

GENERAL UNION

INDIVIDUAL ORGANISING GUIDE

0 BEFORE WE START - YOUR RIGHT TO ORGANISE

- Union rights are constitutionally protected under Article 28 and the Trade Union Law
- Employers must engage in collective bargaining, regardless of union size
- Workers can distribute union materials as upheld by the Supreme Court, as long as it doesn't interfere with work
- If told to stop, comply and inform the union - avoid direct confrontations with management

CAN I BE FIRED?

- No, dismissal for union activity is illegal under Japanese law
- However, in rare cases, some activists have been fired for organising
- The union fights back using negotiations, labour commissions, courts, and other dispute measures
- We don't back down when members are targeted, but we also don't dwell on this possibility

Remember, while Japan offers robust legal protections, organising requires care and strategy. Knowing your rights is the foundation for effective action.

1 BUILDING CONNECTIONS & STARTING CONVERSATIONS

Identifying Potential Partners

- Seek colleagues who raise constructive concerns and want positive change
- Avoid chronic complainers; they can hinder organizing efforts
- Notice respected, solution-oriented colleagues who provide thoughtful feedback

Starting Natural Conversations

- Begin with casual topics like work challenges or shared experiences
- Ask open-ended questions to understand their perspectives
- Share your own thoughts to build rapport and trust
- Listen actively and show genuine interest

Choosing the Right Time and Place

- Choose relaxed settings like breaks or after work
- Be mindful of privacy and potential eavesdroppers
- Suggest moving conversations to private settings if needed

Communicating Through Personal Channels

- Exchange personal contact details to move discussions outside work
- Use secure, private messaging or email to avoid company monitoring
- Respect their communication preferences
- Set up face-to-face meetings to build stronger connections

Building Trust Over Time

- Be consistent, reliable, and follow through on your interactions
- Show empathy and support for their concerns
- Share relevant resources or experiences to establish credibility
- Invite them to informal union gatherings to build camaraderie

Building genuine connections takes time and patience. Focus on creating a foundation of trust and shared purpose that can lead to deeper discussions about workplace issues and the union's role in creating positive change.

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2 HAVING EFFECTIVE UNION COMMUNICATIONS

Listen First

Give colleagues space to share their workplace concerns and observe which issues truly matter to them - your role is to understand, not to jump in with solutions.

Build Genuine Connections

Share your own relevant workplace experiences to establish trust, showing you understand their situation through personal examples rather than abstract ideas.

Guide the Discussion

Help colleagues see how their individual concerns connect to broader workplace issues that can be addressed through collective action.

Address Questions Naturally

Handle concerns about joining as they arise in conversation, keeping responses brief and focused on facts rather than defensive explanations.

Maintain Contact

Follow up thoughtfully after initial conversations while respecting boundaries - organizing is about building relationships, not pressuring people.

3 UNDERSTANDING YOUR TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Structure

Learn how the union works, from workplace branches to the executive committee - detailed information available in the Giant FAQ of Unions in Japan and on our website.

Working Together

Understand how the union assists members through collective bargaining, individual support, and branch activities - not services, but collective action.

Getting Started

Know the basics about joining, consultations, and getting involved with your branch - find step-by-step guides on generalunion.org.

Staying Connected

Learn how to keep up with union activities through branch meetings, our monthly e-news, and digital platforms.

The emphasis is on directing you to authoritative sources. The best answer to a question you don't know the answer to it, "I don't know," but you can't answer every question that way.

Want to know more? Use the union's website at www.generalunion.org, and our Giant FAQ. These sources have answers to many of things prospective members will ask about - from how workplace branches operate to what happens in collective bargaining, from your rights as a union member to how disputes get resolved, from dues structures to strike procedures. Whatever your question, you'll probably find the answer there.

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The **GIANT**
UNIONS IN JAPAN
FAQ