



Uniforms Help Companies Gain Market Share During Economic Downturns; Improve Bottom Lines

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WILMINGTON, Mass., May 21 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- With signs of a recession all around us, now more than ever is an ideal time for the success-minded company to pro-actively advertise their business image and brand to gain market share. As Harvard Business School professor John A. Quelch notes: "It is well documented that (companies) that increase advertising during a recession, when competitors are cutting back, can improve market share and return on investment."

And, as such highly-competitive service industries as airlines, hospitality, and parcel delivery have repeatedly proven, one of the most effective forms of advertising is the use of easily recognizable, image-enhancing employee uniform programs.

"The uniforms that employees wear on the job provide a unique promotional vehicle for companies because the custom apparel serves as 'walking billboards' to promote their services and products," says Robert Isaacson, Director of Marketing for UniFirst, a provider of uniform and work apparel programs to companies throughout North America. "Additionally, when uniforms are selected with the wearer in mind, garment styling, image, and function can have a positive influence on employee attitudes and their job performance -- both of which ultimately translate to improved products and services and, in turn, stronger customer loyalty."

Isaacson says examples of the advertising effectiveness of uniforms abound. "Most consumers, for example, who see a brown uniformed UPS employee, will immediately think about the company's worldwide mailing and delivery service capabilities. And those who observe Midas' uniquely designed yellow-and-black 'pit crew' type uniforms get the subliminal message that their mechanics provide higher quality auto services."

Multiple studies have underscored the positive advertising attributes that uniform programs provide. For instance, a study by the University of Nevada - Las Vegas of 200 hospitality employees, found that uniforms heightened wearer self-confidence and contributed to positive work attitudes. Additionally, surveys conducted by J.D. Power and Associates(R) on behalf of the textile services industry and another by Harris Interactive Polling showed that customers have more confidence and trust in employees who wear uniforms, and indicated they believe that products and services provided by uniformed employees are of higher quality. "What these surveys point to is that image-conscious companies with uniquely uniformed employees have a distinct competitive advantage in the marketplace and that's just that type of business edge you want during economic downturns," says UniFirst's Isaacson.

Isaacson notes there are also post-recessionary benefits. "When economies improve, conditions become more conducive for employees to seek out new jobs. The 'team-like' atmosphere uniform programs create has been shown to be a positive influence in retaining good employees and improving overall turnover rates" -- all of which leads to even further gains in market share and return on investment.

UniFirst (NYSE: UNF) is a leading supplier of uniforms and work clothing to over 200,000 business customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. The company also provides facility services cleanliness products, such as restroom items and floor mats. For more information, contact UniFirst at (800) 225-3364 or <http://www.unifirst.com>.

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