Sizing Up Your Workforce: A Practical Guide to Ordering Uniforms

Ordering uniforms for a growing team sounds straightforward until you try to work out how many small, medium, large, and extra-large garments to buy. Get the mix wrong and you end up with a pile of unworn uniforms or a scramble for replacements. The challenge becomes trickier when your headcount is rising fast and you need to estimate future needs without overstocking.

This guide walks through the key steps for estimating uniform quantities accurately. It covers how to gather reliable data, choose the right size breakdown, and plan for growth without wasting money or time. Whether you run a hotel, a warehouse, or a service company, the same principles apply.

Step 1: Collect Current Headcount and Role Data

Start with the facts you have. Pull a list of every active employee, their role, and their work location. Do not rely on memory or rough estimates. A simple spreadsheet with columns for name, department, job title, and shift pattern gives you a solid base.

What to watch: Seasonal workers, part-timers, and contractors. If your workforce includes temporary staff who need uniforms, include them in the count. Also note roles that require multiple sets of uniforms, such as chefs or maintenance staff who may need a clean set each day. The number of sets per person will matter later.

Step 2: Determine the Right Size Breakdown

Once you know how many people need uniforms, you need to know their sizes. Do not guess based on job roles or physical stereotypes. The best approach is to ask each employee directly. Send a simple form or use an internal survey tool. Ask for chest, waist, and height measurements, plus their preferred fit (regular or relaxed).

What to watch: Sizing varies between brands and garment types. A medium T-shirt from one supplier may fit differently than a medium polo shirt from another. If you are ordering from a new supplier, request a size chart and ask for a sample garment in each size. Have a few employees try them on and report back. This step prevents expensive mistakes.



Also note that size distribution shifts over time. If you have not surveyed your team in the past year, the old numbers may no longer be accurate. People change shape, and your workforce

composition changes.

Step 3: Factor in Growth and Turnover

A growing workforce means you will need more uniforms in the coming months. Do not order for today’s headcount alone. Look at your hiring plan for the next quarter or two. If you expect to add twenty new staff, order enough uniforms to cover them from day one.

What to watch: Minimum order quantities from your supplier. Some suppliers require a set minimum per size or per order. If you only need three extra-large jackets but the minimum is ten, you have to decide whether to order more now or plan a separate order later. Check the supplier’s policy before you place the order.

Another factor is employee turnover. Even if headcount stays flat, you will need replacement uniforms for people who leave and new hires who replace them. A common rule of thumb is to add ten to fifteen percent to your base order for replacements. Adjust this percentage based on your actual turnover rate.

Step 4: Decide on the Number of Sets per Person

One uniform per employee rarely works. Most staff need at least two sets so one can be washed while the other is worn. For roles with heavy soiling or strict hygiene requirements, three or four sets may be necessary.

What to watch: The laundering method. If you send uniforms to an industrial laundry, the turnaround time affects how many sets each person needs. Also consider storage space. More sets mean more stock to hold, which may require a dedicated uniform cupboard or rack.

Calculate the total quantity by multiplying the number of employees by the number of sets per person. Then apply the growth and turnover buffer from step three. This gives you a preliminary order quantity.

Step 5: Review Sample Garments and Approve Sizing

Before you commit to a large order, get sample garments in the sizes you plan to buy. Distribute them to a handful of employees who represent different body types. Ask them to wear the garment for a full shift and report on comfort, fit, and durability.

What to watch: Fabric shrinkage. Cotton garments can shrink after the first wash. If you plan to wash uniforms in hot water, order a size up or choose a pre-shrunk fabric. Also check the garment’s colour fastness and how it handles stains. A uniform that looks good in the catalogue may not survive a week on the job.



If the samples fit well, you can proceed with confidence. If not, adjust the size breakdown or switch to a different garment style. This is the time to catch problems, not after you have received a hundred boxes.

Step 6: Coordinate the Delivery Schedule with Your Supplier

Place your order with a clear delivery schedule. If you need uniforms for a training class that starts in three weeks, make sure the supplier can deliver before then. Split large orders into multiple deliveries if that helps manage storage and cash flow.

What to watch: Lead times vary by supplier and by time of year. During peak seasons, production slots fill up fast. Confirm the delivery date in writing and ask for a tracking number when the order ships. Also clarify who pays for shipping and what happens if a delivery is late or damaged.

For a growing workforce, consider ordering in phases. Place an initial order for immediate needs and a second order for future hires. This approach reduces the risk of holding too much stock while still having uniforms ready when new employees start.

A supplier like uni-cloth.com, which supplies corporate uniforms and custom printed apparel in Malaysia, can help you plan the size breakdown and delivery schedule. Their team works with businesses of all sizes and understands the challenge of estimating order quantities for a growing team.

Step 7: Plan for Replacement Stock and Reorder Points

After the initial order lands, set up a system for reordering. Track how many uniforms you issue each month and how many are returned or written off. This data tells you when to place the next order and in what quantities.

What to watch: Stockouts. If you run out of a common size, new hires may have to wait weeks for their uniforms. Set a minimum stock level for each size and reorder when you hit that threshold. Also keep a small buffer of the most popular sizes to cover unexpected needs.

Consider using a uniform management system or a simple spreadsheet to track inventory. Update it every time you issue or receive uniforms. This habit saves time and money over the long run.



Bringing It All Together

Estimating uniform quantities for a growing workforce is not a one-time task. It requires regular review of headcount, size distribution, and usage patterns. The steps above give you a repeatable process that adapts as your business changes.

Start with accurate headcount and size data. Factor in growth and turnover. Decide on the right number of sets per person. Test samples before you commit. Plan the delivery schedule carefully. And set up a system for ongoing replacement orders.

If you need a reliable partner for corporate uniforms, uni-cloth.com offers a range of options including custom printed apparel, heavyweight T-shirts, and cotton hoodies in Malaysia. Their experience with local businesses can help you navigate sizing and ordering decisions with confidence.

By following these steps, you will have the right uniforms in the right sizes when your team needs them, without wasting money on excess stock or scrambling for replacements.