HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT APPAREL FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

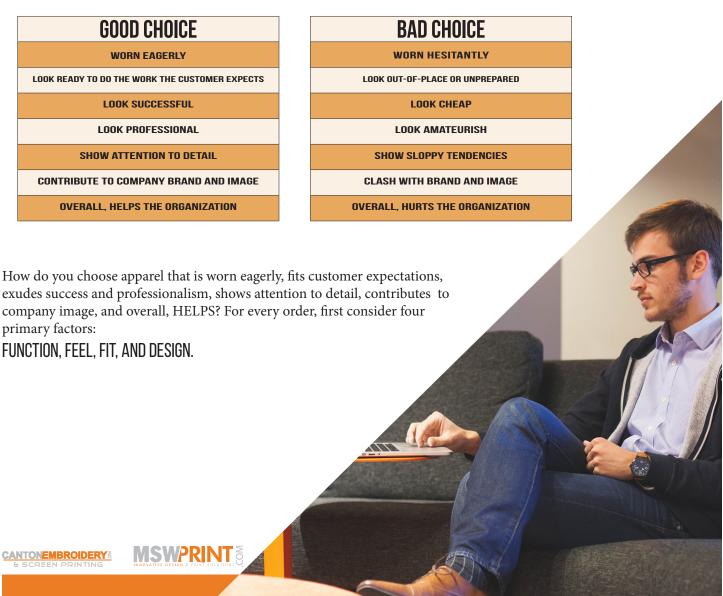
OXFORD, POLO, HAT, JACKET, T-SHIRT, OR TECH?

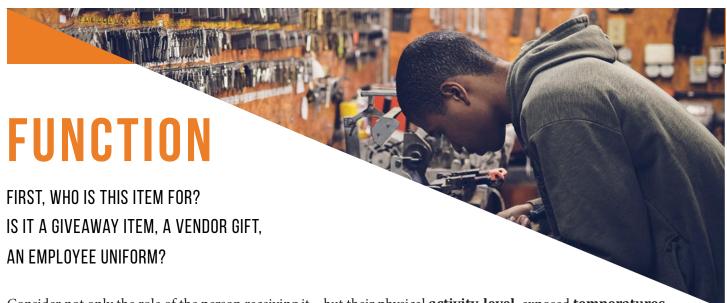
WOULD YOUR TEAM BENEFIT FROM A COLLECTION OF WALKING-TALKING, BRAND-POSITIVE BILLBOARDS IN YOUR LOCAL MARKET—FOR ONLY \$10-50 APIECE? YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS EASILY WITH THE PROPER CUSTOM APPAREL. PROPERLY OUTFITTING YOUR TEAM COULD BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "SOLD." AND "SORRY.". "AWARE OF..." AND "EMBARRASSED FOR...". OR BEING INVITED-INSIDE OR SHUT-OUT ON THE DOORSTEP. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.



primary factors:

FUNCTION. FEEL. FIT. AND DESIGN.





Consider not only the role of the person receiving it – but their physical **activity-level**, exposed **temperatures**, dirtiness of the work and work-**environment**, who they **interact with**, how long you'd like the item **to hold up**, and if you'd appreciate it being **worn outside work**.

Some shirts have more features to accommodate certain intended functions. These can include **Teflon coating** to help better-resist stains, **stronger patches** of fabric to prevent against snags and scuffs, **tagless-ness** for comfort, **special buttons/zippers/pockets** for work, **stretching** in certain areas to accommodate more mobility, **reflective or flurescent fabrics** to aide in work-safety, or even small **vents** to help keep wearers cool.

The function for the apparel is the first thing to think of prior to any order and will affect your decisions regarding fabric, weight, overall-style, and budget.

BEFORE YOU PLACE YOUR NEXT CLOTHING ORDER, CONSULT YOUR APPAREL REP TO BE SURE THAT YOUR CHOICE BEST-FITS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NEEDS.



PERSONAL COMFORT IS KEY FOR MAINTAINING A HIGH-PERFORMING PROFESSIONAL TEAM, AND FOR ENCOURAGING ASSOCIATES TO WEAR YOUR LOGO ON THEIR OWN TIME.

Softness, weight, and absorption will each heavily-affect the wearer's experience, for better-or-worse depending on their activities and function. The material composition is not all that affects how an item feels, however. How it is constructed will affect texture, weight, and breathability for the wearer too.

Let's review some common fabric and construction terms often seen in industry catalogs, and consider how they'll affect your teammates' feel:

NATURAL VS SYNTHETIC

The largest division by which fibers are classified. It's quite straight-forward: (natural fibers) come from natural sources, typically cotton, flax, bamboo, hemp, or wool; and (synthetic fibers) come from synthetic sources, typically petrol-based polyester. As general rule, **natural fibers** are more-absorbent than **synthetics** which are known better for their wicking properties. Other differences would be that synthetic fibers can take on brighter color and are more workable in a few different ways due to their petrol-base. For most people, natural fibers are also more-comfortable for all-day wear. To the touch, naturals also may feel a bit more coarsely-soft than synthetics which feel more slick or smooth.

COTTON

The most-commonly-used natural fiber. Low-cost, high-durability, absorbent-but-breathable. Its fibers also actually increase in-strength when wet. Generally used in more vintage, casual, or comfort clothing than polyester, dye-coloration on **cotton** looks a bit less bright and more muted than on polyester as well.

POLYESTER

The most-common synthetic fiber. Known for its light-weight, low-absorption, high-wicking, semi-elastic properties. As a petrol-based product, it can be virtually any color. Most "Performance" fitness gear is **polyester** due to these properties.

POLY-COTTON BLENDS

Blends of Polyester and Cotton receive the major material-benefits from both. This also allows for a patterned or textured heathered look which is often preferred over solid monochromes. Most blends are priced higher-than 100% cotton or polyester items, and they are common across all types of quality casual wear.

TRI-BLENDS

These items are typically viewed and priced even-higher than 50/50 or Poly-Cotton blends. They are mostly-constituted of cotton and polyester, but incorporate a third material to aide further with the garment's function. The third material is commonly rayon, spandex, nylon, or wool. **Tri-blends** are typically more light/comfortable/stretchy/elegant than their non-tri-blend counterparts, depending on the garment's functional goal.



RAYON

A fiber that comes from natural plant sources, but is broken-down to nearly-molecular increments and regenerated into thread through a heavily-industrialized process, rayon is not fully-accepted as a natural or a synthetic fiber. It is mostly-considered natural though because of its cellulose constitution. Types of **rayon** also seen on labels are **viscose and modal**, which vary slightly from each other. Rayon is known for its soft, smooth-draping, highly-absorbent, low-heat-insulation properties. As a third fiber in a triblend, it adds a great degree of comfort to most summer garments.

SPANDEX

Sometimes labeled **Lycra or Elastine, Spandex** is known for its stretchy properties. Spandex is stronger and more durable than natural rubber, and typically constitutes a small minority of the garment, primarily to add its elasticity to the cotton or polyester which give the garment its normal feel and construction.

NYLON

Possibly the most-versatile material on this list, **nylon** is a polymer with many industrial applications. Tarps, tents, straps, and other durable outdoor cloth are often 100% **nylon**. In clothing, it is known for its strength and durability and is typically added to garments for that purpose.

WOOL

As a premium natural fiber, different variations of **wool** are used most-often in formal wear. It is known for its highly-insulative, strong, and absorbent properties, and is the choice-fiber for men's suits. Unlike other blends on the list, 100% **wool** suits can typically be considered superior to their blended, often-cheaper, counterparts.

In branded business apparel, use of wool is relatively uncommon outside of the rare monogrammed or elegantly embellished sport coat or fine cardigan.

KNITS VS WEAVES

To the casual wearer, these terms are nearly interchangeable – but they refer to quite-different outcomes. **Knits** are constructed by looping together a single, continuous, thread. **Weaves** are an amalgamation of interlocking threads. These two differences have some built-in strenghts and weaknesses:

Knits are able to stretch, but can also shrink or be stretched-out through wash and wear vs wovens which hold their form better, but cannot stretch without elastic material.

Knits are typically more-comfortable and casual while wovens are more-formal and appear more-crisp.

Wovens are also a bit more expensive and prone to wrinkling than knits, but tears in their fabric will stay isolated compared to knits, which tend to "run", or grow the tear over time.

Notable knits include t-shirts and undergarments while notable wovens include denim and dress shirts.

NON-WOVENS AND FELTS

These are best thought of as the particle-board or composite-version of fabric. Unlike in wovens and knits, **non-woven or felt** fibers aren't organized into any particular pattern; rather they are pressed with heat and held together by adhesion(synthetics) or natural hooking(naturals).



PIOUE

A weaving-style most-common in polos where parallel strands are raised to give the shirt a ribbed or textured feel. Most casual Westerners have encountered **piqued** polos and their distinguishing texture.

TWILL

A weaving style using diagonal thread patterns. Its construction gives a small degree of texture and depth to the fabric. It typically uses low-sheen fibers, and is better for muting stains than a broadcloth or poplin. Acceptable for casual or dress shirts. **Twill** is usually considered mid-weight and mid-formal on the Poplin-Twill-Oxford-spectrum—though that can vary based on the types of threads-used and other factors.

POPLIN OR BROADCLOTH

Both are similar but minorly-varied constructions of a plain weave. **Broadcloth** is the simplest 1:1 right-angle weave while **poplin** may have a differing ratio of vertical to horizontal threads, still woven at right-angles. The thinnest common dress shirt constructions, plain weaves are typically quite flat, light-weight, and smooth in texture. Because of its light construction, highly-formal shirts and dresses, as well as more-casual summer button-downs, are often made from poplin.

OXFORD

This term is easily one of the most widely used and over-used on the list. It can mean one of three distinct constructions that differ from those above—or just refer to button-down dress shirts generally. The three distinct constructions are Oxford Cloth, Pinpoint Oxford, and Royal Oxford. **Oxford Cloth and Pinpoint Oxford** are essentially thicker-woven versions of broadcloth (with 'pinpoint' being considered the finer of the two), and are considered good everyday office shirts, but not particularly formal. **Royal Oxford** weaves are true to being the highly-formal shirt that the name implies. They are best thought of as being fit for executives—incorporating elegant threads into powerful, heavily-textured weaves. Summarily, "**Oxford**" is an ambiguous term that refers to thicker-woven, everyday dress-shirts, but may refer to Royal Oxford which could be considered at the top of the dress shirt power-formal-hierarchy.

SATIN AND SATEEN

Similar in its thin-construction and light-weight to poplin and broadcloth, **Satin** is known for it its smooth shine. A proper satin is made with silk, so "satin" items made from cotton or other fibers are properly referred to as Sateen. Satin is primarily used in formal wear, and can appear tacky in more-casual settings.

JERSEY

Probably the most common form of knitting, **jersey-knitting** produces a light, stretchy, one-sided fabric, with piling on the backside. It can also be "double-knitted" to form a construction that is called "interlock jersey", which is less stretchy, but creates a stronger-thicker fabric with two flat sides. Jersey and **Interlock Jersey** drape well and are therefore used for many t-shirts, women's tops, and casual dresses.

SINGLE PLY VS TWO PLY

Remove all toilet-paper-inspired visualizations! Instead of layered fabric as it might imply, "two ply" refers to two yarns being twisted together to make each single woven thread. Two-ply fabrics are considered finer and more-durable than their single ply counterparts.





As an integral aspect of your team's feel, fit gets its own category of thought because it not-only affects how your team feels, but is also an important brand aesthetic that can be externally witnessed and judged. For your team to function optimally and look their best, fit is key.

GENDER-FITS, CUTS, AND NECKLINES

One of the first ideas that we touched on was finding apparel that your team WANTS to wear. One issue many teams have, however, is that whoever does the ordering may sometimes have a blind-spot for the opposite gender's fashion-tastes.

The easiest way to appeal to the Men AND Women on your team is to provide options that fit everyone's body-style and gender identity—however feminine, masculine, large, or small they may be.

Women often appreciate tapered form-fitting cuts rather than less-shaped Men's and Unisex shirts. Untucked styles and 3/4-length sleeves are also more widely-permitted in Women's business-casual attire than for Men, who still largely-adhere to traditional full-sleeved, straight-fitting, tucked-in button-downs.

T-shirts can be engendered even-further by their necklines and hems:

CREW-NECK

The most-traditional circular-cut neckline. Most-common for males and unisex shirts.

V-NECK

Like a crew-neck in size, but the neck-hole hangs a bit-lower into a 'V'-cut on the wearer's chest. V-necks are traditionally considered fully-acceptable for women, and also acceptable-but-more-decorative-or-edgy for men. Men who wear V-necks tend to skew younger and more fashion-forward than their non-V-wearing counterparts.

DEEP-V

This is similar to a V-neck, but with the neckline hanging even lower into the chest as the name implies. An edgier choice for women and especially men, these are rarely seen on men outside of young cosmopolitan fashion-circles.

SWOOP-NECK

Traditionally a women's cut, this neckline hangs loosely, almost to the wearer's shoulders. A great and simple way to add a bit of style to an otherwise generic women's casual shirt.

TANK-TOP

Worn by both genders, but typically specifying Men's or Women's by-item. Mostly acceptable for the beach and hot-weather activity, not for business.

RACERBACK TANK

A different construction of tank top primarily for women with the fabric straps pulled towards the center in the upper-back. It's a more-stable-fitting tank choice meant for active women.

BALLERINA-FIT

Notable cut for women's casual tops that is tapered through the middle and flairs out slightly at the bottom to hang longer over the hips.



FIT CONT.

PETITE FIT

A term used to describe items made for smaller women, typically under 5'4" in height.

Many manufacturers' shirt-styles have a companion of the opposite gender so that modern business teams can coordinate well with each other.

MEN'S SIZES, LENGTH, AND FITS

Some men may be inclined to dismiss the essential role of fit in the look and feel of their business-wear. Those men typically haven't figured out their own proper fit yet, either.

In business, being confident and self-aware is always helpful, and that starts largely in-part with how one's clothes fit.

NORMAL SIZES (SM, MED, LG, XL)

These sizes are stocked in nearly every non-Big and Tall store. A wearer's tag-size varies most with their stature, and secondarily with their weight and composition. Suppliers tend to charge the same price-point for all normal sizes, and more for Bigs. Many men wear too-large of shirts, but going too small can have more-negative consequences. Correcting improper shirt-sizing is one of the simplest ways for a male business professional to improve his look.

COMMON UPPER-LIMITS TO PROPERLY-FIT NORMAL SIZES:

NECK - 18" SLEEVES - 36.5" CHEST - 50" HEIGHT - 6'4"

BIG SIZES (XXL, 3XL, 4XL, ETC.)

These sizes are typically less-available and at a higher price-point than normal sizes. If the intended-wearer is within the size-limits listed above, they should try an XL first, or opt for XLT (below) if height is where they exceed normal sizing limits. Many brands also cut off production above XXL-size, so if you have large team members, make sure that their sizes are available before ordering.

TALL SIZES (LT, XLT, 2XLT, ETC.)

Men over 6'4" can struggle to find well-fitting shirts – sometimes being forced to buy awkwardly-hanging 3XL+ sizes just to get the appropriate length. Tall sizes provide a more-comfortable solution and allow tall slender-to-moderate-sized men to showcase their shape rather than wearing a massive canvass of a shirt. Many brands don't produce tall sizes, so if you have especially-tall male team-members you may want to check that this is available before ordering. Outside of 'Size' for stature, there is also 'Fit' to properly complement each wearer's physique:

FXTRA-SIIM-FIT

For the most-slender-built men. These cuts are smaller around the abdomen and in the sleeves. Unlike other fits, this tends to be carried by fewer, more-expensive brands. Men who feel any pulling of their buttons, or constriction of back or arms while trying Extra-Slim should opt instead for Slim Fit.

SLIM FIT

The slimmest of the three common shirt fits. As a general rule, men will look their best – physically-fitter, trendier, upright, and more crisp-in-appearance in the slimmest fit that they can wear comfortably.







FIT CONT.

Consider though that going too-tight can have a stronger negative impact than too-loose, so if close, err on the larger side so as not to look too constricted after-lunch.

The best way to check for fit is to put on the shirt and extend your arms outward to the sides as though about to give a huge hug. If there is any pull at the buttons or noticeable constriction in the arms or across the back, the shirt is too tight and the wearer should try Modern Fit instead.

MODERN FIT

The mid-weight fit for average-to-husky men. Wearers should test extending their arms as mentioned above. If there is button-pull or arm-constriction, opt for Traditional fit. Inversely, if the shirt seems baggy at all, especially in front around the waist and when trying this test—the wearer may want to opt for Slim instead.

TRADITIONAL FIT

Just like larger shirt-sizes, more men wear traditional fit than should. It is a common option on store-racks, and many aren't trained to look beyond the size and design of the shirt when shopping. Traditional fit leaves the most room in the arms and abdomen, and may be comfortable for heavier men. But for a slender-to-average sized male, it will look awkwardly-baggy and most wearers should seek the other two fits first as described above.

ATHLETIC FIT

Like Extra-Slim, this niche fit isn't present with all brands. It's most-common in young-appealing, fashion-forward lines. Athletic Fit leaves more room at the top for muscular chests and shoulders, but is tapered like 'Slim' in the abdomen for those with a slender waist. If doing the arms test with 'Slim' yields button-pulling at the chest, but the wearer's abdomen is comfortable, this is an optimal choice.

CUSTOM FIT

This is the slimmer-fitting, more-tailored polo-style. It is typically shorter-cut, and smaller around the midsection and in the sleeves. It is more-commonly worn by slimmer males, young professionals, and in cosmopolitan environments. Most European-style shirts and polos are a Custom Fit.

Unlike with button-downs where the slimmest-comfortable fit is generally-preferred, polo fit is truly a matter of the wearer's personal preference for the given function.

CLASSIC FIT

This is the more common, boxy, looser-fitting polo. It hangs longer over the waist and has more room in the arms and midsection. If custom fit polos pull or lift excessively with the wearer's arms outstretched, they should opt instead for a Classic fit.

While a custom fit may appear more-formal in the office, classic fit a safer-buy when doing group purchases since it's the preferred fit for heavier males and it works quite-well for slimmer men too. Traditionally golf shirts are Classic Fit Polos.

IN SUMMARY, COMFORT IS FOREMOST — BUT WITHIN COMFORT-RANGE, THE WEARER SHOULD OPT FOR SMALLER/SLIMMER-FITS TO GIVE THE BEST PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE.





DESIGN

WE'VE DISCUSSED MUCH ABOUT GARMENT CONSTRUCTION AND COMFORTABLY FITTING YOUR ASSOCIATES — BUT LET'S FINISH WITH YOUR ORDER'S FINISHING TOUCH — DESIGN.

HERE ARE SOME COMMON ELEMENTS AND THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN FINALIZING YOUR DESIGN:

COLOR

Are you choosing colors that accurately represent your brand, the associate's role, or the spirit of the event at which they are worn or given-out? Do they coordinate well with the design embellished on them? Shirt-colors shouldn't necessarily reflect the company's actual-colors. In-fact, if the embellishment contains company colors, a good shirt-color strategy is to choose something more-muted that contrasts-well from the logo to allow it to 'Pop'.

Some common color usage -

Blues and beiges are the most-traditional business-casual color-choices, because they are subtle and allow logos or designs to dominate the fabric.

Bright colors are heavily-associated with fun activities, fitness, and youth, and often look best with only white printed on them

Muted colors are common in "casual" items. "Vintage" items are often faded and muted, but sometimes incorporate faded bright or pastel colors too.

Bold contrasts are common for entertainment events such as expos and concerts.

Neutral contrasts such as Black/White are common for service crews, handouts, or other casual usage within otherwise-formal affairs.

Tip: Order a small variety of alternate-colored shirts to print with the same design. People like variety and not to feel as though they're seen in the same shirt every day.

PATTERN

Within business environments, highly-bold or contrasting patterns can be seen as gaudy, but subtle patterns are highly-accepted and will add a bit of style to the item, whatever it is.

With logo'd business apparel, remember that the stronger the pattern, the more the logo can be visually-lost in the shirt. Textures may be preferable to patterns for giving company-logo'd shirts their flair.

TEXTURE AND HEATHERING

The construction of the fabric may give it a textured visual-appeal as well. This is a great way to subtly up the visual-value of your business shirts without messing up how your designs appear, unlike with patterns. Textured fabrics include piqued polos, denims, and some heavy-texture-woven oxfords and twills.

Heathering, or a "heathered" look is similar to textures, but in blended knit items. It gives a

lightly-textured look to otherwise solid-color fabrics. It is known for both hiding sweat and also giving plainer items one more element of style. For these reasons it is most-common in both athletic performance apparel and vintage tshirts.



DESIGN CONT.

EMBELLISHMENT/DECORATION

Any custom element printed onto a blank garment is often referred to as an embellishment or decoration. We use two primary methods of embellishing:

Screen Printing and Transfers

Screen printing creates a smooth, rich-colored, inked image with similar-feel to the shirt. It is most-commonly done on T-shirts, Sweatshirts, and other very casual, handed-out items, and can imprint a large design for the same cost as printing small in many cases. Cost is instead a function of the number of colors used in the imprint as well as the number of imprinting locations on each item. Transfers create a similar imprint, but are done through a different method than screen printing. They may be cost-preferential when imprinting small designs or ordering frequently in small batches, as Screen Printing requires more setup and typically a minimum around 12 items. For optimal dollar impact, try to design using a minimal number of colors, and group orders together as much as possible.

Embroidery and Patches

Embroidery is typically seen as more formal or premium than screen-printing. It is common on polos, jackets, button downs, and even accessories like hats and bags. Unlike screen-printing, price is a function of stitch-count, which depends on the design's size and density, and multiple colors can usually be used, hardly affecting the cost.

DESIGN TIPS

Here are some final miscellaneous things to consider when designing for your order:

Less is more

Simpler designs and cloth patterns will concentrate attention on what is most important - name, logo, or tagline. Unnecessary color or flair might distract from what's important.

Less isn't always more

Cheaper doesn't always create more bang for your buck. Consider spending a little more to achieve the optimal design and be embraced by the associates you share these with.

Consider: Would relatively-plain \$15 polos that your salespeople only wear when required really go further than sharp \$40 zip-downs which they'd prefer to wear out casually on their own time? How often do you wear your favorite shirt vs your least favorite shirt?

Class, Cleverness, or Comedy will stretch your dollar

Just like any billboard or marketing, custom apparel is a standardized blank commodity-purchase. The actual value of that space, for the buyer then, can vary heavily by how it's used.

With thousands of brand-messages inundating most people every day – the goal is to stick out and resonate after falling out of the observer's short-term memory.

The best way to do this is to be "Remarkable" or literally - "worthy of remark."

Consider: What was the last thing you openly remarked on? Chances are, it was something you found clever (thought twice or appreciated some aspect), classy ("oh that's nice"/"I like that...") – or it made you laugh.

EMPLOY THESE IDEAS TO AMPLIFY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH SINGLE ITEM YOU HAND OUT.



SUMMARY **E**

ORDERING APPAREL IS NOT A COMPLICATED SCIENCE, BUT KNOWING WHAT TO CONSIDER REGARDING THE FUNCTION, FEEL, FIT, AND DESIGN WILL MAXIMIZE BOTH BUDGET AND BRAND-EFFECTIVENESS WITH EVERY ORDER.

Basic Guide

After thoughtful consideration of function, form, fit, and design, many buyers still may not know exactly what to get, item-wise for their need. Here's a list of common items and how they're generally used:

T-shirts

Promotional handouts, Casual Friday option, Company Picnics and Events, Event Staff Performance t-shirts
Outdoor laborers, athletic or fitness teams.

Hats

Outdoor laborers, promotional handouts, employee/vendor gifts. Great when business function is too varied, formal, or niche for customized shirts. More-likely to be worn and displayed off-clock than custom-shirt apparel.

Polos

Sales or Customer-services interactions, usually in warm, informal, or clean settings, or with non-business consumers. Acceptable office wear in less-formal or warmer settings than with woven button-downs.

Technician shirts

More professional for laborious/technical business work than a t-shirt, but less-formal and more-functional than a polo. Often contains functional aspects such as pockets, ventilation, or Teflon coating. common for auto-mechanics, janitorial workers, service technicians, drivers, etc.

Wovens/Oxfords

Sales or Customer-service within business settings. Common office apparel in more-formal or cooler-temp settings than with polos.

Outerwear

Great flexibility of use, especially in moderate/cool climates. Common vendor or employee gift. Allows-for and compliments individuals' own shirt choices. Like hats, outerwear is more-likely to be worn and displayed off-clock than shirt apparel.







SUMMARY CONT.

ONCE YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN ORDER, YOUR MSW APPAREL REP WILL WALK YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS, WHICH WE STRIVE TO MAKE AS SIMPLE YET RICH-IN-CHOICE. AS POSSIBLE. IN THREE STEPS. THE PROCESS IS AS-FOLLOWS:

HOW TO ORDER

1. Pick Your Garment

Follow navigation through www.mswprint.com or go directly to preferred supplier catalog, www.alphabroder.com, and select a style of interest.

Email matt@mswprint.com requesting a general type of item for us to recommend.

2. Receive and Confirm Quote

At this point is helpful to know approximately what design you'd like printed and where, as well as your total quantity. Submit print-ready artwork or other relevant graphics. Your MSW rep will quote firm pricing (or options) based on this, which you can confirm to proceed.

3. Design, Proofing, and Payment

MSW will proof out a mock-up of your item with approximate design-placement for final client approval. For first-time customers, if MSW is providing design work, we take a 50% deposit up to \$100 before providing a proof.

At this point, your order will be fully out-of-your-hands and on its way! We're always looking to improve this process or customize it to accommodate our partners. If you have any questions, comments, or requests for us, visit www.mswprint. com or call us directly at (734)975-9935.

