

Tech Workers' Resistance Guide: Impact Through Analysis & Strategy

Version 1.01; Date: 25-08-06

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Big Tech

Over the past decade, Big Tech has faced increasing levels of workers activism. While early instances of worker actions have resulted in positive outcomes (e.g., cancellation of Google's Project Dragonfly), recently worker successes have become more difficult to obtain. This is, in part, because corporations have, in the face of increased pressure, adjusted their strategies to dealing with worker activism (e.g., retaliating against workers, and putting contracts in clauses that prevents cancellation due to worker pressure). This change in company strategy prompts urgent questions about updating worker strategies for influencing corporate behavior in an industry with vast societal impact. This guide emerges as a response to this expressed need.

This guide is a resource for tech workers – defined broadly: engineers, designers, product managers, QA testers, support staff, data scientists, operations personnel, contractors, and everyone else contributing to the tech ecosystem – who are seeking ways to make change.

Why this guide?

After deciding to take action, it is difficult to determine *what* action to take, estimate the *impacts* it might have, *what risks* are involved, and *how effective* it could be. Popular histories of labour struggles and the strategies given the most media attention are not representative of the full set of actions available to you. Likewise, a simple list of actions is unlikely to fully capture the risks and impacts of actions. This guide aims to bridge that gap by providing:

- **Strategic Discussions:** Topics that are relevant to workers regarding strategy (e.g., violence vs non-violence, advocating internally or externally, etc.).
- **A Curated List of Actions:** Detailing various tactics workers can employ, ranging from subtle individual actions to large-scale collective efforts.
- **Action Analysis:** Evaluating each action based on potential:
 - *Risk:* What are the potential negative consequences for individuals or the group (e.g., retaliation, legal issues, reputational damage)?
 - *Impact:* What are the possible direct outcomes of the action?
 - *Effectiveness:* How likely is the action to achieve the desired outcome or exert pressure?

Suggestions: Have any suggestions, recommendations, corrections? Email mabdall12@ualberta.ca with [TWGR] in the subject line. If a more secure mode of communication is required, use an anonymous email to reach out and obtain other methods of communication.

How to use this guide?

This is not a prescriptive manual telling you what causes to care about or what to do. Likewise, this guide is not intended to help you determine your specific risk tolerance or make a convincing argument for why workers should (or should not) take more risk. Rather, this guide is intended as a toolkit for discussion and decision-making. This guide assumes that readers are already passionate and ready to take action for a cause. Once at this stage, we recommend you:

- **Engage with Strategy:** Read the strategic discussions to think critically about your actions and the assumptions you may have. We do not believe that a single static strategy or set of worker actions will be effective in all scenarios or remain effective forever.
- **Explore the Actions:** Browse the different tactics available. We outline possible actions that can be considered as part of strategies, see Table 1.
- **Consider the Analysis:** Use the risk, impact, and effectiveness comments as a starting point for evaluating options within your specific context. Remember that these are generalized analyses – your situation (location, company policy, legal jurisdiction, role, collective agreements, etc.) will significantly influence the actual risk and potential impact.
- **Organize and Discuss:** The most powerful use of this guide is as a catalyst for conversation and collective planning with trusted coworkers.

Disclaimers

- **This is Not Legal Advice:** The information provided here is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as legal or professional advice. Legality will vary significantly depending on your jurisdiction. Consult with qualified parties familiar with your jurisdiction before engaging in risky actions.
- **Context is Crucial:** The risk, impact, and effectiveness of actions depends on the specific workplace, jurisdiction, the cause, and company.
- **Solidarity is Key:** While individual actions are discussed, sustainable change and significant impact often require collective effort and solidarity among workers.
- **This Guide is Not Comprehensive:** Despite our best efforts, it is likely that actions were missed. Likewise our analysis is based on our personal experiences and may not be applicable to your context.

Associated Research Paper

The associated research paper describing the creation of this guide can be found here: [forthcoming](#).

Strategic Discussions:

Strategic thinking is highly contextual; workers exist in different contexts, face different stressors and have different goals. For example, workers on visas face different risks than those who are citizens (regarding deportation for their activism as demonstrated by the recent deportations of pro-Palestine activists ([ALJazeera, 2025](#)))¹. Likewise, employees who are responsible for dependents are operating under different circumstances than those who don't have such a responsibility.

Therefore, in this section, to enable workers to assess for themselves how to prioritize actions, assess effectiveness, and develop coherent strategies, we discuss several commonly raised topics and questions related to worker activism. **It is crucial to note that this discussion and advice is purposefully kept at a high-level. Individuals must account for their specific contexts, risk tolerances, and legal jurisdictions.**

Moral Injury and The Need to Act

Moral injury refers to when “there has been (a) a betrayal of ‘what’s right’; and (b) either by a person in legitimate authority [...], or by one’s self, (c) in a high stakes situation” ([Shay, 2014](#); [Litz et al., 2009](#)). Moral injury has been experienced by tech workers when they learn that the corporations for whom they work advance causes they are morally against (e.g., contributing to climate change ([Stone, 2024](#)), or arming israel ([Ibraheem, 2025](#); [Warren and Roth, 2025](#))).

¹While this has traditionally held true, it seems that the governing U.S. administration is considering deporting U.S. citizens ([Rubin, 2025](#)).

Self-reflecting on his own ethical decisions as a computer science graduate student, [Chan \(2020\)](#) makes the distinction between moral obligations and moral aspirations. Moral obligations are actions whereby an individual becomes morally blameworthy should they fail to perform them (or in the case of a negative action: the blame is assigned when an action is performed). On the other hand, moral aspirations refer to actions where an individual is deemed morally virtuous for doing them, but not morally blameworthy for not performing them. He notes, for example, he has a moral obligation to not work on ‘*building AI systems that enable genocide*’, but only a moral aspiration to pursue a research direction which maximizes ‘*positive ethical impact*’ ([Chan, 2020](#)). Through his examples, Chan highlights the wide variety of seemingly mundane choices made by graduate students that entail ethical consequences (e.g., selecting research directions, seeking funding, and mentoring).

Inspired by an Islamic paradigm, former Google software engineer Hasan Ibraheem arrives at a similar conclusion. Reflecting upon his work and his contributions to Google’s “direct support for the genocide against Palestinians due to their prioritization of profit over human lives” ([Ibraheem, 2025](#)), he concludes that despite not directly working on military technology, providing his labour to a company complicit in immoral actions makes him complicit. He suggests that workers should aim to quit or get fired in as loud a manner as possible as, per his piece, “[o]rganizing does not absolve you of complicity indefinitely” ([Ibraheem, 2025](#)).

For those who feel strongly about particular issues such as Chan and Ibraheem, it’s clear that contributing to such companies, even in tangential ways, may still result in experiencing moral injury. When such injury cannot be avoided, moral injury can be counter-acted by taking actions which account to moral repair ([Litz et al., 2009](#); [Walker, 2001](#)). Moral repair, a topic with rich literature, can be (overly) simplified to doing good deeds (more specifically appropriate amends) to regain positive self-judgment about one’s self ([Vives-Gabriel et al., 2023](#)). Continuing with Ibraheem’s Islamic theme, this would be analogous to the Islamic concept of *tawba* (which can be incompletely translated to repentance) ([Abdullah, 2022](#)) where, in addition to remorse and abandonment of the action causing moral injury, the person should also seek to make amends for any harms they have caused ([Tahir, 2022](#)). We believe that any of the actions discussed in this work can help moral repair but this depends on a variety of factors (e.g., belief that there is net positive impact, which may be difficult to see).

Given the nature of this paper, we have prioritized the voices of workers who have been involved in worker actions or relevant discussions. This focus represents a sampling bias of sorts. It may be possible that most workers do not feel strongly about any particular issue and thus suffer no moral injury. In this case, to maximize impact of actions, it would be beneficial of workers to instill shared values into colleagues such that partaking in the system results in moral injury thus driving them to act (i.e., moral education).

High-Level strategy

While studying the differences between current and historical tactics is enlightening, it does not necessarily inform current and future tech activists on how to engage. Below, we start with a brief high-level vision of how actions should be approached.

First, activists should reflect on what drives them to act. Are they driven out of emotion? Guilt? Ego? While different people may have different source motivations ensuring clarity in one’s motivation can lead to sustained activism ([Jin et al., 2025](#); [Hall, 2019](#)). What is the moral or political framework through which they see the world? Different frameworks will prioritize or disallow certain actions, and have a great effect in the balancing of priorities. What obligations and restrictions do you have placed upon you and how may they affect which actions you may partake in?

Then, it’s important to consider the existing incentive structures for the systems you’re trying to impact. The majority of humans and corporations are not (consciously) motivated by political ambitions or views. Rather, they react to incentives and dis-incentives placed upon them by the system in which they live and work. Understanding that system and the structures that drive decision making will enable activists to map out the power dynamics of their society and better simulate, situate, and execute for their cause ([Bolsen, 2025](#)).

Lastly, activists should set their plans at the structural level. It’s important to realize that all important

causes require “long term, tedious, frustrating, exasperating, boring, disappointing anti-climatic work over decades to achieve incremental gradual progress” (Bolsen, 2025; Anonymous, 2025).

Violence vs Non-Violence

It is now commonplace for those pushing for change to tout their adherence to non-violence as a mark of validity and superior moral standing (Dahlum et al., 2023). For example, when describing Google workers’ walkout to draw attention to Google’s mishandling of sexual harassment claims and unequal pay, Etter (2018) highlights the civility and peaceful nature of the protest as a positive:

It helps that these faces are not angry, but mostly calm, and that the walkouts are largely peaceful and civilised. Things look very different to recent protests by Uber drivers, for example, who have staged more angry demonstrations, waving colourful signs and shouting slogans.

Likewise, adherence to non-violence often extends to property destruction. As highlighted by Malm (2021), past actions have gone so far as to requiring every participant to abide by a solemn pledge to not damage machines or infrastructure. Adherence to non-violent approaches also has academic proponents (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008; Nepstad, 2011) though much of this work has been attacked by later work for inaccuracies in analysis and cherry-picking of data (Gelderloos, 2020). This lionization of non-violence (and disregard for violent approaches) has also propagated within the tech activist community generally, and the AI ethics community specifically (e.g., through citations of Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) by Boag et al. (2022) as they focus solely on non-violent collective actions). While the view that non-violent actions are more effective than violent actions at achieving goals is mainstream², this view is not uniformly shared:

It is strange and striking that climate change activists have not committed any acts of terrorism. After all, terrorism is for the individual by far the modern world’s most effective form of political action, and climate change is an issue about which people feel just as strongly as about, say, animal rights. – Lanchester (2007)

In fact, many activists and academics argue that violent acts (e.g., property destruction) can be, when engaged with appropriately, successful in directly achieving their goals or further enabling the success of non-violent actors (Malm, 2021) (see: “The Need For a Radical Flank” below). Historically, we have seen the suffragettes, the MK in South Africa, black activists in the U.S. and many other groups successfully use violence to work towards achieving their goals. More recently, we’ve seen the success of UK’s Palestine Action in closing down more arms factories through direct violent action (sabotage) than over a year of popular mass protests (Al Mayadeen English, 2024b,a).

As argued by Malm (2021), most people are likely to agree that “violence is *prima facie* bad”, but to disregard it as a matter of course in all circumstances is bad strategic thinking. A more realistic view on the use of violence is that it is a highly impactful tool that should only be used after intense strategic thinking that assesses the culture and contexts. For example, it was only after the perceived failure of non-violence that Nelson Mandela stated that “we will have to reconsider our tactics. In my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of a nonviolent policy” (Freedman, 2015). For a more recent example on the public support for violent action, consider the overwhelmingly bi-partisan support and sympathy for Luigi Mangione following his alleged assassination of a healthcare insurance company’s CEO (Suciu, 2024).

Public vs Private Actions

Workers taking actions need to choose between advertising their action, doing it publicly without advertising, and doing it discreetly. Public actions increase scrutiny and possible personal repercussions, as well as the impact. Public actions can also serve to inspire others to act, the impact of which is likely much greater than the impact private acts that a single person could execute. Furthermore, the more

²See section “The Need For a Radical Flank” which discusses how, despite their significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr. is often lionized while el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz (i.e., Malcolm X) is largely overlooked.

people taking part in an action, the greater the impact and harder it will be to ignore or crush dissent. For example, it's trivial to fire and replace two protesting workers, but much harder to replace 2000. Likewise, fail-safes may prevent sabotage caused by an individual but would likely cease to function if there was wide participation from many workers.

At the same time, there can be many benefits to taking actions discreetly. If one is in a precarious position (e.g., on a visa or supporting multiple dependents), private actions allow them to positively impact their company while minimizing risk. There are also certain actions that would only work if executed discreetly. For example, actions which seek to surreptitiously drain the resources of companies (e.g., hiring lower quality candidates, hiring politically aligned staff, and pushing others to quit) would not be effective if exposed publicly.

Positive vs Negative Acts

Workers at companies tend to have different politics than the ownership class (Ferenstein, 2015). As such, their ability to influence the decisions made by management is often limited. Thus, workers often have to rely on disruptions and halting the normal operation of the company (i.e., negative actions). While negative actions have been very successful in the past, in a system driven to maintain the status-quo, such actions are not guaranteed to result in positive changes. That is, if all tech corporations partake in the same immoral activities, even if workers in all companies engage in actions, the likelihood of companies changing their activities is low.

Thus, to dramatically increase the cost of maintaining the status-quo, there should be companies that exist as moral alternatives to those being targeted by negative actions. Building these institutions is a very important positive action which we do not believe gets enough attention among tech workers. Instead of just quitting a Big Tech company to join another Big Tech company — which can still be a courageous moral stance to take — quitting a company to create a competitor with the intention of punishing them for their immoral action creates a real cost to their actions. Now instead of appealing to the morals of those who run companies and hide behind the excuse of share-holder value to maintain the status-quo, negative actions will incur a quantifiable cost that can be avoided.

Changing from within

A common counter-argument used by those reluctant to quit is that, by being part of the system, workers will have more access to information, people, and knowledge that will make them more effective when pushing for change. That is, change can still be achieved from within a company.

For example, workers on the inside can benefit the movement through baiting and policing bad actors. Baiting colleagues who align with the harmful practices that the company practices and espouses into sharing things that directly violate company policy or local laws can result in these colleagues being reported, penalized, and forced to self-censor. The benefits of such internal pressure are two-fold: a) penalize bad faith actors while building community among those campaigning towards more moral company values, and b) eroding trust and harmony within the company culture. Internal actions can also cause coworkers to also feel morally obliged to act. Likewise, worker petitions were historically more impactful than petitions from outsiders.

On the other hand, many workers inside companies feel that, as small cogs inside a massive machine, their individual actions have little to no effect. Meaningful change is difficult as companies would not keep employees who pose any real threat to their business model or their actions.

Both views have truth in them. The loss of access (to information, people, and decision makers) can reduce the effectiveness of one's actions. Likewise, as companies notice the increasing politicization of their work-force, they continue to change internal policies, structures, and contracts (Perrigo, 2024) to effectively neuter any internal worker dissent. In such instances, the benefits of access are great diminished, and more drastic actions may be needed to effect change.

The Need For a Radical Flank

Contemporary workers have demonstrably learned from the experiences of their predecessors. To sustain momentum, connections, and knowledge gained during periods of collective action (e.g., walkouts or

protests), which historically tended to dissipate after an initial surge, workers have now established enduring organizations that facilitate knowledge transfer and continuity (Marx, 2024). Consequently, the dismissal of individual active workers is less likely to halt movements entirely. Furthermore, workers have cultivated inter-company networks to foster solidarity and disseminate lessons learned (Marx, 2024).

However, tech worker activism currently lacks a radical flank. While there exist radicals in tech (e.g., neo-luddites (Dries et al., 2024)), they are not a flank of current activists. Haines (1984) highlights how many past movements “divide into ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ factions during their development, having been observed in the U.S. labour movement, women’s movement, anti-nuclear movement, and the black revolt in the United States”. In the literature, the radical flank adopts a more maximalist goal and more radical tactics (Tompkins, 2015), thus presenting the moderate flank as a reasonable alternative (Malm, 2021).

Per social movement theory, the lack of factionalism within existing tech activist organizations (i.e., no radical flank), suggests this social movement as being in its infancy. This understanding can help workers situate themselves with the context of past struggles and enable them to assess which strategies are more appropriate.

Second, understanding the inherent historical tension between moderate and radical flanks will enable them to fight united for a cause. The role of the moderates is not become radical. Instead, the moderate flank should pro-actively work to position itself to benefit from the spikes in interest resulting from radical actions (Fortier, 2025) while making sure not to preemptively undercut any of the actions of a radical flank by undue disparagement radical tactics. As described by Malm (2021) of the Black Civil Rights struggle, a jailed Martin Luther King “could signal that if channels of non-violence remained closed, [...] negroes unquestionably will look to untried and perhaps less responsible leaders – notably Malcolm X” (who represented the radical flank). He concludes that the civil rights movement’s moderate flank was able to win the Act of 1964 because, relative to the radical flank, it appeared to be the lesser of two evils.

The literature on the effectiveness of radical flanks is mixed. Tompkins (2015), studying the effects of violent radical flanks, finds that they resulted in increased repression but were not “necessarily detrimental” to progress. Simpson et al. (2022), like Haines (1984), found that radical flanks increase support and perception of moderate flanks. An issue with much of the academic literature on radical flanks is their conservative nature, framing the radical flank as doomed for failure and only existing to further the moderates. Furthermore, much of the literature focuses on violent radical flanks but radical flanks are not *necessarily* violent.

The strategic question for the radical flank is how radical to be. Too radical and they risk discrediting the movement as a whole, a serious ‘negative radical flank effect’ (Haines, 1984). Not radical enough, and they are ineffective moderates. The tech workers who compose the radical flank must balance pushing the movement forward and upping the stakes while staying close and relatable enough to the moderates – a challenging balance to strike.

Possible Actions

Quitting	Lawfare
Quit (quietly) (§1.1) Quit (internal protest) (§1.2) Quit (external protest) (§1.3)	(If fired) Sue (§2.1) Lawsuits (§2.2) Reporting to Regulatory Body (§2.3) Engage with HR (§2.4) Lobbying (§2.5)
Protesting	Malicious Compliance
Public Protests (§3.1) Public Professional Protests (§3.2) Internal Protests (active) (§3.3) Internal Protests (passive) (§3.4) Disruptive Workplace Protests (§3.5) Baiting Reactions (§3.6) Striking (§3.7) Refuse to build (§3.8)	Minimal productivity (Work-to-rule) (§4.1) Hiring lower quality candidates (§4.2) Push for quitting (§4.3) Elongate bureaucratic processes (§4.4) Boycott (negative) (§4.5)
Knowledge Transfer	Violence
Leaking Anonymously (§5.1) Leaking Publicly (§5.2) Publicize Actions (§5.3) Educational campaigns/teach-ins (§5.4)	Towards Infrastructure (§6.1) Towards Self (§6.2) Towards Others (§6.3) Sabotage products (§6.4) Sabotage internal systems (§6.5)
Building Community	Positive Actions
Organize (§7.1) Engage with activist/civil rights groups (§7.2) Hiring Politically Aligned Staff (§7.3)	Build Competing Products (§8.1) Create assistive tools/resources (§8.2) Reperative Actions (§8.3) Boycott (positive) (§8.4)

Table 1: A summary of possible types of actions that can be taken by tech workers. Click the number beside each action to go to the analysis of the action.

Actions – Analysis Template

Each action will be presented in the following format:

Action Name

Description

Describing the action, how it may be executed, some high-level thoughts or variations.

Positive or Negative

Is the action positive (i.e., creating something or adding to something) or (i.e., disrupting, stopping, or taking away from something). These are not moral designations.

Risks

Specify risks to self and others.

Impact

Listing possible positive and negative impacts.

Historical Examples

Listing historical examples of this actions. Using examples from tech workers if possible.

Effectiveness

High level summary of effectiveness of action as well as what factors increase or decrease effectiveness.

1 Actions – Quitting

1.1 Quit (quietly)

1.1.1 Description

Quitting your position without indicating to others your reason for quitting.

1.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

1.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- Loss of income (and possibly pension)
- Difficulty in getting re-hired depending on job market

To Others:

- Derail timelines. Depending on the company culture, position, and involvement in projects, your quitting may force them to derail timelines or co-workers to be saddled with more work.

1.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Avoiding moral injury
- Opportunity to switch to a role that can contribute positively regarding your cause.
- May enable/embolden you to speak publicly about your cause.

Negative:

- No longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things).
- Less access to former colleagues at that company who can directly enact or push for change.

1.1.5 Historical Examples

N/A – it is hard to find sources to cite for this as if they quit quietly it wouldn't be covered in the news. Contributors to this paper know of many such examples.

1.1.6 Effectiveness

In terms of causing the company to change its behaviour this action is not effective. Without knowing why you quit, there is no reason for the company to think it was due to their actions/contracts/procedures. However, avoiding moral injury should be important to yourself.

1.2 Quit (internal protest)

1.2.1 Description

Quitting your position and making it clear to your boss, co-workers, and colleagues why your quitting (e.g., during your exit interview).

1.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

1.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- Loss of income
- Possible that you may be added to an internal/external black-list depending on the politics of those you tell.
- Might make it slightly harder to get hired by others (depending on circumstances and time at company)
- Loss of nodes on your professional network. If they disagree with you they may not help you in the future. They may share it widely beyond your desired scope.

To Others:

- Derail timelines. Depending on the company culture, position, and involvement in projects, your quitting may force them to derail timelines or co-workers to be saddled with more work.
- Depending on the political environment, it may result in increased scrutiny of yourself during your last couple of weeks and of close colleagues.

1.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Co-workers/Management will know that their employees care enough about the issue to quit. Depending on scale, they could change practices to minimize churn (i.e., employee loss).
- Might inspire others to do the same
- Avoiding moral injury.

Negative:

- No longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.

1.2.5 Historical Examples

- “Microsoft employees spent years fighting the tech giant’s oil ties. Now, they’re speaking out.” (Maddie Stone, 2024)

1.2.6 Effectiveness

Effectiveness lies in the ability to have many employees partake in the action together. Losing a single employee is unlikely to result in change. Losing many employees is likely to force management to change course. Rationale: Businesses care only about profit maximization. If the cost to drop a contract/change procedures is more than the benefits they get from the contract/procedure they will be forced to act.

1.3 Quit (external protest)

1.3.1 Description

Quitting your position and going to external parties (e.g., media) or creating public content (e.g., social media, memoir, book) to highlight your reason for quitting.

1.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

1.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- Loss of income.
- May make it harder to get hired by others (depending on specific media coverage).
- Increased chance of doxxing/harassment

To Others:

- Derail timelines. Depending on the company culture, position, and involvement in projects, your quitting may force them to derail timelines or co-workers to be saddled with more work.
- Depending on the political environment, it may result in increases scrutiny of yourself during your last couple of weeks and of close colleagues.

1.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Avoiding moral injury.
- Opportunity to switch to a role that can contribute positively to society.
- Co-workers/Management will know that their employees care enough about the issue to quit. Depending on scale, they could change practices to minimize churn (i.e., employee loss).
- Raising awareness of the issue to the public.
- Bring bad PR to company, increasing costs of continuing on current course of action.
- May inspire others to also quit/take the situation more seriously.

Negative:

- No longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.

1.3.5 Historical Examples

- “Microsoft employees spent years fighting the tech giant’s oil ties. Now, they’re speaking out.” ([Maddie Stone, 2024](#))
- “Senior Google Scientist Resigns Over “Forfeiture of Our Values” in China” ([Ryan Gallagher, 2018](#))
- “A dozen Google employees quit over military drone project” ([Ron Amadeo, 2018](#))
- “Two Google employees quit over AI researcher Timnit Gebru’s exit” ([Rachel Metz, 2021](#))
- Marc Cohen’s Resignation Letter ([Marc Cohen, 2024](#))

1.3.6 Effectiveness

This is likely the most effective of the three quitting options. However, it also comes with the highest cost (possible reduced employability in the future). Effectiveness is strongly affected by the coverage your quitting is able to get. The action of companies will only change once the threat to company profits of not acting is higher than maintaining the status quo. As such, it's unlikely that a single or group of employees quitting will (alone) result in change.

2 Lawfare

2.1 (If fired) Sue

2.1.1 Description

Depending on jurisdiction, an employer firing you for lawful activity which occurs outside of work hours and property may enable you to sue. Likewise, firing you for making complaints through HR can, depending on your jurisdiction, be illegal.

2.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

2.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- May make it harder to get hired by others (depending on specific media coverage).
- Expensive, can be difficult to recuperate legal costs long-term.
- Stress, typically results in smear campaigns.

To Others:

- Stress of those who are involved in the lawsuit.
- Depending on which state you may be subject to the American Rule, paying the winning lawsuit party's legal costs.

2.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Drain resources of the company.
- Bring bad PR to company increasing costs of continuing on current course of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to the public.
- May inspire others to also quit/take the situation more seriously.
- If you win, you will get the benefits of the case.

Negative:

- Loss of case may cause negative PR to movement and loss of momentum

2.1.5 Historical Examples

- “Google Reaches \$27M Settlement in Case That Sparked Employee Activism in Tech” ([Semaphor, 2023](#))
- “Canadian Tech Worker Sues Google, Claiming She Was Fired For Being Pregnant” ([Howard Levitt, 2024](#))
- “Microsoft will pay \$14M to settle allegations it discriminated against employees who took leave” ([Associated Press, 2024](#))
- “California Court Sides with Female Apple Employees in Gender Discrimination Class Action” ([Cohen Milstein, 2025](#))
- “Google workers fired after protesting Israeli contract file complaint with labor regulators” ([CBS News, 2024](#))

2.1.6 Effectiveness

The point of this action is two fold. If you are able to link your lawsuit to your cause/disagreement with the company you would be 1) forcing the company to spend money (thus increasing the cost of maintaining the status quo increasing likelihood of change), and 2) getting publicity for your cause. As with previous actions, it is most effective when pursued by multiple people in tandem or sequentially very close together. Consult with a lawyer before any action is taken.

2.2 Lawsuit

2.2.1 Description

Depending on the action you are fighting against, it may be that the company can be held directly responsible. Made clear from the Nuremberg trials, you can have civilians who must comply with rules of international humanitarian law. Failing to comply with these rules they can be charged with war crimes [X]. So the more tech workers are providing support to belligerents in armed conflicts, the increased risk and responsibility tech workers have. If you can prove that work done by specific teams directly contributes to the violation of international humanitarian law, you can launch a lawsuit or work with lawyers to bring a suit against your company/specific employees.

2.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

2.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- May make it harder to get hired by others (depending on specific media coverage).
- Expensive, unlikely to recuperate legal costs long-term.
- Stress, typically results in smear campaigns

To Others:

- Stress of those who are involved in the lawsuit.
- Possible fines or jail time for those implicated.

2.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Drain resources of the company.
- Bring bad PR to company increasing costs of continuing on current cost of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to the public.
- May inspire others to also quit/take the situation more seriously.

Negative:

- Loss of case may cause negative PR to movement and loss of momentum

2.2.5 Historical Examples

- “Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) v. Mercedes-Benz AG – the right to an environmental future” ([Climate Chart, 2021](#))
- “Second case filed under the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act” ([Jennifer Schappert, 2023](#))

2.2.6 Effectiveness

This is a highly effective action. First, you are forcing the company to spend money (thus increasing the cost of maintaining the status quo increasing likelihood of change). Second, those who perform criminal acts may face punishment for their actions. Third, it increases the social cost and personal worry of anyone considering joining such a team or group. Lastly, the specific team will face higher attrition and slower output as employees fear legal consequences for their work. All in all, this makes it harder for them to recruit top talent and will drive up the cost of recruitment. These lawsuits should also be accompanied by wide media coverage. Foregrounding this concern in the mind of tech workers may be an effective means to getting compliance to laws (local and international).

2.3 Reporting to Regulatory Body

2.3.1 Description

You can report significant potentially illegal actions to the relevant regulatory body. Reports can either be related or unrelated to your cause. Reports can be directed to law enforcement or to an appropriate government agency for investigation and third party audits. It is also important to note that this action can be taken by people not at the company.

2.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

2.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- If uncovered as the cause of investigation, you may be fired. This is, depending on your jurisdiction, illegal, which allows you to sue (see “(If Fired) Sue”).
- If identity is publicly disclosed it may be harder to get hired by others (depending on specific media coverage).

2.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- If the reporting is directly related to the cause, then the result of the report may force the company to address the root issue.
- Drain resources of the company (to conduct the investigation and pay any possible fines).
- Bring bad PR to company increasing costs of continuing on current cost of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to the public.

Negative:

- Could undermine other reports/increase tolerance of third party auditing.
- The regulatory body may disagree with you: see regulatory capture.

2.3.5 Historical Examples

- Shane Jones, a software engineering manager at Microsoft, in a letter to the Federal Trade Commission, highlighted the risk the company’s AI image tool could pose to society. ([Russolillo and Vipers, 2024](#))
- “In a complaint filed to the National Labor Relations Board on Wednesday, six workers claim they were illegally fired for organizing by their employer Appen, which provides tens of thousands of contract workers for Big Tech firms.” ([De Vynck, 2023](#))
- No Azure for Apartheid’s research was used in the creation of a report presented to the 59th session of the United Nation’s Human Rights Council under the title “From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide.” ([No Azure for Apartheid, 2025](#))

2.3.6 Effectiveness

Reporting a company for behavior related to the cause is the most effective form of this action. However, reporting for unrelated acts may also be effective in costing the company time and money thus making it less profitable. Unfortunately, if the action is not directly related to the cause the decrease in profitability will not be linked to your cause which reduces the effectiveness. If done at scale, this could significantly harm a company (though this is unlikely). Can promote better transparency internally for the sectors being audited if consistently done.

2.4 Engage with HR (for applications of policies/laws)

2.4.1 Description

If you do not have the means or capability for conducting the above methods, you could use internal processes in an attempt to have your company adhere to laws/internal policies. For example, in Canada, you cannot fundraise for the militaries of foreign nations (allies or enemies). If your company's matching program has such charities, you can push to remove them. If an employee does actions that violate policies, you can engage with HR to force them to act.

2.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

2.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- If your manager is against your cause, you may face a degradation in your relationship. They may try to find excuses to fire you or stall career growth.
- You will be on HR's radar. There may be internal flags for "troublesome" employees.
- General retaliation from colleagues and company

2.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- Brings company in line with policies/laws.
- If you're targeting a charity, it reduces the harm of charities which are breaking policy/laws.
- If you're targeting employees, it reduces their harm to others as well.
- Is a drain on company resources.
- Creates a paper trail which can be used in later litigation or other actions to demonstrate awareness or lack of action by company.
- Targeting other employees with HR actions reduces their ability to do harm.

Negative:

- Normalization of muted discussions; will undermine the efforts of other workers who aim to express stronger dissatisfaction or anger toward the company through stronger actions.

2.4.5 Historical Examples

- "Apple Cease Funding for Illegal Settlements and Israeli Military" ([Apple Employees, 2024](#))

2.4.6 Effectiveness

Forcing your company to apply their policies/adhere to laws regarding their actions (e.g., employee behavior or charities they associate with) will reduce the harm being done by the offending parties. For example, reducing financial support to organizations which commit criminal/negative actions reduces their effectiveness. Unfortunately without organization/numbers, you may face friction getting this done if it is not in line with the status quo. Organizing may attract attention and other negative risks to yourself/others who are involved with you.

2.5 Lobbying

2.5.1 Description

Directly engaging with lawmakers to push for political change directly.

2.5.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

2.5.3 Risks

To Self:

- If your lobbying is uncovered, and is not in favor of what the company wants, you may be fired or placed on a short-list for firing. This is, depending on your jurisdiction, illegal, which allows you to sue (see “(If Fired) Sue”).

2.5.4 Impact

Positive:

- Directly engaging with law-makers enables you to build relationships which may be useful later one.
- Raising awareness with policy makers.
- Allows you to influence policy decisions.
- Lobbying can also be part of a public campaign to increase coverage build solidarity with other workers and organizations.

Negative:

- Very slow and convoluted process. May take years to accomplish anything.
- Close-door process which does not increase the knowledge or understanding of other workers.
- May be expensive.
- Reduction of agency.

2.5.5 Historical Examples

- “Google employees who have seen some success in pressuring their company into ending forced arbitration joined lawmakers in Washington as they introduced related federal legislation Thursday.” (Sumagaysay, 2019)

2.5.6 Effectiveness

Lobbying can be moderately effective for cementing structural or policy changes. Lobbying is most effective when done on behalf of a large collective (e.g., trade union) with clear demands that have popular support. Lobbying does have its limitations especially as those being lobbied are also open to lobbying by better financed more organized parties (i.e., corporations). There are multiple guides for how to contact your representatives for different jurisdictions.

3 Protests

3.1 Public protest

3.1.1 Description

Publicly protesting the actions of the company on public property, using public knowledge, outside of company time, without using any company resources.

3.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- While unlikely, you may be fired. This can be, depending on your jurisdiction illegal, which may allow you to sue (see “(If Fired) Sue”).
- If those in power positions learn of your protests, it may result in a smear (or whisper) campaign against you possibly resulting in decreased hireability.

3.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Bring bad PR to the company increasing costs of continuing on current course of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to the public.
- Can build a community of resistance.

Negative:

- Depending on strategy and tactics employed, protests can be used to negatively portray employees or the cause.

3.1.5 Historical Examples

Many such protests.

3.1.6 Effectiveness

This action can be useful but is often not directly effective in driving change. Companies cannot be shamed into doing the right thing. They are driven by a profit motive and public protests are often not covered enough to cause enough negative PR to be worth considering. However, informing and reminding the public is an important task that helps the cause. The public nature of protests often also makes it a great place to connect with like-minded folks which can help the sustainability of other efforts. Tangentially, you could raise the execution of such actions with co-workers without revealing your involvement (e.g., “*Did you see the ...*”) to help identify sympathetic parties or push for actions internally.

3.2 Public professional protest

3.2.1 Description

Protests that happen during public professional events (e.g., during an industry conference) by someone who is allowed to be there (e.g., registrant). This can be thought of as a way of publicly quitting (in protest).

3.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- You may be kicked out of the event. Unlikely to be arrested unless you refuse to leave when asked to do so.
- You are likely to be fired. This can be (depending on your jurisdiction) illegal, which may allow you to sue (see “(If Fired) Sue”).
- Those in positions of power are likely to learn of your protests and it may result in a smear (or whisper) campaign against you possibly resulting in decreased hireability.

3.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Bring bad PR to the company increasing costs of continuing on current cost of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to others in industry
- Can build a community of resistance/mirror network of aligned folks.
- Remind co-workers of possible moral injuries and inspiring action

Negative:

- If done poorly, it can be used to negatively portray the cause.
- May result in disgruntled co-workers who “just want to do their job”.

3.2.5 Historical Examples

- “Google fires engineer who protested at a company-sponsored Israeli tech conference” ([Mariella Moon, 2024](#))
- “Two protesters interrupt Google keynote over killer robots, housing evictions” ([Carl Franzen, 2014](#))

3.2.6 Effectiveness

This action can be useful but is often not directly effective in driving change. Companies cannot be shamed into doing the right thing. However, there are likely workers who share your views and this can inspire them to follow other actions listed here. This will cause a small PR hit but it alone will not be enough unless sustained and consistent. Reminding fellow members of industry of the moral injury they will experience if they continue is also a positive. It can also be a catalyst for gathering and connecting like-minded folks for more effective actions.

3.3 Internal protest (active)

3.3.1 Description

“Internal Protests” is a term we use to describe protests that take place at work during work hours that are technically allowed by the rules of the workplace. For example, many companies have rules stating that expressions of dissent are allowed internally, but not externally. This can also include explicitly being “out of office” and using a day of absence as symbolism.

These protests disrupt the workplace and can vary in scope and aggressiveness (e.g., strong questioning during internal events, simple heckling during company celebrations, a solemn vigil). The purpose of these actions can be varied and include, but are not limited to: 1) raising awareness amongst co-workers, 2) decreasing morale and productivity of workers (thus increasing cost of status quo), 3) inspiring others, 4) costing the company in PR and prestige.

3.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- You may be kicked out of the workplace. Unlikely to be arrested (or immediately fired) unless you refuse to leave when asked to do so.
- Depending on how mainstream your cause is with management, you may be put on a shortlist to be fired.
- Depending on coverage, this may result in decreased hireability.

3.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Bring bad PR to the company increasing costs of continuing on current course of action.
- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company.
- Can build a community of resistance/mirror network of aligned folks.
- Remind co-workers of possible moral injuries and inspire action.
- Decrease productivity and lower morale of workers (increasing cost of status quo).

Negative:

- If done poorly, it can be used to negatively portray the cause.
- If you do get fired you’ll no longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.
- If done effectively, companies will put safeguards for future events that prevent similar actions from occurring/being as effective.

3.3.5 Historical Examples

- “Google walkouts showed what the new tech resistance looks like, with lots of cues from union organizing” ([Jillian D’Onfro, 2018](#))
- “Microsoft workers fired over Gaza vigil say company ‘crumbled under pressure’” ([Michael Sainato, 2024](#))
- “Facebook Employees Stage Virtual Walkout to Protest Trump Posts” ([Sheera Frenkel, Mike Isaac, Cecilia Kang, Gabriel J.X. Dance, 2020](#))
- “Microsoft Employees Question C.E.O. Over Company’s Contract With ICE” ([Sheera Frenkel, 2018](#))

3.3.6 Effectiveness

These actions when done at scale or by enough employees to limit retaliatory action are very effective (as they can be sustained). One off actions (or actions by small groups of employees) can also have an impact but it will be more limited and costly to these individuals. Unless the request of your actions does not go against the wishes of management, it’s unlikely that sanctioned protests will directly achieve any change. However, this action can be vital in setting up connections, action networks, as well as starting a process of documenting company actions all of which can be leveraged for other actions.

3.4 Internal protest (passive)

3.4.1 Description

In addition to active internal protests, passive internal protests are protests, technically allowed by company policies, that take place at work during work hours but do not disrupt the normal working of the workplace. These protests are meant to signal your displeasure at the company or solidarity with a particular view and help surface and build a community of like-minded folks. These actions range from letters to leadership, petitions, responding very negatively on feedback measures (e.g., employee wellness surveys) to coordinating clothing colors as a form of protest and raising awareness.

3.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- You may be asked to stop (e.g., political statements are not allowed).
- Unlikely to be fired unless you are identified as the root or refuse to stop when asked to do so, however depending on state or company (e.g., at will) the company could choose to harshly discipline everyone to prevent further actions

3.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company.
- Can build a community of resistance/mirror network of aligned folks.
- Remind co-workers of possible moral injuries and inspire action.
- Increase discontent within workforce.
- Erode company culture. As more internal events and posts become subjected to internal pressure they will remove or sanitise such settings which will erode the company culture.

Negative:

- Erode company culture. As more internal events and posts become subjected to internal pressure they will remove or sanitise such settings which will erode the company culture which may make it harder to organize.

3.4.5 Historical Examples

- “Meta employees say internal posts on support for Palestinians have been ‘censored,’ in an open letter to CEO Mark Zuckerberg” ([Kali Hays, 2024](#))
- “Mark Zuckerberg on leaked audio: Trump’s looting and shooting reference “has no history of being read as a dog whistle”” ([Shirin Ghaffary, 2020](#))
- “Amazon, Microsoft, Wayfair: Employees Stage Internal Protests Against Working With ICE” ([Rachel Sandler, 2019](#))
- “Google Activists Circulated Internal Petition on Israel Ties. Only the Muslim Got a Call from HR.” ([Sam Biddle, 2023](#))
- “Florida Law Firm Fires Workers For Wearing Orange” ([Alan Farnham, 2012](#))
- “Jewish BBC employees leave union after call to dress in Palestinian colours” ([Canaan Lidor, Jewish News Syndicate, 2024](#))

3.4.6 Effectiveness

These actions are to be considered a seed action to help drive organizing and inspiring others. If this is the extent of the planned actions then it is simply performative and will not have any meaningful effect on company actions. However as a means to draw in the curious and raise awareness it can be effective. These actions are a more advanced form of passive internal protests. They can be the source of greater action, organizing, informing, and inspiring others. If this is the extent of the planned actions then it is unlikely to have great effect (as it can be easily ignored), but it is effective to sow discontent amongst the workers which will decrease productivity thus increasing the cost of maintaining the status quo.

3.5 Disruptive workplace protests (aggressive)

3.5.1 Description

Unlike internal protests, disruptive workplaces protests are protests that take place at work during work hours but are not allowed via the existing workplace rules and regulations. These are extremely disruptive and attention grabbing. These are high-cost actions that are meant to force action by the company. They can also succeed in raising awareness amongst the remaining employees.

3.5.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.5.3 Risks

To Self:

- You will likely be fired.
- You will be asked to remove yourself from the premises, and will be arrested if you refuse.

To Others:

- Decreased productivity
- Decreased morale

3.5.4 Impact

Positive:

- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company.
- Can build a community of resistance/mirror network of aligned folks.
- Remind co-workers of possible moral injuries and inspire action.

Negative:

- No longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.
- If targeting is not precise and messaging is not controlled well, previously unaligned co-workers may become aligned against your cause.

3.5.5 Historical Examples

- “Google workers arrested after nine-hour protest in cloud chief’s office” ([Hayden Field, 2024](#))

3.5.6 Effectiveness

These actions are highly effective to help drive organizing and inspiring others. If this is the extent of the planned actions then it is simply performative and will not have any meaningful effect on company actions. However as a means to draw the curious and raise awareness it can be effective. Likewise, if such actions are maintained by a critical mass of people they can change the decision making of leaders as they will seek to avoid such actions.

3.6 Baiting Reactions

3.6.1 Description

If you can bait those who disagree with your cause into performing actions which blatantly violate the policies of the company or local laws (either on internal or external platforms), the company will have no action but to censor/fire them. Their firing or censor will serve to also chill speech from that side. As they become more mindful of how they act, their perceived power by decision makers will decrease, increasing the relative power of your cause. This can happen both on internal message boards and discussion forms as well as externally.

3.6.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.6.3 Risks

To Self:

- Continued moral injury by staying at workplace.
- If you're too obvious about baiting, you may face repercussions yourself..

3.6.4 Impact

Positive:

- Firing/Censoring of worker with opposing view will cause a chill from their supporters.
- This will lead to further self-censoring of those who work against your cause.
- Increased morale on your side.
- Increase discontent and friction within workforce, thus changing company culture.

Negative:

- Once the other side realizes what is happening, they may try to emulate your actions/strategize more effectively.
- Can be used to paint those who advocate for your cause as trouble makers or bad team players.

3.6.5 Historical Examples

- Moshe Binieli was terminated as employee from Microsoft after being baited into advocating for genocide ([Stop Arab Hate, 2024](#))

3.6.6 Effectiveness

Depending on how good and calm (i.e., well within company policy) you are and how fanatical your opposition is, this can be highly effective. Those fighting on the side of the status quo are not used to being judged according to the standard rules and to having their every move monitored. This makes them much more likely to slip up and when you capitalize upon their slip-ups you can fundamentally cause a chill in their pushing their views. Should the company not act, it serves a useful paper trail of their double standards which can be leaked.

3.7 Striking

3.7.1 Description

A strike is when workers collectively stop working until some demand is met. Usually, it is organized through a union, which has a legal right to strike, though it can be informally organized by workers (i.e., wildcat strikes) which may be considered illegal depending on the jurisdiction. There are different types of strikes from a complete work-stoppage, to rolling strikes, sit-down strikes, etc.

3.7.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.7.3 Risks

To Self:

- You are at risk of job loss and disciplinary action.
- Loss (or reduction) of income during the strike period.
- Company may bring in scabs causing the strike to fail.

To Others:

- Financial hardship on co-workers (especially those who are struggling financially)
- Same risks as those to self for all those participating in the strike.

3.7.4 Impact

Positive:

- Demonstrates worker power and builds community.
- Raises both worker and public awareness especially if media attention is captured.
- Can inspire others to action as well.

Negative:

- May be met with retaliation.

3.7.5 Historical Examples

- “Google contractors on strike in Austin hope to rally support among tech workers.” ([Forrest, 2023](#))
- “The people who deliver your Amazon packages are striking. Here’s why.” ([Ioanes, 2024](#))

3.7.6 Effectiveness

Historically this has been one of the most effective tools of workers. However, in the current situation, given the very low level of union memberships, it’s not clear how effective a wild-cat strike would be. A wild-cat strike can be effective if there is a large enough number of participants that temporarily replacing or firing them all is not feasible. For all strikes, effectiveness is increased if the action is timed during a critical time (e.g., peak production or near important deadlines) to increase worker’s leverage and if all workers are united (i.e., in a union which you can form or join).

3.8 Refuse to Build

3.8.1 Description

Unlike a strike, refusal to build is highly focused on a single aspect, project, or product. For example, a cloud engineer working on supporting multiple files, may refuse to engage with a single file, out of principle, and in a manner where his employer is aware. This could also be refusing to implement a feature or a process that is requested from the worker.

3.8.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

3.8.3 Risks

To Self:

- You may be fired or disciplined.

To Others:

- If your colleagues do not partake in the action with you, they be exposed to more have to do more work.

3.8.4 Impact

Positive:

- Demonstrates worker power and builds community.
- Highlights the importance of this issue to you to your manager/company.
- Raises both worker and public awareness especially if media attention is captured.
- Can inspire others to action as well.

Negative:

- May be met with retaliation.

3.8.5 Historical Examples

- “Google Engineers Refused to Build Security Tool to Win Military Contracts” ([Bergen, 2018](#))

3.8.6 Effectiveness

Historically this has been one of the most effective tools of workers. However, in the current situation, given the very low level of union memberships, it’s not clear how effective a wild-cat strike would be. A wild-cat strike can be effective is there is a large enough number of participants that temporarily replacing or firing them all is not feasible. For all strikes, effectiveness is increased if the action is timed during a critical time (e.g., peak production or near important deadlines) to increase worker’s leverage.

4 Malicious Compliance

4.1 Minimal productivity in position

4.1.1 Description

This action can take multiple forms. The most well-known of such actions would be ‘work-to-rule’ which is a classic strategy where workers stick to the exact terms of the contract and do nothing not explicitly mandated by the contract. This minimizes productivity while remaining on the job and getting paid. This is considered less disruptive than a strike and thus can be used in settings where strikes are not allowed (e.g., in healthcare or very critical positions). Another possible approach to minimize productivity is to strategically engage in missing deadlines. If workers are able coordinate actions (e.g., vacations, sick days, delayed responses) to force delays in vital deadlines, they can exert leverage over their company as consistently missing deadlines can cost the company big contracts, reduce its profitability, and exact costs from it.

4.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

4.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- Lack of high productivity may result in lower bonuses and slower/no promotions.
- If you are noticeably unproductive you may get fired. (Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) usually take 3-6 months)
- If this action is not widely coordinated, you may get a bad reputation among colleagues. This may make it difficult to be hired in the future.

To Others:

- Additional work may be shifted onto your teammates (unless you convince them to also do the same).

4.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Reducing productivity means decreased profits
- If you’re able to fail at opportune times, you can cause them to develop a negative reputation and possibly lose contracts.
- You create a worse work environment (either by encouraging laziness or causing others to be overworked).
- Increased work-life balance.

Negative:

- If you get fired, you’d no longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.
- You are still partaking in actions which may give you moral injury
- More adversarial relationship with your coworkers or management.
- You may feel some level of guilt for un-associated employees.

4.1.5 Historical Examples

- “How 1970s Britain Beat the Anti-Union Laws” ([Nicolson, 2023](#))
- “Hospitals work by candle during power strike – archive, 1970” ([The Guardian, 2001](#))

4.1.6 Effectiveness

Highly dependent on the employment situation and the specific approach. Usually work-to-rule is done by unionized employees (or a large enough group of employees to protect them from being fired). When done at individual level it will not be overly effective as individual tech workers are no longer rare and are easily replaced. However, if you're not worried about your hireability (or have another job lined up), clogging up their pipelines, forcing HR timelines to their maximum wastes as much resources from the company as possible. Effectiveness is also affected by whether or not you connect your refusal to go beyond your contract to the cause. If you don't then this action is only about exacting a price/working as a saboteur and will not drive them to change their work.

4.2 Hire lower quality candidates

4.2.1 Description

This is effectively operating at minimal productivity at scale. By introducing lower quality candidates (in terms of skills or personality) into the company you will reduce their prestige, their effect and any harm they cause. This is difficult but not impossible to do when entire groups are required to approve hiring decisions.

4.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

4.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are caught you will be fired and may be sued. However, if you don't leave a written trace or paper trail, it's almost impossible to prove and prosecute.
- You may get a bad reputation amongst colleagues. This may make it difficult to be hired in the future.

To Others:

- Creating a negative working environment for those under you.

4.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Reducing productivity means decreased profits
- Adding workers with bad personalities or low productivity will affect morale which will have many ramifications.

Negative:

- You are still partaking in actions which may give you moral injury
- As this is a secret action, you may (probably should) feel some level of guilt for un-associated employees.
- Lower quality candidates (e.g., those hired without technical talent or ambition) may also less effective in assisting with other actions for your cause.

4.2.5 Historical Examples

None (secret action)

4.2.6 Effectiveness

If you are able to consistently lower the quality of the candidate at the company you will negatively affect their productivity, morale, and their ability to harm. This would effectively be "minimal productivity" but at scale. As with the last point, this action can't be connected to your cause so it won't cause the company to change. It's only about exacting a price/working as a saboteur. Lower the standing and efficacy of work done at a company is only truly effective if no appealing alternatives exist as it can also hamper your ability to push for change in the future.

4.3 Push for quitting

4.3.1 Description

If you are not in an impactful position where your quitting would be felt strongly by the company, you may be able to convince high-performing/important team members to strategically quit (especially at tight deadline times). When a strong performer quits, regardless of the time, it will decrease overall productivity, and changes what the company can achieve. If their quitting can be done at a sensitive time (e.g., before specific crucial deadlines), it will cause the company to miss deadlines/goals and earn them a bad reputation. If the quitter explains why (see [Quit \(internal protest\)](#)), this will increase the cost of the status quo.

4.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

4.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are caught, you will be fired.

To Others:

- To those remaining, they face additional pressure/suffer from the departure.
- For the quitter, see all risks for the Quitting action above.

4.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Missing deadlines/failing to achieve contracts will cost the company both in money and PR.
- A strong performer leaving the company makes the company weaker.
- If they explain their reason for quitting, it will increase the cost of the status quo.

Negative:

- The more workers aligned with you who leave the harder it will be to change things in the company. Many of the other actions require a critical mass to be effective.

4.3.5 Historical Examples

- “White-Collar Sabotage Defines the ‘90s ” ([Brian Michael Jenkins, 1992](#))
- “Does My Code Kill Palestinians? ” ([Ibraheem, 2025](#))

4.3.6 Effectiveness

This can be quite effective. If you can orchestrate a large number of strong performers quitting and inform the company why they’re quitting, it makes it easy to make a financial case why the company behaviour should change. However, given the highly individualistic culture pervasive at tech companies, this will be very difficult.

4.4 Elongate bureaucratic processes

4.4.1 Description

If you do not want the risk associated with sabotage and do not want to quit, another possible option is to elongate bureaucratic processes. This could mean requiring excessive paperwork (being very meticulous and requiring multiple revisions), security checks (highlight all concerns), compliance requests, and using techniques such as irrelevant questions to stall meetings. These actions will reduce productivity of the company.

4.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

4.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- This may reflect poorly on you. You may not be promoted or may be fired.

To Others:

- They will have to suffer through the bureaucratic processes that you initiate.

4.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- Decreased productivity and profit
- Increased documentation and paperwork can help remove some of the secrecy that companies hide behind.

4.4.5 Historical Examples

- “How World War II Bureaucratic Sabotage Endures in the Defense Department, and How to Fight Back” ([Alexis Bonnell, 2024-25](#))
- “The Simple Sabotage Field Manual – CIA” ([CIA, 1944](#))

4.4.6 Effectiveness

If you are not caught you can substantially decrease the effectiveness and productivity of your company. Unfortunately, your actions will not be directly linked to your cause so it is not necessarily going to change your company’s actions. However, if only a certain type of work faces these issues, it may unconsciously change their actions. The more people aligned the more effective this action becomes. Make sure not to leave a paper-trail of your intentions to avoid prosecution. However, the creation of a paper trail can help remove some of the secrecy that companies like to hide behind.

4.5 Boycott (negative)

4.5.1 Description

A boycott is a withdrawal from social or commercial relations with an entity, group, person, or nation-state. A tried-and-true union strategy, generally, boycotts can be enacted by consumers, producers, or workers. What differentiates this action from the other boycott action §8.4 is that here the boycott happens undercover or through deception. For example, in many U.S. states, those receiving public funds are not allowed to boycott the state of israel. Thus, if one wanted to still engage with the boycott, they would need to do so under a guise of deception (e.g., find an excuse to go with a competitor's product). Alternatively, as leadership often does not share the same politics as rank-and-file employees, choosing a product based on a political/moral stand may not be feasible. In these instances, the rank-and-file employee may engage in light deception (e.g., applying more stringent criteria on the product they wish to be boycotted or lying about findings) to make the final decision maker make the choice the aligns with the boycott choice.

4.5.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

4.5.3 Risks

To Self:

- Lying is not a positive action, and if found out you may be fired or be disciplined.

To Others:

- If the alternative you choose is worse, then productivity will be lower.

4.5.4 Impact

Positive:

- You are partaking in the boycott and having the desired negative effect on the target.

Negative:

- Failure to coordinate large-scale boycotts or to demonstrate impact may result in decreased morale.

4.5.5 Historical Examples

- *Difficult to find examples as this is done undercover or through deception.*

4.5.6 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of boycotts depends on many factors (e.g., the presence of alternatives, the size of the boycott movement, and the market-share of the boycotted product/entity). The effectiveness of a hidden boycott is slightly reduced when compared to a public boycott as the target of the action is not made aware of the cost of their actions.

5 Knowledge Transfer

5.1 Leaking Anonymously

5.1.1 Description

As an employee within the company, you will have access to privileged information that the public does not know about. For this action, we consider leaking relevant and important information to the media while remaining anonymous.

5.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

5.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are discovered, you will be fired.
- If you are uncovered, you may be sued for violating non-disclosure agreements. This depends on your jurisdictions and relevant whistleblower protections.
- If you are uncovered it may make it difficult to be hired in the future.

To Others:

- Those close to you (ie., friendly co-workers) might be placed under more scrutiny.
- Direct co-workers and teammates will also be surveilled.

5.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Providing knowledge that no one else has.
- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company and beyond.
- Can serve as the basis for audits, legislation, investigations.
- Erode company prestige by giving them negative PR.
- Erode company culture. As more internal events and posts become subjected to internal pressure they will remove or sanitise such settings which will erode the company culture. Lack of trust between management and employees will increase rigidity and erode company culture.

5.1.5 Historical Examples

- “Tech workers are no longer afraid to go public. Here’s how they found their voices” ([Brian Contreras, 2021](#))
- “Facebook Fired An Employee Who Collected Evidence Of Right-Wing Pages Getting Preferential Treatment” ([Craig Silverman, Ryan Mac, 2020](#))
- “Report exposes Microsoft deepening ties with Israeli military amid Israel’s war in Gaza” ([Harry Davies, Yuval Abraham,, 2025](#))
- “Exclusive: Google Contract Shows Deal With Israel Defense Ministry ” ([Billy Perrigo, 2024](#))
- “Google Worried Israeli Contract Could Enable Human Rights Violation ” ([Nico Grant, 2024](#))

5.1.6 Effectiveness

Potentially very effective. The leak itself will not create much change other than informing the public and lowering social prestige by giving the companies bad PR. However, sensitive/private information, when placed in the hands of those who know how to wield it (e.g., skilled reporters, determined law makers, etc), can be a real mechanism for change. To this end, we believe that the largest determinant of the action's effectiveness is the recipient of the leaked data.

5.2 Leaking Publicly

5.2.1 Description

As an employee within the company, you will have access to privileged information that the public does not know about. For this action, we consider leaking relevant and important information to the media and going public. Going public allows you to more directly control the story of the leak and serve as a subject matter expert.

5.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

5.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are discovered, you will be fired.
- You may be sued for violating non-disclosure agreements. This depends on your jurisdiction and relevant whistleblower protections.
- This may make it difficult to be hired in the future.

To Others:

- Those close to you (ie., friendly co-workers) might be placed under more scrutiny.
- You may be the target of harassment/doxxing/smear campaigns.

5.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Providing knowledge that no one else has.
- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company and beyond.
- Can serve as the basis for audits, legislation, investigations.
- Erode company prestige by giving them negative PR.
- Erode company culture. As more internal events and posts become subjected to internal pressure they will remove or sanitise such settings which will erode the company culture. Lack of trust between management and employees will increase rigidity and erode company culture.

Negative:

- You'd no longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.

5.2.5 Historical Examples

- “Frances Haugen: A former product manager at Facebook” ([James Clayton, 2021](#))
- “Sophie Zhang at Facebook: A former data scientist” ([Karen Hao, 2021](#))
- “Christopher Wylie: Former Cambridge Analytica” ([Carole Cadwalladr, Emma Graham-Harrison, 2018](#))
- “Janneke Parrish: Apple’s #metoo” ([Bobby Allyn, 2021](#))

5.2.6 Effectiveness

Potentially very effective. As you will be the public face of the leak, not only will you inform the public and exact a PR hit on the company, you will also be able to help direct the reaction to the leak. People will look to you for advice on how to deal with the information you are revealing. If you have a plan, suggested actions or next steps, this makes the action very effective. If you do not have the skills to deal with the attention that comes to you (or you wish not to deal with this), then anonymous leaks will be more effective. Either way, like with the previous section, sensitive/private information, when placed in the hands of those who know how to wield it (e.g., skilled reporters, determined law makers, etc), can be a real mechanism for change. While the recipient of the leaked data is still very important it's less important when you go public as you can continue to push it to other sources/venues/actions.

5.3 Publicize Actions

5.3.1 Description

Instead of leaking privileged information (the previous two actions), as an employee within the company, you can still have impact by making non-privileged information available publicly, but this may be difficult to find or the public may not know how to protest or effectively take action . Talking about these events is not (directly) violating any NDAs. You can share your knowledge publicly or anonymously as with the previous two actions.

5.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

5.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- If they attribute the actions to you, you may be fired (or put on a short-list to be fired).
- You have to make sure that you only discuss publicly available information so that you do not violate NDAs. If you do not, you may be sued for violating non-disclosure agreements. This depends on your jurisdictions and relevant whistleblower protections.
- This may make it difficult to be hired in the future.

To Others:

- Those close to you (ie., friendly co-workers) might be placed under more scrutiny
- You may be the target of harassment/doxxing/smear campaigns.

5.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Providing knowledge that no one else has.
- Able to point to where public data is hidden/how they obfuscate it.
- Raising awareness of the issue to others in company and beyond.
- Can serve as the basis for audits, legislation, investigations.
- Erode company prestige by giving them negative PR.
- Erode company culture. As more internal events and posts become subjected to internal pressure they will remove or sanitise such settings which will erode the company culture. Lack of trust between management and employees will increase rigidity and erode company culture.
- If you go public, you can become actively involved in advocating for the cause. You will be seen as a subject matter expert. This can increase your impact/open doors.

Negative:

- If you get fired, you'd no longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.
- The company may close their public data sharing or change obfuscation in a manner you will no longer be able to readily/easily access.

5.3.5 Historical Examples

- Lots of tech workers speak about their companies' actions without violating NDAs.

5.3.6 Effectiveness

Potentially effective. You have insight and expertise the general public does not have. Sharing your knowledge will help inform the public and exact a PR hit on the company. If you share publicly, people will look to you for advice on how to deal with the information you are revealing. If you have a plan, suggested actions or next steps, this makes the action very effective. If you do not have the skills to deal with the attention that comes to you (or you wish not to deal with this), then anonymous publicizing will be more effective. Either way, your expertise can be of great use to those who know how to wield it (e.g., skilled reporters, determined law makers, etc), and can be a real mechanism for change.

5.4 Educational campaigns/teach-ins

5.4.1 Description

Many people (both internally at the company and externally as the general public) are apathetic because they lack knowledge. Both the knowledge of how current systems operate and how they can affect change. Note: Unlike leaking or publicizing actions, this step does not focus on specific actions of a company (though it may mention them). Rather, it focuses on educating the masses (colleagues or the general public) about systems.

5.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

5.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- Depending on media coverage/spin of your educational campaigns you may be smeared.
- If what you are educating others about upsets your bosses, you may face reduced hireability/be on a short-list to be laid off

To Others:

- Education efforts need multiple people to succeed and those who partake with you will face similar risks.

5.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- Increasing understanding may inspire others to action.
- You may increase the number of colleagues who share your views.
- You may be seen as a subject matter expert. This can increase your impact/open doors.

Negative:

- If you get fired, you'd no longer have insight into what the company does. This means losing opportunities to do other actions that only employees can do (e.g., leak things) and to the ear of those who can direct change within the company.

5.4.5 Historical Examples

- “#NoTechForIce Take Back Tech Resources for Popular Education” ([No Tech For Ice, 2018](#))
- “No Tech For Settler Colonialism – Hybrid Teach-In” ([No Tech For Tyrants, 2020](#))

5.4.6 Effectiveness

Sharing your knowledge will help inform the public and can inspire others to action. For the effectiveness of this action to be increased, it'd be good to tie your lessons with actions that can be taken by your learners. It would also be more effective to tie your efforts with a group of educators. Long-term sustained educational efforts are more likely to create a sea-change in opinion when compared to one-off workshops.

6 Violence

6.1 Violence against infrastructure

6.1.1 Description

Violence against infrastructure can take various forms. Various examples are: 1) vandalism of company properties, signs, and logos , 2) breaking windows of workplaces, 3) contaminating clean rooms, 4) arson to tools, rooms, or buildings, 5) the cutting of water/electricity and/or, 6) general destruction of tools or materials used by/in the office.

The action can be taken during the work-day for effect or can happen after work-hours to maximize time to cause damage and minimize risk to individuals. This action can also be set-up as a deadman's switch (where the harm only happens after the employee has been fired) thus enabling the employee to remain at the company and conduct other actions.

The perpetrators can plan to attempt to get away or plan to be arrested.

6.1.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

6.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are connected to the action you may be fired and lose your income.
- If you are connected to the action you arrest and possibly jail-time and a criminal record if convicted.
- If you are connected to the action you may experience reduced hireability and you may be slandered
- Possible physical harm (mistreatment from arresting officers, if the action involves physical risks).

To Others:

- If poorly planned, you may injure someone.
- If your action takes place during work hours you may scare someone.
- Your actions, if effective may cause job losses

6.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Substantially increased costs and reduced profits to the company.
- Potentially causing in-person workplaces to be shut down until further notice.
- Company will have to significantly increase security, affecting company culture.
- Increased awareness to cause.

Negative:

- Oppressive governments may set or expand draconian laws for this type of action.
- Contractor employees may not be paid if they aren't called for a shift.

6.1.5 Historical Examples

- “Protesters block Silicon Valley shuttles, smash Google bus window” ([Hollister, 2013](#))
- “UK’s Palestine Action forces closure of Israeli Elbit Systems factory” ([Al Mayadeen English, 2024b](#))
- “Elbit Cambridge to close following months of pro-Palestine protests” ([Al Mayadeen English, 2024a](#))
- “The Mathematicians Who Ended the Kidnapping of an N.Y.U. Computer” ([James Barron, 2015](#))

6.1.6 Effectiveness

Arguably the most effective action that can be taken especially if it is sustained. One-time actions of violence, while flashy, can be spun using the media and may not be effective. The most successful actions are the ones that consistently cost the company money, not just one time costs (see the success of palestine action in shutting down multiple factories). Even if the action itself does not achieve its direct goal, increasing the cost of continuing the current action will force re-consideration of the status quo.

6.2 Violence against self

6.2.1 Description

A possible target of violent action is oneself. Such actions rely on eliciting reactions from those observing the act: it takes a certain amount of courage and belief in a cause to cause one's self harm. There are various ways to do this, hunger strikes, non-lethal self harm, to lethal self-harm. Success is heavily reliant on the coverage that your action receives (both in terms of scope and spin). All of these methods are to be viewed as very extreme and not to be taken lightly.

6.2.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

6.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- The harm you inflict upon yourself.

To Others:

- Those who are close to you may be very negatively affected.
- You may inspire others to self-harm (without the thought process behind it).
- Causing harm to yourself. If you live in a jurisdiction without a developed healthcare system the healthcare costs can negatively affect you/your loved ones.
- You may be slandered.

6.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- Very negative PR to the company.
- Increased awareness regarding the cause and its importance to members of society.

6.2.5 Historical Examples

- "Suicide as Protest for the New Generation of Chinese Migrant Workers: Foxconn, Global Capital, and the State" ([Chan et al., 2010](#))
- "Aaron Bushnell: US airman dies after setting himself on fire outside Israeli embassy in Washington" ([Geoghegan et al., 2024](#))
- "American journalist sets himself on fire over US media's complicity in Israel's war on Gaza" ([MEE staff, 2024](#))
- "Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi: The man who sparked the Arab Spring" ([Lageman, 2020](#))

6.2.6 Effectiveness

Effectiveness depends on many factors. For example, as noted in the historical examples, self-immolation has worked and not worked due to multiple factors (the media control/spin of the story sympathy vs painting as mentally ill, the ability to latch onto a deep-seated discomfort, the shame/empathy of those watching). These actions rely on the human emotions (empathy, shame, etc.) of those witnessing them to be effective and unfortunately this is not something that can be taken for granted. Location and timing of the violence against self can make a vast difference to the event being hidden or covered by the media.

6.3 Violence against others

6.3.1 Description

Another possible target of violence is others. Violence towards others can be lethal (e.g., killing) or non-lethal (e.g., kidnapping and ransoming). This is an extreme action that can easily backfire. Your targets can vary from management to strike breakers.

6.3.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

6.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- Loss of employment and diminishing future job opportunities.
- Arrest, jail, and possible death penalty (depending on jurisdiction).
- Adoption of oppressive laws

To Others:

- Obvious harm to target
- Those close to you will be subjected to increased scrutiny.
- Your cause may be painted in a very negative light.

6.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Those engaging in negative actions will face consequences in this life
- Those who plan to engage in similar negative actions will think twice before engaging in the action.

Negative:

- You (and the cause) may be slandered
- Government may use this as a chance to crack down on those holding your view or push draconian laws
- Depending on media spin, you may not get/have public support

6.3.5 Historical Examples

- “Gunman at large after UnitedHealthcare CEO fatally shot in ‘brazen targeted attack,’ police say” ([Miller et al., 2024](#))

6.3.6 Effectiveness

Depends on a variety of factors. Unlike previous actions, successful execution of violence guarantees that at least one person engaging in the negative action will face severe consequences. However, if poorly coordinated or targeted it can result in more violence inflicted upon you or those who agree with you, or the enactment of oppressive laws, etc. The current cultural context paints any sort of violence (towards people) in a very negative light which may make it difficult to win others to your cause.

6.4 Sabotage products

6.4.1 Description

Depending on what your company does, you may be able to perform different types of sabotage on the products or services provided by your company. This will lower the reputation of your company/team, and cost them money. This can either be intentionally making design decisions that reduce the quality of the user experience, decisions on physical devices/materials that reduce quality, cost more and decrease performance, or if you're dealing directly with contracts signing bad contracts/behaving in such a way that discourages contractors from signing with you.

6.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

6.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are caught you will be fired. You may be sued depending if they can prove your intentions.

To Others:

- Others are likely to have to deal with the issues you create.

6.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- Decreased productivity.
- Reduced company PR
- Reduced company profits as they're forced to deal with the issues you create.

Negative:

- The sabotage will affect all users (even those you may morally support or wish to protect) equally.

6.4.5 Historical Examples

- "TikTok owner sacks intern for allegedly sabotaging AI project" ([Jolly, 2024](#))
- "Striking waiters in 1913 threw fistfuls of the eye-watering spice asafoetida into the air to clear out customers." ([Richman, 2024](#))

6.4.6 Effectiveness

It depends what team you work in, how immediate your cause is, and how your sabotage affects vital systems. If you work in a team directly causing harm, then sabotaging products is highly effective. Even more so if it affects a vital system that affects multiple products/harms or the cause is immediate. However, if you work in a tangential team sabotage may not be effective at prevent the harm directly. One can reasonably argue that tying the sabotage to your cause can increase effectiveness (by allowing management to quantify harm). However, it's also likely that media slander can paint your cause in a negative light resulting in overall harm to the cause.

6.5 Sabotage internal systems

6.5.1 Description

This action is similar to the previous action but directed at internal systems (e.g., email servers, testing production). This also includes not covering all test cases for a software (leading to bugs/issues in the future) or purposely designing architecture that is not up to all standards or will not scale well.

6.5.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

6.5.3 Risks

To Self:

- If you are caught you will be fired. You may be sued depending if they can prove your intentions.

To Others:

- Others are likely to have to deal with the issues you create.

6.5.4 Impact

Positive:

- Decreased productivity.
- Reduced company PR
- Reduced company profits as they're forced to deal with the issues you create.

Negative:

- The sabotage will affect all users (even those you may morally support or wish to protect) equally.

6.5.5 Historical Examples

- “Tesla ‘sabotage’ at Fremont Factory was due to a racial justice protest, claims report” ([Simon Alvarez, 2020](#))
- “Germany: Sabotage case launched against Tesla protesters” ([DW, 2024](#))
- “A new tool created by Google programmers reportedly allowed its employees to send Google’s top lawyer Kent Walker an automated email notification every time they open an internal document, to flood Walker’s inbox in protest over the company’s more restrictive policies over its internal documents.” ([Sapra, 2019](#))

6.5.6 Effectiveness

Like the previous action, effectiveness is strongly correlated to which systems you are able to sabotage and the time sensitivity of the cause at hand. The more immediate the cause and/or the more vital the system, the more effective the action especially if the affected teams are directly partaking in harmful actions. It’s important to note that sabotage is unlikely to prevent the company from proceeding but serves to increase friction.

7 Building Community

7.1 Organize

7.1.1 Description

Organization is the process of gathering many workers for a shared purpose. This can take the form of unionization or creating external employee groups (e.g., No Tech for Ice, No Tech for Tyrants, No Tech for Apartheid, No Azure for Apartheid). Pre-2010, technology workers were relatively rare. This gave them outsized power when compared to the average employee in other industries. However, as computer science education has entered the mainstream, technology workers are no longer as rare as they once were and this has resulted in a corresponding drop in their ability to influence their workplaces and management. To combat this drop in power, the most effective way is to combine your powers together into a union. Unionization can do much for employees such as preventing the abuse of temporary workers, stamping out bad contracts, and – more relevantly – allow workers greater say in what contracts their company takes on. As noted for most of the actions, sustained repeated actions are what will drive the most effect.

7.1.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

7.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- Employers tend to try to fire employees who push for unionization through indirect means.

7.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- Improve the working conditions of fellow co-workers and the industry as a whole
- Will protect free speech and future political actions attempted at the company
- Increase knowledge and labour and workplace regulation awareness

Negative:

- Employees will have to pay union dues (usually a small amount of each paycheck).
- Some employees may lose some negotiating power.

7.1.5 Historical Examples

- “Google Workers Speak Out About Why They Formed A Union: ‘To Protect Ourselves’” ([Allyn, 2021](#))

7.1.6 Effectiveness

Highly effective at giving you power which can be leveraged to achieve your goals. It can also create community which is a prerequisite for social action. It’s difficult to get people who view the world in an individualistic lens to care about others. It may be possible to overcome this through messaging which highlights the individual benefits to employees over a longer time period.

7.2 Engage with Civil Right/Activist Groups

7.2.1 Description

Whatever your cause is, it is likely that there are organizations (civil rights groups, NGOs, co-ops, etc) that share your cause and are taking action to work towards a shared goal (one that aligns with your views). While different organizations will require different skill sets, they can almost certainly benefit from your knowledge and time for various contributions.

7.2.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

7.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- While unlikely, you may be fired. This can be (depending on your jurisdiction) illegal, which may allow you to sue (see “(If Fired) Sue”).
- If those in power positions learn of your protests, it may result in a smear (or whisper) campaign against you possibly resulting in decreased hireability.

7.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- You will be offering an alternative thus making all actions a real threat/more effective.

Negative:

- Some groups are fronts for industry. Make sure to check the funding, membership, and organizational history of any group you will contribute to.
- Still suffering moral injury from day job.

7.2.5 Historical Examples

There are many groups which are looking for engagement from tech workers.

7.2.6 Effectiveness

Participating in these organizations can have positive effects. Different groups have different methods and that will affect how effective each one will be. However, multiple people working together will be more effective than individuals working alone.

7.3 Hiring politically aligned staff

7.3.1 Description

This action is different from hiring lower quality candidates because this action assumes that the candidates you push for hiring are qualified for the position. Having politically aligned staff join your ranks increases the chance that you'll be able to achieve a critical mass for many of the actions described in this document. This can be done by providing referrals to aligned people (to increase their chances) to asking more difficult interview questions of misaligned applicants.

7.3.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

7.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- If detected, could be accused of biased hiring and discrimination..

7.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Achieving critical mass will increase the effectiveness for many of the above actions.
- Increased solidarity among the working class

Negative:

- You will continue to suffer moral injury from working at your workplace and you'll be exposing those you hire as well.

7.3.5 Historical Examples

- “ Shared political views are more likely to result in a job hire.” ([McDermott, 2024](#))

7.3.6 Effectiveness

Effectiveness depends on whether or not you're able to achieve critical mass and whether or not those hired are willing to partake in actions/put pressure on management. As an individual, such an action is difficult to pull off to a degree required to have an effect unless you're high up the hiring chain. Deciding between attempting to achieve critical mass and change the company vs the negative alternative of sabotaging the company depends on your perspective regarding the ability of the company to change its direction.

8 Positive Actions

8.1 Build Competing Products

8.1.1 Description

Many of the companies we work at offer services which are not inherently negative. The point of leaking, sabotage, and other negative actions is to encourage them to change their course of action lest consumers leave them for competitors. Assumed in this train of thought is the presence of competitors that do not also engage in the same harms. This is often not the case. Thus, to provide a positive alternative, you can leverage your skills and experience to build competing products.

8.1.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

8.1.3 Risks

To Self:

- Not guaranteed to succeed. Taking on more risk and stress.
- Instability and competition with big business (known for anti-competitive business practices)

8.1.4 Impact

Positive:

- You will no longer be tolerating moral injury at your workplace.
- You will be offering an alternative thus making all actions a real threat/more effective.
- Increase the comfort of workers with shared views to take action as there is a company present which shares the same political (i.e., lowers the career risk).

8.1.5 Historical Examples

- “Calls to boycott tech company Stripe after CEO posts about recent visit to Israel” ([Mustafa, 2024](#)) led to the creation of “The Complete Stripe Alternatives List” ([Biggar, 2024](#))
- Rumble as an alternative to YouTube. “What is Rumble, the video-sharing platform ‘immune to cancel culture’?” ([Farah, 2023](#))
- Bluesky as an alternative to Twitter. “Bluesky Is an Overnight Success. Its CEO on Why the Social Media Darling’s Time Has Come.” ([Serwer, 2024](#))

8.1.6 Effectiveness

The presence of competing products/services is vital for boycotts and other pressure tactics to work. How effective such competition can be is reliant on a wide variety of factors that are out of scope for this work. Certain market aspects, such as the high monopolization of current industry, make it difficult for new entrants to compete but it’s not impossible to exploit a niche. Consultation with subject matter experts will be required.

8.2 Create assistive tools/resources

8.2.1 Description

One may also decide to work on creating tools or resources that enable others to achieve their goals such as the creation of guides on how to whistle-blow or organize. This could also include creating and/or execution of training material and support networks. While this would not directly help you achieve your cause, it may enable activists to be more effective in their actions.

8.2.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

8.2.3 Risks

To Self:

- Not guaranteed to succeed or used (or found) by others.
- Depending on the specific contribution, if you are employed at a company while doing this, and they dislike the tool/resource, you may be fired or put on a short-list for firing.

To Others:

- If your tool or resource is not of high quality, you may be exposing people who use it to greater risk than if they had not used it.

8.2.4 Impact

Positive:

- More effective/safe/secure worker actions in the future.

8.2.5 Historical Examples

- “A Tech Whistleblower Helps Others Speak Out” ([Woo, 2021](#)), creates ‘The Tech Worker’s Handbook’ ([Ozoma, 2021](#))
- The Collective Action in Tech team ([Tan and Nedzhvetskaya, 2020](#)) has multiple multiple guides such as “What to do if you get PIP’ed ” ([Schlessinger, 2024](#)) and “Organizing Against Genocide” ([Collective Action in Tech, 2024](#)).

8.2.6 Effectiveness

Companies continuously learn from each other ways to minimize worker power with regards to organizing and affecting the politics of the company. For example, companies are able to hire union-busting firms to help them strategize against their workers. In this respect, workers are at a disadvantage: while there is a plethora of historical experience for workers to leverage (as we have done in this work), it is not readily accessible for the everyday person. Creating resources which learns from the past, makes organizing or leaking easier and safer will help increase the effectiveness of all future actions. Likewise organizing training and creating support network will enable others to learn from each other and feel more supported in taking action.

8.3 Reparative Actions

8.3.1 Description

Reparative actions can take many forms. Financial reparations can be sought formally from a company or facilitated through employees hosting fundraising events with some level of matching from the company. You can use these events to advertise and raise money for your cause.

8.3.2 Positive or Negative

Positive

8.3.3 Risks

To Self:

- If your cause is not popular with management, you may be put on a list of sorts, but it's unlikely that you'll be fired for this.

8.3.4 Impact

Positive:

- Fundraising will minimize the harms caused by the company towards your goal (to some degree).
- Can highlight double standards of management in allowed causes (drawing positive attention to your cause).

Negative:

- Usually requires the organization to be recognized by the company and go through a stringent verification process which can limit to larger organizations and not grass-root organizations.

8.3.5 Historical Examples

There are many fundraising efforts. Some are done through organizational structures (e.g., donation matching) and others externally.

8.3.6 Effectiveness

Short-term fundraising can be quite effective. Employees in industry often have much more disposable income compared to the average worker. Long-term it is not the most effective means of action, as the company is keeping you employed because you are helping it meet its goals. Even though you're directing part of your effort/fruits of your labour towards a good cause, the bulk of your time (during the work day) might still contribute against your own cause.

8.4 Boycott (positive)

8.4.1 Description

A boycott is a withdrawal from social or commercial relations with an entity, group, person, or nation-state. A tried-and-true union strategy, generally, boycotts can be enacted by consumers, producers, or workers. Unlike the other boycott action §4.5, here the boycott is public and explained.

8.4.2 Positive or Negative

Negative

8.4.3 Risks

To Self:

- If the alternatives are much worse, you will be less productive/effective/efficient.

To Others:

- If the alternatives are much worse, you will be less productive/effective/efficient.
- Failure to have (or see) impact of boycotts of large multinational corporations may be demotivating.

8.4.4 Impact

Positive:

- You are partaking in the boycott and having the desired negative effect on the target.
- Competitors get another customer which will enable them to grow and hopefully improve making others' boycotts less costly.

8.4.5 Historical Examples

- “Software Freedom Conservancy Calls for GitHub Boycott” ([Gooding, 2022](#))
- “The Case Against Microsoft and GitHub” ([Paul, 2020](#))
- “What is BDS?” ([Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, 2025](#))

8.4.6 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of boycotts depends on many factors (e.g., the presence of alternatives, the size of the boycott movement, and the market-share of the boycotted product/entity). A public boycott is more effective than a private one as the target can calculate the cost of their actions.

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