

Answering Difficult Questions:

Affirm, Answer, Redirect

Keep the focus on our message. When people come to you riled up over the spin from management, a good method for responding is “**Affirm, Answer, Redirect.**”

Example: I support the union effort, but I can't afford to be fired.

AFFIRM:

Let them know you're listening, you understand, and their feelings are valid.

Example: I hear you. I don't want to get fired either!

ANSWER:

Give a truthful, concise answer to the question. Don't be evasive. If there's a grain of truth to management's message, say that up front. If you don't know the answer, don't guess. Tell the person you'll find out and get back to them. Make sure you follow through.

Example: Even though it's illegal to fire people for organizing, employers do break the law if they think they can get away with it. That's why we're building supermajority support—so we can exercise our power and stand strong together.

REDIRECT:

Once you've answered the question, don't get bogged down in too much back-and-forth about it. Instead, be ready with a question that brings the conversation back to our message and points out what management is trying to distract them from.

Remind your coworkers of the issues that inspired them to organize in the first place. Ask whether that's changed. Steer the conversation back to the plan to win, and the next steps.

Example: How else are we going to push back against unequal treatment and huge pay disparities if we don't band together?

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Now you pick one!

Pick a message management has used, or might use, to undermine your campaign. If there's a concern that's already been getting traction with your coworkers, use that one. Write the concern the way a coworker might phrase it.

A Yeah But you might hear:

Now write what you would say to answer it, using the three steps:

AFFIRM:

ANSWER:

REDIRECT:
