

## **7 ½ Ways to Raise Your Uniform Game**

## Consider this

Most people wear a uniform because it's required, not because they want to. But, what if your frontline team was excited to wear their uniform? Would that make your job easier?

Attitudes are often formed early in the day, right when people are getting dressed, and it's no secret that when you look good, you feel good. All this sets the tone for the way team members interact with your customers and each other. Ergo, bad uniforms can wreak havoc on more than just your image.

Let's get started!

## Tip # 1: Choices, Choices

Have you ever seen Groundhog Day? The movie where the main character, Phil, was reliving one day over and over again. Wearing the same uniform without reprieve can make your team members feel like Phil.

You have the power to offer them choices. Also, who says a uniform has to look like a “uniform”? If the team looks good and the styling and colors all fit, then they’ll feel better and work better, too. And, if you give your employees choices on what to wear, you might just become the best boss ever.





## Tip # 2: Reposition Your Brand

The first place we look to figure out who's official is the left chest, but not everyone is comfortable with that.

For instance, many women prefer not to have patrons looking at their chest.

Sleeves, hemlines, and collars can provide a more subtle location for your messaging. And, more companies are putting the brand message on the back, like The North Face.



## Tip # 3: Show More than Your Logo

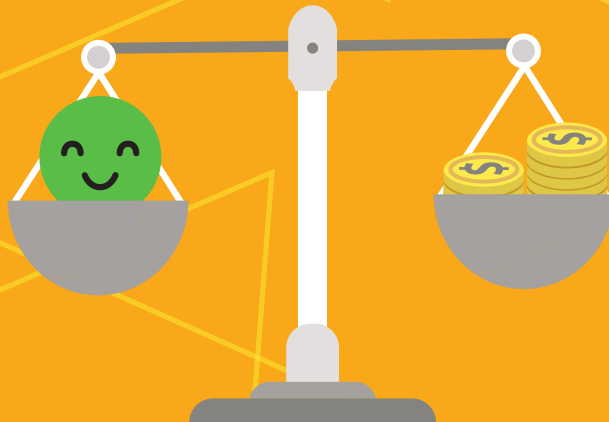
When someone walks into your establishment, they already know where they are, so you don't need your logo on the shirt, cap, jacket, and apron.

Your logo on one of those might be enough, and the other uniform pieces can include taglines, values, fun phrases, accent colors, and patterns, that all fit within your brand.

## Tip # 4: Focus on Value vs. Cost

You know the old saying “you get what you pay for”? The brands with the most employee engagement aren’t going for the bottom price, but they do want to get great value for their spend. A good starting place is with empathy for your frontline employees.

What would they want to wear? How do you want them to feel while wearing your uniform? When you start with the end-user in mind, you open up the possibilities for new uniforms to help your team feel both stylish and comfortable. Cheap outfits need replacing more often. And, savvy employees know a good quality shirt when they see one. So give them one.



## Case Study: Real Story of Swagger on the Job



Recently, a young restaurant worker was on the train in LA, heading home after a long day of work. He was still wearing his uniform, and he wasn't hiding it.

Our CEO saw him and remarked that our company had produced his shirt and buff. He got very animated and asked, "this, you made this?" pointing to his clothes, "I love this stuff." He wasn't being quiet about it. He was genuinely enthusiastic about what he had on. That made our day.

## Tip # 5: Change It Up

Do you remember the old studies on which wall paint color led to the greatest productivity?

Researchers found that it wasn't about a single color but the change in wall colors that made the difference.

When you make changes, it shows everyone looking in that you're active and evolving. The same is true for your uniforms. If you keep your team in the same thing year after year, it shows that you're not adapting to a shifting marketplace.

Modern brands change their uniforms regularly by adding new styles, colors, sleeve lengths, and hem lengths. So, keeping it fresh affects your bottom line too.







## Tip #6: Treat Your Rock Stars like Rock Stars

Since your frontline employees are the embodiment of your brand, they need to be treated like the amazing people they are—starting with their New Hire Kit.

Give them an awesome swag bag containing a variety of branded gear; welcome them to the team with a custom message, provide a reward program that encourages the pursuit of company goals, and provide regular replacements of key uniform pieces. When they look sharp, it shows that your company cares.

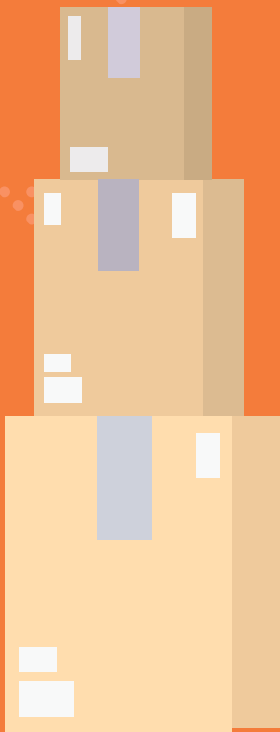
## Tip # 7: Get with the Times

Inventory only is so last century: In the olden days, there was one way to manage uniform fulfillment, and that was long-term held stock. Now, with many brands thinking differently about their image, the options for Uniform Program Management are increasing.

Fortunately, there are new options available. While most brands still have core items in-stock for regular use, many items can be produced on demand and held in a virtual inventory.

Another option is Group Orders. This takes advantage of the overall volume of the franchise group that may participate, and since the gear is produced on demand, there are no inventory holding costs.

How this works is that everyone places their orders during the same period, and then the entire volume is produced at one time and drop-shipped. No one wants to have three years' worth of inventory dollars sitting on a shelf.



## Tip # 7 ½: Think Beyond Embroidery

When we started writing this, the last piece of advice was intended as more of a half tip, but it just might be the most valuable. While embroidery is often the go-to for uniform branding, it's by no means the only one.

Let's look at top athletic brands for a sec. They're an awesome source of inspiration because they're always creating new trends. They've designed silicone emblems, leather and fabric layered patches, UV and reflective inks, metal sewn-on tags, and LASER light treatments (that burn your branding into the fabric).

There are new patches that, once scanned by the user's mobile phone, will launch your URL. [With this technology, there are so many ways to make your brand stand out.](#)



At the end of the day, you want your employees to feel accomplished and successful, so at the beginning of the day, provide them with the gear they want to wear - the apparel that amps their confidence, and creates excitement and energy to serve your customers, and each other.

Clothing is an unsung hero in your brand's success. May you unlock its potential and go on to be remembered as the best boss in history.

