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NEW DAY AT UPS

NEWS FOR UPS WORKERS, BY UPS WORKERS!

MAY DAY SURVEY AND SUBJECTIVE DIFFICULTIES OF LABOR ORGANIZING

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For May Day, New Day at UPS polled UPS workers in order to gauge what the focus of our work should be between now and the 2028 contract.

The methodology was simple. A New Dayer stood outside the WORMA hub during the shift change (and when drivers returned from the road) and collected responses, which were limited to "strongly disagree", "disagree", "no opinion", "agree", "strongly agree". These were converted into numerical values indicating positive/negative attitudes towards some aspect of working at UPS, and averaged out. The unweighted average just takes all the responses and averages them out. The weighted average added up the years working at UPS, assigns a total share of experience to each responder, and weighs the answers accordingly. So, for instance, if the weighted average on a question is shown to be more negative than the unweighted average, that means UPSers generally dislike UPS more the longer they work there. On the other hand, if weighted is more positive, this means UPS generally mistreats new hires whose opinions soften up over the years. We collected 40 responses, representing nearly 500 years of UPS experience.

Here are the questions and the weighted and unweighted average responses. Note that an average -2 would mean everyone selected "strongly disagree" and an average of 2 would mean everyone selected strongly agree.

"My managers are competent, well-trained, hardworking, and follow the contract."
Unweighted Average: -0.33
Weighted Average: -0.60

"My union coworkers follow safe work methods and work at a reasonable pace."
Unweighted Average: 0.54
Weighted Average: 0.47

"My union representatives do a good, honest job representing me."
Unweighted Average: 0.54
Weighted Average: 0.35

"UPS is a good company that I enjoy working for. UPS treats its employees with respect."
Unweighted Average: -0.10
Weighted Average: -0.52

"UPS is a safe work environment."
Unweighted Average: -0.36
Weighted Average: -0.94

What does this tell us? It tells us a lot. Firstly, it tells us that the longer employees are at UPS, the worse their opinion overall. This makes sense, since newer UPSers will have accumulated fewer grievances with the company. The two aspects of the job that were generally viewed favorably—coworkers and union representation—were viewed less favorably with more experience. Additionally, more experienced employees felt very strongly about safety issues, management quality, and corporate culture, with the weighted averages for these issues being much more critical. The survey concretely shows the degree to which UPSers are aware of issues at UPS, and the rate at which they become aware of them, which is very slowly over long periods of time. This is the natural course of the development of trade union consciousness, at UPS or any other company.

Often, new hourlies will see a problem manager or behavior and ask, how are they able to get away with this? The answer is in the averages. All that is needed is for enough people to be complacent about an issue, and the entire group is neutralized. Even if a lot of people demand a solution to the issue, this does not guarantee they will use the correct methods to solve it. (Many wrongly think these issues can be solved via the Teamsters, UPS' Ethics Hotline, or appealing to government bodies like OSHA.) This is why the struggle for unity in the labor movement is so important to handle correctly.

The one weakness in this survey is that there was no question concerning the performance of the government and the state of the logistics industry outside of UPS. No doubt many UPSers feel strongly about OSHA, the Departments of Labor and Transportation, and the top-level leaders in Congress and the White House. It would be very useful for our organizing to understand who UPSers think deserves the blame for our grievances.

Subjective Difficulties in Labor Generally and UPS Specifically

By the subjective factor, we mean how people perceive themselves and their environment.

In the labor movement generally, the subjective factor is a massive obstacle for any organizing campaign. The very first obstacle most organizing campaigns crash into is a majority of workers not knowing what a union is or why they need one. As the campaign goes on, people get disillusioned and simply quit and go work somewhere else, which means that experience and knowledge is effectively thrown away. People feel strongly about one issue but pursue an individual resolution instead of organizing. People feel apathetic, or they don't trust their coworkers to have their back in a serious labor struggle. And so on.

This is where the guiding role of ideology becomes operative. Everyone applies their own logic to make sense of the world, whether they are aware of it or not. Ideology is what distinguishes between correctly comprehending the cause of some phenomenon and delusional thinking. It can blind one to the facts or it can reveal them. For example, one UPSer blamed UPS' current issues on the fact that UPS has a female CEO, and in his words, "Women can't lead because they think too emotionally." Of course, not only is this empirically wrong (UPS management is 70% men, and the board of directors is majority men—in any case Carol Tome only does what the shareholders and other execs ask her to) but it is logically fallacious as well. This idea hinges on the obviously wrong belief that UPS had no problems before 2020 when Carol was made CEO, at which point she immediately sabotaged the company while all the high-ranking men in the company did nothing. This person's ideology—misogyny--blinded him to the facts and turned a potential organizer into an actual wrecker.

Another example revealed by the survey, management and safety are clearly perceived as problems by the UPSers. But obviously, not many UPSers understand how the Teamsters block movement on these issues. EPA and OSHA rules are systematically violated at UPS and nobody in the bargaining unit gets punished for this even though everyone knows it's happening. How many people know that UPS was one of the companies with the most layoffs last year? [See "Layoffs 2025: Which companies are laying off employees by thousands? See full list". From storyboard18.com] (Teamster strong!) Or that article 6 of the national master agreement requires new technology that affects hours be the subject of bargaining with the union or otherwise risk economic recourse, i.e. striking? And that the union has therefore conceded to tens of thousands of layoffs? Or that Sean O'Brien received almost $450k in workers' dues last year in disbursements?

This is why the struggle for the line of New Labor is so important right now. It is not enough to "get organized"—workers must organize CORRECTLY, or else they will gain nothing but more broken promises, pay cuts, and layoffs. Workers' real wages are plummeting as prices increase, and organizing is continually derailed by all sorts of backwards ideas and fraudulent state union campaigns. The masses will only break out of the cycle of sellout union contracts, broken electoral promises, and individualist "solutions" to their problems once they become conscious of their collective power in the production process and organize on that basis.

In Chicago, the location of the Haymarket Square Massacre in 1886, workers commemorating May Day march under the banner of the New Labor Organizing Committee.

NEW DAY AT UPS

New Day is a newsletter produced by UPS workers to rally our coworkers against UPS corporate and their agents in the Teamsters. New Day Committees are for gathering information and disseminating the basic outlook of the revolutionary UPS workers to the rank and file in the operation, as well as a base that our coworkers can use as a launchpad for campaigns around more immediate issues. Our long-term goal is the creation of a revolutionary industrial logistics union.