



Marketing Issues

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Starting a Campaign: A step-by-step guide to kicking off your next organizing campaign

Choosing which contractor to pursue for your organizing campaign is a major decision—one in which many factors must be determined before you even begin to put a campaign together.

One of the first steps is to investigate multiple companies and select the best one for the type of campaign you want. But before that, **establish your campaign goal**. Some of the goals may include:

- › Keeping the non-union contractor from obtaining work
- › Stripping workers
- › Bannering
- › Providing apprentice and journeyman training
- › Offering an avenue to pension and health insurance savings
- › Generating more work for the contractor through your union-friendly contacts

Often the best campaigns will combine many of these goals in order to reach the ultimate objective of getting the first collective bargaining agreement signed.

Once you have your campaign goal, it's time to research contractors. The first (and easiest) thing to do is **Google the company** and owner's name. This is quick and free—plus, your search results may bring up information about other businesses with which the owner is involved.

The city or state you live in may require a license to do business in the area. If this is the case, **make sure the company has the required license**. You can usually check for

required licensing on your city or state website.

Safety is something that concerns not only roofing contractors, but also their clients. To **check a company's safety record** on the web, go to www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.html. The OSHA website allows you to go back ten years to look up both closed and open cases. When you find any violation or investigation on the OSHA website, make sure to print it out immediately, as OSHA may delete it from the site at any time. Print out the Inspection Information page and the Violations Item page(s). Often there will be more than one violation found at a site inspection, so print out all violation pages. If you need to have the full OSHA report, you will need to make a request in writing.

These simple Internet searches will save you time and money; however, at some point you will need to **find all of the customers** or end-users of the contractor you've selected. While the web will help with this, it will also require a tremendous amount of foot work to confirm as many customers as possible.

To do this, you will need to **find out where the company is working**. This step involves time and effort. If the company does a lot of public work, attend the pre-bids or bid openings. When attending, make clear who you are and that you will be making sure the contractor follows all requirements in place for that public entity. If the company does any private work, you may need to go to the shop and follow a company truck to a jobsite. Another option is scheduling a meeting

with the owner. Many owners like to boast about the work they are doing—ask them, and often they will tell you exactly what you want to know!

The **company's website** can also be a good source of job information.

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Choosing a contractor is the first step in putting together an organizing campaign. Once you have selected the contractor, researching the contractor will be continual. It will also become more straightforward as you learn the type of projects the contractor prefers to do. So take that first step and start researching, because the more you do it, the easier it gets. ■