

**Should I Lease, Rent, or Purchase My  
Company's Uniforms?  
Uniform Nations | @UniformNations**

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## Introduction

Uniforms can help define your company. They are one of the many ways you can create a consistent look and feel across any national brand, and a way that you can ensure that every visitor and customer gets the same experience.

There's a catch to every aspect of a business- uniforms can be a costly, ongoing expense, and it's difficult to determine the best way to manage the process.



Some companies prefer to purchase their uniforms outright, while others prefer to rent or lease their uniforms. Each of these methods have their advantages and their drawbacks.

This article will help define some of these differences, and guide you to a solution that works best for your business.

Once you have made your decision, we can help you find a local provider in your area that will help you with whichever solution you choose.

## Renting or Leasing Your Uniforms

The first two options that we will explore is renting or leasing uniforms.

This usually entails contracting with a uniform service provider that will pick up your uniforms on a daily or weekly basis.

It eliminates some of the up-front cost of actually purchasing your uniforms, and reduces the inconsistency of having your employees responsible for replacing damaged or soiled uniforms.



### Renting vs. Leasing Uniforms- What's the Difference?

Most uniform rental services and leasing services have strikingly similar services- you contract with the provider, they measure and provide uniforms for your employees, and will provide new uniforms when they're requested for new employees, replacements or repairs.

The biggest difference between renting and leasing uniforms is how the laundering is handled. When you **rent** uniforms, the rental company picks up soiled uniforms and provides laundered uniforms for you on a regular basis. When you **lease** uniforms, your employees launder their uniforms themselves, or use equipment provided onsite.

Laundry services can account for hundreds of dollars in your monthly uniform rental bill- eliminating these costs and trusting your employees to keep your uniforms clean and ironed.

In industries where there's a good chance you're going to have a lot of soiled uniforms at the end of each workday, renting uniforms that will be picked up as often as you need them.

This reduces the chance of an employee accidentally forgetting them, not laundering them, or not keeping them presentable as often as your company standards require.

## Benefits of Leasing or Renting Uniforms

Let's look at some of the benefits of utilizing a local uniform rental service to lease or rent uniforms for your business.

### Includes Repair and Replacements



Damaged or lost uniforms can be costly to any company. If there's a chance that your employees are going to gather tough stains on their uniforms on a regular basis, or the chance that the uniform will be ripped or damaged, renting uniforms might make a lot of sense for your company.

In most cases, damaged or lost uniforms are either included in the rental fee, or replaced for a fraction of the cost of purchasing an entirely new uniform.

### No up-front capital investment

Purchasing enough uniforms for a small company to ensure you maintain the quality and image you're looking to achieve can be costly- especially if you have hundreds of employees you're trying to outfit.

If you want to institute a quicker change in your image without having to worry about the up-front cost, renting uniforms is the way to go. It gives you a chance to make quick adjustments to match a rebranding, and provides an easy-to-manage solution that eliminates the short-term cost of buying uniforms.

## No inventory/storage costs



To get better pricing for uniforms long-term and allow for growth or uniform replacement, many companies purchase surplus uniforms and store them.

Maintaining that inventory and storing them can be much more costly than you think- especially if you decide to change the style or

look of your existing uniforms. You could potentially have thousands of dollars' worth of old uniforms that you have no use for in the long-term.

If you're planning to rebrand (or your company has a history of rebranding every few years), renting your uniforms can eliminate long-term storage costs and useless inventory.

## Better for high turnover rate

Let's face it- some industries and companies have a higher turnover rate than others- and purchasing uniforms for a short-term employee is a sunk cost. If your company has new employees on a regular basis, a rental program can reduce your costs of purchasing and customizing uniforms for employees that might only be there for a short period of time.

Most uniform rental services provide flexibility for adding and removing the number of uniforms you require, giving you a chance to adjust your monthly costs based on seasonality, temporary workers, or a high turnover rate. That way, you maximize the efficiency and lead-time for new employee uniforms while reducing the sunk cost of buying a uniform that may be unusable before you know it.

There are plenty of advantages to renting uniforms- it's a simple way to get a fresh look for your employees and your business without having to worry about long-term expenditures. That being said, there are some drawbacks that might not be advantageous for your company.

## Drawbacks of Renting or Leasing Uniforms

### It Requires a Contract

To rent uniforms, you'll need to sign a contract- and uniform contracts are very comprehensive.

The contracts last from 2 years to 5 years- and are usually renewed automatically after a short cancellation period.



Although you can change out the style or type of uniform, you are locked into a long-term contract that isn't easy to cancel.

In addition, you could see a 30% extra charge for sizes above XL, and some contracts require you to purchase the uniforms you have rented when your contract expires. Be sure to look at all the details of your contract before committing to it to ensure you're aware of any fluctuating charges, additional fees, and exceptions to repair and replacement uniforms.

### Look Out for Additional Charges

Additional charges can be 20% to 40% of the annual costs of a uniform rental program. The additional charges range from prep charges to environmental fees, and could include service and fuel charges, minimum stop charges, emblems and nametag fees and more.

Here are some of the more costly charges that you have to account for throughout the length of your contract.

### **Size changes**

Throughout your contract, employees could have their uniforms adjusted for when they lose or gain weight. Any time you request a size change, there is a fee associated with it.



### **Set-Up Charges**

Set up charges are what rental companies charge to ensure that your uniforms have the appropriate nametags, logos and other important things. These charges are normally waived for the initial employees that are covered on the original contract, but any new hires are charged an additional fee.

### **Loss Charges**

When an employee leaves (quits, retires, terminated, dies, etc.) the company taking the service is charged for any uniform that wasn't turned in- and can include an active employee when there is a discrepancy concerning the number of uniforms turned in and the number of uniforms returned following cleaning.

### **Long-Term Garment wear and tear**

Over the course of a multi-year contract, employee uniforms tend to fade and end up looking less professional. In most cases, the uniforms that were provided when the original contract was signed are the ones that are used throughout the length of the contract.

Although you can request new uniforms, using uniforms that are faded or worn is common, and over the course of a few years, your garments won't be as bright as they used to be.

## Quality and Image

One thing you sacrifice when renting uniforms is quality and extra features.

Most uniform rental companies offer a limited selection that you can choose from when renting or leasing uniforms



In most cases, they use the least expensive clothing in their line. This could be something the company produces themselves, or something that they purchased in bulk (and couldn't sell).

As you can see, renting or leasing uniforms for your company does have its advantages, the biggest ones being the minimal upfront cost and that you don't have to worry about storing or maintaining uniforms for a set period.

There is one alternative (which all of our uniform service providers offer) that can give you anything and everything you want for your new uniforms- you just have to purchase them outright.

## Buying Uniforms- Is it worth it?

Purchasing uniforms has its own unique set of benefits and downsides. If you're looking for a unique look or specific style or color, it's going to be hard to find a company that will rent or lease uniforms that can't be used universally across multiple companies.

If you want to enhance your brand more than providing a consistent, clean, uniformed look, buying uniforms may be the way to go. Here are some benefits to buying your uniforms vs. utilizing a uniform rental service company.

## Benefit #1- Long-Term Cost Savings



Although there are significantly lower up-front expenditures when you buy uniforms vs. renting or leasing them, in the long-term you can save up to 40% by eliminating costly per-uniform charges including laundry service, resizing service, and new employee setup fees.

You might lose a little consistency by having your employees launder their uniforms themselves, but if you have low turnover or need new uniforms annually instead of monthly or weekly, you can save quite a bit of money and have higher-quality uniforms as well.

## Benefit #2- Better Quality, Customized Uniforms

If you're looking for a specific type or style of uniform, you might have a very difficult time renting or leasing something that fits everything you're looking for. Purchasing your uniform allows you to not only select the color and style that matches your marketing- it gives you a chance to have high-quality uniforms that are much more durable than rented uniforms that are usually much lower quality.

That way, you have a look that no one else has- and a uniform that will hopefully be much more durable and last longer than if you decided to rent them.

## No Contracts

If you want the freedom to change the style, color, or logo at will, purchasing uniforms will make things easier. You can choose to purchase a small amount of uniforms instead of locking yourself into a 3 to 5 year contract, and you can switch them out as often as you want to. It eliminates a long-term cost- but realize that the smaller uniform orders you request, the more they will cost per uniform- so you might cut into the long-term benefit mentioned above if you order new uniforms too often.

The big difference in buying vs. renting is choosing between convenience and customization- what's more important to your business?

## Drawbacks to Purchasing Uniforms

As you might guess, most of the disadvantages of buying uniforms were already mentioned previously when we discussed the advantages of renting or leasing uniforms. Here are the two most important disadvantages, but keep in mind the decision to rent or buy is different for every company.

### Drawback #1- Higher Upfront Costs

Purchasing uniforms costs more up front- since you're not spreading the cost of each uniform over a set amount of time, you have to purchase them in bulk. The smaller number of uniforms you purchase at once, the more they cost per uniform.

If you have the capital to invest in it, you'll create the savings we mentioned above. The good thing is that replacing or purchasing uniforms for new employees is all included upfront- depending on how many sizes and types of uniforms you want to store.

### Drawback #2- Less Consistent Image

With our experiences, we've realized that purchasing uniforms is great when you don't have to launder them- but you have put some of the responsibility to maintain your business' image in your employees' hands.

Rented uniforms are laundered and pressed- if you have them delivered to your company, they'll always have that same look. Employee-washed uniforms can shrink; be wrinkled, or worse- not laundered at all.

It's one thing to trust your employees, and discipline them if they don't have their uniform up to your standards. Do you want to take that risk?

## Conclusion

So there you have it- some of the most compelling reasons to rent or buy your uniforms.

There's a lot of things to consider, and you really need to determine what's most important for your company.



- Do you have a lot of turnover, or need to have uniforms replaced and repaired frequently?
- Do you need to invest in uniforms without a large upfront cost?
- What about the style and color- is there something specific you need or want?
- How do you want your employees to handle them- do you want them laundered and delivered, or are you going to trust your employees to present themselves accordingly?

There are advantages to renting or leasing uniforms, and an upside to purchasing them. If you need help deciding, give us a call- Uniform Nations will set you up with a reliable local contractor that offers uniform rental and purchase services in your area. Fill out the form to the right, or give us a call today!

## Additional Resources

### [Renting Uniforms vs Buying Uniforms](#)

Here's another perspective of whether or not you should rent or buy uniforms for your company

### [What to Consider When Buying Uniforms](#)

There are quite a few different things to consider while you are searching for the correct uniform, and here are some things you may want to look at before making a final decision!

### [Company Uniform Sales vs Rentals](#)

Running a successful business can be quite a chore! There are so many different aspects to a business, it can be difficult to remember all of the things that you have to maintain. One thing that doesn't need to be a hassle though is getting your company uniforms.

<http://americancityandcounty.com/proposals-bids/renting-vs-purchasing>

[http://www.koenigs.com/images/Uniform%20Information%20Handout%20-%20Generic%206-11%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.koenigs.com/images/Uniform%20Information%20Handout%20-%20Generic%206-11%20(1).pdf)

<http://www.servicewearapparel.com/docs/swa-renting-vs-purchasing.pdf?display=true>

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/renting-vs-buying-employee-uniforms-38608.html>

## For More Information

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