What can help your company make a memorable first impression, give your customers an added sense of security and motivate your employees to take greater pride in what they do? Workwear.

According to current statistics, more than 32 million U.S. employees wear company clothing to work each day. And, interestingly enough, the majority of these employees work for small businesses. By providing small businesses with the ability to present a consistent, polished and...
professional image, workwear offers them an important “competitive edge.”

According to the old saying, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” Nowhere is this more applicable than in business situations. By outfitting your employees in company clothing, your small business can make a big impression. In addition to enhancing your competitive credibility, workwear can be customized with employee names and company logos, providing you with the ability to promote customer identification while communicating a personal, friendly attitude. And, in the home service sector, customer safety and security remains an issue of concern. Provide your service staff with workwear and reassure your customers that they’ve hired a true professional to do the job.

A study published by the Journal of Marketing Services indicates that “uni-
formed” employees are perceived by customers as being more “legitimate” and highly qualified. In addition, the study suggests that employees who wear company clothing are naturally motivated to take greater pride in their company and show greater pride in their work.

**MANY ADVANTAGES**

Concerned about costs? Keep in mind that employee uniforms don’t have to lead to measurable savings in payroll (FICA) tax. And for most small businesses, the purchase of employee clothing is completely tax-deductible.

**HOW TO BUY**

What should you know before you buy workwear? First, remember that your purchase is an investment, not an expense. A polished, professional image, after all, just might translate into more satisfied, loyal customers.

EMPLOYEES WHO WEAR COMPANY CLOTHING ARE NATURALLY MOTIVATED TO TAKE GREATER PRIDE IN THEIR COMPANY AND SHOW GREATER PRIDE IN THEIR WORK.

be elaborate. A poplin shirt, embroidered polo or screen printed T-shirt can look polished, professional and nothing less than terrific—especially when combined with a matching cap or pair of stylish, pleated work pants.

Workwear also can be offered to employees as a fringe benefit. Employers who have implemented this idea have found that they often have an edge over their competition when it comes to recruiting and retaining the best employees—the “perk” of being supplied with company clothing is very appealing.

Other companies use clothing incentives as a substitute for taxable wages—a compensation strategy that can lead and, in the long run, bigger and better sales. With this in mind, make sure that the workwear you buy is durable. Invest in clothing that will hold up, even under the most extreme circumstances, and still provide your employees with a great look and long-lasting wear.

Second, don’t settle for a limited selection of colors, sizes or styles. One size does not fit all! Look for a reputable and well-established company that will offer you a variety of looks and extended sizes to choose from.

Third, consider how the clothing you buy will be worn and used. Make sure that your selections are appropriate for and designed to fit your employees’
true needs. In addition to appearance, think comfort, function and protection.

Fourth, make sure that you won’t get stuck with company clothing you’re not completely happy with. Look for a company that offers a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee, even on personalized items. If you don’t have a company logo or would like to update your existing one, make sure you find a workwear supplier that can create a custom design just for you.

Finally, purchase your company’s workwear from a company that specializes in servicing smaller businesses. Otherwise, you might end up paying higher prices on lower quantity orders.

About the Author
Ron Doyle is the vice president of WorkWear for NEBS, Inc. (New England Business Service, Inc.), Groton Mass. Founded 45 years ago, the company serves more than one million small businesses around the world.