

## “DO OR DIE” FOR UAW AS IT ATTEMPTS TO ROPE IN VOLKSWAGEN’S EMPLOYEES



Disappointed by its futile efforts in getting employees of such car makers as Toyota, Honda, Mercedes Benz and Nissan, to join their ranks, the UAW, or United Auto Workers has targeted Volkswagen's manufacturing facility in Chattanooga. UAW has a tarnished image, as past records show that they are heavily prejudiced in favor of their members and the security blanket they provide has increased absenteeism at the workplace, reduced accountability and induced undeserved pay-hikes. UAW President Bob King knows that failure at Chattanooga could have disastrous consequences for the union and greatly dilute its efficacy. King has seen the membership decline. Membership revenue is on the wane, forcing it to sign on non-auto members from casinos, university student-employees, and other groups. So much so, the union has had to use cash from its strike fund to meet day-to-day expenses. The outcome will decide whether the union will ever manage to bring any of the foreign-brand factories in the U.S. under its net. The Union's representatives have been at the Volkswagen's Chattanooga plant handing out authorization card, mobilizing employer opinion, as the first step towards getting a vote for unionization. An earlier attempt by the UAW at Nissan's plant fell flat, when the CEO Carlos Ghosn via closed-circuit TV, hinted without being explicit, that the Nissan had a lot of options around the world and if you vote to unionize, we'll just pack up and leave. However, it was extremely doubtful Volkswagen would follow suit. Its Chattanooga factory is vital to achieving its sales targets and closing it will have a negative impact on its profitability. Moreover, Tennessee is also a right-to-work state. The National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation states, "Every citizen has the right to work for a living without being compelled to belong to a union. Compulsory unionism in any form--"union," "closed," or "agency" shop--is a contradiction of the Right to Work principle and the fundamental human right that the principle represents." The UAW will try to entice and tempt workers through a promise of higher wages and job security. But their past miserable records in the GM and Chrysler 2009 bankruptcies will surely pose some very uncomfortable questions to them. Moreover, an individual enquiry revealed, "an attitude of gratitude for the work, the opportunity for a career, and the investments in these local areas." "I don't think the UAW makes a lot of sense down here," said one VW worker. "I see no need for union representation," says Adrian Leslie, a worker at Volkswagen's Chattanooga plant. "We are being treated fairly here." It is a well document fact that almost every job lost at U.S. car factories in the last three decades has been at a unionized company, while almost every job gained has come at a non-union company. What has added to the UAW's woes is that the factories that they are targeting are in the South, which is historically hostile to unions. The German car companies that are being targeted by King have so far declined to comment, but they are apprehensive of the union's confrontational past. A Wall Street banker said, "They view the UAW as a disaster."