

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA BUSINESS JOURNAL



Focus on Corporate Identity

Uniforms do more than build trust, they build brands

By Ralph Nardone

Studies of consumer behavior confirm that companies whose employees are dressed in professional, standardized uniforms realize improved sales and higher levels of consumer satisfaction. One local company executive emphasizes that companies “build their brands” when they invest in uniforms.

Kristin Dempsey, vice president from Dempsey Uniform and Linen Supply in Jessup, Lackawanna County, says uniforms are a cost-effective way to promote a brand.

“A company logo and coordinating clothing colors help build your brand because they are worn by a key element of your service - your employees,” she says. “Employees who wear uniforms feel like they are part of a team, which makes them more productive, plus uniforms help break down and eliminate barriers between gender, class and race,” she adds.

Dempsey cited a study done by J.D. Power and Associates that concluded consumers are more likely to buy and have a more positive perception of a company’s products and employees when they are wearing well-maintained uniforms. The study reviewed sales in 11 different industries including pharmaceuticals, janitorial services, food services and landscaping.

Fidelity Deposit and Discount Bank requires “stylish” uniform shirts with the Fidelity logo and black pants, according to Dempsey. She believes Fidelity is one of the first local banks to

require their tellers to wear uniforms. This is key to branding because these workers are on the front line, dealing directly with customers.

Joann Marsili, vice president of marketing for Fidelity says the bank’s investment in uniforms creates a professional image. “When given the option between their own clothing and uniforms, most employees elect to go to the uniforms,” Marsili says, adding that branding efforts have stepped up since Fidelity recently built a new “green” branch in West Scranton.

Maureen Mills, vice president of Craft Oil Corporation, says all of the company’s drivers wear uniforms.

Recently Craft purchased two companies in Philadelphia and now serves consumers in 10 counties across Pennsylvania. The uniforms and the trucks show matching company logos and work together to help build their brand, Mills says.

Ed Ware from Francis Smith and Sons, a company that sells and services gasoline pumps at local stations, says the company’s supervisors and technicians all wear uniforms. He believes it differentiates them from the competition and gives a sense of pride in the company’s image.

Choosing the right uniform is not necessarily simple. Dempsey says. To help her customers with their choices, Dempsey uses image consultants who visit business to help them decide the right style of uniform and colors. The consultants can also help create logos for businesses that don’t have one.

Recreated from Original 10/2008