



THE TIMES 100

Unison summary

Introduction

Issues at work include things like health and safety, working conditions and fair treatment. In a workplace, it is not easy for every individual employee to discuss issues with management. This is why workers may need representation. A trade union provides representation, along with help and support. The largest public services trade union in Britain is UNISON, with over 1.3 million members. Public services include local authorities, hospitals, schools and colleges. UNISON also represents workers in utility companies that provide electricity, water and gas. UNISON aims to help improve the work environment and, at the same time, tackle climate change. One current challenge is to change the way in which the businesses they work affect the environment. To do this it is focusing on two approaches to make workplaces greener. It has talked to both government and employers to raise the issue.

Aims and objectives

UNISON has set targets for its members to help them combat climate change. It has developed ways to reduce energy use, reduce waste and recycle more. Unison wants its green targets to fit in with its overall aims. One such aim is to support UNISON members to broaden the workplace agenda to include environmental issues, with particular focus on tackling climate change. It has put together a set of key objectives to reach these aims. By getting involved in this way, UNISON has demonstrated that it is a green organisation. This has given it better relations with employers, and therefore put it in a better position to drive change. To help it to reach each target, UNISON has set up appropriate strategies and tactics.

Strategy and tactics

UNISON has developed a long-term strategy - or collection of plans. This involves both the government and its own members. Most of UNISON's members work in the public sector, a large part of the UK economy and one that has a big impact on the environment. UNISON has shown the government how its plans could reduce emissions. UNISON has also developed shorter-term activities called tactics to carry out its strategies. These include training materials, courses and events aimed at promoting the need for environmental awareness in the workplace.

SMART targets

It is important for targets to be SMART. This means they are

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-related.

This helps UNISON to measure if it achieves its targets. To these factors, UNISON has added understandable and challenging. The targets relate to three key areas:

- reducing UNISON's own carbon footprint - by changing its power provider, increasing recycling and switching officials cars to hybrid vehicles
- making workplaces more environmentally friendly
- running campaigns focused on environmental issues to increase awareness.

Stakeholders

UNISON's stakeholders include its members, the government, the managers of the businesses its members work in and the public. UNISON wants to communicate its message about the environment clearly to its members and other stakeholders. To do this it has held conferences, run campaigns, produced materials like posters and hosted events.



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Conclusion

UNISON is having a positive influence on workers' attitudes to improving the environment. It has been praised for showing real leadership over climate change issues.