

# — Is It Time for a Uniform Reboot? —



## Tips for Helping Your Entire Team Dress for Success

Changing up your company's uniforms benefits everyone on the team – from your boots-on-the-ground team members, to HR and Marketing, all the way up to the CEO. Here are 7 ½ tips to get you thinking outside of the box so your uniform reboot makes a lasting impression.



***“Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence in society.”***

***– Mark Twain***

No matter what industry you’re in, if your employees are customer-facing, what they wear is almost as important as how they actually perform their jobs.

That’s because your employees are an extension of your brand, and great uniforms help make lasting, positive impressions on your customers every day. They help spread the word about your company, foster trust, respect, and can help build brand loyalty.

### **When was the last time your company had a uniform reboot?**

If it’s been awhile, it might be time to give your company a new look. Studies have shown that new uniforms can help boost worker morale and productivity, which can indirectly help your bottom line.

New uniforms are a chance to reposition your brand in the marketplace and create a consistent look and feel across your entire team. In this eBook, we’ll take a look at how every department can benefit from a uniform reboot, and close it out with 7 1/1 tips to consider during the planning stage.

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# Human Resources: An Intimate Connection to Your People

A company's HR department is intimately connected with its people. They are often the first point of contact for talent recruitment, interviewing, onboarding, and ongoing work-related matters. With a tight labor market, employers are seeking to attract and retain great talent, reduce turnover, and improve morale and productivity, but there are currently a lot of headwinds.



New uniforms can help HR directors accomplish their objectives and bolster their results. If a company's employees like wearing their uniforms because they are comfortable and they look great, that boosts employee morale, productivity, and pride in the company.

Great uniforms make employees feel better about themselves, and that good feeling is conveyed to your customers. Uniforms help your customers quickly identify and recognize your employees and convey authority and trust. Studies have shown that well-fitting, comfortable, professional uniforms improve worker morale and customer service worker service.

Finally, every new employee loves receiving a welcome bag of goodies filled with company-branded apparel and promotional items to don on their new desk:

- Uniforms
- Casual day t-shirts or polos
- Sweatshirts and quarter zips
- Coffee mugs and cups
- Cinch sacks and duffle bags
- Pens
- Mouse pads
- Water bottles
- Hats

Whatever you choose, branded apparel and items help make for a fantastic onboarding experience that will get your employees excited about your brand.

# CEOs: A Focus on Synergy

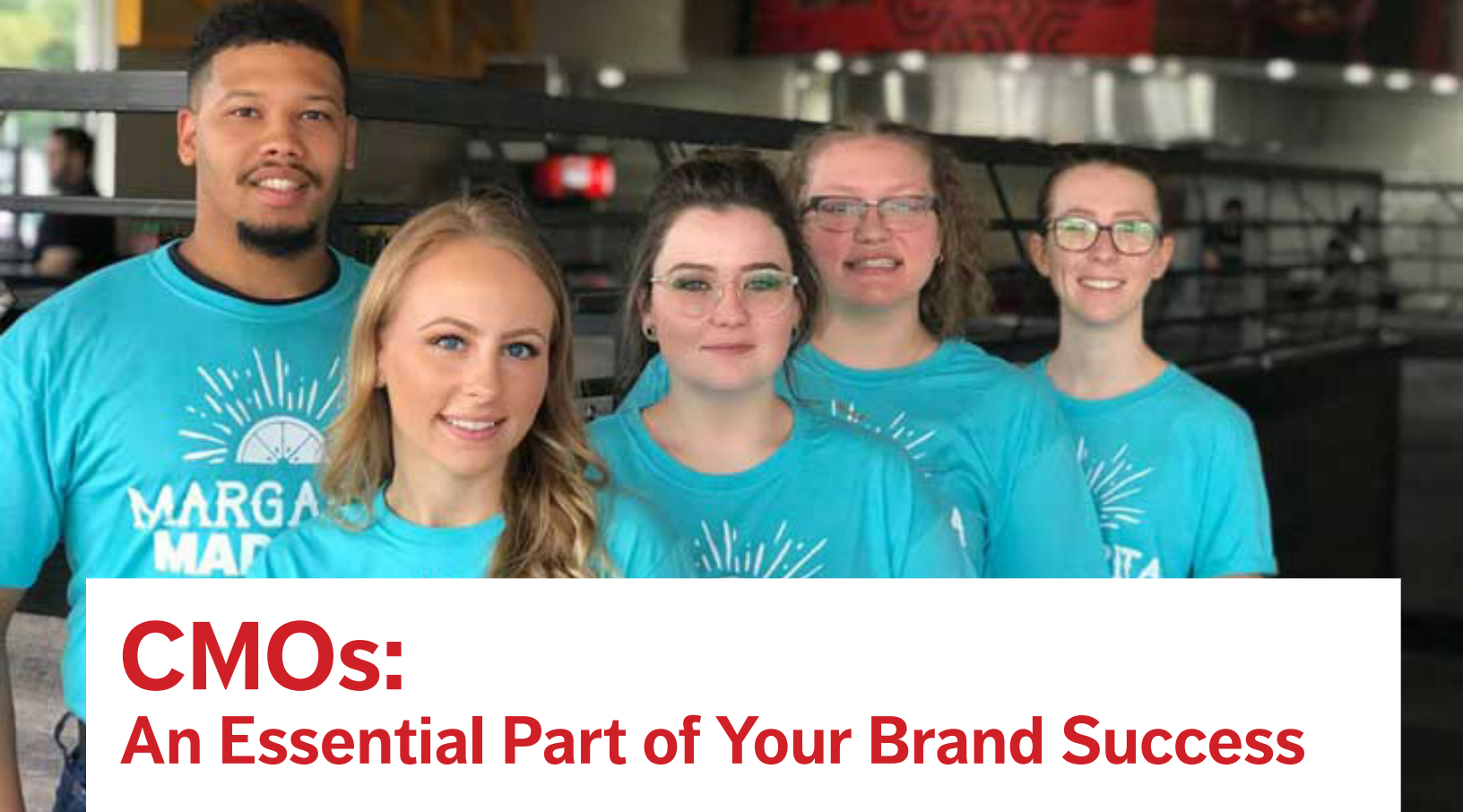
Let's face it—corporate CEOs have a lot of demands to deal with these days. Whether it's exceeding shareholders' expectations, grappling with a potential looming recession, dramatically repositioning a global brand, or addressing the new reality of remote or hybrid work, CEOs have a lot of balls to juggle and a lot of things on their minds when it comes to keeping all the teams running smoothly.

## Recruitment and Retention

New uniforms have the potential to directly and indirectly contribute to a whole host of business objectives, including aiding in the recruitment and retention of talent, improving consumer sentiment about your brand, and achieving and bolstering synergy with other marketing and branding efforts.

The bottom line is that new uniforms and professional apparel can help any CEO, whether they're the head of a Fortune 500 company, a Silicon Valley startup, or a growing local brewery. A uniform refresh can contribute to the company's market positioning, growth, and market share. New uniforms are a sound investment that helps each department and executive team member achieve their objectives in an affordable, impactful way.





# CMOs: An Essential Part of Your Brand Success

Clothing is an often-overlooked but essential part of your brand's success story. A great-fitting, great-looking uniform has the power to change everything. It may even be the first interaction a customer has with your brand—so brand it right!

Most people wear a uniform because it's required, not because they want to. But if your frontline team were excited to wear their uniforms, think about what that means from a marketing perspective.

Attitudes are often formed early in the day, right when people get dressed. When you look good, you feel good—so what your employee wears sets the tone for how they interact with your customers and each other.

Every happy, comfortable employee—an employee who feels good wearing their uniform, who wakes up feeling like a valued part of a team right down to the shirt on their back—is an advertisement for your company's brand and a positive asset to your marketing department.

A uniform refresh is like any marketing or branding change—evaluate the current situation, throw out what doesn't work, and try out something new that might. Do it right, and the results of your employees' new uniforms could include more positive customer engagement and attention.



## Case Study: A 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: "This, you made this?" he asked, 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.

That's the power of a great uniform. That's what a comfortable, empowered employee sounds like. A comfortable, empowered employee is a walking advertisement for your brand—and a better advertisement than money can buy.



# 7 ½ Uniform Reboot Tips

Hopefully by now your wheels are turning and you're ready to get started planning your uniform refresh! First and foremost, have fun. A uniform reboot is your chance to make a big statement with your employees and customers.

Here are 7 ½ tips to get you thinking outside of the box so your reboot makes a lasting impression:

## TIP # 1

### Choices, Choices

Have you ever seen *Groundhog Day*—the movie where the main character, Phil, finds himself reliving one day repeatedly? Wearing the same uniform daily without reprieve can make your team members feel like Phil.

But you have the power to offer your team choices—to make every day for your team feel like a new one. Who says, after all, that a uniform has to look like a “uniform?”

Giving your team more choice in the matter, opportunities to switch things up day-to-day, and seasonally appropriate attire cuts down on monotony and helps make every day feel like a new day.

If your team looks good and the styling and colors all fit, they'll feel better and work better.



# TIP # 2

## Reposition Your Brand

Choosing a uniform your employees will love wearing means thinking outside of the box. When you're looking at a new design from the perspective of all of your employees and their needs, you'll find solutions to problems you might not have ever thought about.

For example, when you're a customer, the first place you look to figure out who's official is the left side of the chest, where your company logo typically is. But not everyone is comfortable with that. For instance, many women prefer not to have patrons looking at their chests.

When you start really thinking about who's wearing your uniform and their daily life as an employee of your business, you'll start to think of more creative ways to position the logo and other pieces of messaging on your uniform.

Sleeves, hemlines, and collars, for example, can be a refreshing alternative for your messaging. Today, more companies are putting their brand message on the back—like The North Face, for example.

In other words, today's modern uniforms don't have to be predictable or standard-issue. In fact, the most memorable branded uniforms stick in your customers' minds and draw their eyes by not being predictable and following existing trends.



# TIP # 3

## Show More than Your Logo

Logos are a big part of your brand's identity, conveying authority and authenticity to your customers and creating positive consumer sentiment. Having a prominent logo on your uniforms is vital for building up these aspects of your brand and keeping your business on your prospective customers' minds.

That said, your logo isn't the be-all, end-all of your branding. And when someone walks into your establishment, they already know where they are—so as long as your logo is prominently displayed, you don't necessarily need your logo on the shirt, cap, jacket, apron, and everything else.

Having your logo on just one of these pieces might be enough. Consider using the other pieces of your employees' uniforms to further build up your brand with your tagline, values, accent colors, and patterns that excite your customers about your brand. Mix it up!



# TIP # 4

## Think About Direct and Indirect ROI

You know the old saying, “you get what you pay for?” Cheap, ill-fitting, uncomfortable uniforms can have a massive negative impact on your employees’ mental state and their ability to do their jobs and represent your brand well.

Although that certainly isn’t saying you need to break the bank. Rather, you need to think about getting the best value for your spending, and not just direct monetary value. You need to think about the ROI you receive from factors that can’t so easily be assigned a dollar amount as a line item on an invoice for Accounts Payable.

The brands with the most employee engagement aren’t going for the lowest price, though they want great value for their spending. Their first consideration is empathy for their frontline employees.

What would your frontline employees want to wear? How do you want them to feel while wearing your uniform? Morale, pride, and productivity are all on the line here. When you’re getting the best value for your spend on your uniforms and providing clothes your employees can feel good in, you increase your bottom line, keep your workers loyal and happy, and in general reduce churn and employee turnover.





When you start with the end user in mind, you open up the possibilities for new uniforms to help your team feel stylish, comfortable and empowered.

Here are just some of the benefits to having comfortable and empowered employees:

Your HR department will see more satisfied, more engaged employees and less employee turnover.

Your marketing department will see increased brand awareness, improved customer sentiment—because your customers will feel more comfortable around comfortable employees—and improved brand compliance among your employees.

When it comes for getting bang for your buck, cheap and low-quality workwear also needs replacing more often. Savvy employees know a good quality shirt when they see one—so give them one! Ultimately, cheap uniforms tarnish your brand and reduce its effectiveness.

It doesn't cost as much as you might think to provide a good quality shirt, and one good quality shirt that costs a few dollars more and lasts years longer is ultimately a lot cheaper than a low-quality shirt that wears out and needs replacing in just a few short years.

# TIP # 5

## Change It Up

Do you remember the old studies about which wall paint color led to the greatest bump in productivity? Researchers found that it wasn't about a single color, but the change in wall color made the difference.

When it comes to business branding, nobody wants to be stuck in the past. If your branding isn't keeping up with modern trends, your customers will feel like your service isn't, either. When you make changes, it shows the world that you're active and evolving—not some lumbering brand dinosaur that can't keep up with the times.

The same is true for your uniforms. Modern brands change their uniforms regularly by adding new styles, colors, sleeve lengths, and hem lengths. Change for the sake of change does a lot more than you might think to freshen things up, lift employee morale, and bolster customer sentiment, as long as you don't overdo it.

Change stimulates your customers and energizes your frontline workers, so keeping it fresh affects your bottom line, too.





## TIP # 6

### Treat Your Rock Stars Like Rock Stars

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

Day one, 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 your employees look sharp, it shows that your company cares and encourages loyalty and enthusiasm for the company mission.

And when it comes to swag, it's not just about employees—it's about your customers, too. If your customers really love your brand, and they see your employees rocking branded gear, they might even want a piece of the action themselves!

You know you have a great uniform when even your customers ask to buy it. Great branded clothing and gear doesn't just turn your employees into brand evangelists—it makes your customers want to spread the word, too!



## TIP # 7

### Inventory-Only is So Last-Century

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

For example, 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, which take advantage of the overall volume of the franchise group that may participate. Since the gear is produced on-demand, there are no inventory holding costs.

Here's how it works: Your team places their orders during a set shopping window. Once the sale closes, the apparel is made and drop-shipped to you. No one wants to have three years' worth of inventory dollars sitting on a shelf.

There are a lot of solutions out there nowadays to make it easier to have branded gear and swag on-hand and available when you need it without cluttering up your own company's storage space or running into shipping and supply chain issues.

# TIP # 7 1/2

## 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 option for uniform branding, it is by no means the only one.

Nothing catches someone's eye like something they've never seen before. And today, the trends in branded apparel point toward premium brands to project an image of high quality and modernity. Top athletic brands like Nike, Adidas, or Under Armor always create new branding trends.

They've produced activewear and uniforms with silicone and PVC emblems, leather and fabric layered patches, UV reactive and reflective inks, and even laser light treatments that burn their branding into the fabric.

Metal sewn-on tags, previously associated with high-end boutique accessories, are also catching on with clothes. And there are new patches that, when scanned by the user's mobile phone, will launch your URL using a QR code.

With all this new technology and all these new techniques, there are more ways than ever to make your brand stand out in a crowded, competitive marketplace.





# Get Started on Your Uniform Reboot Today!

At the end of the day, you want your employees to feel accomplished and successful. Start them with the gear they want to wear—the apparel that amps their confidence and creates energy and excitement.

A uniform reboot is a cost-effective investment that returns dividends and helps your company—including your CEO, HR team, CMO, and more—achieve their specific objectives. A new uniform benefits everyone and is a great way to grow your brand, build customer and brand loyalty, and boost your bottom line.

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

Ready to revamp your brand with custom uniforms that your team will love and your customers will notice?

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2022 Trend Guide**

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