DRIVE TO 325 NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

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| *Why New Employee Orientations***New Employee Orientations (NEOs) are our best method for recruiting new members.** *NEOs are where most new members come from.* Formal analysis of AFGE’s growth have revealed that NEOs could account for over 80% of our new members each month. It is the most effective recruitment grounds for existing bargaining units. Because we are not present at all NEOs held, we have ample opportunity to improve our recruitment efforts.*NEOs are where new employees learn what it means to be union members.* NEOs are also our best opportunity to frame the Union for bargaining unit employees. As folks are introduced to the job and the Union, they are learning about AFGE (and often times, unions in general) with a fresh perspective. NEOs are a great chance to explain AFGE and what it means to be a Union member. We can explain that being a union member is about actively having a voice and a say in the workplace- it is active and empowering. *State of New Employee Orientations*There is huge variation in our penetration into NEOs. In some locals, we are at every NEO and presenting and signing up new members. Some locals are present at some NEOs, but not all. At some locals, we are present at none. Some locals are forced to attend virtual NEOs, and struggle to sign up members because of the structure. At others still, we either present with, or sometimes through, external benefit providers who explain the advantages of Union membership, including access to the benefit vendor’s products. Because of this mix, there is a huge opportunity for improving our saturation into NEOs. The Drive to 325 NEO Initiative aims to maximize the benefits of NEOs.DRIVE TO 325 NEO Initiative Goals:* **Appear at every NEO**
* **Maximize the effectiveness of our recruiting to get the most members**
* **Maximize the effectiveness of our recruiting to best explain the meaning of membership**
* **Develop Locals to master the tools and methods of effective NEO recruitment and organizing**
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The Key to the Drive to 325 NEO: *I AM AFGE*

When we explain what joining the Union means, we often talk in terms of the services and benefits we provide to the membership. We provide excellent services and benefits, and they are compelling. When we introduce our Union as a provider of services and benefits, however, we *other* the Union from its members. We make the Union a “third party” from the member and the employer and propose to the members that they are not expected to participate in their Union to have a voice and be empowered. They are expected to pay in return for receiving a service. In so doing, we fail to empower our members. We also lay groundwork which will make it harder to engage members in the future, explaining that they are not the Union and should not expect to be involved.

Perhaps most dangerously -- this explanation of Union membership suggests that we don’t need them to be members. The Union is a third party that provides services and benefits. If I don’t need those services or benefits, I can choose not to join (or not join now) and both I and the Union will be fine. I don’t need AFGE, and AFGE doesn’t need me.

I AM AFGE remedies that problem. Who is AFGE? You are. It is personal, indivisible, and necessary. This is a directly individual- you in the NEO are the Union. We need you. Others in this NEO, in your workplace cannot do this without you. You are this Union, and your membership and participation is necessary. As we have message drift or diffusion as hundreds of locals explain the Union, a simple, singular message that the individual member is the Union will lend cohesion.

In marketing, there is a device called “An XYZ statement.” the X is what we do, the Y is the customer we do it for, and the Z is the benefit to the customer. I AM AFGE inverts the XYZ statement from being a transactional relationship, where AFGE and the member would be separate entities. They are one and the same. There is no difference in identity or interest. I AM AFGE.

More folks join AFGE and more folks stay AFGE when THEY ARE AFGE.

*The Drive to 325 NEO PowerPacks*

* **NEO Scripts**
* **NEO Video Links**
* **NEO flyers**
* **NEO New Member Handouts**
* **I AM AFGE NEO Banners (Available for Order)**
* **I AM AFGE NEO t-shirts for new members (Available for Order)**