

# How Important is Your Company's Image to You?

By Len Delekta

I have a saying that I have used for many years. When your employees look good, your company looks even better. Here's why: A company with high standards usually has a uniform program.

So why uniforms? Uniforms and logos are used to address a variety of business needs: from customer loyalty to employee retention and advertising, and to promoting and creating a positive image for you. Today, smart managers and business owners are discovering exciting opportunities to turn their uniform programs into a genuine competitive advantage in the marketplace. Here are some reasons to consider the benefits of a uniform program for your business.

A uniform program is customized for your business and the workplace environments your staff will encounter, so that clothing that will not get in the way of the work at hand. Even if most of your staff chooses appropriate apparel most of the time, why leave it to chance?

Everyone wants to work in comfortable clothing, but for people in the hotel and restaurant business, durability and style as well as comfort and fit are equally important.

I talked with a number of decision makers with various companies on the importance of uniforms and what they mean to their business image.

Tom Jones, president of Gyotaku Restaurants, said uniforms need to be congruent with the restaurant atmosphere and also be a functional fit within the corporate cost structure. "Uniforms are a necessary cost within the operation of the restaurant and the Gyotaku management staff chooses to involve employees in the uniform decision process," Jones said. "The uniforms need to have the company logo to remind and reinforce to the customer where they are dining. We believe uniforms should be neat and fresh looking while accenting colors of the restaurant."

Uniforms can fill an important role in any company's advertising and branding program. A well-designed and consistent uniform look makes positive

statements about your business and company values. Uniforms are used to create and promote an image for your company. If your employees are excited about your uniform program then these good feelings will transfer to your customers. By having all employees wear the company uniform on a daily basis, you can help build your reputation and recognition — and your advertising dollars will stretch even further.

Russell Chun, general manager, Miramar at Waikiki Hotel, said, "We must always be aware of our customers' perceptions of our property and the image we are conveying with our uniforms. Uniforms are a necessary expense within the hotel structure and it helps us identify the image we wish to create.

"Uniforms chosen must be comfortable, stylish and fit, and help enhance the employee attitude. We all must understand that their effect can be powerful and should not be taken lightly. These costs are not welcomed but understood as necessary because these uniforms are a reflection of the property and the image we wish to convey."

Scott Pauli, corporate director of housekeeping at ResortQuest Hawaii said, "Uniforms create the image of how you want your company to be shown. Functionally, a poor uniform selection can lead to problems and you must work with your vendor.

"Let your supplier know what your requirements are. This could include processing requirements, replacement cycle, fabric choices and budget limitations, stock levels and availability, colors and the expected life of the program. All these factors are important if your uniform program is to be a success."

Uniforms should mean much more than a company requirement. They should

fulfill the company image within the budget allocation; however, you cannot settle for the cheapest cost if it does not fulfill the company statement or reflect the true assets of the company. We should be conveying a professional image with our uniform program.

What makes our uniforms unique over our competitors? Is it a custom print or fabric with aloha wear, logos, styling, functionality or color selection? It can be any or all of these choices.

We must remember how good it feels to wear new clothing. This feeling should be conveyed by our employees to our customers. More than just clothes, a uniform program can be used as a marketing tool or as a reward and incentive to help motivate your workforce. Remember, when your employees look good, your company looks even better. Is it time for new uniforms?

*Len Delekta is the president of Image Apparel Hawaii. He has more than 30 years of experience within the uniform industry. For more information regarding uniforms, visit [www.imageapparelhawaii.com](http://www.imageapparelhawaii.com) or call (808) 383-5042.*



*Miramar employees Peter Yeung (bellman) and Emily Liu (front desk) show off their new uniforms.*