

PSA LINK

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PSA SHOP STEWARD NEWSLETTER

Importance of ORGANISING in the workplace

One of the most important characteristics to have as a shop steward is the ability to organise. A shop steward's duty is to build and maintain strong discipline and a progressive and informed membership at the workplace.

The strength of a trade union lies in the combination of the service model and organising model of building a union. The **service model** focuses on satisfying membership by resolving their grievances and securing their benefits through direct grassroots-based pressure, campaigns and collective bargaining. The **organising model** focuses on building confidence, strong networks and leaders in the workplace and championing strong campaigns at the workplace and broader society to lobby, advocate and push for the rights of workers and the public.

There is a direct relationship between service and organising. A union with a strong membership base and leadership at the workplace will have enough intellectual, human, financial and material resources to service its members adequately. To have a strong voice at the workplace, in collective bargaining councils and in mass campaigns, require large number of members, all acquired through organising.

Every member and leader of the PSA should know the information and facts about the PSA that they can use to attract and recruit workers to the Union.

The most important aspect is the principles, values and practices of the Union or its unique organisational culture and processes that set it apart from other unions.

Related to this, is the status of the Union and the role it is playing in society and how it positions itself politically. These are critical factors that have an impact on the extent to which the Union can service its members and protect the rights of workers and broader society diligently.

The strengths of the PSA (competitive advantage and selling point) that organisers should know and use, include:

- The PSA is a registered trade union at the forefront of labour developments
- The PSA is the largest, politically non-affiliated, fully representative union in the Public Service
- The PSA has almost 100 years of service to members and currently represents more than 240 000 workers in the public sector
- The PSA's affiliation to Fedusa provides access to Nedlac, and international exposure to institutions such as the ILO. This affiliation means that the interests of members as workers and citizens will be pursued at the highest level and allows the PSA to be part of broader socio-economic issues.

Shop stewards must be able to relate to the objectives of the PSA as derived from its *Statute* and MOI. PSA members should also be able to outline and explain to prospective members the benefits of being a PSA member - this starts with shop stewards as leaders in the workplace.

As a shop steward, you should be able to explain the overall organisational culture of the PSA as informed and shaped by the Union's values of *Loyalty, Transparency, Respect, Integrity, Consistency, and Service Excellence.*

