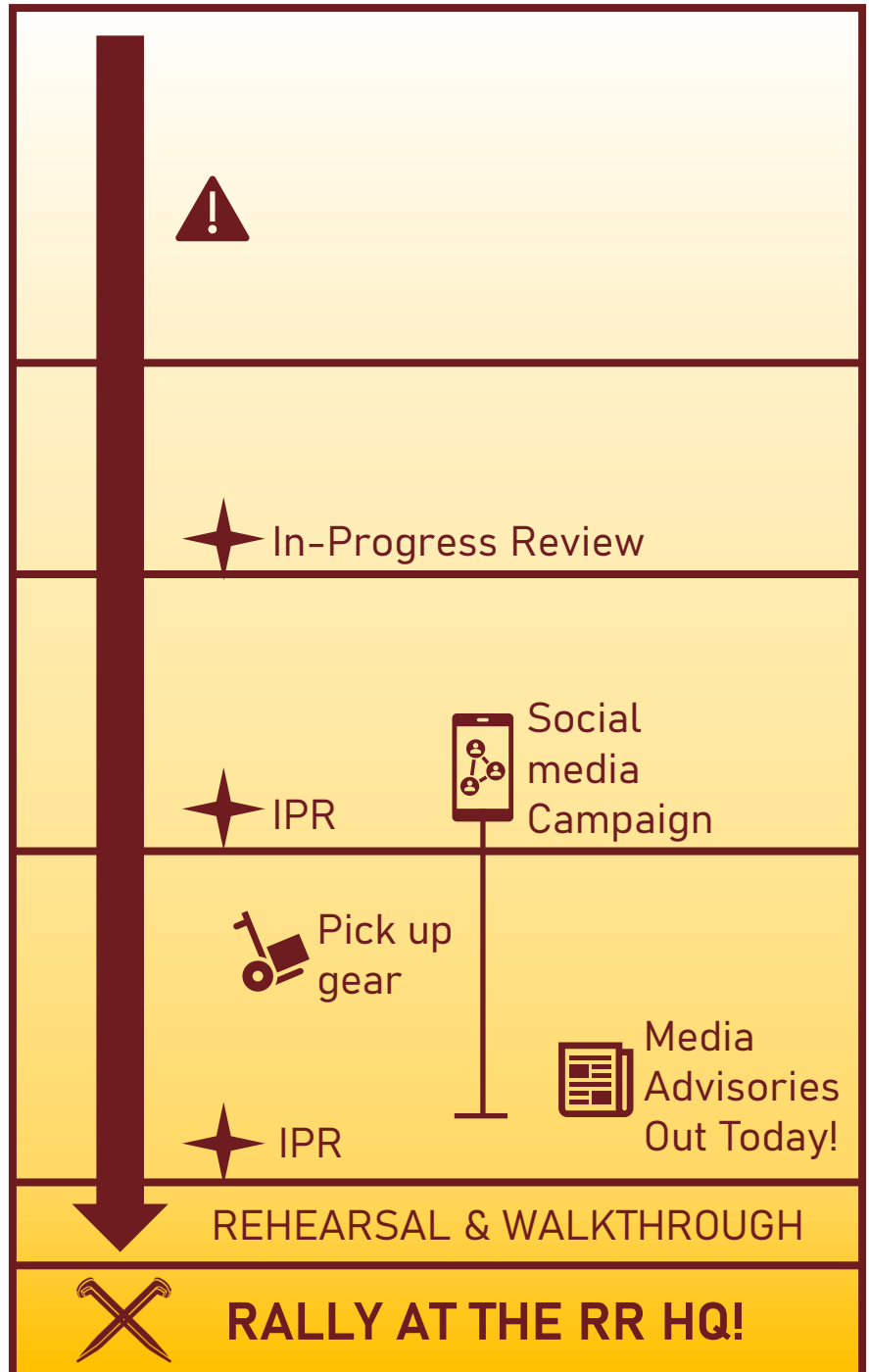
TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

TIMELINES

An example Timeline is provided in the appendices of this Guide.

Once you determine a date, work backward from that date to identify other dates where necessary work must be completed, tasks assigned, or reviews conducted.

Have others review your timeline, especially if you're asking them for support or material.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

TIMELINES

Each Action will have its own requirements for work. However, every action will require you to develop some form of messaging; solicit support from within BMWED, other unions, or local lawmakers; gather necessary equipment or materials; and advertise your action or event.

The examples to the right are not ironbound, but a good representation of what you can expect during preparations.

EXAMPLE TIMELINE TARGETS

~6 weeks prior Action: This is when you should begin work on your action and putting together your team.

~1 month prior to Action: Have your team assembled and discuss tasks and assignments. Lay out your purpose, intent, and theme. Start necessary permit work, if needed.

~3 weeks prior to Action: Have your messaging ready so you can develop flyers, talking points, and media advisories. Also, reach out to potential guest speakers or other supporters.

~2 weeks prior to Action: You should start getting commitments from guest speakers or attendees. Begin spreading the message within BMWED. You should know where your equipment (inflatables, megaphones, PA, etc.) is or who is rounding up your gear.

~1 week prior to Action: Media advisories to news outlets. Social media and public campaign. Get commitments from BMWED attendees. Materials (signs, markers, tape, etc.) should be on hand or easy to locate now.

Day Before the Action: Rehearsal on site or tabletop rehearsal. Phone call reminders to key attendees or guests, if appropriate.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MAKING THE “ASK”

SOCIAL MEDIA “LIKES” ARE NOT CONFIRMATIONS OF INVOLVEMENT!

IF YOU INTEND ON HAVING ANY MEMBER ATTEND YOUR RALLY, PARTICIPATE, OR BE INVOLVED IN A SPECIFIC ROLE, YOU MUST GET A POSITIVE CONFIRMATION FROM THEM. **YOU MUST ASK THEM.**

THIS IS BEST DONE FACE TO FACE. OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO MAKE THE “ASK” FACE TO FACE WITH MEMBERS.

NEVER ASSUME A MEMBER WILL SHOW UP, EVEN IF THAT MEMBER EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM ONLINE, EXPRESSED A VAGUE INTEREST IN ACTION BEFORE, OR MADE OTHER INDICATIONS THAT THEY WOULD INVOLVE THEMSELVES.

UNTIL YOU HAVE DIRECTLY ASKED THEM AND RECEIVED A DIRECT ANSWER, YOU SHOULD ASSUME THE ANSWER IS “NO.”

For our union actions to be successful, we must have our members show up for them.

About 2-3 weeks prior to your event, unless you have other reasons for not doing so, you should be able to start talking to members and soliciting their involvement.

Whether it's a petition to sign, a rally to attend, or an informational picket line to stand, our members need to be there!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

ASSIGNMENTS

No successful action is a one-person show. From a small-scale petition drive to a nationwide rally blitz, each action we do as a union should be done as a team!

Some key roles you may need to fill during your action:

Action Coordinator – Unless you assign yourself this job, you will want someone to keep an eye on timelines, correspondence, confirmations, logistics, and other details.

Event Coordinator – If your action is a rally or informational picket, you will want a person who act as a “Master of Ceremonies,” introducing speakers, starting up chants, controlling the pace of events, and generally being a charismatic “hype man” for the action. Find someone comfortable speaking to a crowd!

Chant Leaders – Leading energetic chants is a tougher job than it first appears to be. You may want to have a couple different people trade off the job. Be sure they communicate with one another and “relay” the work. You don’t want to have two separate chants going on at the same time!

Speakers – These could be BMWED members, officers, local lawmakers, other union leaders, or guests. Remarks don't need to be long, but they should be well-crafted.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

ASSIGNMENTS

Media Liaison – If you have press show up to your action, you will want someone to speak with them. They may end up asking for other members to interview, but the Media Liaison can assist with that work. This member can also work on advisories and releases.

Safety Marshal – Any action will have safety considerations, traffic management, or other concerns. You should appoint one or more Safety Marshals to keep an eye on overall safety, help monitor “out of bounds” areas, or be ready to lend a hand in an issue.

Police Liaison – Depending on your action, you may or may not need a permit. You may also end up interacting with law enforcement. Your Police Liaison should be someone comfortable with the role, who can explain our action, our rights, and help navigate any concerns from law enforcement.

Social Media Coordinator – Actions today benefit from aggressive use of social media to spread the word. Having a social media savvy member help with that work, or collaborate with our BMWED Communications Team, will boost your action’s signal!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

ASSIGNMENTS

Shuttle Drivers – If your action has no nearby parking accessible, you should use shuttle drivers to get attendees between the action location and parking areas.

Equipment Manager – If you have signs, placards, flags, banners, or other “stuff,” assigning a member to ensure all these items are accounted for will help you keep an orderly action and help you be ready for the next action, too.

PA System Minder – Get a member who knows how to adjust all the knobs on your PA system and can dial it in the right way. Then make sure no one else touches those knobs!

There can be any number of special jobs our members may perform during an action. The different jobs you have will depend on the action you conduct. A door-to-door canvassing campaign will require different roles than an informational picket. If you're putting together a petition drive, you will have different jobs available than if you're rallying in solidarity with a nearby factory or warehouse strike.

Giving members a job to do in your action helps the success of the overall action, distributes work so no one member is overwhelmed, and helps develop a sense of pride and ownership in what we do together!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

GETTING HELP

You have a big idea, but how do you translate it into an effective action?

While this guide will be a useful tool, it isn't the only support you have in organizing a successful action. Once you have an idea of what you want to accomplish and have started the groundwork, don't hesitate to reach out for help from your brothers and sisters!

Your System Division or Federation should be your first contact.

Your officers can help you plan and coordinate your action within the overall work you are doing on any specific issue, or help you reorient the action if it may jeopardize other work (claims, legal actions, etc.). Look to them for guidance and support!

The **BMWED Organizing Department** can provide their expertise in how to plan, coordinate, and conduct an action. They can also work with you to tie your action into a broader campaign, or develop follow-on actions to keep the fires lit.

The **BMWED Communications Department** is an essential team of folks to support you when you want to reach out to get news coverage. Make sure to reach out as early as you can, so they have time to help you craft effective media advisories and share them through their professional channels. Our Communications team can also help you with imagery, slogans, and social media content!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

GETTING HELP

Don't forget to reach out locally!

While BMWED has a lot of resources and support they can offer you, don't forget the folks right next to you. Getting support from your Lodge, nearby BMWED Lodges, other nearby unions or community organizations, and local lawmakers can add a lot of firepower to your action!

The **BMWED Legislative Department** and your **State Legislative Director** can help you connect with local lawmakers who can come to speak at your action or offer letters of support.

BMWED Local Lodges can use their internal communications to get the word out, as well as reach out to other crafts in their depots, yards, or workplaces. Major terminal cities may have Lodges from several other Systems or Federations, so don't get tunnel vision and forget to reach out to **ALL** your brothers and sisters!

Your nearby **IBT** local or **Joint Council**, **AFL-CIO Labor Council**, or other labor and community organizations will often be happy to lend a hand and join the action. It never hurts to reach out and build bridges across organized labor. **Work with your System or Federation officers to get started on soliciting support from other unions, IBT, or outside organizations!**



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

GETTING HELP

Just like with our own members, it's important to "make the ask!"

Wherever you look to get support or assistance for your action, it is **vital** to provide your potential partners with a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve, the scope or limits of your action (what it is **AND** what it is **NOT**), and offer clear, direct communication when asking for support or coordinating the support they offer to provide.

Even if you get large organizations involved in your action, remember it is **YOUR ACTION!** Don't let another group usurp your action for their own agenda.

Also be aware that there are some groups out there that look to cause trouble and may latch on to your action to do just that. There are organizations out there that look to exploit and divide our members, and will try to "stir the pot" when they can.

The best way to ensure your partners fully understand their roles, feel excited about participating, and give you a firm commitment is to keep in contact with them as you prepare your action. Be sure to "make the ask," and then keep partners involved and in the loop.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MEDIA



If you want your action to be a success, you have to **SPREAD THE WORD!**



You can use phone trees, mass emails, face-to-face conversations, and more to alert our members to an upcoming action.

For our communities, and to have more impact on our targets, we also need to know how to reach out to news agencies, leverage social media, and engage with our larger union community.

Facebook, websites, news interviews, and media advisories (press releases) are all valuable tools to amplify your action's message, if you know how to use them!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MEDIA – TALKING POINTS

Even if you have your **THEME** and **PURPOSE** committed to heart, have a passionate story to tell, or understand all the intricacies of the current issue, unless you're a secret improv artist (we'll keep our eyes on you!), you'll likely benefit from using **TALKING POINTS** to help you during discussions with outside groups, media, or others interested in your action.

TALKING POINTS sound like political nonsense, but they are actually just fact sheets, useful tools to ensure our messages are focused, consistent, and get the job done! Several different people, referencing the same talking points, can offer a consistent message for news agencies, municipal organizations, or allied groups. We can also review talking points to ensure that we don't open the door to trouble for our members or our union down the road, getting our messaging vetted by our senior leaders and legal counsel, if needed.

Once you have a set of approved TALKING POINTS for your action, ensure anyone interacting with media or outside agencies keep their messaging and responses within the guidelines set out in the TALKING POINTS.

Some reporters will attempt “gotcha” questions or try to pull a different story out of our members in one-on-one interviews. Our opponents will also try to “frame” a dispute in their favor. Talking points can help us stay on topic, on message, and cut down hearsay, misinformation, or gossip.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MEDIA – TALKING POINTS

TALKING POINTS WILL:

- 🔥 Offer our organizers, liaisons, and speakers a set of easily referenced facts and data, so they don't have to remember details off the cuff.
- 🔥 Keep our messaging consistent, so members aren't coaxed into "gotcha" questions or to take positions that others can use against them or against our union.
- 🔥 Reinforce the purpose and intent of the action, offering more context about why we're acting and what we want to achieve.
- 🔥 Help members who are less comfortable speaking in public or being interviewed by reporters.

TALKING POINTS WILL NOT:

- 🔥 Support gossip, hearsay, or misinformation.
- 🔥 Slander any of our members, our fellow unions, or misrepresent our mission and values.
- 🔥 Prevent our members from telling their genuine stories or expressing themselves.
- 🔥 Place our members, our union, or our partners in a jeopardizing situation.



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MEDIA – EXAMPLE TALKING POINTS

EXAMPLE TALKING POINTS:

BMWED STANDS AGAINST THE BAD FAITH NEGOTIATING TACTICS OF GRAND CONTINENTAL RAILROAD (GCRR) AND DEMANDS A FAIR CONTRACT NOW!

- BMWED represents 1123 maintenance of way workers on the Grand Continental Railroad (GCRR) across the United States.
- BMWED and GCRR began Direct Negotiations after an exchange of Section 6 notices under the RLA on January 1, 2022.
- GCRR has cancelled or failed to appear at several mutually scheduled negotiation sessions. Each time, GCRR offered flimsy excuses to cover their absences.
- GCRR has failed to offer any substantive proposal for amendments to current bargaining agreement, claiming that *“it must review its forecasted economic situation.”* This railroad has provided no response to BMWED’s proposals.
- At this time, **BMWED workers on GCRR have had no increases to their wages since 2021** and have been forced to endure increased prices and losses to real earnings.
- GCRR recently awarded its CEO a \$5 million bonus for “performance” and initiated 3 stock buybacks since 2021.
- BMWED believes we are at an impasse and demands GCRR come to the table or that the National Mediation Board (NMB) invokes mediation!
- **BMWED members rally for a FAIR CONTRACT NOW in Phoenix, Arizona, at GCRR’s Operations HQ on August 4, 2023!**

- **THIS IS NOT A STRIKE.**



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

MEDIA ADVISORIES

Even if your action is the best scoop in town, a reporter will likely not know about it until you tell them. To engage local, regional, and national news about our actions or major issues, we must use **Media Advisories** and press releases to do the job.

- 🔥 A few weeks before your action, you should start working with the **BMWED Communications Department** to craft media advisories. Key pieces of information in an advisory include:
 - 🔥 A brief statement of who we are.
 - 🔥 A description of the issue that prompted our action, as well as what we intend to accomplish or bring awareness to.
 - 🔥 Details of what the action is, where and when it will occur, and what to expect (music, marching, speakers, etc.)
 - 🔥 A list of any special VIPs, guest speakers, or other newsworthy partners and visitors to your action.
 - 🔥 A point of contact for the action (either you, an assigned Action Coordinator, the Event Coordinator, or Media Liaison) so the news agency can follow up.

The next page provides one example of a concise media advisory. Again, reach out for help if you need assistance!



TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

EXAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

(BMWED or Organizational Letterhead)

BMWED STANDS AGAINST THE BAD FAITH NEGOTIATING TACTICS OF GRAND CONTINENTAL RAILROAD (GCRR) AND DEMANDS A FAIR CONTRACT NOW!

July 21, 2023

Rail workers with the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED), a division of the Teamsters, will conduct a rally protesting the actions of Grand Continental Railroad (GCRR) at that railroad's operational headquarters on 2200 W Corporate Center Drive, Phoenix, AZ from 7 AM to 10 AM on Friday, August 4, 2023.

BMWED workers are currently in contract negotiations with GCRR under the Railway Labor Act. BMWED has received no response to its proposals for wages or work rules, and GCRR has cancelled or failed to appear at several scheduled bargaining talks. GCRR has also made no proposals of its own. BMWED workers on GCRR have had no wage increases since 2021, while GCRR has had several rounds of stock buybacks and recently awarded its CEO \$5 million as a performance bonus. BMWED workers demand GCRR come to the negotiating table or that the National Mediation Board declare bargaining at an impasse and invoke mediation to reach a FAIR CONTRACT for BMWED rail workers.

BMWED will have live music and a food truck at its rally, as well as chanting, marching, and demonstrators holding signs. The Presidents of the BMWED, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Arizona AFL-CIO, and the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO will all speak at this rally. **This informational protest is not a strike.**

Further information about this event is available by contacting BMWED member Ash Anderson at (012) 867-5309 or education@bmwe.org

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BMWED ACTS!

A Guide to Planning, Conducting, and Coordinating
Effective Actions for BMWED Members and Campaigns

TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

GAUGING ENERGY

So! You've kicked off your action! You have folks chanting, yelling, ready to go!

Forty minutes later, everyone is hoarse. Chants are now mumbles. Folks are dragging their feet. You've already seen a few members duck out to the nearby restaurant, and you've got two hours to go...



What happened?!



- 🔥 Remember that chanting takes a lot of energy! Plan chants in short bursts, 5 minutes or so, before or after a speaker or other event. Avoid round-the-clock, continuous chanting at your action or event. It'll wear your folks out!
- 🔥 Provide places for attendees to recharge. Shade, snacks, beverages, warming areas, all will help sustain momentum.
- 🔥 Fill empty time with music! Put together a playlist to run through a PA System or have a member bring a guitar!
- 🔥 Don't let your action turn into a slog. **An energetic action cut short is better than a long-running action that has no fire in it.**

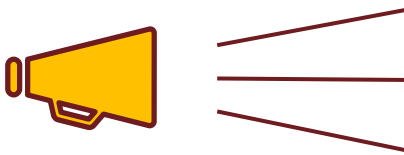


TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

GAUGING ENERGY



While we all pride ourselves on being loud, proud rail workers, wherever you can **use a bullhorn, megaphone, or PA to amplify speakers' voices.** Continuous speaking with a raised voice will make it harder for your crowd to hear you and for speakers to keep up their own energy.



If you use a PA, though, make sure you dial it in correctly to avoid feedback or excessive reverb!

Remember that everything about your action is a form of communication. It takes a bit of showmanship, humor, and audacity to pump up a crowd and keep them going.

