

The Purpose of the Union Label Committee



Article 44 of the UAW Constitution outlines the mandatory standing committees for local unions. Union Label comes second – right after Constitution and Bylaws. **Article 54, Section 8** adds: “**All Local Unions shall have an appointed or elected Union Label Committee that must function.**”

Its prominence is not surprising given the sacrifices early union activists made just to have the right to bargain. In fact, the UAW Constitution also states that the policy of the UAW is to “insist that all parts, stampings, tools, dies, machinery, fixtures, accessories and supplies used in the manufacture of articles under the jurisdiction of this International Union, bear the Union label or Union stamp of the International Union, or any other bona fide labor union.” Article 54.

The union label is a mark or emblem which identifies that the good or service was made by workers who belong to a labor union. It means that the workers behind the product had a voice at work and collectively bargained to improve working conditions.

One of the most powerful and, at the same time, most neglected influences available to union men and women is their purchasing power. Today, buying union (let alone American-made) is a challenge, and it is the work of the Union Label Committee to help coworkers and our communities understand the benefits of buying union.

Tips for Building an Effective Union Label Committee:

- Showing is more persuasive than telling: some union label committees build simple displays with examples of union-made household goods that will look very familiar to consumers.
- Piggyback on shopping cycles: whether it's candy for Valentine's, Easter, Halloween, back-to-school, or Christmas shopping, there are certain times of the year when people pay attention to shopping. It's a good opportunity to start conversations about how we vote with our wallets every time we support union-made goods and services.
- Union-made applies to goods AND services: When you travel, do you think about whether the flight attendants on your red-eye are members of a union? How about the shuttle bus driver at the airport? Or the housekeepers in your hotel? Your children's teachers? Local police, firefighters? Supporting union jobs is about so much more than what you buy at the store.

•It's all connected: Elected officials play a big role in determining whether union-made goods and services prosper or fail. They are the ones who negotiate trade laws that unfairly pit workers against one another. They are the ones who weaken organizing laws, so employers have all the advantages when it comes to fighting unions. While promoting our goods out of pride of craft, we should also always have a conversation with others about how elections matter.

•What we can do right now:

•Ask management to buy or lease union-made equipment and office supplies and hire union companies and contractors to service the worksite.

•Use union vendors for catering picnics or parties.

•Book travel on union airlines and in union hotels.

•Work with other standing committees such as Education, Recreation, or CAP to raise awareness of union-made goods.

•Promote the “do buy list” and the “boycott list.” Goods and services on these lists change frequently, so keep everyone up to date with the latest.

Check-out other Made in America Product Websites:

- ✓ www.afcio.org
- ✓ www.unionlabel.org
- ✓ www.labor411.org

You may also like to order:

- ✓ **Running an Effective Union Label Committee – PUB #461**
- ✓ **Union Label Standing Committees Tri-fold – PUB #545** *(available in Spanish)*

Union Label Golden Rule...

Union members, teach your spouses. Union parents, teach your children. And don't forget to teach your friends and neighbors to recognize and demand union-label products and services.

