



## SMART Union Official Corner

*Oscar Union Official* says about **SMART**:

"Our union uses this program whenever possible because it works so well in resolving grievances:

- **SMART seems to better address the root causes of workplace problems.**
  - I was impressed with the **SMART** mediators' skills in facilitating an open exchange between the employee and manager, as a first step in finding resolution.
  - I observed even "difficult" managers behave more flexibly and be more willing to compromise during **SMART** mediations.
  - After **SMART** mediations, I notice fewer repeat grievances against the same managers, thanks to improved communication.
- **SMART increases union productivity.**
  - Out of about 10 **SMART** cases, nine were resolved in a few weeks, with a maximum of one day's time spent by each party.
  - Before **SMART**, we had many grievances that took years to resolve and drained away our limited union staff time.
  - With **SMART**, the union can help more employees by not getting tied up with a few time-consuming cases.
- **SMART mediators are free.**
  - The union pays nothing.
  - Our agency pays only local mileage and parking costs.
  - The agency lending the **SMART** mediator pays its own employee's salary.
- **SMART lets the union stay in control.**
  - The union may attend the **SMART** session and speak on the employee's behalf.
  - **SMART** mediators address the employees' interests and do not impose a solution, as does a judge.
  - If the mediation does not resolve the case, the union still has legal remedies available, so it has nothing to lose trying **SMART**.
  - Since there is no loser in **SMART** mediations, the union does not risk losing face and marring its success rate.
- **SMART mediators are professional.**
  - The mediators I observed were well-trained and very effective.
  - Both sides trusted their objectivity.
  - Because **SMART** mediators come from another agency, both parties trust the confidentiality of the proceeding more."