

Pilots Form the Foundation

Negotiations begin and end with the pilots. They elect their key decision-making leaders—the Master Executive Council (or MEC)—and the Negotiating Committee members are selected from the pilots' ranks. As the pilot group's representatives are chosen, and as priorities are identified and negotiating strategies are developed, every pilot has an individual responsibility to participate in the activities of the union and to express his or her views and concerns.

Feedback from individual line pilots is critical, especially as the negotiating process begins. Through extensive statistical polling and surveys, the MEC learns the issues, concerns, and views that are of primary importance to the pilot group. Using this comprehensive pilot input, the MEC develops a set of goals and priorities to guide the work of the Negotiating Committee.

Once the pilot group and management reach a tentative agreement at the bargaining table, the agreement still needs approval by the MEC and, if the pilot group so chooses, direct membership ratification. The membership ratification process is much more effective if pilots stay informed about the issues throughout the bargaining process.