

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COMMITTEE DOs AND DON'Ts

It is very easy and an often-used tactic for the union to allege an “unfair labour practice” (ULP), which can provide the union with an opportunity to attack the EBA’s credibility with workers, the public, and officials, and can derail collective bargaining.

DO:

- Get to know members of the union’s bargaining team (name, background, history)
- Read the current collective agreement (or at least the highlights)
- Thoroughly understand the proposals from your bargaining team
- Determine beforehand who is the EBA bargaining team spokesperson, and then speak only when addressed by the spokesperson – don’t interrupt your own team!
- Keep your cool, be patient, and leave the room if your frustration level is high
- Act like everything is being taped (as it probably is) and don’t say anything you wouldn’t want repeated to your workers, media, family, etc.

DON'T:

- Never let them see you sweat – keep bargaining team politics and disagreements to the caucus room
- Bargain directly with the bargaining unit members/workers – no ‘deals’ to be made with individual workers
- Negotiate against yourself... bargaining takes time and often can’t be rushed
- Threaten or give ultimatums to bargaining unit members/union “if you don’t accept this... I will close my operations”
- Joke or be sarcastic.... Not everyone understands or shares your sense of humour, and in high-pressure situations, jokes and humour and even your tone of voice can easily be misinterpreted
- Forget your Code of Conduct and values – even when you’re in bargaining, the Code of Conduct, and all other human rights and employment legislation are in effect.