



**Our Airline's Executives Said
We Didn't Need
the Association of
Flight Attendants-CWA**

**What Will
Yours?
Say???**

Flight attendants at your airline are organizing with the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) to make your jobs better and more secure. We want you to succeed. That's why flight attendants like us, who have already joined AFA, want you to know what to expect from your airline executives during your campaign.

Not every airline management uses all the same tricks and tactics to prevent us from exercising our legal right to join AFA, but you need to know — ahead of time — that there is a pattern or script that most follow. Most will do some or all of the following:

- Make empty promises or threats.
- Tell lies about AFA.
- Spread rumors to discourage or divide you and your flying partners.
- Refuse to have open, honest debate on the issues that prompted you to seek AFA representation.

The first thing our executives did was try to confuse us by claiming that AFA is an “outside” organization that will erect a barrier between us and our airline, or that AFA will make all of the decisions about our job for us. This is false. Our executives didn't want us to organize together in AFA because with professional representation we got collective bargaining rights. Ask yourself why your executives would say something like that. It's because organizing a union means that your executives would have to negotiate with you and your coworkers over the terms of your pay, benefits and working conditions. They prefer to keep for themselves that control and the ability to set your pay, benefits, etc.

This is why executives portray AFA as an outside party — they want you and your fellow flight attendants to forget that when you join AFA, you become the union and you will have rights that you don't have today.

AFA is made up of 55,000 flight attendants across the U.S. from airlines just like yours. AFA is assisting with this effort because many of your flying partners have come to us and said they want a professional voice on the job.

When you join AFA, the decisions you and your peers make are done at the carrier level through democratic voting. You elect your leaders (flight attendant members just like us), you vote on your contracts and you determine the priorities for your career. In short, AFA representation will be what you and your coworkers want it to be. As members of AFA, we do have professional negotiators, organizers, attorneys and staff to provide support, advice, and assistance — but the decisions about running your AFA union and negotiating your first contract with management will be made by you and fellow flight attendants at your airline. And, when you win your first contract, it will only take effect if a majority of the flight attendants at your airline vote to ratify it. So, when your executives claim that AFA is some “outside” entity, they are in reality attacking you — implying that you and your coworkers are not capable of making your own decisions, representing yourselves, or speaking up for your interests. When was the last time management let you vote on one of their decisions?

Our executives made many of the same silly arguments when we organized, but we remained focused on our goal and we were successful in joining AFA and obtaining bargaining rights. Organizing is tough, but it's the only legal way that we, as flight attendants, can get a real voice on the job, fair treatment, secure benefits, and job security. Organizing with AFA paid off for us. We know it will for you.

Use this brochure to anticipate or keep track of the tactics that your airline executives use against you. Following it helped us get AFA representation. We hope it is useful for you as well.

A Checklist: What Your Airline Executives Might Do

✓ HIRE A UNION-BUSTING CONSULTING FIRM.

Lawyers and labor-management ‘consulting’ firms make millions advising airline executives on ways to keep us from exercising our legal right to form unions. Most spend as much as \$2,000-\$3,000 per flight attendant to stop us from organizing. Most airline executives hire consultants to run their anti-union campaign. They also send supervisors to union-busting seminars and during campaigns they follow scripts prepared by consultants. They call it “union avoidance.” Is your airline following a consultant's anti-union script? If so, ask yourself why your employer hasn't responded to you and your coworkers' needs or invested the same amount of time and money into workplace improvements for flight attendants? They view it as a long-term investment; thousands spent now will save them many times that much in the future by avoiding union-negotiated increases in wages, benefits and workrules. And, in their view, “union avoidance” means avoiding the loss of unilateral control when they have to negotiate with you and obey a contract. For airline executives, maintaining control is priceless.

✓ PRESSURE SUPERVISORS TO PRESSURE YOU.

Airline executives usually order supervisors to take the lead in campaigns against flight attendants seeking AFA representation. Typically, supervisors are told to hold “one-on-one” meetings with individual flight attendants. Executives often tell supervisors that they will lose their jobs if employees vote in a union. They also tell supervisors that a legal contract would prevent them from playing favorites or criticizing workers. Remember, supervisors generally don't have unions, so they can be forced into doing things that they don't believe in to keep their jobs — even supervisors we may like.

✓ ENCOURAGE A FEW FLIGHT ATTENDANTS TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOU.

In many campaigns, “Vote-No” or “No-Union” committees of unnamed flight attendants crop up. The material they circulate seems to present the airline executives' perspective. Such committees generally adopt a “homemade” style for leaflets or websites so it won't look as if the employer is producing or paying for their material (which is against the law). Literature from employee “Vote-No” or “No-Union” committees almost never identifies workers who make up the committee. By contrast, the most successful AFA literature identifies (in pictures, by name or signatures) the flight attendants who support AFA.

Rarely does anyone find out who paid for the committee's expenses, or who feeds them the ideas, rumors, and misinformation they circulate. What do you suppose they are promised for doing their executives' dirty work? Frequently, members of “employee” anti-union committees are recruited from among workers who are friends or relatives of someone in management or are politically opposed to unions.

✓ SEND LETTERS OR MAKE A ‘MOVIE’

After ignoring flight attendants' concerns for a long time, your executives may take a sudden interest in you by sending you letters. They may even go so far as to send you a slick ‘movie’ video. The video is carefully scripted by their anti-union firms and includes almost all of the tactics described in this flyer. These tactics are designed to mislead or divide your committee and their fellow flight attendants before AFA supporters have a chance to respond.

✓ HOLD MEETINGS TO SWEET-TALK (OR BROWBEAT) YOU.

You may be required to spend some time at work in mandatory captive-audience

meetings where supervisors make empty promises or try to scare you. Executives do not use the meetings to tell you that they are worried about you joining AFA because they will have to treat you better; instead, they use the meetings to claim that they are worried about “what will happen to you.” (You may wonder why they suddenly care so much about you now.) They will claim that bad things will happen if you join AFA — that you'll lose benefits or be “forced out” on strike. You can expect to see these tactics expand to your crew lounge and your In-flight sign-in area as your campaign grows.

If you hear about an upcoming captive-audience meeting, do some research in advance. If you ask good questions your employer will probably not give straight answers — and they may even stop allowing questions. AFA supporters are often kept out of these meetings so they won't be faced with questions they can't answer, or that will embarrass company executives.

✓ DENY YOUR RIGHTS THROUGH DELAY AND VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW.

Union busters always advise airline executives to delay every step of the way when flight attendants have organized together to join AFA. By finding loopholes in the law, they can delay your union election or, later, prolong your contract negotiations after you vote in a union.

Employers often deliberately violate the law (i.e., telling lies about the union or your rights, or that the company will be forced to close if you vote in a union) even though they realize that they might later be forced to post a notice stating that they violated the law and your rights. Since executives do everything they can to reduce union support at your workplace, any penalties are viewed as an acceptable and necessary risk, or simply “the cost of doing business.”

The best way to defeat these illegal tactics during your campaign to get union representation is to expect them, anticipate them, and to let management know that such tactics will only make you more determined to get union representation.

AFA organizers and lawyers will assist you in fighting any delays or illegal actions. Our union has made a commitment to help you and will stick by you.

✓ SPRING A LAST-MINUTE SURPRISE ON YOU.

Just before flight attendants are scheduled to vote in the AFA representation election, union-busters often urge airline executives to spring a special event, or issue an unfounded attack because it will be too late for AFA supporters to respond. (These surprise actions might be announced by the “No-Union” committee.) These surprises might be:

- A captive-audience meeting featuring a speech by an executive the airline flies in from corporate headquarters.
- An unfounded charge about AFA or its supporters.
- A rumor about a possible raise or base closure.
- A flyer or letter with distorted “facts” about a flight attendant contract, strike or layoff at another airline.

Expect a last-minute surprise aimed at keeping you from making a free choice — then it won't work because it won't be a surprise after all.

If your airline executives use any of these tactics, check with your AFA flight attendant organizing committee and your AFA professional organizers. Use the checklist inside to keep track of such efforts to mislead or misinform you during the campaign.

Executives Who Use These Tactics to Stop Flight Attendants from Organizing

• Hold mandatory meetings	92%
• Conduct “one-on-ones” with flight attendants	78%
• Hire “labor” consultants	75%
• Distribute anti-AFA literature	75%
• Mail out anti-AFA letters	70%
• Threaten to close a base or the airline	51%
• Promise improvements	48%
• Make bribes; use special favors	34%
• Assist “anti-union committees”	31%
• Employers who use 5 or more tactics	62%

Based on Cornell University, 2000 study.

When You Organize

Here's What Your Executives Might Say ...

Here's What Your Executives Won't Say ...

Union Dues

"YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY AFA UNION DUES."

Your executives may do things like:

- Giving you two checks on payday (one being a phony check with union dues taken out).
- Passing out a mock check that shows how much dues you will pay as a group each year.
- Bringing in a basket of groceries with a label: "What you could buy with one year's dues."

Remember, union dues are not collected until you get your first union contract. And, you get to vote on that contract so you'll decide then whether it's worth the cost of union dues or not.

"AFA IS ONLY INTERESTED IN YOU FOR YOUR MONEY."

Your executives may give you "documents" or newspaper clippings which are supposed to show that AFA needs your dues money to survive because it is losing members.

"AFA WILL JUST SPEND YOUR MONEY ON CORRUPT SCHEMES AND BIG SALARIES FOR UNION OFFICIALS."

Your executives may distribute reports which show union salaries and expenses. You may also be shown clippings about charges of corruption in other unions.

"AFA CAN RAISE YOUR DUES OR CHARGE YOU OTHER ASSESSMENTS WHENEVER IT FEELS LIKE IT."

Your executives may try to make you think you will be charged with additional fees once you get a union. Any such increases or fees must be approved by the membership, or by the annual convention of AFA leaders from all AFA carriers, including your own representatives.

YOU CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO HAVE AFA.

The improvements in pay and benefits which we gained in our very first AFA contract more than offset the dues we paid — plus we got the improved treatment and respect that comes with the many services AFA provides. As the saying goes, 'You get what you pay for.' No organization can be effective without money to pay for services and supplies. Remember: You will not begin to pay any AFA dues until you vote to approve your first contract.

AFA IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND IS FINANCIALLY STRONG — IT EXISTS ONLY TO SERVE US, THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT MEMBERS.

AFA membership has grown recently and these statements are simply untrue. And, again, you pay no dues until you ratify a first contract. We want to help other flight attendants organize because every time a group of new flight attendants joins AFA and wins a new union contract, it puts added pressure on all airline executives to improve pay and working conditions.

AFA MEMBERS DECIDE HOW WE SPEND OUR DUES.

All decisions about AFA's budget — including salaries for our elected union officers and professional staff who serve us — are made by flight attendants. AFA's financial reports are provided every year to the federal government which can bring charges if union money is being misused. In more than 60 years since AFA was founded, it has never been accused by the government of misuse of funds.

AFA DUES ARE SET ONLY BY US, AFA MEMBERS WHO WE ELECT AS MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

AFA dues have not changed in many years and are set at \$39.00 per month per flight attendant.

Strikes

"AFA LOVE STRIKES."

Your executives may talk as though the whole purpose of AFA is to call strikes.

"AFA CAN FORCE YOU TO STRIKE."

Your executives may suggest that, soon after you vote for AFA representation, you will be forced out on strike whether you like it or not — either for your own contract or to support other workers.

"IF YOU STRIKE, AFA WILL NOT SUPPORT YOU."

Your executives may scare you about strikes by asking how you and your family could survive during a strike without your income

WE JOINED AFA TO IMPROVE OUR JOBS — NOT TO STRIKE.

In over 99 percent of cases, AFA has succeeded in negotiating new contracts without a strike.

ONLY AFA MEMBERS CAN DECIDE WHETHER WE WANT TO STRIKE.

In AFA, a strike can only be called by a majority of flight attendants who would be directly involved, and only after a majority of the affected members vote to support a strike in a secret-ballot election.

AFA MEMBERS DECIDE WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT WE NEED IN OUR STRIKE PLAN.

In the few situations where a strike becomes necessary, AFA members set up a local CHAOS™ strike fund to support flight attendants who strike.

Your Rights

"AFA WILL FINE YOU FOR MISBEHAVIOR."

Your executives may tell you that you can be fined by AFA if you don't attend union meetings or don't vote for political candidates endorsed by the union.

"WHEN YOU SIGN A CARD FOR AFA, YOU SIGN YOUR LIFE AWAY."

Your executives may hint that you will start getting orders from "union bosses" if you sign a union authorization card.

"AFA WON'T LET YOU TAKE A PROBLEM DIRECTLY TO MANAGEMENT."

Your executives may claim that, under AFA contracts, workers must let "outsiders" from the union speak for them.

YOU WILL NOT BE TOLD WHAT TO DO BY AFA.

If you want a strong union to represent you, you'll probably decide to participate in AFA activities — but that is completely up to you. No one can force you to come to an AFA meeting or vote for certain candidates.

SIGNING AN AFA CARD SIMPLY MEANS YOU WANT A UNION.

All decisions at AFA are made democratically. There are no "union bosses." We, the flight attendant members, run our union.

AFA WILL HELP YOU TALK TO MANAGEMENT ONLY IF YOU ASK FOR HELP.

In AFA, you will elect fellow flight attendants to lead your local executive council (LEC) at each of your bases — flight attendants who are trained to represent you on the job. If you decide that you can get results from your supervisor without union representation, that is fine. But if you can't, we will have AFA to turn to.



"Uh-oh, another management funded picnic ... our AFA organizing campaign must be getting stronger."

Here's What Your Executives Might Say ...

Here's What Your Executives Won't Say ...

Threats

- "WE WON'T EVER SIGN A CONTRACT EVEN IF YOU VOTE FOR AFA."**
Since it is illegal for the employer to say this directly, you may be told this instead: Remember, we don't have to agree to what you want in your union contract. Your executives may circulate news clippings about another group of workers who voted for AFA and didn't immediately get a contract.
- "YOU WILL LOSE THE WAGES AND BENEFITS YOU ALREADY HAVE."**
One common tactic is to distribute a leaflet with two columns – one showing a list of what you have now; the other showing a huge question mark and the question: "What will you get with AFA." Another tactic is to show AFA contracts at other airlines with pay levels or other provisions that are not as good as what you have now. This is without telling you what those workers had before they organized AFA at their airline or what improvements they won. Your executives may also threaten that if you join AFA their 'hands are tied' and they cannot grant you raises, or that you will have to 'start from scratch' in negotiations.
- "WE WILL SHUT DOWN COMPLETELY."**
Some executives even go so far as parking empty moving vans near their corporate headquarters just before the election. You're supposed to assume that the vans will be used if you vote union.
- "AFA SUPPORTERS WILL LOSE THEIR JOBS."**
Your executives may hint that it plans to take some action against those who support AFA representation even though that would be illegal.
- "WE WON'T BE ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY IF YOU VOTE IN AFA, WE WILL BE LESS FLEXIBLE."**
Your executives may warn that if you join AFA, there will be new rules and reduced flexibility, say, in scheduling and in other areas. They may even make some changes and try to blame them on the union.

THEY ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO NEGOTIATE WITH YOU ONCE YOU GAIN AFA REPRESENTATION.

Nearly every airlines' management team talks tough before flight attendants organize so their employees won't vote AFA. But it is in their interest to keep employees satisfied and keep the work flowing. So, if you present your employer with reasonable contract proposals, a settlement is usually possible; AFA has always won a first agreement. But think about this: If your airline executives really believe they don't have to agree to an AFA contract, then why are they fighting so hard to keep you from joining AFA?

AFA MEMBERS ALL OVER THE U.S. GET BETTER AND MORE BENEFITS, NOT WORSE.

You will decide among yourselves what are acceptable benefits and working conditions. No one from the "outside" will "trade away" any benefits you want to keep. Would you vote for a contract with worse benefits and working conditions? What you gain in your contract will depend on what you have to start with and how actively you and your co-workers mobilize together to support your negotiators. If AFA really leads to worse benefits, why don't airline executives want to get the union in now so they can start saving money?

SHUTTING DOWN OPERATIONS TO AVOID A UNION IS AGAINST THE LAW AND WOULDN'T MAKE ECONOMIC SENSE.

Your executives won't directly make the threat of a shutdown because they know that they cannot legally follow through. Besides, a shutdown would mean financial losses.

IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO PUNISH ANYONE FOR SUPPORTING AFA.

This is why executives don't usually spell out such threats. But if you are concerned you should know AFA will defend the rights of any flight attendant who is punished for union activity.

AFA AND MANAGEMENT WILL GET ALONG FINE — IF MANAGEMENT IS WILLING.

When you negotiate a contract with your airline management, you can agree to as much flexibility in scheduling — or in any other working conditions — as you want. At many AFA carriers, management has great relations with their AFA-represented flight attendants.

Promises

- "PLEASE GIVE US ANOTHER CHANCE — WE'LL MAKE THINGS BETTER."**
Before the AFA election, your executives may say that because you have shown that you are dissatisfied, it will be able to work out all of the problems so there will be no need to vote for AFA.
- "WE'LL SET UP PROCEDURES FOR HEARING YOUR COMPLAINTS."**
These may include:
 - A new or improved "open door" policy or a worker "participation" scheme so you can talk to management when you have a suggestion or complaint.
 - A "grievance procedure" that is set up much like the system established by union contracts — except executives have the final say and there is no binding arbitration clause as there is in AFA contracts.
- "WE'LL CHANGE A FEW THINGS THAT ARE BOTHERING YOU."**
Your executives may transfer one unpopular supervisor or make changes in certain working conditions that have caused a lot of dissatisfaction.

GETTING AFA REPRESENTATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE CONDITIONS IMPROVE — AND STAY THAT WAY.

If your company is really willing to change, it can agree to go along with your bargaining demands during contract negotiations. When flight attendants have heeded executives' promises and pleas "to give us another chance" they find out the hard way that most if not all of the their promises are forgotten soon after workers decide against representation. This was illustrated at Delta Air Lines recently, when after rejecting AFA representation, Delta flight attendants took the deepest pay and work rule cuts in the industry.

UNLESS YOU HAVE AFA, YOUR EXECUTIVES WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD.

New procedures for hearing complaints may sound good at first, but without AFA your employer can simply ignore your ideas. AFA contracts provide for the mandatory arbitration of disputes, so that if you and the employer cannot agree on a resolution, the problem is resolved by an impartial third party chosen by both AFA and management. If your executives are so interested in what you have to say, why then are they so opposed to your getting a stronger voice through AFA?

IF YOU CAN GET SUCH CHANGES BY TALKING ABOUT AFA, IMAGINE WHAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ONCE YOU GET AFA REPRESENTATION.

The experience of AFA members shows that you must continue to mobilize together to keep what you've gained through negotiations, and to get action the next time you have a problem.

As you can see from our checklist, joining AFA and obtaining collective bargaining rights won't be easy. It will take patience, hard work, and commitment from your flight attendant organizing committee to overcome your airline executives' likely opposition. In addition, the gains we make as AFA members don't come overnight — progress comes in steps and we keep building upon what we have gained. As an AFA member, you have the support of 55,000 flight attendants as well as 700,000 CWA workers just like you. We made organizing pay off for us. You can too!