

10 REASONS WHY FORMING A UNION WILL MAKE STARBUCKS A STRONGER WORKPLACE



Unions are like many other organizations -- they are what you make of them. The union we are forming with Workers United gives us the ability to have a real say in our workplace. It is good that Starbucks calls us "partners," but a partnership requires equality. We believe that we will only have a true partnership with corporate if we unionize. When we vote 'yes' for a union, we will form an autonomous local organization run and led by us, the partners.

Corporate is telling us that it is possible to "win, lose, or stay the same," with the union. This is true. Yet, we, the partners, are the union, and we will not negotiate any decreases. Is Starbucks saying that they want us to lose with a union? Ultimately, Starbucks doesn't want us to have the ability to collectively bargain because it will fundamentally change the power dynamics at work. With collective bargaining, we will have the opportunity to have a real say in our stores and a real partnership with Starbucks as a company.

1 **Bargaining a Contract**

If we form a union, the biggest advantage we will have is the ability to bargain a contract for improvements in our work lives, working conditions, pay and benefits. This means that we--the partners--will negotiate a contract with corporate. While we start negotiations with the existing benefits package we have, we will also have the ability to bring up any issues that we want to address, from understaffing to vacation time. Once a contract is negotiated, all partners will vote on whether we want to ratify the contract or not. Right now, Starbucks has the power to take away benefits, like the pandemic food & drink markouts, whenever they please until we can speak for ourselves.

2 **'Just Cause' Employment**

Right now, we are all 'at will' employees. "At will" means that Starbucks can fire or discipline anyone for almost any reason. With a union, we can negotiate a 'just cause' provision in our contract, which means that Starbucks would need a legitimate reason to fire or discipline someone.

3 **Higher Wages + Benefits**

On average, union employees make 30% more than their counterparts. Currently, partners receive almost no compensation for their years of dedication to the company. One Buffalo partner has 11 years with Starbucks and makes just a few cents more than a new hire. It is true that Starbucks offers benefits that other coffee shops do not, from healthcare to ASU tuition. This doesn't mean that it couldn't be better. With a union, we can negotiate about everything from seniority pay to sick time improvements, including better accommodations for mental health.

4 **Better Workplace Health + Safety**

As we all know, workplace safety and health is not just about Covid precautions, but is also about how safe we feel interacting with customers and being on the floor. With a union, we will have the ability to create a safer work environment. We can do this by negotiating through these issues in our contract, in labor-management meetings, through a health and safety committee of partners, and through the process of filing grievances. For instance, if management does not respond to issues of harassment by customers, we would have the ability to file a grievance and demand accountability. Throughout the Covid pandemic we've been faced with serious challenges. Many decisions were made *for* us, rather than *with* us. A union will ensure that we, the partners, will have the ability to collaborate with upper management and have a say in our health and safety at work.

5

Better Staffing & Lower Turnover

As many of us are well aware, it takes a lot of physical and emotional labor to work at Starbucks in the long term. High turnover can also make it harder for us to do our jobs. By forming a union, we will create a support system for partners' concerns to truly be heard--not just in the short term, while the union campaign is going on, but for the long term. With a union, we will be able to continuously make our workplace better. We will fight for partners to have the opportunity to turn jobs into long-term careers. For example, we will form a joint labor-management committee. This committee would meet on a regular basis and talk about issues and concerns before they became major problems.

6

Increase Training

Another issue that we can negotiate about is increasing training for new partners. While Starbucks says that they are making changes to increase training, they could change their mind at any time. With a union, we can negotiate in writing a new training system that will ensure an adequate amount of time for green beans to get the appropriate amount of time they need before they are put on the floor.

7

Facilities and Maintenance

We all know the struggles of trying to work at peak with broken and old equipment. We also want to ensure that it doesn't get this bad again in the future. Without a union, there is no guarantee that things won't go back to the way things were once the union campaign ends. No one believes management would be making all these changes if we hadn't started to form our union -- and we believe that they will revert back to normal unless we unionize.

8

Create a Democratic Workplace

The union is not a 'third party', the union is us. If we vote 'yes' to form a union, we--the partners--will be the ones who form a bargaining committee and negotiate our contract. We will also be the ones who serve as 'shop stewards' from each unionized Starbucks store. Stewards will be partners who work alongside their coworkers to advocate for issues that arise in the store and can highlight issues to upper management if they are not being adequately addressed. We will negotiate and meet with corporate on an equal footing.

9

Be Part of Something Big

By forming a union, we would be joining one of the most powerful movements for social justice in the history of the United States--the labor movement. The labor movement is responsible for everything from the weekend to the minimum wage. As service industry workers, we spent the last year being called 'essential', yet we are also constantly told to 'get a real job'. We love what we do, and we work hard at our jobs. It is true that Starbucks has raised the standards for service sector employees by offering benefits like healthcare. Yet, this doesn't mean that we can't make it much better. With a union, we are taking the a major step towards raising the standard of living for all service-sector employees and fighting for the dignity and respect we deserve as partners.

10

Hold Starbucks Accountable

Ultimately, by forming a union, we are fundamentally changing the power dynamics in our stores. Right now, corporate and management hold all the power and they make all decisions top-down. We, the partners, know what makes our stores run. We should have a real voice in determining store policies, wages, benefits and how our stores are run. With a union, we are standing together to win that voice. We are the public face of Starbucks and the ones who are in the stores day in and day out, making sure they function. We have the best ideas for how our stores should run, and forming a union gives us the best chance to actually implement our ideas. During the month since we filed a union petition it could not be clearer that corporate and management run the show, not partners. Sure, they may have a periodic survey and ask about our experience at Starbucks. But until the union campaign began, they didn't have to listen. For now, they do. If we vote yes to the union, then they always will have to listen.

By forming a union, we will ultimately have the ability to raise the issues that we want to raise at the bargaining table. We will fight for the best interest of partners because we are the partners. A Starbucks Workers United Union will allow us to have a contract where our ideas are heard and actually have a chance to be implemented. We will hold Starbucks accountable to be the company that we know it can and should be.