

Top tips for leaflets and campaign messages

1. Decide on your brief

What is it that you want to achieve with the leaflet or communication? Consider how this fits in with your overall campaign objective and make sure you're clear how this will help. Consider who your audience is, what message will resonate with them and what you want them to do afterwards.

2. Focus on one key message

Leaflets, emails and other union communications should focus on a single thing you want the reader to know. Giving too much information or lengthy background detail will reduce the chances of it being read or understood and the main point you are making could get lost.

3. Keep it simple – less is more!

Attention spans are incredibly short and most people at work don't have the time or inclination to do much more than scan the headline. Not everyone will be as interested or aware of the issue as us so simplify things to one key message with no jargon, acronyms or unnecessary text. Once you've cut out the unnecessary text, read it over again and cut it some more!

4. A strong call to action

The call to action describes what you want your audience to do (e.g. vote yes in your ballot, sign a petition, take strike action etc.). Make sure you are clear what this is yourself, make sure this is the first thing you say and then repeat it at least twice throughout the message.

5. Make it visual

Avoid cluttering your leaflet or message – clear, consistent presentation will make it easier to read and understand and show our colleagues and management that we're a serious and well organised presence in the workplace. Try to use UCU house-style and official logos (<http://btu.web.ucu.org.uk/toolkit/>) but feel free to be creative, unique and use interesting images and designs.

6. Keep it positive

Emphasise the fact that staff can make a difference (that's what unions are here for!). Focussing on the negative aspects of a situation without offering a solution or positive alternatives could mean less people follow your call to action or get involved in the campaign. Despite the variety of workplace problems and challenges facing education – it can and should be a great sector to work in and most UCU members care about their students and colleagues.

7. Don't reinvent the wheel

We're here to make your job easier (campaigns@ucu.org.uk) and our Build The Union blogsite provides activists and branch officers with template leaflets, template newsletters, downloadable posters and a range of advice and tips on organising and campaigning.