

It's Not Your Granddaddy's Union Anymore





**If you want to go fast, go alone
If you want to go far, go together**

—African Proverb



How do you feel about changing the world, Forever

We created the IAM's Young Machinists program to do just that. We want to engage young workers in the greater cause of improving society, facilitated by more union involvement. In turn, active young machinists are encouraged to reach out to peers about issues that affect every worker.

Starting

Young Machinists committees are a great way for members to get involved in union activities, but we need to generate interest. It all starts with the first event.

- Talk with your friends at work about the idea of working together on a project
- Determine what activities members will support. Social gatherings or charity projects appeal to almost everyone and get members working together
- When three or four younger members have volunteered to coordinate the event, talk to lodge leaders and garner their support
- Spread the word to get all members to attend and, if it makes sense, include their families
- Let everyone know the event was organized by the local's Young Machinists

Successful events build solidarity, give Young Machinists credibility, and show seasoned members that Young Machinists care about the future of workers.

Moving from Concept to Reality

When there's enough commitment, you can officially form a Young Machinists Standing Committee. The process is usually pretty simple, but varies based on your lodge's bylaws. Sometimes your executive board can approve it, other times it requires the members passing a motion at a regular meeting. Talk to your lodge leadership and if you need to pass a motion, sample language is below.

*I move that in the interest of engaging younger members of Local Lodge [number], and encouraging an environment that involves younger members in the local lodge business, and develops leaders who will keep the lodge strong, that we form a Young Worker and Emerging Leaders committee, to be known as the Young Machinists committee. It shall be a **standing committee** that works to strengthen solidarity and bridge generations.*

Giving Reality a Structure

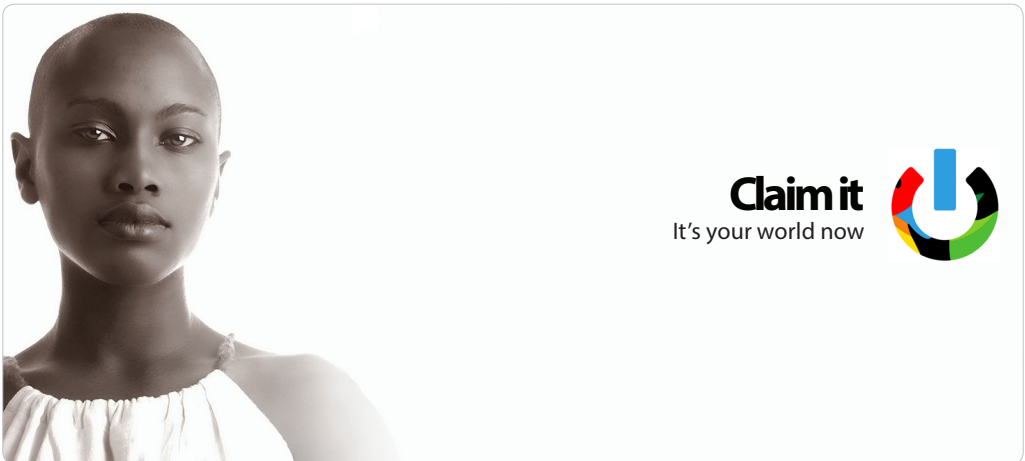
Depending on the nature of the local lodge, Young Machinists might function best in the traditional structure of an appointed chairperson and secretary, or a less traditional core group of leaders who rotate responsibilities. Regardless of the structure, key points need to be observed.

- Keep the executive board updated
- Meet regularly as a committee
- Keep written or electronic records of committee meetings
- Report to the members at regular monthly meetings

Your Emerging Role

It's important to remember that the Young Machinists committee works for the good of everyone, not just the younger members. Activities should be inclusive and encourage interaction between members of all ages. Conducting surveys, written and electronic to accommodate everyone's preferences, is a good way to figure out what interests the members.

Face-to-face communication is also important. Talking to all the members—introducing yourselves and explaining the Young Machinists' intent—helps dispel rumors, negativity and generational division before it starts.



Starting Something Bigger

Young Machinists can spearhead and plan activities, and we can volunteer to help other activists with larger tasks. Everything should benefit the members in some way and have the approval of the executive board.

- Hosting educational socials to teach members about a particular issue that impacts the community or workplace
- Sponsoring fund-raisers to help members, their families or a local charity the lodge elects to support
- Building alliances within the community and neighborhood groups; to put a face on the union as a community partner separate from the company
- Representing the local at rallies and marches
- Explaining how issues affect workers and organizing participation from all members
- Being a resource for the lodge during critical times like following a natural disaster, or when facing layoffs or during a strike
- Lending skills to community improvement and community service projects, i.e. Habitat for Humanity or community beautification projects

Bozo Control

Not everyone is equally accepting of a Young Machinists committee. It can sometimes be seen as a union within a union, a challenge to tradition, a threat to status quo, or overzealous without bothering to do the time.

Demonstrating that Young Machinists genuinely respect the accomplishments of previous generations goes a long way to defusing animosity. Towards the end of being inclusive, consider

- Inviting all members to attend the Young Machinists meetings, and see if any seasoned members would like to volunteer as mentors
- Sponsor a “History of Our Lodge” event and ask the local’s retirees and older members to share their experiences from past battles

Young Machinists sometimes have difficulty getting their peers to agree to be involved. Apathy, lack of understanding, and personality conflicts can be challenging. So, as a committee

- Keep inviting—As Young Machinists develop staying power, members might change their minds
- Plan Young Machinists activities that are fun and inclusive
- Don’t spread rumors or practice favoritism—Maintain mutual respect and others will too



Someone, somewhere will change the world.
Perhaps that one is you.



WTF: Work the Feeling

Getting people involved is easier when Young Machinists activities are campaign based. Young Machinists can take the lead in keeping members involved in issues that affect working people, but are not necessarily wage or benefit driven.

- Student Debt
- Minimum Wage Laws
- Changes to Healthcare
- Voting Rights Laws
- Grant Availability
- Privatization of Government Services
- Social Justice Equality Issues
- Local Community Initiatives
- Awareness Campaigns and Fund-Raisers for Charitable Groups

As human beings, primarily we make important decisions based on what we feel. Later, we justify those feelings with what we know.

Remember, in the end, people will forget what we say; they'll forget what we do; and, if the divisiveness in America is an indicator, they may not care about what we know.

But they'll never, ever forget how we made them feel.

So, how do you feel about changing the world?



Young Machinists



Young Machinists


As the Young Machinists movement grows and develops in your area, consider using these resources:

- IAM Women's and Human Rights Department, coordinating the Young Machinists program
- AFL-CIO Young Workers Advisory Committee / Next Up groups
- Young Invincibles
- Young Trade unionists
- Generation Next
- Young worker committees within constituency groups
- Other unions young workers groups: AFGE YOUNG, AFSCME, OPEIU Rising Star, UAW

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