

# Proactive Communication Strategy to Mitigate a Union Contract Campaign

## CASE STUDY

A leading healthcare system, operating multiple academic, community, and children's hospitals, employs nearly 28,000 employees and 6,000 physicians across its network. With a strong reputation for patient care and innovation, the organization is a cornerstone of its community. However, as it navigated a complex merger, leadership faced the challenge of aligning policies across unionized and non-unionized teams while maintaining workforce engagement. With multiple labor contracts set to expire, the organization needed a proactive strategy to ensure stability, reinforce its commitment to employees, and mitigate external pressures that could disrupt operations.



*labor relations  
&  
crisis  
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### ISSUE

- Union Corporate Campaign – A politically connected healthcare union aggressively pushed for a neutrality agreement, contractual staffing ratios, and a government review of the organization's tax-exempt status.
- Expiring Contracts – Four contracts across multiple hospitals and facilities were set to expire within 60 days of each other, creating risk for a multi-hospital strike involving thousands of nurses.
- Merging Workforces – The organization needed to align union and non-union policies while ensuring equitable benefits across the newly merged health systems.

### ACTION

- Patient-Focused Messaging – Launched the “We Put Patients First” campaign, reinforcing the organization's commitment to patient care and employee well-being, and to counter-act the union's "Patients Over Profits" narrative.
- Multi-Platform Outreach – Ran a targeted digital, print, and social media campaign in key areas to directly reach employees and the broader community.
- Proactive Engagement – Developed testimonial videos, leadership communications, and on-site pop-up banners to reinforce positive messaging and employee voices.

### RESULT

- Negotiation Success – Contracts were successfully ratified at all four locations, with unionized employees receiving the same benefits as non-union staff.
- Union Pressure Deflected – The neutrality agreement was rejected, and organizing efforts were effectively deflected.
- Workplace Stability – Strikes were averted at all facilities, ensuring uninterrupted patient care and operational continuity.

