

## DESIGN BRIEF CHECKLIST

Uniforms impact diverse aspects of a business. The inputs to a successful design reflect these enterprise-wide insights and interests.

Below is an outline of the ideal information to inform and inspire a new uniform design or a review/updating of your existing range.

### 1. BRANDING

Uniforms are not just branded clothing but a powerful way to help **BRING TO LIFE** your unique brand for both staff and the **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**.

In addition to a **FULL BRAND ID KIT**, including your latest guidelines, colour palettes and artwork for logos, clients should seek to provide their uniforms design partner with any further artefacts, videos or documentation that will help inspire a deeper understanding of the **COMPANY STORY, CULTURE + VALUES**. [Also see Sustainability and Corporate Values below.]

If you have a documented **EMPLOYER BRAND**, this is great input too.

So are profiles of your **CORE CUSTOMERS** and how they view and interact with your staff and brand. Do make clear in the brief, with imagery where possible, the different **WORK ENVIRONMENTS** where the uniforms will be worn and seen, including any seasonal or geographical variations in those conditions as well as cultural contexts. [Also see Wearer-Driven Needs below.]

Other relevant brand considerations/inputs at the outset of a design project:

Is any **WIDER BRAND ARCHITECTURE** or company sub-branding relevant here?

Will any **CO-BRANDING** be required, such as promotional partnerships or, say, branding for in-store concessions?

Do you envisage **CUSTOM BRAND DESIGNS** for all garments or also items, for example, from **jSD's CUSTOMISABLE READILY AVAILABLE RANGE**.

Make sure you provide an exhaustive list not only of all garments you anticipate to be in the new range but also any **OTHER ITEMS + ACCESSORIES** [e.g. masks, bags, stationery] in scope for the project. You can also make clear if certain items [e.g. shoes, protective eyewear] are explicitly excluded or not – or guidance invited.

Finally, however experienced your design partner may be in UK domestic and international **HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS** as they impact uniform design, do work with them to make sure the regulations and other **MANDATORIES** specific to your brand, sector and locations are clearly identified and underlined in the brief.

### 2. WEARER-DRIVEN NEEDS

This design brief checklist started with your brand, but jSD believes all workwear designs must first and foremost be wearer-driven – and that **STAFF WELL-BEING** is paramount for all service brands.

Make sure your brief includes the **FULL LIST OF JOB CATEGORIES** included in the project [with a short description of each or longer one for less familiar jobs]. Include any **EQUIPMENT OR ACCESSORIES** carried for these jobs, in addition to the different **WORK ENVIRONMENTS**, as mentioned above, and any job-specific health and safety needs [e.g. zipped pockets to stop equipment falling out].

All wearer **FEEDBACK, SURVEYS** and **PERFORMANCE DATA** for existing workwear is highly valuable design input. Longer research reports can accompany the brief. Also include wearer **WISHLISTS** in this feedback [e.g. gloves, hats] plus any insights into **GARMENT CARE**.

If you have required **SIZE RANGES**, include these. Plus if you will offer staff **MADE TO ORDER** garments for special fits and sizes or bespoke tailoring. Include in the brief if any specific cultural, religious or other **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS** are to be addressed by the core range or requested as special orders.

Share your company policy, brand perspective and any expressed staff views on **GENDERED/GENDER-NEUTRAL/ALL-INCLUSIVE FITS AND STYLES** – or invite informed design suggestions. You can assume maternity wear will be in scope.

State your policy on wearer **ALLERGIES**. For example, do you want to offer alternative fabrics for staff who cannot wear wool or polyester?

On all these wearer-driven considerations, you can both state a company point of view or expectation in the brief and at the same time invite informed **IDEAS AND GUIDANCE** from your design partner. A company like jSD has a wealth of domestic UK and international experience at handling all these issues for brands. Do not hesitate to ask jSD for hands-on help in framing your specific project.

Finally, include in the brief if end-wearers are part of the project team and if you already have further **WEARER RESEARCH/ENGAGEMENT** planned – or if you invite wearer trial and feedback proposals as part of your supplier's design and development recommendations.

### **3. ETHICS + SUSTAINABILITY**

Your brand uniform is a very visible expression of your company values and **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY [CSR]**.

From the outset of a design project, your brief should stipulate total transparency from your supplier in terms of its own documented commitment to **ETHICAL SOURCING**, anti-slavery and other CSR practices, including, for example, **ISO14001** certification for environmental management and **SEDEX** [Supplier Ethical Data Exchange] membership. Ethics cannot be an add-on to design.

Take sustainability. Clearly state your corporate **SUSTAINABILITY GOALS + POLICIES** in your brief. Uniforms can make a range of important and measurable contributions to these goals; but only if sustainability is viewed as a green thread running throughout the uniforms lifecycle. From high-comfort **RECYCLED FABRICS** or biodegradable trims to garments made for easy recycling and end-of-life disposal, sustainability starts with design.

As well as carbon neutral and other sustainability goals, include in your brief any existing company initiatives your uniform needs to support, such as **ZERO PLASTICS** or **ECOVADIS RATINGS**.

### **4. BUDGETS + COMMERCIAL DRIVERS**

Many factors size workwear design budgets. Design and manufacturing cannot be separated from the **ENTIRE OPERATIONAL AND BUSINESS LIFECYCLE** of a uniform. That is why existing costs can be a useful benchmark for briefing new designs.

This **ACTUAL LIFE-TIME COST** is impacted directly by the durability/lifespan of each item, which in turn is influenced by how many items are allocated to each wearer as well as the garment's fit, fabrication and care regime. That is why jSD gives clients a **DURABILITY INDEX** for each item quantified in months; this enables clients to make informed decisions about allocations, fabric choices and finishes etc.

Lead times, stock levels, storage costs, the envisaged lifespan of the design itself... all ultimately need to be factored in. Plus your **ROLL-OUT STRATEGY**. For example, are you planning a phased introduction or 'big bang' launch? This impacts sourcing, which influences design.

When an existing uniform is being updated or replaced, **CURRENT STOCK** needs to be managed down in a coordinated and cost-effective way. Your current **CONTRACT TERMS** also impact this. Smart stock management software with predictive data and real-time client dashboards, as incorporated into jSD's latest **STREET SMART™** system, can help facilitate a seamless and cost-effective transition in this regard.

Finally, your design brief should include not only a **TIMESCALE** for this design phase itself but also future critical deadlines, always allowing for **WEARER TRIALS**.

Try to allow at least **4-6 WEEKS** for a first creative response, which should include not only 3D design concepts but also fabric samples and trims. jSD's guide to the entire **LIFECYCLE OF CLOTHES AT WORK** includes typical timescales for each phase of a uniforms project from this design phase through **DEVELOPMENT + MANUFACTURING to DISTRIBUTION, ROLL-OUT + BEYOND**. The guide can be downloaded from the jSD website.

## CONCLUSION

Uniforms don't fit neatly inside most client's operations. They impact so many different aspects of a business. So tap into your design partners experience when developing your design brief and pulling together these diverse inputs.

Your uniforms supplier should be able to provide valuable guidance based on similar projects as well as cross-industry insights and the latest innovations.

"jSD is more than happy to help brands frame their workwear design projects and supply relevant case studies. We have 40 years experience of pioneering award-winning uniforms and can work with you on audits of your existing operations as well as hold workshops on sustainability, wearer well-being and other topics. Please do not hesitate to contact jSD."

jSD SALES + MARKETING DIRECTOR **ANN DOWDESWELL**