Blended Organizing
Using Organizing Pathways
Welcome: Learning Goals

1. **You will understand** the concept of an Organizing Pathway (aka Supporter’s Journey) and how it helps integrate digital and in-person organizing.

1. **You will learn** how applying one can help strengthen organizing campaigns.

1. **You will be positioned** to adapt an Organizing Pathway to your own organizing.
How do you define organizing?
Organizing...

1. **Built** on relationships

1. **Develops** the skills and expertise of members, via “leadership development”

1. **Helps** members contextualize their own experiences and builds a vision for taking action for a better future
Why “blended organizing”? 

**BLENDED ORGANIZING**

1. **Recognizes** the power inherent in personal interactions and relationships.
2. **Recognizes** that in-person work often uses digital tools.
3. **Puts the emphasis** on the organizing rather than the mode by which it is carried out.
The Problem of Scale
The Problem of Scale in Organizing

What comes to mind

When I say “the problem of scale”?

When you think of how your or other organizations have addressed it?
The Problem of Scale in Organizing

Two Elements for Success

What can we do to support more staff, volunteers, and/or leaders?

What should always be at the center of your organizing work, at the center of support and solutions?
The Problem of Scale in Organizing

Centering Your Members

In blended organizing an essential tool for ensuring that you center your members in your work is...

The Organizing Pathway
The Problem of Scale in Organizing

The Organizing Pathway

1. Where does it start?
2. What is the final stage?
3. What happens between the start and final stage?
The Problem of Scale in Organizing

The Organizing Pathway
United for Respect Edition

1. What does it include from what you know about how organizing works?
1. Why do you think UFR chose the final stage that they did?
1. What about each interim step helps get people to the final stage?
The next 15 slides are from a training deck prepared by Online 2 Offline Strategies (O2O Strategy) and presented to Lab members in December 2020. You can find O2O Strategy here: https://o2ostrategy.org/
Case Study: Toys R Us
Toys R Us was bought by three Wall Street firms in 2005 through a leveraged buyout. The company was five billion dollars in debt and filed for bankruptcy. All stores in the US were closed by June 30.
Lo’ and behold...

THE WORKERS WERE SELF-ORGANIZING

This Dead Giraffe Society Facebook group was key factor in connecting the workers to each other. It was small before all this hit all the news cycles and then in a matter of weeks grew to 20K workers 2/3rds of Toys r Us's workforce as more and more workers were looking for answers and ways to connect. For once the Facebook algorithm helped.

So UFR organizers joined the group and had some toys r us workers they had already found and were talking to join the group, asked those workers to become friends with moderators, and used this group as a way to identify who wanted to take action. UFR moved people from DGS into UFR groups. They didn’t want to disband or take over group, they just wanted to move people to take action.
Here's the Organizing Pathway again
This is a screenshot Facebook Messenger exchange between a UFR worker-volunteer and a Toys ‘R’ Us worker.

A key element of the exchange is to validate how the TRU employee is feeling, and then to build trust by signalling empathy with where she’s at.
A key ask in moving from reach out to connect was joining a UFR private Facebook Group. Folks who said yes were introduced to the existing members like this.

What are some of the things that Aneta is doing to help Amanda build connections with the existing members?

A. She’s asking people to welcome her
A. She’s making sure Amanda is tagged, so she’ll see the welcomes in her notifications.
A. She’s giving folks in the group a little background on Amanda.
Engagement is part connecting and part activation. You are feeling out the people who’ve come this far to see what more they are willing to do and/or what their attitude to the situation is.

What would be successfully moving a person from engagement to activation look like? What would be a reasonable thing to ask here?

It's crazy....all I really want is my freaking vacation time paid out. I EARNED that Last year

that's totally unfair. you know in california they have better laws that require employers to pay out vacation in event of mass layoffs. you're not so lucky in texas 😞

Yea. I wish we could do something to shake the system up, but I'm only one person ya know

yeah but if one person each gets one more person then we build a movement!

Very true....should we start be emailing or congressman or state representatives?
Remember Amanda?

As a result of her connection and engagement, she’s now been activated. Not only is she writing to her Congressman, she’s finding other TRU workers to bring into the group, AND she’s asking for people to pledge to take action.

Dear Congressman,

I’m writing you on behalf of the thousands of employees who have lost their jobs with Toys’R’us due to company bankruptcy. I want to obtain severance payouts and want to work with Congress to regulate leveraged buy outs and private equity. On the eve before filing bankruptcy, Toys’R’us executives received million dollar bonus checks in hand. This is not only unethical, but extremely irresponsible. The

Who pledges to follow suit in their state?!
Here are in-person actions that TRU employees took. This is some of them at hearings on the store closures.
This is TRU employees at the office that oversees the pension investments for Oregon Public Employees - they invested in private equity firms - and at the HQ of the private equity firm that owns TRU.
And... the work of showing up and protesting at stores, at hearings, at pension boards, at Congressional Hearings, at campaign events, had an impact.

Thousands of Toys R Us workers are getting severance, following months of protests

The owners of the defunct toy chain have agreed to give out $20 million to laid-off employees.
By Chavie Lieber | @ChavieLieber | Chavie.Lieber@Vox.com | Nov 21, 2018, 12:00pm EST

Elizabeth Warren's latest Wall Street enemy: private equity

The Massachusetts Democrat says she wants to stop “Wall Street looting.”
By Emily Stewart | Jul 19, 2018, 4:20pm EDT
THE NEW TOYS R US HAS COMMITTED TO

- prioritize hiring former Toys R Us employees
- commit to job standards close to UFR’s Principles for Quality Jobs
- establish a board of TRU employees to advise the CEO on workplace issues

VICTORY!!!

$22 M to TRU workers from private equity fund

Toys R Us workers are training Sears workers to fight for severance
So, how many organizers does it take...

4,700+

One-on-one conversations

72 total offline actions

26 meetings with electeds
28 direct actions (6 with staff, 22 without)
18 pension fund meetings

100%

A success!

A. Two.

UFR had other staff involved in part of the fight as well - the digital team, for example - but it was only two full-time organizers.
Case Study Debrief

Debrief Questions - Small Groups

1. How did UFR solve the scale problem?
2. How would you say each step contributed to a successful journey?
3. What combination of in-person and digital tools would you like to try, based on what you saw here?
Blended Organizing at UFR
Create a list-building opportunity (petition, survey, etc.) or revisit existing lists.

Use a digital platform that you know your membership, or potential membership uses to start your outreach and engagement. This is the relationship building phase.

Engage, activate, and develop leadership with online AND offline action that connect to a current campaign, or help develop a new one. This is the power building phase.
UFR Organizing Pathway

List building
- Petitions
- Surveys

Reach out
- Facebook Pages & Groups
- Text
- Call

Connect
- Facebook groups
- Meetings / Events
- 1 on 1s in person or over the phone

Engage
- Share stories
- Attend events
- Talk to media
- Spread the word

Activate
- Help with outreach
- Bring others into community
- Plan actions, lobby days, etc....

Lead
UFR Organizing Pathway

How do you build a list?

● Tabling
● Intake Sessions for Services
● Petitions
● Surveys
● Facebook Ads
● Voter Files
UFR Organizing Pathway

Reach out

This part is tricky

- Call through your contact list
- Email petitions signers
- Text your hot contacts
- Use FB messenger to engage active participants
UFR Organizing Pathway

Digital List Building

Here UFR is using Facebook Ads to find hand-raisers from Amazon warehouse workers.

They are looking for people concerned about “time off task”, a performance metric Amazon uses for its warehouse workers.

They try to start follow-ups with petition signers no more than 7 days after they took action.
UFR Organizing Pathway

Reaching out to hand raisers

UFR like to text them and ask a Q about their work or to the issue that they signed the petition around. You’ll have to play with the language to get strongest reactions.
UFR Organizing Pathway

Connect people to the organization and to each other

- Get them to join your digital community
- Get them to attend a Zoom or conf call
- 1:1 with an organizer
The person who brings a person to the UFR FB group also introduces them to the group via a welcome post. Name, location, and what they want to see changed at the company are all included in the intro along with a request to welcome them via the comments.