

New methods - Imatu recruitment

Between May 2008 and April 2009 the KwaZulu-Natal region of the Independent Municipal & Allied Trade Union, a Fedusa affiliate, increased its membership by 500. **Stanley Khosa** describes some of the strategies it has been using.

CONSTITUENCY MEETINGS

The eThekweni and KwaZulu-Natal regions of Imatu have about 100 shop stewards each and they hold two-hour constituency meetings every month. Stewards get up-to-date information for dissemination to members. Such meetings are imperative as members want to hear from elected representatives.

These meetings are monitored by stewards who have to return attendance registers.

INDUCTION MEETINGS

The employer generally holds induction meetings for new employees and unions get a slot to market their unions. The shop stewards at such meetings are equipped with Imatu gift packs for lucky draws to encourage employees to join Imatu.

Stewards also market the union by advertising victories in industrial relations and by informing prospective members of benefits such as loans and group schemes.

LOANS

Imatu providing loans is the most successful recruitment tool. The region alleviates the financial burden of its members by offering loans. This requires much patience from Imatu staff and the key is professionalism and a reasonably quick payout.

Imatu also provides members with reasonable rates for insurances made possible by negotiating with providers in the industry. The union gets sponsors for events such as the Imatu Women's event.

IMATU GEAR AND LUCKY DRAWS

Visibility is an important recruitment tool, so the region provides Imatu gear. These include t-shirts, caps, pens, tog-bags, pencil cases, cooler bags, lanyards, conference bags.

The union provides shop stewards annually with golf shirts which ensure visibility of Imatu at the workplace. It also gives members a gift annually. For 2008 it was a mug with 'Imatu' on it.

We give new members a choice of a t-shirt or a cap and a member who takes a loan gets a bag.

Every month, the region runs a lucky draw. The first 15 membership numbers drawn receive a cheque or gift.

John Malematja is one of Imatu's best recruiters. In one month he recruited 100 new members. SALB asked him how, "I get women members to recruit. Men don't trust other men but when a woman approaches them they are soon persuaded."

TOP RECRUITER PRIZE

For every new member, the recruiter receives a sponsor fee. This is not restricted to shop stewards, but is open also to general membership.

At the end of each year, the region gives prizes to the top three shop steward recruiters. The winners get floating trophies, a trophy to keep and top recruiter certificates.

This encourages stewards to recruit

vigorously in competition with each other.

IMATU EVENTS

Whilst the region attempts to celebrate events such as Worker's Day, the Imatu annual Women's event has grown hugely. The employer grants the release of women members to attend at the City Hall.

It is arranged by women shop stewards and the day is packed with entertainment, lucky draws, speeches and lunch. Each women gets a gift.

TRAINING

Training is granted to shop stewards to develop skills to become effective representatives at the workplace. A key part is getting stewards to observe whilst experienced representatives are in action.

For arbitrations, the region has an experienced team, who are trained to keep up with latest developments in industrial relations. Their representations must be of a standard that it influences members to cross over from the opposition.

ALLIED MEMBERS AND RESIGNATIONS

As the municipality outsources its services, the region must be active in recruiting these allied members.

Regions must investigate resignations and attempt to get members to rejoin.

We are developing a local eThekweni website to make the region more accessible via post, fax and emails. This also equips stewards to hold effective constituency meetings. LB

Stanley Khosa is deputy president of Imatu.