



UniformNations

TODAY'S RESTAURANT UNIFORM

**BALANCING WORKER SAFETY,
APPEARANCE, AND PURPOSE**

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EMPLOYEE UNIFORMS – LOOKING THROUGH A RESTAURANT’S LENS

BY RYAN MCHUGH

One of the most eye-catching aspects to a business when making a first impression on a customer, the presentation restaurants offer is heavily influenced by the appearance and attire of their employees.

A dual-purposed investment, [uniforms for restaurants](#) can both define a company and establish a consistent national or international brand as well as protect employees from workplace hazards—keeping them safe from harm and able to do their job so the restaurant continues operating smoothly.

Considering the advantages made available today by restaurant uniforms, the question now becomes whether your current uniforms and processes for managing them best suit your restaurant, or if your business may be better suited by other available uniform types, purposes, or [services for either renting or purchasing them](#).

In the modern food service landscape, restaurants of all shapes, sizes, and qualities have an essential need to ensure their employees have uniforms in order to equally ensure the success of their restaurant.

With a range of different employees like kitchen staff or servers needed to operate a restaurant, there are a range of different [restaurant uniforms](#) your business needs.

Although it may come as a surprise, these uniforms can offer a variety of benefits to restaurants. But first, it's important you ensure these benefits are properly catered to your employees. After all, there's hardly a need to seize on the advantages of flame-resistant materials to attire a serving staff.

Stretching from the option to embroider your company logo onto the high-quality shirts or aprons you buy for your servers, bussers, hosts and hostesses, however, restaurants can take the many benefits uniforms offer in numerous directions—boosting the sense of a professional appearance for your business as just one example.

Throughout this white paper, we provide a breakdown of the employee uniform while looking through the lens of restaurants themselves—laying out not only the essential components to the restaurant uniform and the purposes they serve, but also how other restaurants today frequently handle logistic questions like managing [purchasing and cleaning their uniforms](#) as well.

BREAKING DOWN THE RESTAURANT UNIFORM

Extending from front line staff like hosts, hostesses, and servers who deal with customers, to the chefs and cooks busily working in backs of kitchens, the average restaurant can have a wide variety of different staff members.

Ranging equally as wide, there are also numerous different reasons to have restaurant employees wear uniforms.

Between the need to ensure staff safety, to the importance of setting a professional appearance, and even some more subtle or lesser-known functions, the restaurant uniform serves many purposes in food service today, including:

WORKER SAFETY

For the large part, when it comes to ensuring the safety of restaurant staff, the employees who will mostly be in need of protection can be found working in restaurant kitchens.

When working in a kitchen, the primary concern for cooks and chefs is often food preparation itself, out of consideration for the equipment they use and the potentially hazardous conditions they work in.

For instance, when the **kitchen staff** is working on initial food prep such as cutting vegetables or meat, the threat of injury to one's hand from sharp knives must be considered (often accommodated by protective work gloves).

Similarly, the risk of fire hazard for employees cooking near open-flame stovetops must be factored in as well. With the use of **flame-resistant chef jackets, aprons, or other similar uniforms**, restaurants can help to prevent the likelihood of a grease spill flare-up injuring a member of your staff and potentially leaving your business liable.

Besides just the hazards related to the actual cooking process itself, busy kitchens and restaurants with food and people constantly moving through them also have a high chance of food or drink spills—posing the equal risk of slips or falls leading to injury.



Although restaurants obviously can't ask their guests to ensure they're protected with slip-resistant shoes, restaurant owners *do* have the option—and it's highly recommended to be taken—to require employees to wear sturdy, rubber-soled shoes as part of their daily uniform.

EMPLOYEE APPEARANCE

Standing on the front lines of the business, **a restaurant's servers, bussers, and hosts or hostesses** must be dressed at their best to be able to present the business in its most professional light.

Because restaurant types can vary, individual restaurants will want to match uniform selections to the type of restaurant they are and the service they offer. While staff in t-shirts at an elegant Italian establishment will seem out of place, going all-out at a small diner, fast-food restaurant, or similar business on the other hand may be unnecessary.

Regardless of the restaurant, however, professional appearance of employee uniforms provides a powerful opportunity to boost the **marketing appeal of a company**.

Whether the guest is celebrating a major event or looking for a quick meal, everyone can appreciate a high-quality presentation, and it may end up being an unconscious factor as potential customers consider their dining options for the next time.

This factor can be especially relevant for high-quality restaurants seeking or already able to provide their guests with a fine dining experience, as it takes an already high-grade uniform as the standard and now provides an option for stepping it up one notch further.

At a five-star steakhouse as just one example, one could consider options like embroidering uniforms with company logos or making use of better uniforms materials to further establish the quality of brand image.

RESTAURANT UNIFORM FUNCTIONS

On one hand, the servers and other staff working on the front lines and in direct contact with guests will usually have uniform functionality focused around ensuring a professional presentation for your business.

At the other end of the spectrum of use for employee uniforms, restaurant cooks and other kitchen staff will typically have uniforms which serve other practical purposes.

While the protection kitchen and **chef uniforms** provide is just one of the essential functions they provide, each individual piece to the uniform plays a critical role which, without it, could spell trouble for you employees or restaurant itself.

The following provides a breakdown of each component to the standard **kitchen uniform**, and the purpose it serves:

- **Hat** – The traditional image for a professional chef, the tall chef hats or other headgear worn by kitchen staff do more than make a fashion statement. Not only protecting the hair of cooks from fire-hazard, chef hats also protect customer's food—preventing a hair falling in and your restaurant's reputation falling with it.
- **Jacket** – As before, when it comes to protection, a cook's jacket is their first line of defense. Using double thick cotton, the material is designed to protect from hazards like hot liquid splattering or boiling steam rising which can come with the

commercial equipment, dangerous tools, and hot surroundings of kitchens.

- **Apron** – Although they come in handy for the extra pockets they provide for keeping equipment on hand, kitchen aprons also provide stain protection. Cooks have a high chance of accruing tough grease or wine stains, but using an apron, a chef can remain looking at their best with the ability to quickly change.
- **Neckerchief** – While it might seem backwards to think that adding an extra layer of clothing could somehow help keep employees cool, the neckerchief does just that. Helping to absorb sweat protect the skin in an often sweaty work environment, a neckerchief can also prevent sweat from dripping into food.



SERVICES DESIGNED TO MEET RESTAURANT UNIFORM NEEDS

With the ideal uniform for restaurants now in mind, many eager owners of businesses ranging from local dining landmarks to the common restaurant chains may be now considering their more practical uniform needs.

Among others, this can include logistics such as where to purchase or rent uniforms, what they will cost, and how to ensure uniforms are always cleaned and well-managed.

To help outline several of the more specific business factors restaurants should be taking into consideration as they turn to laying out more solidified uniform plans, the following is a breakdown of many of the top services utilized for managing uniform needs in restaurants today:

UNIFORM RENTAL SERVICES

Typically an initial consideration and one of the first questions to answer as a restaurant plans for new uniforms or reconsiders their old ones, is whether they will opt for renting uniforms or purchase them outright.

In one hand, [uniform rental services](#) for restaurants may be an attractive option—especially for establishments which place less emphasis on quality over other traits—as the convenience of clean uniforms being regularly dropped off in exchange for dirtied ones comes with plenty of other advantages as well.

Between benefits like free uniform repair and replacements, not needing to dedicate any precious real-estate for uniform inventory or storage, and avoiding the upfront cost of purchasing an entire uniform inventory, going with uniform rental services can be the cost-efficient option restaurants are searching for.

Despite this however, the additional option for [restaurants to purchase uniforms](#) should not be overlooked, as this

strategy in turn offers unique benefits which rental services by comparison cannot.

To put it simply, the greatest difference between renting and buying restaurant uniforms boils down to convenience vs. customization. When restaurants need constant uniforms, but can get by with lesser quality, then rental services are probably the safer bet—but for a fine dining experience, investing in a higher-grade material may pay off down the road.

LAUNDRY SERVICES

With a plan for how the restaurant will obtain and manage employee uniforms, the next question for an industry like food service where there is a high chance for uniforms to be dirtied is how to ensure they're regularly cleaned and fit for use in the workplace.

Using [commercial laundry services](#), restaurants are provided an easy solution to this problem however.

Clean uniforms are still dropped off regularly in exchange for dirtied ones—providing a way to ensure restaurant uniforms are properly cleaned and sanitized, but without requiring the restaurant to invest in space or equipment for doing the laundry themselves.

Although laundry services are an included perk with a restaurant uniform rental service, a high-grade restaurant which purchases its own uniforms still has the option to [outsource their laundry services](#).

By letting menial administrative tasks like uniform laundry be handled by an external provider, restaurants can instead focus on what matters most—the high-quality food and customer service which makes their business money.

CONCLUSION – FINAL THOUGHTS TO KEEP IN MIND

Whether it's an upscale sushi bar or an everyday corner café, providing uniforms for your restaurant staff can offer benefits for both you as well as your employees.

Ranging from helping your business look more professional, to protecting your employees from the workplace hazards which come with working in restaurants, uniforms have plenty to offer the [food service industry](#)—making the decision of which uniforms are needed and how to manage them all the more critical for restaurant owners.

To help you as you now weigh your uniform options, here are a few final considerations for restaurants to keep in mind:

- **Cater Uniforms to Fit the Functions of Employees** – There's a variety of different employees working in a restaurant and an equally wide range of uniforms you can attire them in—from [flame-resistant chef jackets to high-grade, embroidered server shirts](#). With this in mind, to get the most from uniforms, restaurants will want to ensure they provide proper uniforms to suit the function the employee serves.
- **Which Uniform Services Will Best Suit Your Restaurant?** – Although uniforms are used across restaurants of all shapes, sizes, and qualities, there are multiple services available for managing your uniforms—including [uniform rental vs. purchasing](#). So which will you choose, convenience or customization?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Your Company Uniforms: Using Them to Your Advantage

Although often viewed as just another basic need for businesses, the uniforms you equip your employees with can actually offer a surprisingly large number of both practical as well as subtle benefits to business. Get the breakdown on how you can be better using your company uniforms to your advantage with this in-depth white paper.

Should I Be Renting, Leasing or Buying Uniforms?

So you've established a need for uniforms in your business, but what's the best option for going about managing your uniforms? With choices ranging from uniform purchasing, leasing, or rental services, different businesses will want to weigh their options carefully against their own needs. Here, we explore the pros and cons of the individual services to best match businesses with the services to suit them.

The Healthcare Industry and Rental Services: Medical Uniforms and Linens

The healthcare industry places special emphasis on the importance of qualities like uniform sanitation and cleanliness, as health services depend on ensuring the wellbeing and good health of the patients they care for. With this in-depth white paper, we take a closer look at not only the uniform needs of the healthcare industry, but also optimal strategies for managing these uniform and linen needs as well.