

CASE STUDY

CUPE 882 - Saskatchewan vs. Mayor of Prince Albert & City Council

CUPE 882 represents the inside workers of the City of Prince Albert. Having been without a contract since December of 2021, in June of 2023, the membership voted overwhelmingly to strike despite what Mayor Greg Dionne called, "one of the highest offers in Canada." In fact, CUPE workers decided to stand their ground to demand more than the 11% increase that was offered.

CUPE was also all too aware of the irony of having their cause be criticized by a mayor and city council who have accepted huge pay raises of 20% since 2016, double what the workers would receive under the proposed new contract.

Patchthrough IBVM and Prompt.io Texting

To get the word out about their cause and to generate some public support, CUPE 882 hired Stratcom to run Patchthrough IBVMs to the residents of Prince Albert. Stratcom's patchthrough service starts with a short Interactive Broadcast Voice Message survey that includes an important message from our clients and asks residents to input their responses on to a series of simple questions on their phone keypad, to gauge the level of support from each resident we call. Members of the public who are most supportive are asked to patchthrough to their elected representative's office to voice their support for the workers at the end of the survey.

On August 9th, Stratcom began the patchthrough calling campaign, letting citizens of Prince Albert know about the issue and encouraging them to talk to city hall directly to show their support for the workers. Stratcom called thousands of residents and found that the majority of those who participated in the quick poll supported the workers. During the course of four days of calling, 84% of respondents indicated their support for city workers with their responses to the poll questions. A further 140 people took the time to patchthrough to city hall to tell the mayor to get back to the bargaining table with a better deal. After the calls went out,



If you received a message from a local union asking for your thoughts on the current state of negotiations, you're not alone.

In fact, thousands of Prince Albert residents reportedly got a text message or automated voice call on behalf of CUPE 882...asking for people's thoughts on what the City of Prince Albert is offering union members."



Link to the article: Union asks P.A. residents for input on contract negotiations | paNOW



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Stratcom followed up with an SMS campaign using Prompt.io. The results of that textblast were that 77% of respondents affirmed their continued support for city staff. The city of Prince Albert was clearly feeling the pressure and the union energized their membership who voted to strike on August 10th.

Speaking to paNOW, Tria Donaldson with CUPE Saskatchewan said the robocalls and texts are part of a budget the national union has for situations like this.

“We are investing money in terms of strike averting to try to connect with the public and put pressure on City Council to get back to the table,” she said. “We want to do everything we can to reach a deal before job action is needed.”

In the end, CUPE alerted their community of the coming strike and the unfair offer coming from city hall and were able to show City Hall and others that the community was on their side. They also did media interviews during the rollout of this campaign, which earned them solid stories to further push their messages out to the general public and pressure the employer.

Research — Interactive Voice Recorded and Online Polling

Stratcom followed up on the engagement work that we completed in August with an IVR poll, which showed the public was onside with the union. When the strike began, this polling assisted with CUPE’s public relations strategy and informed their next steps, providing them with the best strategy to address the tension between city hall and the workers. By the end of 2023, after lots of public pressure on the employer, the strike was eventually resolved and a new Collective Agreement was ratified.

Stratcom’s experience proves that by using these tools and continuing to apply pressure, union workers are able to meet their goals in bargaining.

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Patchthrough IBVM

	Totals
Number of Live Answers	33,739
Percentage of Live Answers who participated	13%
Number who Indicated support for CUPE	3,776
Number who indicated they do not support CUPE	691
Total supporters of CUPE in %	84.5%
Total who do not support CUPE in %	15.50%
Supporters that opted to Patchthrough	140
% of Supporters that Patched-through	13%

Prompt.io Texting

	Totals
Messages Sent	32,931
Contacts replied	2,767
Supportive of CUPE	2,135
Not Supportive of CUPE	452
Total Supporters CUPE in %	77%
Total who do not support CUPE in %	16%

E: sales@stratcom.ca

X [@stratcom_ca](#)

stratcom.ca

T: 1.866.537.6199

f [@Stratcom.Inc](#)

 Local 8300

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