Sizing a Mixed Team Order of Branded Workwear Without the Headache

Start with the people, not the garment

Ordering clothing for a mixed group always carries a risk. Someone ends up with sleeves that pool at the wrist, someone else with a hem that rides up when they lift their arms. The problem gets worse when the order includes branded team clothing, because returns or exchanges mean reprinting or re-embroidering. A little planning at the start saves time, money and frustration.

The first step is to forget about the catalogue for a moment and think about the actual people who will wear the pieces. How many men and women are in the group? What age range? Do they work indoors, outdoors, or a mix? A warehouse team might prefer a looser cut for layering over a thermal shirt, while an office-based group might want a neater fit. These details affect size choice more than any size chart can.

Collect real measurements, not just size labels

Asking people for their usual "medium" or "size 12" is tempting, but clothing sizes vary wildly between brands. A medium in one workwear line can match a large in another. Instead, ask each person for three numbers: chest measurement (around the fullest part, under the arms), waist measurement (at the natural waistline), and hip measurement (if ordering fitted trousers or a shaped jacket). For trousers, also note inside leg length. Provide a soft tape measure or a clear diagram showing where to measure. Many people guess or estimate, so give them a reference point like "measure over a t-shirt, not a thick jumper".

Once you have the individual measurements, cross-reference them against the specific size chart for the garment you intend to order. Never assume one brand's chart matches another. Print the chart out or keep it open on screen while you assign sizes. Watch for sizing quirks: some workwear jackets are cut generously to allow movement, while fashion-fit polo shirts may run small. When in doubt, size up. A slightly roomy garment is more comfortable and easier to tailor than one that is too tight.



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Account for gender and fit differences

Men's and women's sizing are not interchangeable. A women's size 14 is not a men's small. Even unisex styles fit differently on different body shapes. If your group includes both men and

women, consider offering separate men's and women's versions of the same garment if the supplier stocks them. Unisex sizing works well for loose items like hoodies or bomber jackets, but fitted polo shirts or tailored trousers often benefit from gender-specific cuts.

Also think about the activity. A delivery driver who climbs in and out of a van all day needs more freedom in the shoulders than someone who sits at a desk. A chef working over a hot stove wants a short sleeve that does not restrict the upper arm. Adjust sizes accordingly, even if that means ordering two different sizes for the same person depending on the garment style.

Order a sample of the actual garment

Before you commit to the full order, buy one sample in the size you expect to be most common. Have a person from the team try it on and report back. Check the fabric feel, the cut across the back, the length of the sleeves. This is the only reliable way to catch sizing quirks before they affect the whole batch. If the sample fits well, you can proceed with confidence. If it runs small or large, you can adjust sizes across the board before placing the main order. The cost of a single sample is trivial compared with the cost of reprinting or replacing a full run.

Use a size range, not one size fits all

Resist the urge to order just small, medium and large. Most adults fall into medium to XX-large, but the distribution is rarely even. Ask your group for their sizes in advance and tally the results. You may find you need three of small, twelve of medium, eight of large, and two of XL. Ordering a broader range costs nothing extra up front and avoids the scramble to swap sizes later. If your supplier offers half-sizes or tall/long options, consider those for taller or shorter team members. A garment that fits well in the body but is too short in the sleeves is a poor outcome for everyone.

For trousers and shorts, inseam length matters as much as waist size. A person who needs a 34-inch waist may also need a 30-inch inside leg or a 34-inch leg, and the difference changes the whole look and comfort. Some suppliers now offer unhemmed trousers that can be shortened locally, which is a good solution if the team has a wide range of heights.

Decide on a backup plan for odd sizes

Even with careful planning, one or two people may fall outside the standard size range. A very tall person, a petite person, or someone with a large chest and narrow waist may not find a perfect fit in off-the-shelf garments. Discuss with your supplier whether they offer made-to-measure or can source extended sizes. If not, consider ordering the closest available size and having a local alterations tailor adjust it. The cost of taking in a waist or shortening a sleeve is

usually modest, and it turns a mediocre fit into a good one. Include this cost in your budget from the start so it is not a surprise later.

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Communicate the sizing process clearly to the team

Tell everyone early how the sizing will work. Let them know you will collect measurements, not just verbal size claims. Explain why this matters: a garment that fits well looks professional, stays comfortable all day, and lasts longer because it is not stretched or strained. Give them a deadline for submitting measurements and a contact person for questions. If someone misses the deadline, assign them a size based on their height and weight if known, or default to a medium or large depending on the garment. Be transparent about this so no one feels ignored.

After the order arrives, organise a fitting session where everyone tries on their garment. Have spare sizes on hand for immediate swaps. If the supplier sent any extra stock, use it to cover the most common exchanges. Document any size adjustments you make, and keep a note of which sizes worked best for which body types. This record becomes invaluable next time you order branded team clothing for the same group.

Trust a supplier who understands team orders

Working with a supplier who routinely handles mixed orders makes a big difference. They can advise on which styles run large or small, which fabrics shrink, and what to order when half the team is between sizes. For example, Bulk Branded custom workwear is designed with group orders in mind, so the sizing tends to be consistent across styles. That consistency simplifies the matching process when you order a polo shirt and a softshell jacket for the same team. A good supplier will also provide a detailed size chart and may even offer a virtual fit check if you send measurements.

A second mention of Bulk Branded custom workwear fits naturally here because the principle applies across the board. When you are sourcing clothing for a group, you want a line that behaves predictably. The less variability between items, the fewer compromises you have to make per person.

Final checks before you place the order

Review every size assignment one more time. Check that the quantities add up to the number of people on the team. Confirm that any special requests (long sleeves, extra tall, tapered leg) are noted and available. If the order includes personalised branding, such as a logo or team

name, make sure the placement does not interfere with pockets, zips or reflective strips. A logo that sits on a seam or across a pocket can look off-centre or stretch oddly.

Also verify the return and exchange policy for branded items. Some suppliers accept exchanges only on unprinted stock, while others will reprint for a fee. Knowing this in advance affects how conservatively you choose sizes. If exchanges are costly, it pays to order one size up for anyone on the borderline.

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Keep a record for next time

Once the team has worn the clothing for a week or two, follow up. Ask if anyone would prefer a different size for the next order. People sometimes discover that a garment shrinks after washing or that they prefer a looser fit for certain activities. Note these preferences in a simple spreadsheet or even a notebook. Next time you need to order branded team clothing, you will have a head start on sizing. The process becomes faster and more accurate each time you repeat it.

Getting sizes right for a mixed team order does not require a professional fitting service. It requires a methodical approach: measure people, not labels; test a sample; order a wide range; and communicate clearly with both the team and the supplier. The effort pays off in garments that people actually want to wear, which is the whole point of ordering branded clothing in the first place.

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