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The purpose of this study was to acquire information about the decision makers and decision making process for corporate image apparel purchases to provide direction for industry and academic researchers in better understanding this growing market. Corporate image apparel, or company logo apparel, is widely used across companies for a range of purposes that relate internally to the employees or externally to the company's image to the public. The Organizational Buying Process Model (Kotler, 2000) provided the conceptual framework for this study.

The sample consisted of 10 companies who currently purchase image apparel to fulfill the needs of an image apparel program. Using a case study approach, company representatives were interviewed via the telephone or e-mail. Respondent companies were categorized based on their primary use of corporate image apparel, including employee dress code, employee incentive, corporate promotion, and corporate identity. These four groups were then compared for similarities and differences both among and across industry and supplier designations as related to the appropriate stages of the Organizational Buying Process Model and nine research statements. Results successfully identified the primary decision makers and decision making processes for corporate image apparel purchases both within and across designated user groups.

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DECISION MAKERS AND DECISION MAKING
PROCESS FOR CORPORATE IMAGE APPAREL PURCHASES**

by
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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my grandmother

Mary DiLuna

whose strength and compassion is both remarkable and inspiring.

BIOGRAPHY

The author, Kristie DiLuna, was born in Norristown, PA on August 5, 1979. Her parents are John and Betsy DiLuna and Wendy DiLuna (deceased) and she has three brothers and one sister, James, Johnny, Patrick, and Kate.

Kristie grew up in Massachusetts and graduated from Acton-Boxborough Regional High School in Acton, MA in 1997. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Textile Marketing from the University of Rhode Island College of Human Science and Services in 2001. Kristie then moved to North Carolina to pursue her Master of Science Degree in Textile Technology and Management (with a New Product Development concentration) at NCSU College of Textiles. She is currently completing the requirements for her graduate degree and looks forward to pursuing a career in the textile industry.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The uniform industry is a large and rapidly growing market within the United States marketplace (Abend, 2000). Significant increases in the use of uniforms are apparent across a range of diverse market groups, ranging from school uniforms to employment uniforms. While some groups within the industry are consistent and offer little room for further development and innovation, other markets offer significant potential.

Corporate image apparel is one type of employment apparel that has seen considerable growth in recent history (PR Newswire Association, 2000). It is a rapidly growing facet of the uniform industry as companies strive to differentiate themselves, increase employee morale, and use their employees as a marketing and branding tool. Corporate image apparel is broadly defined and refers to logo apparel used as casual business dress in office or professional-related businesses as outlined by individual companies (DiLuna, 2002). A report in Bobbin magazine estimates that over 58 million workers wear career apparel in the United States, a figure that includes logo apparel as well as executive and corporate casual apparel (Abend, 2000). This figure represents slightly less than half of the overall employment force in the United States and shows the growing importance of this market and its potential impact on the textile industry.

The use of image apparel is prevalent in a growing number of companies. Generally, a decision maker or group of decision makers are responsible for

decisions regarding the product and the method of obtaining the product, either through retail companies such as Lands' End or uniform services such as Cintas.

The organizational buying process model serves as the conceptual framework for this research. It applies only to corporate buying processes rather than consumer processes (Kotler, 2000; Webster & Wind, 1972). This model provides a framework to analyze the decision makers and the decision making process followed when purchasing goods at a corporate level.

Little research has been conducted on the image apparel market, despite this market's significant growth. It is a difficult market to define because of its large overlap with a number of markets, including both rental and retail outlets. Thus said, it provides an important opportunity for an analysis of the decision makers and the decision making processes in relation to the purchase of image apparel in corporate America.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the decision makers and decision making processes for corporate image apparel purchases. There are two primary objectives to this research:

1. Decision Makers: To determine the primary corporate decision makers for supplying image apparel to employees.
2. Decision Process: To identify and analyze the various factors within the decision making process from a product perspective.

A case study methodology was used in this research. Targeted companies for the case studies were those who purchase image apparel for either formal or informal image apparel programs, including dress code policies, employee incentives, and corporate promotion.

Research Statements

There are nine primary research statements. Each question relates directly to one part of the organizational buying process model as indicated in italics after each statement.

Decision Maker Research Statements

1. Who are the primary decision makers with regards to leasing, renting, or purchasing image apparel? (*Buying Center*)
2. How are these people chosen to be decision makers? (*Buying Center*)
3. How do decision makers gather information regarding the options available for supplying image apparel to employees? (*Need Description and Establishing Objectives, Supplier Search, Influencers on the Buying Process*)
4. How is the initial need for image apparel established? (*Problem Recognition and General Need*)

Decision Process Research Statements:

5. Why do companies implement image apparel programs? (*Problem Recognition, Need Description*)

6. How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to internal drivers? (*Problem Recognition*)
7. How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to external drivers? (*Problem Recognition*)
8. How is the decision making process and final selection influenced by internal and external variables? (*Influencers on the Buying Process*)
9. Why are individual products/suppliers selected within the corporate image apparel market? (*Product Specification, Supplier Search and Selection*)

Significance of the Study

This research will provide insight into image apparel which is an area of corporate decision making that has yet to be studied. It is intended that this research will provide a greater understanding of the corporate image apparel market, which is of particular interest due to significant increases in image apparel consumption. Currently, there is a large void in the literature regarding the decision makers and the decision making processes that are followed concerning corporate image apparel purchases. This study will provide insight into the decision makers and processes and will provide direction for industry and academic researchers in better understanding this growing market.

Limitations of the Study

There are four limitations of this study. The first is that the research will focus solely on image apparel, or logo apparel, which comprises only one subset of the overall uniform industry. The second is that the research will utilize a case study approach. Therefore, only a few select organizations will be studied and generalizations about the larger population may be difficult to make. A third limitation is there will be a focus only on image apparel used predominantly for promotional, incentive, or team building purposes, rather than functional (job-related) purposes. A fourth limitation is due to the available sample size. While companies such as Lands' End were forthcoming with providing names of their national account customers, other suppliers would not divulge customer lists. Thus, some of the samples had to be gathered from advertisements in supplier catalogs.

Definition of Terms

Corporate Image Apparel	Logo corporate apparel worn by employees of a company to create a consistent look (Joseph, 1986).
Decision Maker	Person who has primary responsibility regarding the selection and purchase of image apparel.
Direct Purchase	Items that are bought from a supplier directly and do not include a service such as laundering (UTSA, 2001).
Drivers	Those factors which have an impact on the decision making process with regards to image apparel purchases.

Executive Apparel	Sub-category of corporate apparel worn to distinguish supervisors from other employees in an image apparel program (Wearables Business, 2002).
Formal Policy	A dress code policy that is structured, written, and requires mandatory employee participation (DiLuna, 2002).
Image Apparel Policy	Corporate policy implementing and defining the use of image apparel within the organization (DiLuna, 2002).
Informal Policy	A dress code policy that has voluntary employee participation (DiLuna, 2002).
Process Factors	Those factors which have an impact on the specific product or services selected for image apparel policies.
Textile Rental	A company that provides both a uniform product and a service (commercial laundering, pick-up, delivery, alterations, program management) for businesses. Many textile rental companies now offer direct purchase programs also (UTSA, 2001).
Uniform	Any pieces of apparel required and consistent across a group (Joseph, 1986).
Retail Outlets	Market vendors that provide image apparel through traditional retail outlets such as stores, catalogs, and online.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Origin of Uniforms

Uniforms are a broad category of apparel that “identifies group members, helps ensure that organizational goals will be attained, and orders priorities of group and status demands for the individual” (Joseph, 1986, p. 66). Traditional uses of uniforms range from military attire to public servant attire, such as police or firefighter uniforms. Over time, other types and uses of uniforms have emerged as members of groups strive to differentiate themselves within society. Overall, uniforms impose conformity within an organization allowing for a greater degree of togetherness.

Traditionally, uniforms have been used to identify groups as well as ranks within an organization (Joseph, 1986). Uniforms provide four innate qualities:

1. Uniforms are a group emblem
2. Uniforms reveal and conceal status position
3. Uniforms are a certificate of legitimacy
4. Uniforms suppress individuality

Throughout time, companies have recognized the inherent qualities of uniforms and their potential benefits to the business environment. Such uses of uniforms are often referred to as occupational clothing, defined as, “any dress that indicates participation in a specific type or general category of jobs” (Joseph,

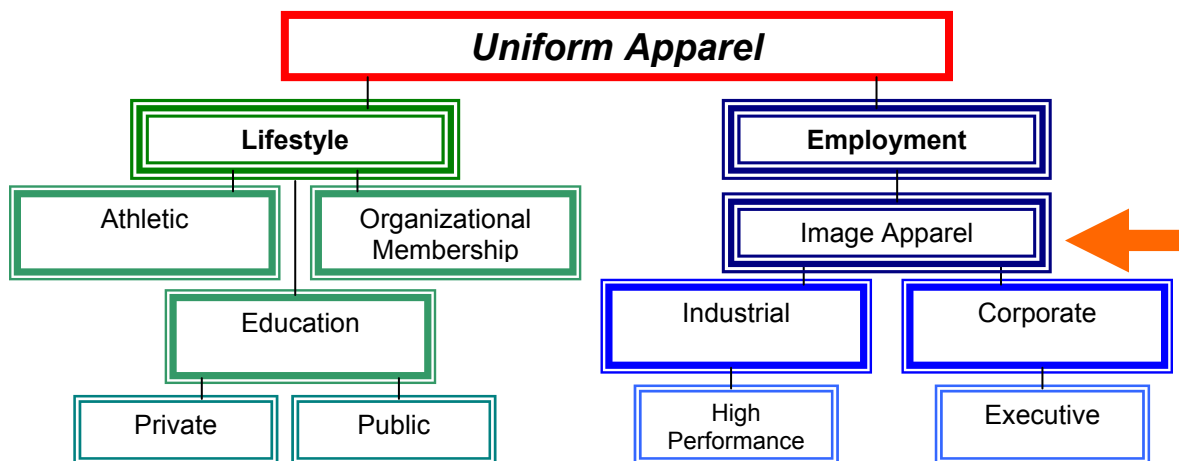
1986, p. 143). Occupational clothing can be delineated into quasi uniforms (nun's habits), standardized clothing (mechanic coveralls), career apparel, and dress codes.

Image apparel is a form of occupational clothing intended for white collar workers (Joseph, 1986). This sort of clothing can be categorized by a corporate initiative to designate color, fabric, or style of clothing to their employees. This often consists of a number of different apparel items that can be mixed and matched with one another. In doing so, the wearer retains their freedom of choice while also displaying a consistent and identifiable image to the public. Research has indicated that some companies require image apparel to decrease competition through clothing as well as to decrease the likelihood of upward mobility through clothing manipulation (Joseph, 1986). Other research indicates more extensive reasons for the use of career apparel, ranging from branding and marketing purposes to creating a consistent work and team environment and corporate image.

The Uniform Industry Defined

For the purpose of this research, a uniform has been broadly defined as any piece of apparel required and consistent across a group (Joseph, 1986). The term uniform is to be used lightly, as its meaning may not be consistent across various groups of apparel usage. The uniform industry is rather elusive in nature due to two main reasons. These reasons include a lack of consistent terminology and definitions in referring to the individual segments within the

uniform industry as well as a large overlap with current retail markets, further blurring the lines of understanding. In order for this assessment to be successful, working definitions had to be created. The broad definition of a uniform can be broken down into two specific categorizations of uniform usage: employment and lifestyle. Preliminary research focusing on a market assessment of the uniform apparel industry found that there is a basic landscape of the uniform apparel industry as shown in Figure 1 (DiLuna, 2002).



Source: DiLuna, K., Market Assessment of the Uniform Industry, Cotton Incorporated, 2002.

Figure 1: Landscape of the Uniform Apparel Industry

Employment Uniforms

Uniforms used for purposes of employment can be further delineated into their intended end-uses, including industrial and corporate apparel.

Industrial Apparel

Industrial apparel refers to bottom and top sets worn by employees of service occupations that are intended to protect the wearer from their work environment (DiLuna, 2002). These items must meet significant performance requirements as stipulated by the wearer's job description. The term "industrial apparel" is often used interchangeably with work clothing, workwear (a term frequently used by companies and trademarked in conjunction with another word, e.g. VF Workwear™), or service apparel. This term also includes items intended for the healthcare and hospitality industries. Items within this designation are generally made of a 65/35-polyester/cotton blend and have the company name and logo on the garments. Many manufacturers of such apparel correlate "blue collar" or "outdoor" employment with industrial apparel.

High performance uniforms are a subset of industrial apparel that refer to apparel worn by military or federal service industries such as police and firefighters (DiLuna, 2002). Items within this designation are generally made of high performance fibers and fabrics intended to protect the wearer from a range of environments and situations. For example, the most distributed work uniform of the military is the battle dress uniform (BDU). Annually, the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP) buys 2-3 million sets of 50/50 ripstop nylon/cotton blend BDU's. Each BDU uses approximately three linear yards of 60" material, for a total of 6-10 million yards annually. The military spent approximately \$305 million on standard issue apparel in 2000. In addition, they also purchase

500,000 chemical protection suits of 50/50 nylon/cotton blend fabric, which uses similar yardage per capita as the BDU. Formal dress uniforms are made of wool or wool blends for all of the Services. These items constitute the military's largest areas of consumption. Military fabric specifications are among the most rigid and demanding in the textile industry and a change in fiber content does not come easily or frequently due to the specific performance requirements in place.

The majority of industrial apparel is made of 65/35 polyester/cotton blends to provide durability, laundering, and comfort qualities. Industry sources believe that poly-dominant blends allow them to have good durability, low shrinkage, good color retention, ease of care, as well as comfort qualities. The United States Census Bureau differentiates apparel used in this sector from other clothing groups due to their distinct properties and construction. For example, workpants refer to "utility trousers in a sturdy fabric designed for hard wear and work with closed seam construction and a waistband in the same fabric as the shell" (US Census Bureau, 2002). This designation includes waistband overalls and coveralls; however it does not include jeans or dungarees.

Work shirts refer to "open front or pullover shirts in a sturdy fabric, designed for work and ease of movement" (US Census Bureau, 2002). Overall and work type jackets refer to "utility jackets in a sturdy fabric, designed for hard work and ease of movement" (US Census Bureau, 2002). These items generally have a closed seam construction. Tailored suit-type sport coats and jackets refer to "tailored separate suit-type coats including tailored uniform and separate formal jackets" (US Census Bureau, 2002). Washable service apparel refers to

“nontailored washable work apparel designed for use by waiters, gas station attendants, hospital staff, and other uniformed service workers” (US Census Bureau, 2002).

Corporate Apparel

The term “corporate apparel” is often used interchangeably with “image apparel” and “corporate casual apparel.” Items within this designation generally include a polo or oxford shirt of a cotton/poly blend and pants. Most manufacturers of such apparel correlate “white collar” or “indoor” employment with corporate apparel. Corporate apparel refers to either top and bottom sets or only tops worn by employees of a range of occupations and generally used for the purpose of creating a consistent look within a company as well as addressing the issue of dress codes (DiLuna, 2002). These items typically do not have to meet any high performance requirements nor do they undergo a large degree of wear.

Executive apparel refers to a subset of corporate apparel and typically consists of either top and bottom sets or only tops worn by supervisors within the same range of occupations as wearers of corporate apparel (DiLuna, 2002). This apparel is used for the purpose of maintaining a consistent look within an organization while also distinguishing the supervisor from other employees. These items typically do not have to meet any high performance requirements. The term “executive apparel” is often used interchangeably with corporate apparel, as not all companies make designations based on level within the

organization. Items within this designation generally include a solid colored oxford shirt of 100% cotton or cotton/polyester blends and slacks.

Apparel used for these purposes are not intended to adhere to specific performance requirements, and fiber content varies depending on whether it is rented, leased or direct purchased. This segment is more elusive than industrial apparel, primarily due to the large overlap with retail markets. For this reason, the U.S. Census Bureau does not specifically differentiate between corporate apparel and other retail apparel. However, it does include such apparel in broader apparel categories. For example, separate dress and sport trousers, including uniform refer to “all pants except jeans, jean-cut casuals, dungarees, and work pants” (US Census Bureau, 2002). Jean-cut casual slacks refer to “all pants of jean-type construction made from fabrics other than denim to be worn as sportswear” (US Census Bureau, 2002). This designation includes corduroy and khaki pants, among others. Dress and business shirts refer to “open front shirts designed primarily for dress or business wear, usually with a collar band” (US Census Bureau, 2002). Items within this designation may or may not have sleeve length and neck sized in inches and also may feature a convertible collar. In addition, shirts that are sized S-M-L-XL may be included.

With over 58 million U.S. workers wearing career apparel (including logo or executive corporate casual wear), corporate apparel offers a great deal of potential (Abend, 2000). A report in 1998 stated that “more than 32 million U.S. workers were wearing company apparel to work each day” (ACH&R News, 1998). With trends toward corporate casual there is a huge overlap with the retail

market; many areas of which cotton already has a strong presence (DiLuna, 2002).

Lifestyle Uniforms

Uniforms used for the purposes of lifestyle can be further delineated into their intended end-uses (DiLuna, 2002).

Athletic Uniforms

Athletic uniforms refer to tops and bottoms worn by members of an athletic team to create consistency and to distinguish themselves from opposing teams. These items must meet a number of performance requirements depending on the intended end use. Items within this designation generally consist of nylon-dominant fabrics.

Education-School Uniforms and School Dress Code Apparel

School uniforms refer to tops and bottoms worn by students at both private and public educational institutions. Generally private school students must wear a specific uniform that is tradition-based (S. Royal, personal communication, June 2002). Private school uniforms typically must meet strict durability requirements. These items are generally made of 65/35-polyester/cotton blends and can only be purchased at specialty stores. In contrast, public schools generally have dress code policies in place that are intended to create a consistent look across the student body. Public school boards often refer to such policies as uniform policies; however, for the purpose

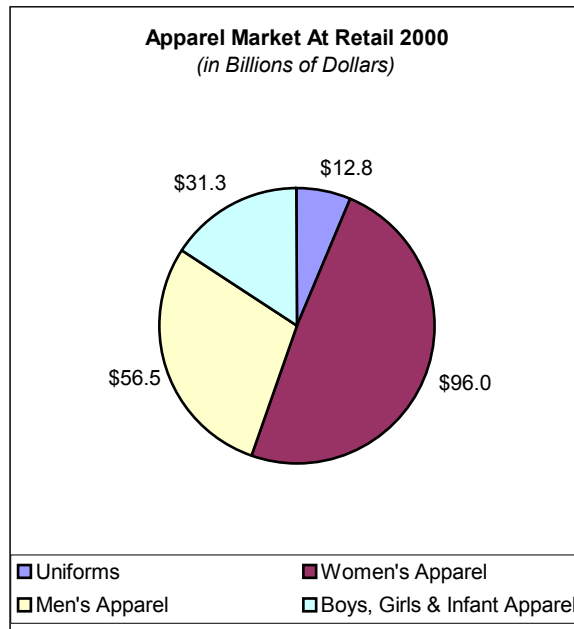
of this research, they will be referred to as school dress codes. School dress code apparel must meet some durability requirements, although there is much greater variation in the quality and styling of these items as compared to private school uniforms. Items within this designation consist of both 65/35 polyester/cotton blends as well as cotton dominant blends and can be purchased at a range of retail outlets.

Organizational Membership Uniforms

Organizational membership uniforms refer to either tops and bottoms or just tops worn by members of an organization to create consistency within a group (DiLuna, 2002). These items may have to meet a range of performance requirements depending on their intended end use. A Boy Scout uniform is an example of apparel within this category.

Overall Market Size for Uniforms

Focus 2000, an economic profile of the apparel industry that is distributed by the American Apparel and Footwear Association, reported that the uniform industry at retail was worth about \$12.8 billion (AAFA, 2000). While this figure is small compared to women's apparel (\$96 billion), men's apparel (\$56.5 billion), and boys', girls', and infant apparel (\$31.3 billion), it is also misleading in some respects. The \$12.8 billion



Source: *Focus 2000*, American Apparel and Footwear Association

Figure 2: Apparel Market Statistics at Retail, 2000

takes into account all industrial and school uniform purchases, however it does not take into account corporate or executive apparel, such as polo shirts or khaki slacks or apparel used in school dress codes. Corporate apparel has significant value and growth potential, particularly for cotton. While the uniform industry continues to grow, it also continues to consolidate. In all areas, significant players have emerged and are successfully buying out smaller uniform suppliers.

Image Apparel Market Assessment

Regardless of the industry, companies are constantly striving for new ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors, increase company

morale, and portray a clean, consistent image to the customer (M. Lonigro, personal communication, June 2002). Companies are finding the solution to such goals in the form of image apparel programs. Such policies, often referred to as corporate identity programs, are gaining widespread popularity in a range of occupations throughout the United States. With changes and instability in the economy and huge increases in competition, companies are realizing the advantages of implementing image apparel programs.

Overall Fiber Assessment for Image Apparel

Generally, image apparel is made of 65/35 polyester/cotton blends (DiLuna, 2002). This differs depending on the end use of the garments as well as the laundering practices that they must endure. Industrial apparel, in general, is made of 65/35 polyester/cotton blends. This allows the garment to achieve desired performance requirements while also providing some degree of comfort. There are two major exceptions to this. One is in regards to the use of denim, a trend that is increasing substantially in the industrial apparel market with the use of both denim shirts and pants. Overall, the use of denim shirts is more widespread throughout the industrial apparel segment. Another is in relation to the welding industry. This is the one industry where 100% cotton garments are consistently provided so that if sparks are released, the employee will not have to worry about the fabric melting to their skin (M. Lonigro, personal communication, June 2002). Corporate apparel, on the other hand, differs.

The vast majority of corporate apparel that is provided by textile rental companies is made of 65/35 poly/cotton blends. This is primarily due to the commercial laundering processes that the fabric must endure. Corporate apparel sold at retail, however, tends to have greater percentages of cotton. Many tops are made of 100% cotton to increase the comfort of the item while many bottoms are made of 60/40 cotton/poly blends or 100% cotton. This segment does not have specific performance requirements, and comfort qualities are more readily emphasized.

Image Apparel Segments

There are a wide range of occupations that require employees to comply with specific dress code policies or wear company mandated uniforms or apparel. These occupations range from chefs, security guards, and manufacturing workers to nurses and office workers. In an effort to encompass the largest employment-related uniform apparel industries, two distinct segments were identified.

Industrial and Corporate Apparel Provided By Textile Rental/Leasing Industry

The textile rental industry has a unique position within the industrial and corporate apparel supply chain. The textile rental industry is a primary provider of uniforms and corporate apparel to a range of industries, including two industries boasting the largest labor forces, the medical and food related industries. Textile rental companies are both service and product oriented. They are generally commercial launderers who provide a product in the form of

industrial and corporate apparel and provide a service in the form of laundering, maintenance and delivery of such goods (DiLuna, 2002). The term “textile rental” may be misleading, as the majority of companies within this sector participate in leasing, rentals, as well as direct sales of uniforms. By including this industry as a separate sector in the assessment, it allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of both industrial and corporate apparel related industries.

The fiber content of apparel provided by textile rental companies are generally polyester-dominant and made of 65/35 poly/cotton blends (DiLuna, 2002). This blend is used because it provides the necessary durability to withstand a range of working conditions as well as the durability needed to withstand commercial laundering (M. Lonigro, personal communication, July 2002). Other benefits of this blend are said to be related to color retention, shrinkage control, and cost concerns.

Commercial laundering facilities have different concerns than retailers (DiLuna, 2002). Since they are supplying an item, they have to ensure a certain number of washings per garment, based upon the industrial end-use of the item. It is upon these estimates that contracts are signed with individual companies. Thus, if an item wears out before the contract is over then it is the responsibility of the textile rental company to replace it, increasing their own costs. A visit to G&K Services in Graham, NC, in Summer 2002, illustrated this point (DiLuna, 2002). The overall hand of garments differed depending on the fiber content. Newer items had a stiffer and thicker hand while older items were very thin and flimsy. Mike Lonigro, General Manager of G&K, stated that the thin items were

ones where the cotton had “washed” out of it over the life of the item leaving only the polyester (M. Lonigro, personal communication, June 2002). Thus, if they were to provide 100% cotton goods, the life of the garment would be substantially decreased.

Another interesting point that came about was in regards to the difference in finishing processes of 100% cotton garments and poly/cotton garments. This difference, the exact figures of which G&K Services would like to be kept confidential, can be attributed to the fact that cotton garments had to be manually placed on the steamers while poly/cotton garments were hung and automatically sent through the process.

Industrial and Corporate Apparel Provided by Traditional Retail Outlets

There are also a great number of companies who are moving towards the use of apparel dress codes but are not utilizing textile rental companies (DiLuna, 2002). This would include brands such as Lands’ End and Dickies, who manufacture goods for industrial apparel and/or corporate apparel and distribute the goods through catalog or online retail outlets. Often retailers providing industrial and corporate apparel offer the option of goods to have a logo or be personalized. This designation would also include providing apparel to both medical and food related industries. The fiber content of goods in this industry follows those of the textile rental industry, although there is more cotton use. This can be attributed to the absence of the strict durability requirements imposed by commercial launderers.

Overall Market Size

The National Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors (NAUMD) estimates that approximately one in ten (total = 26 million) Americans wear a uniform at work (NAUMD, 2000 and Purchasing, 2000). Bobbin estimates that over 58 million workers wear career apparel in the United States, which was estimated from data provided from NAUMD and AAFA and includes logo apparel as well as executive or corporate casual apparel (Abend, 2000). In 2000, the uniform and career apparel markets together were estimated at over \$6 billion and growing.

The overall population of the image apparel market is difficult to describe. This is due to a lack of information and widely accepted definitions of the market itself. Personal research of major image apparel supplier catalogs as well as representatives of such suppliers has shown a large variety of image apparel customers. A detailed listing of some of the known customers from three major textile leasing agencies and one major retail agency can be found in Appendix A. Gathering information on current corporate users of leased image apparel was challenging due to the competitive nature of the market as well as supplier-based privacy policies. From the retail side of the industry, the information was openly divulged and case studies could be conducted following supplier notification to the customers requesting consent of the customer before contact with the interviewer could be established.

Corporate Casual Trends

The concept of “corporate casual” became popular within the last decade as companies began to allow employees to dress “down” for work (Foust, 1996). This shift away from formal business attire began with “casual Friday” offerings by companies and then slowly began to shift into other days of the week. Such a trend was expected to hurt uniform suppliers’ business. However, as the lines of what was considered acceptable work apparel blurred, companies began to shift their dress codes back towards more standardized policies (personal communication, 2002). While the shift is not expected to move all the way back to previous formal business attire, it is expected to move partially in that direction. In an effort to facilitate this shift back, companies began to enlist uniform suppliers for help in determining acceptable employee dress standards. Thus, the dress-down trend can be attributed to increasing demand for uniforms by opening new markets.

Cotton Incorporated’s Lifestyle Monitor™ (2001) reported that 65% of respondents reported casual days at work compared with 57% in 1994. Approximately 39% of the respondents in 2001 believed people had begun dressing too casually on casual day, as compared to 37% in 1998. It is likely that the Lifestyle Monitor™ has not yet reflected this trend back towards more distinct dress codes, and it will be interesting to see if the Lifestyle Monitor™ (2001) results are consistent with the trends within the uniform rental industry.

Advocates of Uniform Usage

Advocates of uniform usage see a number of benefits, both from a customer and employee perspectives. Craig Karasin, Vice President of Marketing for ARAMARK, believes “as more and more companies are looking to build their brand recognition and corporate identity, we are seeing an increase in the use of uniforms and career apparel as an extension of the brand” (Newswire, 1999).

Perceived Consumer Benefits

In May 2001, J.D. Power and Associates reported the results of a study conducted for the Uniform and Textile Service Association (UTSA, 2001). This study focused on consumer perceptions of companies and employees wearing uniforms. The study showed that when the quality and price of an item are equal, then the consumer would be more likely to purchase the product at a store where the employees are wearing uniforms. The respondents felt overwhelmingly that the quality of the product and/or service would be higher if an employee was uniformed. Uniformed staff gave consumers feelings of trustworthiness, credibility, and confidence. Interestingly enough, this perception was viewed throughout a number of areas, even those for which uniforms were not typically used. The uniforms that were referred to in this study included traditional work shorts and pants, business casual cotton and denim shirts, polo shirts, khakis, dress slacks, lab coats, aprons, and executive wear (UTSA, 2001).

Perceived Employee Benefits

A number of studies have been conducted regarding the perceived employee benefits of wearing image apparel. In 1996, *The Journal of Services Marketing* conducted a study called the “Dimensions of Uniform Perceptions Among Service Workers” to determine the effects, if any, of wearing such apparel. Overall, the study found that employees who wore company colors to work were more motivated and found greater pride in both their company and their own work. It also showed that employees who wear image apparel thought that the customer would view them as being more professional and thus better qualified for their job.

Opinion Research Corporation International (2000) conducted a similar study for ARAMARK Uniform and Apparel Group. This study had a sample size of 1,000 people and found an overwhelming 82% of “uniform” wearers thought their company benefited from such a policy. The same study found that 56% of respondents felt that the “professional, consistent corporate image a uniform conveys is the most important attribute” (Weller, 2000). The study also found that 60% of respondents thought wearing a uniform to work was important to a person’s job. About 53% of respondents also reported that image apparel closely resembled current styles and fashions of regular clothes. This is an interesting statistic when considering that the majority of such apparel is made of poly-dominant blends, while in other retail markets, cotton makes up the majority of fabrics. Over 33% of the respondents also reported that wearing such apparel

was more convenient in terms of getting ready for work and also saved them money (Newswire, 1999).

Research conducted by the Textile Rental Service Association (2000) showed that approximately 25-33% of firms without uniform policies in place were considering implementing a uniform program (TRSA, 2000). This research found that the greatest benefits of wearing a uniform were considered to be company image and employee appearance. However, it also determined that cost (e.g. high start-up costs and time needed to manage such a program) would be the greatest obstacle to overcome in implementing a uniform program.

Textile Rental Industry

Within the textile rental industry are a number of service options available to companies as a means to outfit their employees with uniforms including rental services, leasing services, direct sales, not our goods (NOG), and custom catalogs (UTSA, 2001). Rental services take care of all the details, including outfitting the employees, picking up soiled items and laundering them, delivering clean uniforms, as well as maintaining the uniforms. These services tend to be used in industries where moderate or heavy soiling is likely, where home laundering is not possible, or where the employee is highly visible to consumers. G&K Services goes so far as to install individual employee lockers where the clean uniforms are directly delivered to each employee's locker (M. Lonigro, personal communication, June 2002). Leasing services are very similar but they

do not include the laundry service (UTSA, 2001). Typically, leasing services will take care of mending or alterations that need to be done.

Direct sale of uniforms is used when a company purchases and owns the actual uniforms (UTSA, 2001). There is no laundering service offered. This service is typically used if a company has employees at remote locations or a great deal of seasonal and part-time staffing.

Not Our Goods services are used in the textile rental industry, although its use within the uniform sector is rare (UTSA, 2001). This service is for the laundering of garments only and the items are employee-owned. Custom catalog services are offered for companies that would like their employees to choose their own uniforms from a variety of styles. These catalogs are company-specific.

Market Size

The textile rental industry is a growing sector that provides a large majority of service and corporate apparel to the United States workforce. Estimated revenues for the overall textile rental industry differ. The director of the Uniform Textile and Service Association estimated that the overall textile rental industry has revenues at about \$10 billion, with this figure including other textile items and linen supply in addition to uniforms (UTSA, 2002). However, a market assessment of the uniform industry that was published in Bobbin in May 2000 reported that total revenues of uniform rental and direct sales was about \$9 billion (Abend, 2000). Of this figure, it was estimated that rentals accounted for

\$5 billion while direct sales accounted for \$4 billion. In this same article, it was reported that industry insiders believed that this figure was still too low and that the actual uniform business is a \$15 billion industry with almost an equal split between rentals and sales.

Specific numbers of the size of the uniform market are not available, as companies are not required to disclose the individualized revenue on items. Potential market sizes are estimated to be considerably larger at approximately \$24 billion (personal communication, July 2002). However, this figure does not seem to satisfy industry executives. Mike Lonigro, General Manager of G&K Services, estimates that the market as a whole is only saturated 3%, thus providing abundant growth opportunities (M. Lonigro, personal communication, June 2002).

Estimates can be made based on U.S. Census Bureau (2002) figures that show linen supply represents about one third (of receipts) of the total linen and uniform supply business and industrial launderers represent about two-thirds. However, even so, it is unknown as to how much of the industrial laundering business is made up of uniforms and garments. Industrial laundries comprise about twelve percent (of receipts) of the total personal and laundry services sector, based on estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau 2002 statistics. In speaking directly with companies, the figure varies as some focus more on other textile items while others focus on uniforms. Below are the most recent linen and uniform supply statistics that were reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1997. Because such data is five years old and tremendous growth has been reported, it

can be assumed that these figures are substantially lower than current figures would be.

Table 1: Linen and Uniform Supply Statistics

NAICS Code	Description	Establishments	Receipts \$(000)	Payroll \$(000)	Paid Employees
812	Personal and Laundry Services	185,484	57,879,444	18,577,395	1,217,185
81233	Linen and Uniform Supply	2,960	7,947,659	2,757,740	138,608
812331	Linen Supply	1,347	2,940,022	1,087,068	56,700
812332	Industrial Launderers	1,613	5,007,637	1,670,672	81,908

Source: 1997 U.S. Census Bureau

Industry Growth

In 2001, the Textile Rental Services Association (TRSA) released a strategic analysis of the textile rental industry (TRSA, 2001). This report included statistics from 1992-1997 and showed that sales revenues had grown in the industrial sector by 37.2% and in the linen-supply sector by 9.2%. This growth is likely to have continued, as the apparel rental industry has grown substantially since then. Employment in these sectors also grew considerably, with growth of 29.7% reported for the industrial sector and growth of 2.6% reported for linen-supply. These growth rates can be attributed to the fact that uniform consumers prefer to rent their garments rather than purchase them. This can be attributed to both the convenience of renting uniforms as well as the fact that renting is more economical in terms of total costs than purchasing.

The TRSA Industrial Uniform Services Subcommittee conducted a study to determine the fastest growing markets within the textile rental industry. They reported that the trucking industry looks very promising, with over three million drivers in the global trucking industry and expected growth of over 903,000 from 1996 to 2006. Other promising sectors and their expected growth include the following areas outlined in Table 8 (TRSA, 2000).

Table 2: Largest Growth Sectors within the Textile Rental Industry

Heating, ventilating, air conditioning firms	29%
Pest controllers and assistants	22%
Parking lot attendants	20%
Vehicle washers/equipment cleaners	20%
Gardeners, nursery, and groundskeeping	19%
Automotive body repair	17%
Automotive mechanics	17%
Elevator installers and repairers	15%
Refuse collectors	12%
Electric power line installers and repairers	10%

Source: 2001 Strategic Analysis of the Textile Rental Industry, TRSA Online;

www.trsa.org/members/tr/1100/stratplan.htm

Industry Profitability

The 2000 TRSA PROFIT Report is a trend analysis based on data from 1995 to 1999 (TRSA, 2000). The 2000 survey reported that textile rental companies with a mixed-segment operation, or that which had both linen and industrial operation, was almost twice as profitable (9%) than a linen-only operation (4.6%) or an industrial-only operation (5.1%). In relation to plant size, the survey showed that companies with two to four locations had profit margins of 6.7%, while companies with one location had profit margins of 3.9%. Comparably, companies with over four locations showed profit margins of 6.2%.

Industry Consolidation

As the industry becomes more and more profitable, consolidation increases in the linen-supply sector and decreased in the industrial supply sector. This is happening as companies strive to gain as much share of the market as possible. While there was a 9.3% decrease in the number of linen-supply companies from 1992 to 1997 (from 1,375 to 1,247), there was a 12.4% increase for industrial companies (from 1,435 to 1,613), as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 2002). In general, consolidation is more widespread within the industrial sector, a fact that is supported by the fact that competitors tend to be larger and have better capital than linen-suppliers.

Industry Strategies

Administrators within the textile rental industry believe that growth can best be achieved by first trying to convert uniform buyers to uniform renters (personal communication, 2002). However, they realize that cost is the major obstacle in doing so. Thus, many strive to emphasize the benefits of a rental service.

Major Competitors

There are six major players within the textile rental industry, five of whom are public and one of whom is privately owned (DiLuna, 2002). A brief synopsis of these companies is provided in the following section and more detailed descriptions can be found in Appendix B.

Cintas Corporation

Cintas is the largest commercial launderer in the United States (corporateinformation.com, 2002). They are a completely vertical company, with 15 manufacturing facilities ready to provide goods throughout the United States and Canada. Uniform rentals provided 75% of their revenue in 2001 and 25% for other services, such as direct sales. With over \$2.2 billion in revenue, Cintas has a strong hold on the textile rental industry. Cintas has reported 32 consecutive years of growth, a prime indicator of the growth and potential of the textile rental industry (see Table 3).

Table 3: Cintas Corporation Sales and Profitability Summary

Cintas Corp. Sales & Profitability Summary

Figures expressed in billions of U.S. Dollars

Year	Sales	Sales Growth	EBITDA ¹	% of sales	Inc. before Extra Items ²	% of sales	Employees	Sales/Employee
1993	0.453	12.7%	0.100	22.1%	0.045	9.9%	7,797	58,064
1994	0.523	15.6%	0.115	21.9%	0.052	10.0%	8,581	60,974
1995	0.615	17.6%	0.132	21.5%	0.063	10.2%	9,724	63,256
1996	0.730	18.7%	0.159	21.8%	0.075	10.3%	10,803	67,586
1997	0.840	15.0%	0.186	22.2%	0.091	10.8%	11,996	70,019
1998	1.198	42.7%	0.258	21.5%	0.123	10.3%	16,957	70,667
1999	1.752	46.2%	0.372	21.2%	0.139	7.9%	22,000	79,617
2000	1.902	8.6%	0.423	22.3%	0.193	10.2%	n/a	n/a
2001	2.161	13.6%	0.480	22.2%	0.222	10.3%	24,193	89,311
2002	2.271	5.1%	n/a	n/a	0.234	10.3%	n/a	n/a

Source: www.CorporateInformation.com

¹ Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization

² Income Before Extra Items

Angelica Corporation

Angelica Corporation provides both textiles and services to hospitality and healthcare industries near major metropolitan areas in the United States (corporateinformation.com, 2002). They have over \$350 million in sales, which can be divided into two sectors. Angelica textile services sector has 26 laundering plants and a number of linen facilities. Textile services comprised 74% of their sales. They also operate a retail sales segment that comprised 26% of their sales. Angelica has approximately 2,000 specialty stores and 10 catalog operations (see Table 4).

Table 4: Angelica Corporation Sales and Profitability Summary

Sales & Profitability Summary: Angelica Corporation

Figures expressed in millions of U.S. Dollars

Year	Sales	Sales Growth	EBITDA	% of sales	Inc. before Extra Items	% of sales	Employees	Sales/ Employee
1992	430.797	-0.8%	48.444	11.2%	13.803	3.2%	9,000	47,866
1993	427.128	-0.9%	45.430	10.6%	11.151	2.6%	9,500	44,961
1994	472.832	10.7%	49.121	10.4%	13.071	2.8%	9,800	48,248
1995	487.014	3.0%	45.787	9.4%	1.141	0.2%	9,700	50,208
1996	489.219	0.5%	41.942	8.6%	8.022	1.6%	10,100	48,438
1997	526.524	7.6%	34.340	6.5%	-6.898	-1.3%	9,400	56,013
1998	491.645	-6.6%	43.936	8.9%	8.892	1.8%	8,600	57,168
1999	462.941	-5.8%	34.031	7.4%	5.274	1.1%	n/a	n/a
2000	458.646	-0.9%	33.990	7.4%	6.586	1.4%	7,600	60,348
2001	350.063	-23.7%	25.930	7.4%	1.629	0.5%	7,000	50,009

Source: www.CorporateInformation.com

G&K Services, Inc.

G&K Services provides corporate identity apparel as well as facility services to companies in the industrial, service, and technology-related industries (corporateinformation.com, 2002). They experienced revenues of \$603 million, with uniform and linen rentals accounting for 97% of revenues 2001 and uniform sales accounting for 3% (see Table 5).

Table 5: G & K Services Sales and Profitability Summary

Sales & Profitability Summary: G & K Services, Inc.

Figures expressed in millions of U.S. Dollars

Year	Sales	Sales Growth	EBITDA	% of sales	Inc. before Extra Items	% of sales	Employees	Sales/ Employee
1992	194.716	10.5%	35.567	18.3%	8.582	4.4%	3,400	57,269
1993	207.904	6.8%	39.492	19.0%	11.123	5.4%	3,008	69,117
1994	225.229	8.3%	45.513	20.2%	14.791	6.6%	3,966	56,790
1995	262.481	16.5%	53.481	20.4%	18.286	7.0%	4,035	65,051
1996	305.414	16.4%	65.649	21.5%	22.720	7.4%	5,375	56,821
1997	350.914	14.9%	74.670	21.3%	29.002	8.3%	4,873	72,012
1998	502.593	43.2%	108.004	21.5%	32.058	6.4%	6,551	76,720
1999	519.966	3.5%	113.381	21.8%	37.029	7.1%	6,743	77,112
2000	577.392	11.0%	116.375	20.2%	37.812	6.5%	7,913	72,968
2001	603.579	4.5%	111.378	18.5%	33.783	5.6%	8,448	71,446

Source: www.CorporateInformation.com

UniFirst Corporation

UniFirst Corporation supplies image wear, occupational apparel and career apparel to a wide range of industries (corporateinformation.com, 2002). Their 2001 sales reached over \$556 million of which garment rentals accounted for 65%, non-garment rentals for 26%, garment decontamination services for 7%, and direct garment sales for 2% (see Table 6).

Table 6: UniFirst Corporation Sales and Profitability Summary

Sales & Profitability Summary: UniFirst Corporation

Figures expressed in millions of U.S. Dollars

Year	Sales	Sales Growth	EBITDA	% of sales	Inc. before Extra Items	% of sales	Employees	Sales/ Employee
1992	268.190	7.1%	42.010	15.7%	14.343	5.3%	4,500	59,598
1993	287.728	7.3%	47.199	16.4%	17.689	6.1%	5,000	57,546
1994	318.039	10.5%	50.369	15.8%	18.871	5.9%	5,500	57,825
1995	355.041	11.6%	53.725	15.1%	20.634	5.8%	6,000	59,174
1996	391.794	10.4%	61.729	15.8%	24.662	6.3%	6,600	59,363
1997	419.093	7.0%	70.387	16.8%	28.723	6.9%	7,000	59,870
1998	448.052	6.9%	80.804	18.0%	33.190	7.4%	7,300	61,377
1999	487.100	8.7%	83.471	17.1%	24.106	4.9%	7,500	64,947
2000	528.726	8.5%	73.954	14.0%	19.868	3.8%	7,500	70,497
2001	556.371	5.2%	84.033	15.1%	23.224	4.2%	7,500	74,183

Source: www.CorporateInformation.com

ARAMARK Corporation

ARAMARK is a privately owned company with a wide range of business interests, including the textile rental industry (corporateinformation.com, 2002). Of their total 2001 revenues of \$7.8 billion, approximately 18% or \$1.4 billion were for uniform and career apparel. This figure is the approximate percent of sales that can be used when looking at Table 7.

Table 7: ARAMARK Corporation Sales and Profitability Summary

Sales & Profitability Summary: ARAMARK Corporation

Figures expressed in billions of U.S. Dollars

Year	Sales	Sales Growth	EBITDA	% of sales	Inc. before Extra Items	% of sales	Employees	Sales/ Employee
1998	6.377	n/c	0.534	8.4%	0.134	2.1%	150,000	42,515
1999	6.718	5.3%	0.569	8.5%	0.150	2.2%	152,000	44,200
2000	7.263	8.1%	0.640	8.8%	0.168	2.3%	167,000	43,490
2001	7.789	7.2%	0.680	8.7%	0.176	2.3%	200,000	38,943

Source: www.CorporateInformation.com

In 1999, ARAMARK was processing over 500 million garments a year for over 15 million customers (PR Newswire Association, Inc., 1999). In the three years since that report, the company has launched The ApparelOne Process®, which they designed in order to give fulfill orders with a single point of purchase. Thus, a combination of this process and the growth of the industry are likely to have increased this figure substantially.

Retail Industry

Corporate apparel provides a definite market opportunity for cotton (DiLuna, 2002). This market opportunity is a result of a lack of performance requirements that are needed for the garments. Often, apparel in this segment is bought based upon the consumers' personal preference of where they would like to shop. Therefore, companies such as Lands' End have been targeting this segment of the industry in an effort to encourage consumers to regard their clothing as both employment and pleasure related.

Lands' End promotes cotton extensively in their catalogs (DiLuna, 2002). Figure 3 shows an example where the team-values associated with image apparel are combined with pima cotton. Doing so will help to encourage consumers to associate cotton with their image apparel items.



Figure 3: Lands' End Pima Promotion



Figure 4 is another example of Lands' End marketing of cotton. In this instance they show actual cotton plants with a company logo shirt. This is another example of encouraging consumers to associate cotton with corporate apparel needs.

Figure 4: Lands' End Catalog Image

Lands' End marketing techniques can be compared with the American Uniform Company, who advocates the use of Fortrel® polyester.

Figure 5: American Uniform Company Catalog Image

MEN'S SOFTUFT™ INDUSTRIAL SHIRTS... BUILT TO LAST

THROUGH THE TOUGHEST JOBS AND COME OUT ON TOP FOR COMFORT AND CARE. OUR SOFTUFT™ FINISHING ADDS A KITTEN SOFT TOUCH, WHILE INCREASING MOISTURE WICKABILITY AND SOIL-RELEASE PROPERTIES.

S364 VIP®

The popular choice for basic needs, this shirt is SoftTuf™ permanent press 65% polyester/35% cotton 4 1/4 oz.-5 oz. poplin.

- Short sleeves
- 1 pc. lined convertible collar with gripper snap closure
- 6 button front
- 2 button through chest pockets with pencil section in left pocket
- Sizes S-6XL, regular, long and X-long lengths available, sizes vary by colors at left

S365 VIP®

This is the long sleeve version of the popular SoftTuf™ shirt in permanent press 65% polyester/35% cotton 4 1/4 oz.-5 oz. poplin.

- Long sleeves with button cuff
- Sizes S-6XL, Regular, long, and X-long lengths available, sizes vary by colors at left



Factors Influencing Adoption of Corporate Uniform Policies

Branding and Public Image

“The function of a brand as a distinguishing goods of one producer from those of another and of thus allowing consumers freedom of choice” has remained consistent throughout history (Murphy, 1987, p.1). Generally, consumers will perceive a brand as “embracing a set of values which they can specify means that they will reject, or tend to reject” (Murphy, 1987, p.1). This brand will be the identifiable symbol of the service or product for which the consumer relates to and in essence adds value to such. When done properly, branding has the potential to progress indefinitely because they “offer consumers something of value which is different from that offered by competitive brand” (Murphy, 1987, p.1). In essence, building a brand is “making a product, service, or company stand for something, thus creating a positive interest that would make a defined audience buy or support it and keep supporting it against the efforts of competitors” (Marconi, 1999, p.9).

Branding as a Means of Corporate Identity

Branding can be a particularly important component of creating corporate identity. Corporate identity can be classified as the “branding and packaging of an entire company” (Diefenbach, 1987, p.156). Such programs, herein referred to as image apparel policies, “differentiates the company in a positive and memorable way; it projects the unique personality of the corporation; it positions

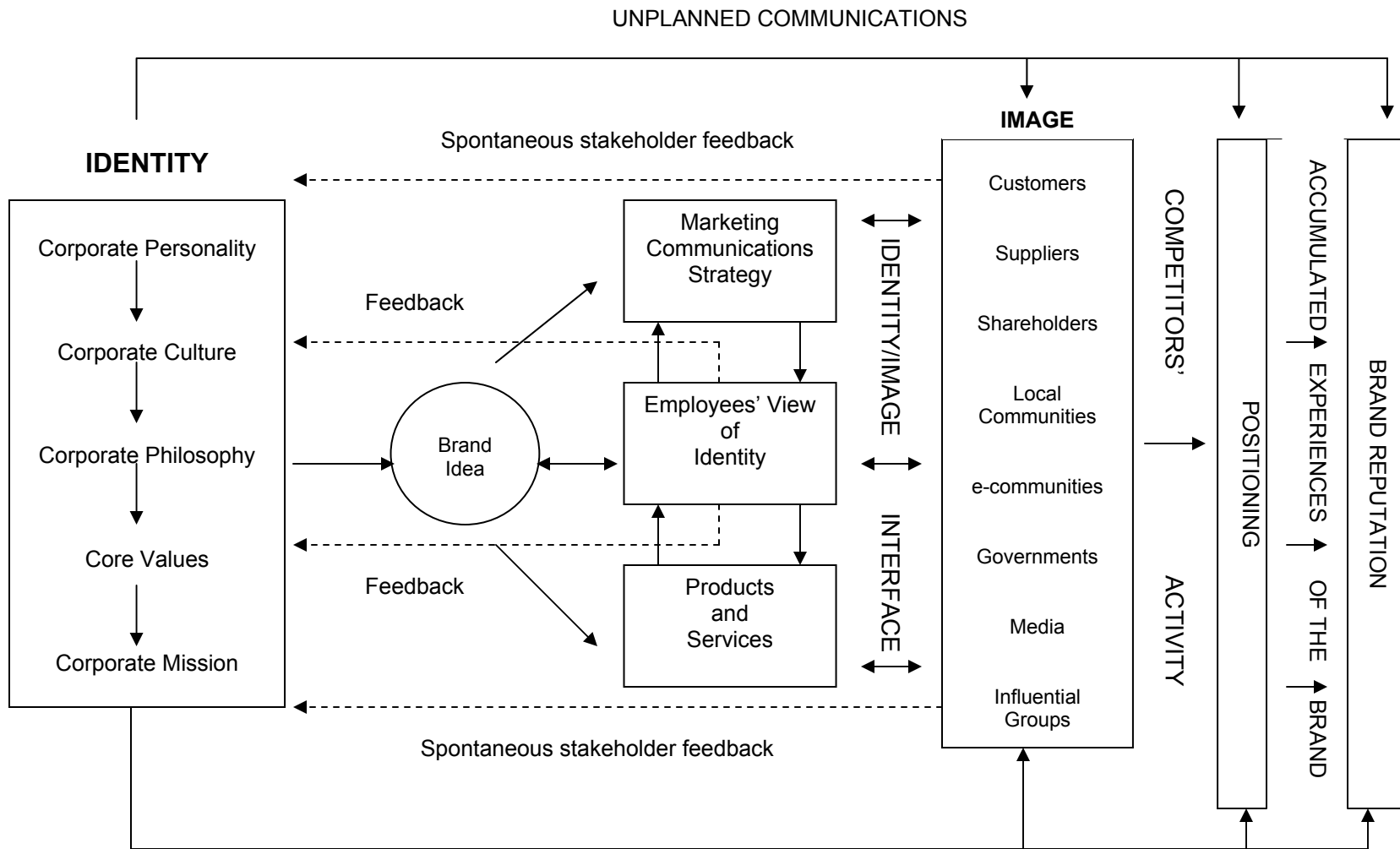
the company in the market-place” (Diefenbach, 1987, p.156). Thus, corporate identity through the use of image apparel can be an important strategic marketing tool and allows the consumer to better understand and identify with a corporate mission. Such image apparel policies are the collaboration of “all the visual elements which serve as points of public contact” (Diefenbach, 1987). Visual elements can range from the use of a corporate name, logo, promotional media, and visibility assets. In relation to this research, employees wearing image apparel will be the visibility assets that are focused on. Image apparel is the visual identity of a company and greatly influences how it will be perceived by others outside of the company. Corporate identity programs, also known as employee dress codes, can be definitive, inflexible, and symbolic.

The use of corporate apparel as a means of branding is a form of advertising that is less explicit than a billboard on a highway (Diefenbach, 1987). Such apparel reflects an overall and identifiable image of the corporation and its products and services, therefore giving value to such. In addition, research has shown that “there is a measurable relationship between a brand’s level of public awareness and its market share” (Marconi, 1999, p.55). Research has also indicated that a consumer’s decision to remain loyal to a specific brand is a result of the value of price and quality, the image, convenience and availability, satisfaction, service, and product guarantee. The consumer’s attitude towards an employee, particularly employees of a service industry, will be particularly important in establishing brand loyalty. The use of image apparel in business

situations, both for product and service based industries, can help to raise the perceived value, quality, image, and service of a company and their brand.

Employees and Brand Formation

Employees are a valuable asset in brand formation. Brands can be thought of as “a recognizable and trustworthy badge of origin and also a promise of performance” (Ind, 2001, p.18). It has been said that the “relationship between employees and consumers is at the heart of the brand experience” (Ind, 2001, p.28). Identification is an important component of aligning employee values with corporate values. Image apparel is one means of supplying the employee with an opportunity for identification with the organization (see Figure 6).



UNPLANNED COMMUNICATIONS
 Source: Living the Brand By: Nicholas Ind, p. 93

Figure 6: The Brand Model

Wearer Preferences

In some instances, companies may take employee preferences into account when making decisions regarding their image apparel policies (DiLuna, 2002). This can be achieved in a number of ways, including allowing employees to purchase from a list of designated items from a selected catalog. In other instances, the company might take a consensus from the employees to gather their feedback and preferences towards such apparel. In other instances, the employee may not be asked to involve their opinion in such a decision.

Supplier Based Factors

The depth and breadth of suppliers and products may also be an influencing factor towards the selection of image apparel policies (DiLuna, 2002). While some suppliers may offer a range of items for purchase, others may only offer a small list of offerings. The company must make decisions based on the availability and range of options of suppliers and services.

Organizational Buying Process Model

Organizational buying is a process that organizations use to make and evaluate decisions (Webster & Wind, 1972). It allows companies to establish the need for consumer purchased products or services. Following this, the organizations can then identify, evaluate, and choose alternative brands as well as suppliers. Doing so allows a company to evaluate potential competitors to establish the appropriate buying strategy.

Organizational buying is different from consumer buying in three distinct ways (Kotler, 2000). The first is that organizational buying markets have fewer buyers. Secondly, these markets have larger buyers that do the majority of the purchasing. Third, there is generally a close supplier-customer relationship that can be attributed to the previously mentioned points. In general, organizations expect that their suppliers will customize their product offering to better suit the needs of the individual customer and not just the overall market. As mass-customization continues to increase these supplier-customer relationships continue to grow stronger.

There are a number of terms that are important to be familiar with in terms of organizational buying. These terms are outlined below and should be used as reference when referring to organizational buying (Kotler, 2000). Professional purchasing, several buying influences, multiple sales calls, direct purchasing, and leasing are the terms that relate the most to this study.

Table 8 : Organizational Buying Terms

Organizational Buying Terms
1. Geographically concentrated buyers
2. Derived demand
3. Inelastic demand
4. Fluctuating demand
5. Professional purchasing
6. Several buying influences
7. Multiple sales calls
8. Direct purchasing
9. Reciprocity
10. Leasing

Note: Items in **bold** represent terms related to this research.

Source: Kotler, 2000

The Buying Center

The actual decision makers within the organizational buying context can be categorized into seven primary roles that make up the buying center. The buying center can be defined as, “members of the organization who interact during the buying decision process” (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 77). Initiators can be categorized as those persons who make the initial request for the purchase of an item. These persons can be users, management, or hold other responsibilities within a company. Users are those who will be the end-user of

the product or service that is purchased (Webster & Wind, 1972). They often play an important role in helping to define product requirements. Influencers are those within the company who have a direct influence on the actual purchase decision (Webster & Wind, 1972). They are often a key in defining the product requirements as well as providing alternative evaluation tools. Deciders are those who make the final purchase decisions of the product and supplier (Webster & Wind, 1972). Approvers are those who authorize the final decision made by the deciders and buyers (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Buyers are those who select the suppliers for the product or service and who make arrangements for the actual purchase of goods and services (Webster & Wind, 1972). They play a very important role in choosing the vendors and negotiating terms and contracts. Gatekeepers are those who have power within an organization to prevent access to the members of the buying center, whether they are sellers or information. Corporate gatekeepers are "group members who control the flow of information into the group" (Webster & Wind, 1972, p. 79). Oftentimes, the role of gatekeeper is played out by the purchasing agent or buyer who is responsible for managing company relationships with vendors. The role of formal gatekeepers is most prevalent when identifying buying alternatives.

Organizational Buying Process Stages

The organizational buying process model is a valuable decision process for companies to follow. The typical buying process consists of eight basic stages: problem recognition, general need description, product specification,

supplier search, proposal solicitation, supplier selection, order-routine specification, and performance review (Kotler, 2000). Kotler has stated these are the eight stages of organizational buying, but has not visually depicted the process.

Problem Recognition

The first stage of the buying process is problem recognition where a need is acknowledged that can be fulfilled by the adaptation of a product or service (Webster & Wind, 1972). This recognition can come from a variety of sources, including internal corporate stimuli, the corporate culture, employment class, situational influences, or external stimuli. Examples of internal stimuli are the development of a new product that requires new technology and materials, an existing material breaking necessitating the purchase of a new material, a purchased item does not meet the requirements of a company requiring the search for a new supplier, and recognizing the ability to lower costs through the use of a new item. Sources of external stimuli include decision-maker resources, motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, and company values. External stimuli can also trigger need recognition, including the product being seen at a trade show, an ad, or a sales representative solicitation.

General Need Description and Establishing Objectives

The search for information is necessary for an individual to find more information regarding the product or service to be purchased (Webster & Wind, 1972). This search can be accomplished a number of different ways, including

personal searches, commercial searches, public searches, and experiential searches. Such a search allows an organization to better understand the objectives and specifications for the actual purchase. Product and service specifications can come about as a result of the definition of the buying problem and also based on the information that is available through searches. These objectives will focus upon the needs required by the product or service, the benefits, the attributes, the brand beliefs, and the brand image portrayed through the use of the product.

Product Specification

The third stage of the organizational buying process is that of product specification (Webster & Wind, 1972). This is accomplished by doing a product value analysis that studies the various components of a product to determine if there is a better or cheaper way of achieving the same results.

Supplier Search

Once product specifications are decided upon, the buyer must identify suppliers for the product or service (Webster & Wind, 1972). This can be done a number of ways, including searching through trade directories, doing an online search, evaluating what the competitor uses, trade shows, and sales representatives, to name a few. Suppliers may include rental agencies, retail outlets, and catalog retailers.

Proposal Solicitation

Once potential suppliers have been identified, the buyer will solicit proposals to evaluate the products and services (Webster & Wind, 1972).

Supplier Selection

Often, companies will create a list of desired supplier attributes and the importance of each (Webster & Wind, 1972). Doing so allows them to more easily identify the most appropriate suppliers to fulfill the company need. Supplier value is an important component of the organizational buying process. Most often, delivery reliability, price, and supplier reputation are the most important attributes considered by buyers.

Order-Routine Specification

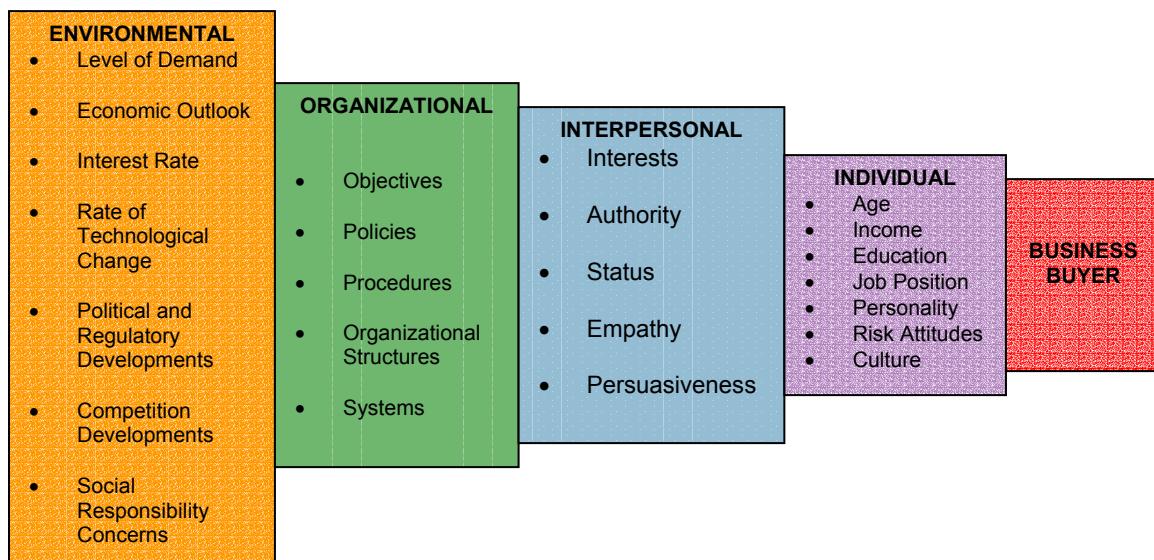
Once a particular supplier has been decided upon, the buyer will negotiate the terms of the final contract (Webster & Wind, 1972). This will be a detailed list of specifications and requirements that are agreed upon by both the supplier and the buyer. It also allows for a greater degree of organization within the supplier-buyer relationship.

Performance Review

Suppliers are reviewed over time to analyze the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their product or service (Webster & Wind, 1972). After the evaluation has been completed, buyers may choose to change or discontinue an existing supplier service.

Influences on the Buying Process

There are a range of influencers that can affect the buying environment (Kotler, 2000). Corporate buyers should evaluate and consider all of the influencers when making their buying decisions. These influencers are outlined in Figure 7.



Source: Re-created from Marketing Management, Kotler, 2000, p. 197

Figure 7: Major Influences on Industrial Buying Behavior

Influences can be delineated into four primary categories (Kotler, 2000):

Environmental

Environmental factors are important to be considered during the buying process (Kotler, 2000). These factors include economic influences including

consumer spending and level of investment, technological influences, political influences, and competitive developments.

Organizational

Organizational influences include those which relate directly to the organization and its activities, such as purchasing objectives, company policies, procedures, organizational structure, and systems (Kotler, 2000).

Interpersonal

Interpersonal factors can also influence the buying process depending on the committee dynamics (Kotler, 2000). Oftentimes group dynamics can differ as a result of varying interests, status in the company, empathy, and level of authority.

Individual

Individual factors are those which are related directly to each member within a purchasing committee or organization (Kotler, 2000). Individual factors and preferences cultural factors are the most prevalent sources of individual influence.

Summary

The previous sections have described an overview of the image apparel industry and where it fits within the broader landscape of the uniform industry. The influencing factors, structure, and nature of the industry have all been explored. This market is still highly generalized with other types of apparel which causes certain areas of the market remain indistinct. The following chapters attempt to provide a greater understanding of the decision makers and decision making processes as they relate to image apparel purchases.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Statements

The specific objectives of this study have been segmented to target the two major sections of this study: Decision Maker and Decision Process.

Decision Maker Research Statements

1. Who are the primary decision makers with regards to leasing, renting, or purchasing image apparel? (*Buying Center*)
2. How are these people chosen to be decision makers? (*Buying Center*)
3. How do decision makers gather information regarding the options available for supplying image apparel to employees? (*Need Description and Establishing Objectives, Supplier Search, Influencers on the Buying Process*)
4. How is the initial need for image apparel established? (*Problem Recognition and General Need*)

Decision Process Research Statements:

5. Why do companies implement image apparel programs? (*Problem Recognition, Need Description*)
6. How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to internal drivers? (*Problem Recognition*)


7. How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to external drivers? (*Problem Recognition*)
8. How is the decision making process and final selection influenced by internal and external variables? (*Influencers on the Buying Process*)
9. Why are individual products/suppliers selected within the corporate image apparel market? (*Product Specification, Supplier Search and Selection*)

Research Design

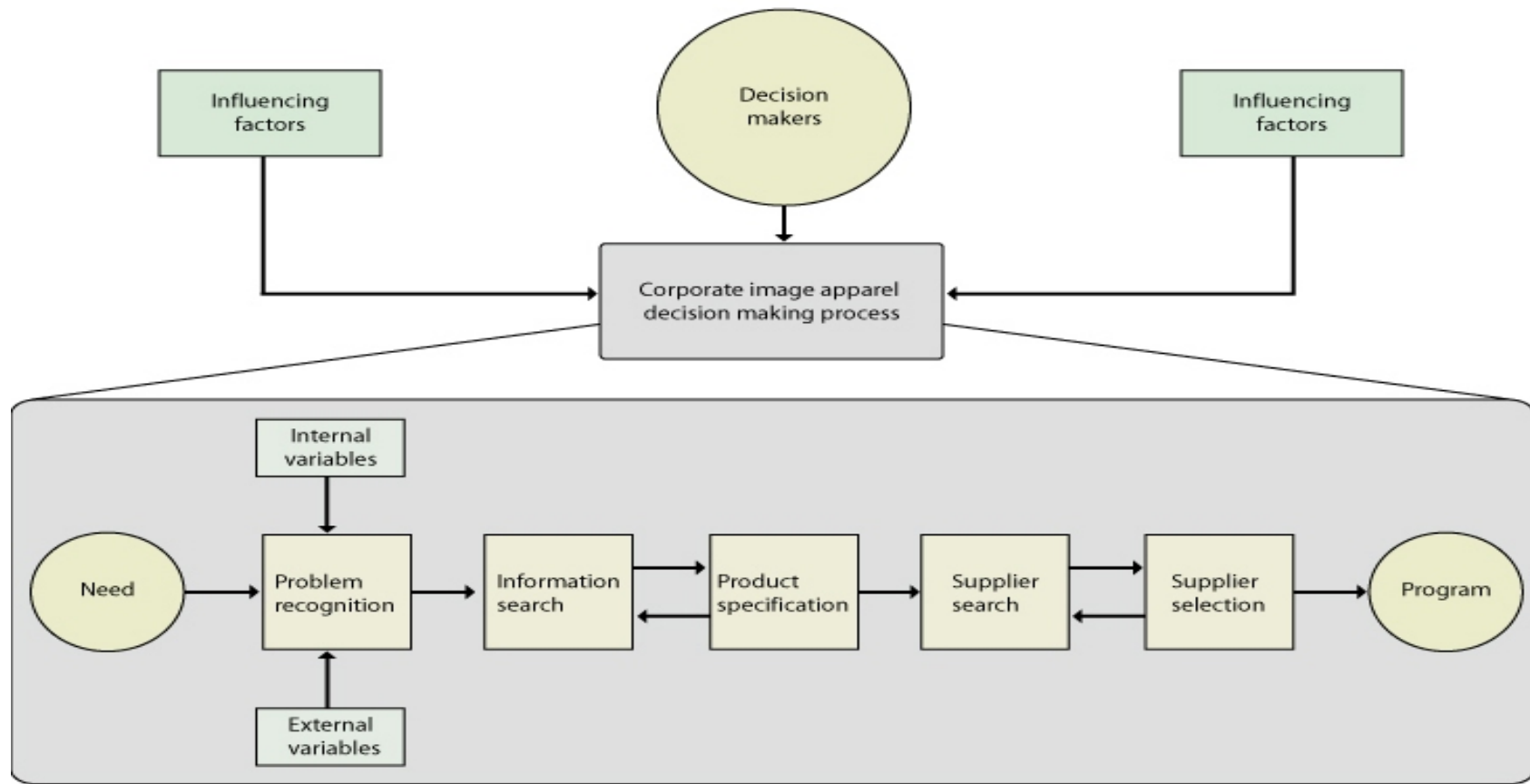
Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a case study approach was chosen to analyze the decision makers and decision making processes used when evaluating and implementing formal and informal image apparel programs. Such an approach allowed for a greater breadth and depth of data to be collected (Yin, 2003). In choosing a smaller number of cases to research, as compared to a larger survey research method, the primary benefit is that a greater amount of information was gathered on each company than would have been possible through a survey with a much larger sample size. Another benefit of doing case study research is the ability to gather unstructured and detailed data that can be qualitatively analyzed. Unstructured data allows for additional insight and is important because various business situations can be captured.

Figure 8 represents the image apparel decision making process as it relates to the organizational buying process model. This model was developed using Kotler's (2000) eight stages of organizational buying behavior but was

adapted by the researcher for image apparel. The adapted model followed the same basic sequence as the original model while highlighting five of the eight stages of outlined by Kotler, including problem recognition, information search, product specification, supplier search, and supplier selection. The stages of proposal solicitation, order-routine specification, and performance review were not included in the model since they were deemed as stages that only sometimes were part of the corporate image apparel purchase decision process.

The adapted model illustrated the relationship between the decision makers and decision making process for corporate image apparel purchases. It also showed the impact of influencing factors on the decision making process. The primary focus of the model, the stages of the decision making process, was visually depicted from the initial need establishment to the implementation of an image apparel program. The internal and external variables that influenced the initial problem recognition was also portrayed. Arrows connecting the individual stages of the model illustrated the general progression of the decision maker through the decision making process. There are two instances where double arrows () were used to portray that decisions made during the individual stages are not permanent and that the decision maker may revisit them if necessary as they follow through the process.

Corporate Image Apparel Decision Making Process as it relates to the Organizational Buying Process Model



Source: DiLuna, K. 2003

Figure 8: Image Apparel Decision Making Process and Organizational Buying Process Model

Instrument Development

Qualitative data were gathered through individual case study interviews. Each case study was structured by a designated set of questions that were separated in relation to the decision maker and the decision making process. The questions were structured using the organizational buying process model outlined by Kotler and relate to the appropriate stages of the model as well as the research statements. A six-page interview questionnaire was developed by the researcher (Appendix C).

Each question related to a stage of the organizational buying process model. Within each question, subsets of questions further explored the issues outlined in the research statements. The questions addressed the decision makers and decision making processes involved in image apparel purchases as related to the organizational buying process model stages of: buying center, problem recognition, need description and establishing objectives, product specification, influencers on the buying process, and supplier search and selection. Table 9 represents a matching of the Organizational Buying Process Model Stage, research statements, and instrument items.

Table 9: Instrument Development

Organizational Buying Process Model	Research	Instrument
Stage	Statement	Item
Decision Maker (D.M.)		
Buying Center	1, 2	#1 (a-c), 5 (a,c)
Problem Recognition	4	#2 (a-b)
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	3	#3 (a-c)
Supplier Search and Selection	3	#4 (a-d)
Influencers on the Buying Process	3	#5 (b)
Decision Process (D.P.)		
Need Description	5	#7 (a-b)
Problem Recognition	6,7	#6, 7 (bi-iii)
Product Specification	9	#9 (a-b)
Influencers on the Buying Process	8	#8 (a-e)
Supplier Search and Selection	9	#10 (a-b)

Note: Demographic questions were incorporated at the beginning of the questionnaire and known demographic information was completed prior to the interview.

Questions #1-5 were used to determine information regarding the decision maker for corporate image apparel purchases (RS 1-4). Question #1 (a-c) was used to determine information regarding the primary decision makers at the individual companies as it relates to the Buying Center of the organization (RS 1,2). Question 1 analyzed who the decision maker was (Q1a), why the decision

maker was chosen (Q1b), and whether other people were considered for the role (Q1c).

Questions #2 (a-c) were used to determine information regarding the initiator responsible for suggesting offering image apparel to employees at the individual companies as they related to problem recognition (RS 4). The questions addressed who recommended offering image apparel to the employees (Q2a), why they recommended offering image apparel to employees (Q2b), and when they recommended offering image apparel to employees (Q2c).

Questions #3 (a-c) were used to determine information regarding the information search conducted regarding image apparel and image apparel policies (RS 3). The questions addressed who was responsible for researching different types of image apparel policies (Q3a), what sources were used for this research (Q3b), and what types of image apparel policies were considered (Q3c).

Questions #4 (a-d) were used to determine information regarding supplier-based decisions for image apparel purchases (RS 3). The questions addressed who was responsible for researching suppliers of image apparel (Q4a), how much time was spent with suppliers in creating an image apparel program for the company (Q14b), the number of suppliers that were researched (Q4c), and the sources used for researching potential suppliers (Q4d).

Questions #5 (a-c) were used to determine information regarding final decisions and decision makers related to leasing or purchasing image apparel (RS 1, 3). The questions addressed who made the decisions on whether to

lease or purchase (Q5a), the factors that influenced the decision (Q5b), and who influenced the decision (Q5c).

Questions #6-10 were used to determine information regarding the decision making process for corporate image apparel purchases (RS 5-9). Question #6 was used to determine information regarding the decision process from the perspective of the internal company organization as it related to the influencers on the buying process (RS 6, 7).

Questions #7 (a-biii) were used to determine information regarding the perceptual and actual benefits related to supplying image apparel to employees and how these benefits impacted the decision making process (RS 5, 6, 7). The questions addressed the perceptual benefits companies hoped to achieve by supplying image apparel to employees (Q7a), as well as the actual benefits doing so had on the company from an employee perspective (Q7bi), corporate perspective (Q7bii), and competitive perspective (Q7biii).

Questions #8 (a-e) were used to determine information regarding the factors and process drivers that influenced the decision to offer image apparel to employees (RS 8). The questions addressed the effect of employee employment class (Q8a), situational factors that influenced the decision (Q8b), important employee-related factors (Q8c), important corporate-related factors (Q8d), and the influence of cost (Q8e).

Questions #9 (a-f) were used to determine information regarding the selection of image apparel products (RS 9). The questions addressed the most important product attributes (Q9a), how products were chosen (Q9b), the number

of products chosen (Q9c), the implementation of such policies (Q9d), the product order process (Q9e), as well as the subsidization of such products (Q9f).

Questions #10 (a-b) were used to determine information regarding the selection of image apparel suppliers (RS 9). Additional questions addressed why suppliers were chosen (Q10a) and length of time required for policy implementation (Q10b). The final questions were open-ended regarding future contact.

Sample Selection

Research samples for this study were chosen based on the following five criteria.

1. *Use of Image Apparel*

Companies were narrowed based on their use of image apparel for either employee dress code policies or for promotional and branding items.

2. *Lease or Retail*

Companies were delineated based on whether they were current users of image apparel supplied by a major textile leasing agency or a retail channel.

3. *Size of company*

Companies were narrowed based on their overall size. Whenever possible, larger, national companies were chosen as samples over smaller, regional companies.

4. Industry

The industrial sector within which each company fell was also a determining factor in sample selection. Segmentation based on industry was done whenever possible to allow for a more definitive comparison between companies.

5. Convenience

Companies were chosen based on customer information that was made available through supplier catalogs of major lease and retail image apparel suppliers as well as through discussions with executives at these suppliers. A convenient sample was chosen because many suppliers could not release customer lists due to privacy agreements.

Sample Procedure

A total of 133 companies were identified as current users of image apparel through conversations with suppliers and supplier identification of customers that were used in supplier catalogs. This group was narrowed to 22 companies who fulfilled the five sample selection criteria and interviews were requested. A total of 12 companies responded to the request for interviews and agreed to be interviewed. The remaining 10 companies who did not fulfill the request for interview either declined to participate, did not use image apparel anymore, or did not respond to the request and subsequent follow-up requests.

Many of the sample companies who agreed to participate requested to complete the questionnaire by e-mail rather than telephone and attributed their request to convenience and time availability. Of the 12 completed interviews, two were excluded due to insufficient data. The resulting sample (n=10) is listed in Table 10 and represents companies who purchase image apparel to fulfill the needs of an image apparel program.

Table 10: Sample Selection

Industry	Company (coded to maintain company confidentiality)	
Technology	E	F
Hotel Management	B	J
Services	H	D
Manufacturing	G	A
Miscellaneous	I	C

Data Collection

Formal interviews were conducted over a four-week period of time during Winter 2003. Marketing and sales executives at the companies selected for the sample were contacted via the telephone as a starting point for data collection. These executives were either able to answer the questionnaire or direct the interviewer to more appropriate company representatives. Obtaining interviews

was a challenge due to the busy schedules of the executives being contacted as well as the necessity to contact a number of different people before the most appropriate person was reached. Many of the interviewees requested to respond to the questionnaire via e-mail and then conduct follow up questions over the phone.

Telephone interviews ranged from 5 to 80 minutes. Questions were asked in order as outlined in the interview questionnaire (Appendix C). The researcher collected secondary data on each company prior to the interview.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was completed in three stages. First, the interviews were transcribed into paragraph form. Second, the data were organized according to the two primary groupings: decision maker and decision making process. These two groups were further organized by their relation to the appropriate stages of the organizational buying process model. Third, the companies were categorized based on answers to initial question #3 in the questionnaire regarding primary use of image apparel. Categories included employee incentive, employee dress code, corporate promotion, and corporate identity. These four groups were then compared for similarities and differences both among and across industry and supplier designations.

Operational Definitions

Corporate Dress Policy	Guidelines for employees to follow regarding what to wear to work. <i>(Initial Q1)</i>
Corporate Image Apparel	Logo corporate apparel worn by employees of a company to create a consistent look.
Decision Maker	Person who has primary responsibility regarding the selection and purchase of image apparel. <i>(Section 2, Q1)</i>
Direct Purchase	Items that are bought from a supplier directly and do not include a service such as laundering or alterations <i>(Section 1, Company Information)</i> .
Factors	Those drivers which have an impact on the decision making process, specific products, or services in regards to image apparel policies <i>(Section 2, Q8)</i> .
Final Decision Makers	Those persons responsible for approving the programs, products, and services outlined by the primary decision maker <i>(Section 2, Q1)</i> .
Formal Policy	A policy that is structured, written, and requires mandatory employee participation. <i>(Initial Q2)</i>
Image Apparel	Logo corporate apparel (logo polo shirt) that companies use to fulfill formal or informal dress code policies. <i>(Initial Q2)</i>
Image Apparel Policy	Corporate policy implementing and defining the use of image apparel within an organization. <i>(Section 2, Q3)</i>

Informal Policy	A policy that has voluntary employee participation. (<i>Initial Q2</i>)
Initiator	Person responsible for recommending implementation of a policy or program. (<i>Section 2, Q2</i>)
Internal Environment	An environment within the office or corporate location of a company. (<i>Section 3, Q6</i>)
Primary Decision Makers	The main people responsible for decisions regarding image apparel programs and may not be the same as those responsible for final corporate approvals (<i>Section 2, Q5</i>).
Textile Lease/Rental	A company that provides a both a uniform product and a service (commercial laundering, pick-up, delivery, alterations, program management) for businesses. Many textile rental companies now offer direct purchase programs also (<i>Section 1, Company Information</i>).
Retail Outlets	Market vendors that provide image apparel through traditional retail outlets such as stores, catalogs, and online (<i>Section 1, Company Information</i>).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Sample Description

The research sample consisted of 10 companies who currently purchase image apparel for the purposes of an employee dress code policy, employee incentives, corporate identity, or corporate promotion. Table 11 provides detailed information about the sample, including use of image apparel, industry, number of employees, direct purchase or lease, and whether the use of image apparel is voluntary or mandatory.

Table 11: Sample Description

Company Identification	Primary Use	Industry	# Employees	Direct Purchase or Lease	Voluntary or Mandatory Use
A	Employee Incentive	Manufacturing	1,300 ³	Direct Purchase	Voluntary
B	Employee Incentive	Hotel and Property Management	300 ⁴	Direct Purchase	Voluntary
C	Corporate Identity	Miscellaneous, non-profit	20	Direct Purchase	Voluntary and Mandatory
D	Corporate Identity	Services	10,000 ⁵	Direct Purchase	Voluntary
E	Corporate Promotion	Technology	36,000 ⁶	Direct Purchase	Voluntary
F	Corporate Promotion	Technology	150,000 ⁷ (US)	Direct Purchase	Voluntary
G	Corporate Promotion	Manufacturing		Direct Purchase	Voluntary
H	Employee Dress Code	Services	41,400 ⁸	Direct Purchase	Mandatory and Voluntary
I	Employee Dress Code	Miscellaneous	85 ⁹	Direct Purchase and Lease	Mandatory and Voluntary
J	Employee Dress Code	Hotel and Property Management	140,000 ¹⁰	Direct Purchase	Mandatory and Voluntary

³ The majority of employees voluntarily wear image apparel daily.

⁴ Image apparel is used for recognizing 3rd, 5th, and 10th year employee anniversaries.

⁵ The company uses image apparel for corporate identity and both employees and the general public can purchase the apparel.

⁶ Employees may also wear the apparel voluntarily.

⁷ The primary use of image apparel is corporate promotion, but the company also has a “Peer to Peer” program where employees can give image apparel to other employees as thanks for working on a project.

⁸ Retail store team members are required to follow specific dress guidelines using image apparel.

Employees working outside of retail stores do not have to follow guidelines requiring use of image apparel.

⁹ 79 employees are required to wear image apparel while corporate employees and managers may do so on a voluntary basis. Image apparel is also sold in the pro shop for members and guests to purchase.

¹⁰ Requires 60% of the employees to wear image apparel while others may do so on a voluntary basis.

Case One: Company A

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Employee Incentive

Company A, founded in 1991, is a durable medical equipment supplier of power wheelchairs. The company employs a total of 1300 people at their headquarters, 47 distribution centers located across the United States, and three retail locations. The company purchases image apparel primarily for employee incentive. While the company has implemented an employee dress code policy, named Dress Code Guidelines, the policy is corporate casual and does not require employees to wear image apparel. However, as an incentive to employees, the company operates retail store that stocks image apparel from Lands' End. The store was originally set up as a place for employees to use their employee incentive awards which were given to employees who went above and beyond their normal daily functions but it also used to supply clothing that adheres to the company's Dress Code Guidelines.

Company representatives are quick to admit that "the overall success of the retail store has been far above what we ever expected it would become" (company representative, personal communication, 2003). The success of using logo apparel for employee incentive has expanded to the point that many employees have voluntarily taken advantage of wearing company logo business casual apparel at wholesale prices. In fact, there are a number of employees who have ordered one of every available piece of logo apparel for their work wardrobe. The company is very excited about the use of image apparel and this

excitement is obvious. In fact, one parts supplier for Company A is so impressed with their image apparel program that they would like to set up a similar program at their own company. Tables 12 and 13 present interview results for Company A.

Company A – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 12: Company A – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: Employee Advocacy Manager.</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: Was Executive Assistant to President/Owner when the idea to start a company store came about. She worked with him to make it a reality and when she was promoted to her current position she took the responsibilities with her. The retail store is now managed under the Human Resources Department and is considered part of the PeopleWerks Department.</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: None</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: President/Owner</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: Increase employee morale, team spirit, give employees a value-added benefit, increase brand recognition, corporate identity, and give employees an incentive.</p> <p><u>When</u>: March 2000</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Employee Advocacy Manager</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Image apparel suppliers, internet, word of mouth.</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: Unstructured (give employees the option of wearing logo apparel). When the company implemented their Dress Code Guidelines they wanted to make sure that the retail store would offer employees logo apparel that met the policy guidelines while also giving employees the opportunity to purchase the items at great prices. To facilitate employee purchases, incentive awards are given to employees and could be redeemed at the store as well as payroll deduction.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: Employee Advocacy Manager</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: Over 1 month</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: 4</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Internet research, sales meetings with suppliers, conversations with suppliers, catalogs/flyers from suppliers, recommendations by employees</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: Lands' End</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: President/Owner and former Executive Assistant and current Employee Advocacy Manager</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Cost, Quality, Level of Service</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: None</p>

Company A – Decision Making Process Interview Results

Table 13: Company A – Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision:</u> Corporate (President)</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits:</u> Increased employee morale, team spirit, build brand recognition, corporate identity, and offer apparel as incentives to employees and enable them to purchase apparel at cost.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations:</u> Yes, the overall success of the retail store has been far above expectations.</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits:</u> Increased employee morale, team spirit, feeling of value to the company, increased enthusiasm for the job, no need to worry about what to wear to work, saves money on buying work clothing.</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits:</u> Increased corporate morale, builds brand recognition, builds corporate identity</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits:</u> Increased brand recognition and corporate identity</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes:</u> Price, Style, Employee Opinions, Ease of Care, Number of Style Options, Quality, Durability, Fit</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes:</u> Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen:</u> 45 apparel items, tops and bottoms</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier:</u> Employee Advocacy Manager</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier:</u> fax</p> <p><u>Subsidization:</u> Yes, 100% and partially. Products can be purchased with Doug Dollars at no cost to the employee or through payroll deduction</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees:</u> No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors:</u> Employment incentive</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors:</u> President/Owner, wanted a way to recognize employees for outstanding work and in appreciation of such. In addition, it would be offered to employees at a great price while also meeting Dress Code Guidelines.</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors:</u> To provide an incentive to employees and increase brand recognition.</p> <p><u>Price Influence:</u> Somewhat influenced.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection:</u> Quality, cost, level of service</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation:</u> one month</p>

Case Two: Company B

Use of Image Apparel: Employee Incentive

Company B is a hotel chain that opened in 1991. The company requires all 300 employees to adhere to a formal dress code policy through the use of uniforms (not image apparel) and has done so since opening the company. Company B uses image apparel, or logo apparel, as service awards to recognize the employees 3rd, 5th, and 10th year anniversaries working at the company. They began using Lands' End image apparel as an incentive item in 1999.

It is difficult to assess the company's overall attitude towards the use of image apparel because they preferred contact via e-mail rather than phone. Tables 14 and 15 present interview results from Company B.

Company B – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 14: Company B – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<u>Primary Decision Maker</u> : Human Resources Assistant Director <u>Reason Chosen</u> : Due to job responsibilities in employee relations. <u>Other People Considered</u> : Yes, various other staff members.
Problem Recognition	<u>Initiator</u> : Former Human Resources Director <u>Reasons for Recommendation</u> : Increase employee morale, team spirit, and give employees a value-added benefit <u>When</u> : 1999
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u> : Not sure. <u>Sources</u> : Not sure. <u>Types of Policies Considered</u> : Structured policy requiring uniforms and unstructured policy using image apparel during company anniversary times.
Supplier Search and Selection	<u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u> : Human Resources Manager <u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u> : over 1 week and less than 1 month <u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u> : 3 <u>Sources</u> : Sales meetings with suppliers, word of mouth, conversations with suppliers, catalogs/flyers from suppliers <u>Supplier</u> : Lands' End
Influencers on the Buying Process	<u>Final Decision Maker</u> : Human Resources Director and Financial Controller <u>Influencing Factors</u> : Cost and quality <u>Other Influencers</u> : Employee opinions from various departments

Company B– Decision Process Interview Results

Table 15: Company B – Decision Process Interview Results

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS</i>
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u>: Corporate</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, increased productivity</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, increased feeling of value to the company, increased enthusiasm for the job</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits</u>: Increased productivity, corporate morale, builds brand recognition and corporate identity</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u>: Increased brand recognition and corporate identity</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes</u>: Price, comfort, style, employee opinions, quality, durability</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen</u>: 1-3, tops only</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u>: Human Resources</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u>: Phone</p> <p><u>Subsidization</u>: Yes, 100%</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees</u>: No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors</u>: Employment incentive and years of employment with the company</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors</u>: Employee recognition for service and purchasing quality merchandise</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors</u>: Meeting corporate quality standards</p> <p><u>Price Influence</u>: Somewhat influenced</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u>: Quality and product options</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation</u>: Immediate</p>

Case Three: Company C

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Corporate Identity

Company C is a non-profit organization that supplies and builds playground equipment. It was founded in 1995 and employs a total of 20 people. The company does not enforce a formal dress code policy, however employees and project managers are encouraged to wear “build t-shirts” on build sites for easy identification and branded polo shirts when traveling and in meetings. Since the dress code policy is informal, image apparel is primarily used for corporate identity and branding purposes. The company utilizes a number of suppliers. Company C attributes this to the fact that they are non-profit and are always looking for reasonably priced high quality items. Their suppliers include Cintas and Lands’ End as well as local suppliers.

The company representative was very forthcoming with talking about their use of image apparel. She mentioned that while the company has an informal dress code policy, “it’s understood that for meetings, builds, or public events staff is to wear Company C gear.” This is attributed to the fact that they want “employees to put their best foot forward when meeting potential corporate partners, as well as future clients.” Company representatives feel that image apparel allows them to “outfit staff appropriately, in a comfortable and fun way.” It is interesting to note that the image apparel decision makers poll staff to determine what products they like best and are most needed for their jobs. Company C does not want to purchase something “that will not be work by staff

because it is low quality, uncomfortable, or not practical for their work.” Tables 16 and 17 present interview results from Company C.

Company C – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 16: Company C - Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker:</u> Co-Founder and CEO</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen:</u> He is the CEO and makes all final decisions of how the company logo is used.</p> <p><u>Other People Considered:</u> No</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator:</u> Co-Founder and CEO</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation:</u> Increase team spirit, increase brand recognition, corporate identity, and because the company feels it is important for each employee to be able to put their best foot forward when meeting potential corporate partners, as well as future clients. Image apparel allows the company to outfit staff appropriately, in a comfortable and fun way. In addition, image apparel makes certain that project manager staff stands out on a build site so that if someone needs assistance then they can easily find the staff member wearing a purple shirt and company logo.</p> <p><u>When:</u> 1995</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search:</u> Marketing and Publicity</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Suppliers, internet, word of mouth, magazines</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered:</u> Structured (require employees to wear logo apparel), Corporate casual (require employees to wear their own apparel within designated guidelines), and a combination of both where employees have a casual dress code but it is understood that for meetings, builds, or public events, the staff is to wear company logo apparel.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers:</u> Marketing and Publicity</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program:</u> 6-7 days</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched:</u> 5</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Internet research, word of mouth, catalogs/flyers from suppliers</p> <p><u>Supplier:</u> Lands' End, Cintas, local suppliers (whoever is most reasonable)</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker:</u> Co-founder and CEO</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors:</u> Cost, Number of employees being outfitted, quality, level of service, and product attributes</p> <p><u>Other Influencers:</u> All staff are polled to determine what products they like best and are most needed. The company does not want to purchase something that will not be worn by staff due to low quality, lack of comfort, and impracticality for their work.</p>

Company C – Decision Making Process Interview Results

Table 17: Company C – Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u>: Corporate (President)</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits</u>: Increased team spirit, build brand recognition, corporate identity, provide consistent professional appearance to customers.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits</u>: Increased team spirit, increased feeling of value to the company, felt more professional, saves money on buying work clothing.</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits</u>: Increased corporate morale, builds brand recognition, corporate identity, and provides a consistent image to customers.</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u>: Increased brand recognition, corporate identity, provides consistent image to customers.</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes</u>: Price, comfort, style, employee opinions, fiber content, ease of care, number of style options, quality, durability, color, fit</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen</u>: 10+</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u>: Employee</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u>: Online network with supplier, fax, phone</p> <p><u>Subsidization</u>: Yes, 100%</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees</u>: No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors</u>: Need to increase corporate identity</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors</u>: What employees needed to complete their job, as in supplying project management staff with raincoats and sweatshirts to keep them dry and warm on a build site. For comfort for the employees while also effectively supporting the company image of a fun, kid-friendly environment that is also professional.</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors</u>: Increased brand recognition and corporate identity</p> <p><u>Price Influence</u>: Greatly influenced</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u>: Quality, cost, level of service</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation</u>: 1-2 months. First, the company gains employee opinions, then gets approval for the order, then places the order, then distributed to the employee.</p>

Case Four: Company D

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Corporate Identity

Company D is an automobile lubrication and repair service company founded in 1979. The company is franchise based, with only 20% of the outlets being company-owned and operated. Due to the nature of the company and the large number of franchise operated stores, Company D does not have an image apparel policy that is company controlled throughout both the franchise and corporate owned service stations. However, executives in Company D's corporate headquarters are currently in the review process of choosing a single image apparel supplier who can provide them with all of their logo apparel and logo hard goods needs.

Company D personnel are in the process of choosing one supplier in order to implement a consistent logo program across all corporate-owned facilities. Of the 10,000 employees, approximately 1/3 will be affected by the implementation of standardized corporate apparel purchases. The primary driver for the company for purchasing image apparel is to make a profit while increasing corporate identity. Company representatives are implementing a program where they will purchase image apparel and add a 10% mark up before offering it to employees and customers. By implementing one vendor for all items, "it gives the company more buying power and better unit prices."

The executive interviewed said that she expects the implementation of this program to be just the beginning of offering logo apparel and that she expects

more formal policies regarding employee dress codes to be integrated into the program in the future. Overall, there is a general excitement about the use of image apparel. The company representative interviewed for this research has previous experience with image apparel and contacts in the industry and is trying to use her skills to facilitate a more efficient image apparel program at Company D. It was interesting to note that while there was obvious excitement about the program, the representative interviewed stated that, “the products are not anything that I would personally wear, but they are items that are popular with the corporate executives and field representatives.” Tables 18 and 19 present interview results from Company D.

Company D – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 18: Company D – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: Graphic Designer, Marketing Department (for corporate owned decisions; franchise owners make their own decisions regarding image apparel)</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: The role fit into what the graphic designer does for design. In addition, she had a lot of contacts and experience with logo apparel from previous employment.</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: No</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: Not sure. However, when the graphic designer started working for the company 1 ½ years ago, she realized that people across the company were purchasing logo items from all different suppliers and she recommended implementing one vendor for all items to give the company more buying power and better unit prices.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: Increase brand recognition, corporate identity, give costs savings by going through one supplier.</p> <p><u>When</u>: About 1 year ago.</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Graphic Designer, Marketing Department</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Suppliers, previous experience with the industry, other employee relationships with vendors, and supplier contacts</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: There are 2 components: 1. Logo apparel to wear whenever people would like and 2. As a rewards program for employees.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: Graphic Designer, Marketing Department</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: over 1 month, currently in the supplier review process</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: Started with 12 and then narrowed to 3 suppliers for a full review process.</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Catalogs/flyers from suppliers</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: Still in process of choosing a supplier</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: Graphic Designer who is in charge of running the program and writing the contract, and the President of the company.</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Cost</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: None</p>

Company D – Decision Process Interview Results

Table 19: Company D – Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision:</u> Individual departments: Marketing Department</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits:</u> Build brand recognition, corporate identity, get a better price for a great product with an easy way to get it.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations:</u> N/A, the company has not instituted a program yet and are still in the supplier review process</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits:</u> N/A</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes:</u> Price, comfort, fiber content, ease of care, quality, durability, color</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes:</u> Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen:</u> 70 apparel items and 30 hard good items</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier:</u> Graphic Designer is responsible for deciding which products are offered and then anyone can order them, potentially even the public.</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier:</u> Online network with supplier, company website, intranet, and printed catalog for phone and fax orders.</p> <p><u>Subsidization:</u> No, Company D is actually taking the cost and adding 10% to make money.</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees:</u> No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors:</u> Cost, the company would like to purchase image apparel to sell to employees and customers for profit</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors:</u> Cost and the ability to deliver on-time, on-budget, high quality products and by a company that is responsive to the short-term needs of Company D.</p> <p><u>Price Influence:</u> Somewhat influenced, but the product still must be of good quality.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection:</u> Company D is still in the supplier selection process. Currently, there are three suppliers that have made it to the review stage. One was a friend of someone very high up in the company and the other two had experience working with franchises and with large and different groups. In addition, they had experience handling different types of billing and do so all at the supplier cost. They also have overseas connections which help to decrease costs as long as they follow labor agreements.</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation:</u> a couple of months, still in review process</p>

Case Five: Company E

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Corporate Promotion

Company E is a technology based corporation that specializes in computers, networking, communications and the manufacturing of such. The company, founded in 1984, employs 36,000 people. The dress code policy is categorized as business casual and employees follow an unstructured policy that allows employees to wear their own clothing to work as long as it is appropriate. Company E is a consumer of image apparel and uses it for promotional purposes, including brand identity and awareness for customers and employees. In general, the items are handed out during trade shows and other events. However, employees also have the option of purchasing such items for personal use if they so choose (see Tables 20, 21).

Company E uses two primary suppliers: Lands' End and Robertson Marketing Group. Overall, Lands' End is used for just-in-time purchases and personal employee purchases because the items are higher-end and therefore more expensive. Company representatives stated that "Lands' End is higher end so they are a niche for personal self and not for give-aways." Robertson Marketing Group is one of the company's that is used for hard good items and promotional items used as takeaways at events. The company has two retail stores that are run by Robertson Marketing Group and give some insight into the extent of the company's investment in their image apparel program.

Company E – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 20: Company E – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: A marketing representative is the main contact; however there is no one person. There is a group of 26 people in the Company E Corporate Identity Organization (C.I.O.) department that are all involved with decision making.</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: The marketing representative is the contact person because he has a history with merchandising programs. Company E has a merchandise branding booklet that was written in coordination with the C.I.O. department. This group is part of the marketing department, which fits with the goals of the department.</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: No</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: Not sure.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: Increase brand recognition and corporate identity.</p> <p><u>When</u>: At least 9-10 years ago when it was managed by the Human Resources department.</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Since it was so long ago, I am not sure.</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: It is unsure what sources were originally used to research implementing an image apparel policy. However, since the respondent has been involved with the company, a merchandise vendor approached Company E and built a website and system for them to easily purchase the apparel.</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: Unstructured (Gave employees the option of wearing logo apparel)</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: Marketing. However, 2 years ago the person previously in the position did some benchmarking on local suppliers for management and fulfillment of logo apparel. From that benchmarking, the respondent was able to narrow the products about 1 ½ years ago.</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: N/A</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: 5</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Word of mouth and the supplier worked with Company E and used Company E products. The name of the supplier was found in the company's purchasing database.</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: Lands' End, Robertson Marketing Group</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: Team of 5 people from purchasing, marketing, IT, and global customs.</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Cost, level of service, and technology of supplier for developing online ordering and program management capabilities. Lands' End approached Company E because they have all Company E products at their company and therefore was a good fit to demonstrate Company E technology through their products.</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: None</p>

Company E – Decision Process Interview Results

Table 21: Company E – Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u>: Employees. Many employees requested from Human Resources because they wanted something to give to customers as well as for personal use.</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, build brand recognition, and corporate identity.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, increased feeling of value to the company, and increased enthusiasm for the job.</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits</u>: Increased corporate morale, builds brand recognition, corporate identity</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u>: Increased brand recognition and corporate identity.</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes</u>: Price, employee opinions, quality, color (for corporate identity)</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen</u>: 10+ because Land's End has such a wide range of options available (tops only)</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u>: Employee</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u>: Online network with supplier</p> <p><u>Subsidization</u>: No, but there are three tiers of pricing: 1. Employee, 2. Partner, and 3. Guest (for customers)</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees</u>: No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors</u>: Employees wanted it and it can be used as a take-away at events</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors</u>: Demand for it. Although Company E now has a frugality policy that has caused the demand to drop.</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors</u>: Branding and Identity</p> <p><u>Price Influence</u>: Somewhat influenced. Lands' End is higher-end so they create a niche market within the company for personal use and not for give-aways. Robertson Marketing Group, on the other hand, is used for promotional items and those that aren't as high-end.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u>: Cost, Level of service, Available technology for coordination of system.</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation</u>: It generally takes 60 days from the beginning of contact with a supplier to actually getting items.</p>

Case Six: Company F

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Corporate Promotion

Company F is a technology based company that specializes in computers, communications, and software developing and manufacturing. The company was founded in 1924 and employs 320,000 people worldwide and 150,000 nationwide. Overall, the company has a business casual dress code. This informal policy is a result of a move from the company about nine years ago to change their corporate image from formal dress (i.e. business suits) to business casual in order to come more into alignment with their competitors. Despite this change, employees in the company's corporate headquarters tend to dress more than business casual; however this dress does not include image apparel.

Company F is a large consumer of image apparel for promotional merchandise to give to customers, employees, and to wear at conferences and events. Their Corporate Brand Strategy department handles their image apparel program and purchases. In addition to a corporate identity program geared towards customers, clients, and potential contacts, Company F has implemented a "peer to peer" program. The "peer to peer" program allows employees to "thank" other employees for their assistance with a project. Generally, gifts valued at up to \$25 can be given within the organization as a thank you; which includes hard good items as well as image apparel. It is estimated that 70% of the "peer to peer" gifts are under \$25 while the rest are above. Company representatives believe that image apparel gives "longer lasting value than other

forms of advertising.” There is a great deal of excitement and investment surrounding the Company F image apparel program and the representatives are constantly trying to improve the process and products they offer. Tables 22 and 23 present interview results from Company F.

Company F – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 22: Company F – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: Program Manager, Corporate Brand Strategy</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: The respondent fell into the job in brand strategy to protect the image of the company and to make sure that the company logo was used appropriately.</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: No</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: Not sure</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: Increase employee morale, team spirit, competitors were doing it, increase brand recognition, corporate identity, and there was a demand for it. Overall, image apparel provides a longer lasting value than other forms of advertising.</p> <p><u>When</u>: 10-15 years ago</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Human Resources</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Research studies (on certain logo's and their effect on customers), suppliers, internet</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: Unstructured (gave employees the option of wearing logo apparel) and corporate casual (require employees to wear their own apparel within designated guidelines).</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: Program manager with a group of 5 people from procurement department, IT, and Corporate Brand Strategy</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: over 1 month</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: The company did a competitive bid to narrow the field to 60 suppliers, then narrowed to 10, and then did RFP's for 6 of the suppliers.</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Competitive bidding and then sales meetings with the suppliers.</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: American Identity, Lands' End, Marketing Technologies Inc., Halo, A-dell, Kwalwasser</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: Group decision made by corporate brand strategy and procurement due to the size of the company.</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Quality, uniqueness, in-house capabilities (i.e. embroidery allowing for greater consistency), manufacturing own apparel for a proprietary line, consistency</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: None</p>

Company F – Decision Process Interview Results

Table 23: Company F Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision:</u> Corporate Brand Strategy</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits:</u> Increased employee morale, team spirit, build brand recognition, corporate identity, provide consistent professional appearance to customers at events, as a thank-you for doing business with Company F.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations:</u> Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits:</u> Increased employee morale and team spirit. Employees can also take part in a "peer to peer" program where they can give another employee a logo thank you item valued up to \$25 for helping with a project.</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits:</u> Increased corporate morale, builds brand recognition, corporate identity, provides consistent image to customers, and shows appreciation to employees and customers.</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits:</u> Increased brand recognition, corporate identity, provides consistent image to customers, and differentiates Company F from competitors.</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes:</u> Price, comfort, style (conservative trends), fiber content (wrinkle-free twills), ease of care, quality, durability, and color (within the company color palette and popular trends).</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes:</u> Yes for men's apparel and no for women's apparel. Women's lines are still limited and therefore cause sales not to be as high.</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen:</u> 100 apparel items (tops and bottoms), 200 hardgood items</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier:</u> Project Manager</p> <p>Corporate Brand Strategy is responsible for selecting which items will be available to the employees. The employees are responsible for ordering what they want.</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier:</u> Online network with supplier, Fax, and Phone account for 60-65% of the orders.</p> <p><u>Subsidization:</u> No, employees pay for their own image apparel.</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees:</u> No</p> <p><u>Situational Factors:</u> Competition was doing it, demand from employees.</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors:</u> Demand from employees</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors:</u> To make certain that corporate identity was being done the correct way and consistently.</p> <p><u>Price Influence:</u> Greatly influenced. Suppliers had to put in a competitive bid for cost-plus. The company is price-conscious to a certain extent but realize that they could get items cheaper if ordered direct from supplier. However, they are willing to pay more for a supplier who can warehouse and cover the expenses of a program.</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection:</u> quality and ability to fulfill the company's needs</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation:</u> 2-3 months from the time it takes to choose a supplier to fulfillment of the order. Special orders only take 1-2 weeks and there is a large quantity of such. All special orders must go through the program manager.</p>

Case Seven: Company G

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Corporate Promotion

Company G, founded in 1914, is a sock manufacturer that focuses on making products for the preventive foot health of the customer. The company has a corporate casual dress policy at the company and uses image apparel primarily for promotional uses and also for employee incentives. A number of ad specialty companies are used to direct purchase and fulfill their image apparel needs, although the use of image apparel is currently limited due to corporate reorganization.

Currently, Company G is going through a restructuring which has caused the image apparel program to be put on hold. In the past, each department within the company is responsible for deciding upon their own image apparel needs and decisions. These needs are then assessed and approved by the Director of Sales and Marketing. Overall, Company G uses image apparel to increase brand recognition and representatives made the distinction that they use the brand logo on image apparel, which is different than the corporate logo. Tables 24 and 25 present interview results from Company G.

Company G Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 24: Company G – Decision Maker Interview Results

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS</i>
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: Director of Sales and Marketing, makes final decisions, however the Sales and Marketing Team also makes decisions as a group.</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: Falls within job responsibilities</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: No</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: Marketing Department</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: Increase employee morale, give employees a value-added benefit, and increase brand recognition.</p> <p><u>When</u>: approximately 15 years ago</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Currently: No one person because the use of image apparel has been temporarily suspended due to a company reorganization. However, it used to be the Sales and Marketing Department.</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Ad specialty companies</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: Unstructured (gave employees option of wearing logo apparel)</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: Individual teams in the company who will use the apparel.</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: over 1 month</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: 2-3</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Internet research, sales meetings with suppliers, word of mouth</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: not identified</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: Marketing and Sales Director</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Cost and quality</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: None</p>

Company G Decision Process Interview Results

Table 25: Company G Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u>: Corporate</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, build brand recognition, corporate identity, provide consistent professional appearance to customers.</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits</u>: Increased employee morale, team spirit, increased feeling of value to the company</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits</u>: Increased productivity, increased corporate morale, builds brand recognition, provides consistent image to customers.</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u>: Increased brand recognition and provides consistent image to customers.</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes</u>: Price, comfort, style, fiber content, durability, color, fit</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen</u>: 1-3 (tops only)</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u>: Managers from individual teams in the company</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u>: Phone</p> <p><u>Subsidization</u>: Yes, partially. Employees can purchase apparel at cost and the company does not try to make a profit.</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees</u>: N/A</p> <p><u>Situational Factors</u>: Need to increase corporate identity and increase brand awareness</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors</u>: Increase employee morale when used as an incentive</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors</u>: Increase brand awareness and recognition</p> <p><u>Price Influence</u>: Greatly influenced</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u>: Quality and cost</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation</u>: 3-6 weeks</p>

Case Eight: Company H

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Employee Dress Code Policy

Company H is a retail electronics and services supplier that was founded in 1921. The company employs a total of 41,400 people. The company currently has specific dress guidelines for their retail store team members and uses Lands' End direct purchase program to adhere to the policy guidelines. Retail store team members purchase the image apparel required for their job through a payroll deduction service offered by the company. At this point in time, employees working outside of the retail stores do not have a mandatory dress code policy requiring the use of image apparel.

It was difficult to assess the company's overall attitude towards their image apparel program because they preferred to answer questions via e-mail. Tables 26 and 27 present interview results from Company H.

Company H – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 26: Company H – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKERS
Buying Center	<u>Primary Decision Maker:</u> Vice President of Sales Planning <u>Reason Chosen:</u> Took ownership of the program by choice. <u>Other People Considered:</u> No
Problem Recognition	<u>Initiator:</u> Dennis Howell, Senior Director for Strategic Projects <u>Reasons for Recommendation:</u> Encourage more comfortable working environment <u>When:</u> 1998
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<u>Person Responsible for Information Search:</u> Senior Director for Strategic Projects <u>Sources:</u> Other companies, research studies, suppliers, internet, word of mouth, and competitors <u>Types of Policies Considered:</u> Structured (require employees to wear logo apparel), Unstructured (gave employees the option of wearing logo apparel), and Corporate Casual (require employees to wear their own apparel within designated guidelines)
Supplier Search and Selection	<u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers:</u> Senior Director for Strategic Projects <u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program:</u> over 1 month <u>Number of Suppliers Researched:</u> 5 <u>Sources:</u> Internet research, sales meetings with suppliers, word of mouth, type of supplier (lease or retail), conversations with suppliers, catalogs/flyers from suppliers <u>Supplier:</u> Lands' End
Influencers on the Buying Process	<u>Final Decision Maker:</u> N/A <u>Influencing Factors:</u> N/A <u>Other Influencers:</u> N/A

Company H – Decision Process Interview Results

Table 27: Company H – Decision Process Interview Results

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS</i>
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u> : Corporate <u>Intended Benefits</u> : Encourage more comfortable working environment <u>Fulfillment of expectations</u> : no answer <u>Actual Employee Benefits</u> : no answer <u>Actual Company Benefits</u> : no answer <u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u> : no answer
Product Specification	<u>Important Product Attributes</u> : price, ease of care, durability, payroll deduction capability <u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u> : Yes <u>Number of Products Chosen</u> : 10+ (tops and bottoms) <u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u> : Employee, manager, corporate office <u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u> : fax and phone <u>Subsidization</u> : Yes, partially. The logo fee and shipping are absorbed by Radio Shack.
Influencers on the Buying Process	<u>Employment Class of Employees</u> : No <u>Situational Factors</u> : Going business casual <u>Employee-related Factors</u> : no answer <u>Corporate-related Factors</u> : no answer <u>Price Influence</u> : Somewhat influenced
Supplier Search and Selection	<u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u> : Quality and cost <u>Length of Time for Implementation</u> : 3 months

Case Nine: Company I

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Employee Dress Policy

Company I, founded in 1999, employs a total of 85 employees; of which 79 wear image apparel. Corporate employees and managers are among the 6 employees who do not adhere to a mandatory image apparel policy, although they may wear the apparel on a voluntary basis. Company I utilizes logo apparel and uniforms for all other departments at the company. In addition, they sell logo merchandise in the country club's pro shop for members and guests to purchase. The company utilizes both lease and direct purchase image apparel suppliers to fulfill their needs.

The overall corporate attitude towards their use of image apparel was difficult to estimate because they preferred e-mail correspondence. Tables 28 and 29 present interview results from Company I.

Company I – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 28: Company I – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKER
Buying Center	<u>Primary Decision Maker</u> : No primary decision maker <u>Reason Chosen</u> : <u>Other People Considered</u> : Yes, Department Heads
Problem Recognition	<u>Initiator</u> : General Manager <u>Reasons for Recommendation</u> : Standard in the industry, gives a value-added benefit to employees, competitors were doing it, increase corporate identity <u>When</u> : 1999
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u> : no answer <u>Sources</u> : suppliers <u>Types of Policies Considered</u> : Structured (require employees to wear logo apparel) and Corporate Casual (require employees to wear their own apparel within designated guidelines)
Supplier Search and Selection	<u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u> : Department Heads <u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u> : no answer <u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u> : 4 <u>Sources</u> : Sales meetings with suppliers, type of supplier (lease or retail), conversations with suppliers <u>Supplier</u> : Various, not identified
Influencers on the Buying Process	<u>Final Decision Maker</u> : Department Heads <u>Influencing Factors</u> : Cost, number of employees being outfitted, quality, level of service, and product attributes <u>Other Influencers</u> : None

Company I – Decision Process Interview Results

Table 29: Company I – Decision Process Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS REGARDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<p><u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u>: Individual departments</p> <p><u>Intended Benefits</u>: Build corporate identity and provide consistent professional appearance to customers</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of expectations</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Actual Employee Benefits</u>: No need to worry about what to wear to work, felt more professional, saves money on buying work clothing</p> <p><u>Actual Company Benefits</u>: Builds corporate identity and provides consistent image to customers</p> <p><u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u>: Increased corporate identity and provides consistent image to customers</p>
Product Specification	<p><u>Important Product Attributes</u>: price, fiber content, durability, color, style, quality, fit</p> <p><u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u>: Yes</p> <p><u>Number of Products Chosen</u>: 1-3, (tops only)</p> <p><u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u>: Manager</p> <p><u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u>: Phone</p> <p><u>Subsidization</u>: Yes, 100%</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Employment Class of Employees</u>: no answer</p> <p><u>Situational Factors</u>: Employment incentive</p> <p><u>Employee-related Factors</u>: Offered as employee benefit and the image of the club</p> <p><u>Corporate-related Factors</u>: Image of consistency of apparel and value to employees</p> <p><u>Price Influence</u>: Somewhat influenced</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u>: Quality, cost, level of service, product options</p> <p><u>Length of Time for Implementation</u>: About one month</p>

Case Ten: Company J

Primary Use of Image Apparel: Employee Dress Code Policy

Company J is a large corporation that operates a chain of hotels, resorts, executive apartments, and senior assisted living facilities. The company employs a total of 140,000 people, of which 60% wear image apparel. In order to facilitate the large consumption of image apparel by Company J, the company utilizes services provided by a large hospitality procurement agency. The agency is a procurement service company for the hospitality industry in the United States and Caribbean. The company was founded in 2001 and currently procures products and services for a number of leading hospitality companies. Company J is the procurement agency's largest consumer of image apparel. A procurement agency company executive answered questions for this research based on Company J's use of image apparel. It is the procurement agency that works with Cintas to fulfill the image apparel needs of Company J.

It was difficult to assess Company J's overall attitude towards the use of image apparel because the questions were answered by the procurement agency representative. Attempts to contact the Company J decision maker were unsuccessful. However, it became clear that it is Company J's responsibility to make specific product decisions and the procurement agency is simply their source for fulfilling the specifications outlined by Company J. Tables 30 and 31 present interview results from the procurement agency regarding image apparel purchases for Company J.

Company J – Decision Maker Interview Results

Table 30: Company J – Decision Maker Interview Results

STAGE	EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS
Buying Center	<p><u>Primary Decision Maker</u>: Company J makes decisions regarding using image apparel and the procurement agency fulfills the needs that Company J defines.</p> <p><u>Reason Chosen</u>: no answer</p> <p><u>Other People Considered</u>: no answer</p>
Problem Recognition	<p><u>Initiator</u>: The procurement agency initiated the idea of offering image apparel to Company J as a value-added service for the company.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Recommendation</u>: The agency recommended offering image apparel services to Company J due to the aggregation of customer demand that brought savings previously unavailable to Company J.</p> <p><u>When</u>: 2001</p>
Need Description and Establishing Objectives	<p><u>Person Responsible for Information Search</u>: Both the agency and Company J representatives are responsible for researching image apparel and programs.</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: no answer</p> <p><u>Types of Policies Considered</u>: Structured</p>
Supplier Search and Selection	<p><u>Person Responsible for Researching Suppliers</u>: confidential</p> <p><u>Time Spent with Supplier to Create Program</u>: over 1 month</p> <p><u>Number of Suppliers Researched</u>: 3</p> <p><u>Sources</u>: Conversations with suppliers and previous contact with customer.</p> <p><u>Supplier</u>: Cintas</p>
Influencers on the Buying Process	<p><u>Final Decision Maker</u>: The agency makes the final decision regarding leasing or purchasing image apparel for Company J.</p> <p><u>Influencing Factors</u>: Cost, number of employees being outfitted, quality, level of service, and product attributes.</p> <p><u>Other Influencers</u>: no answer</p>

Company J – Decision Process Interview Results

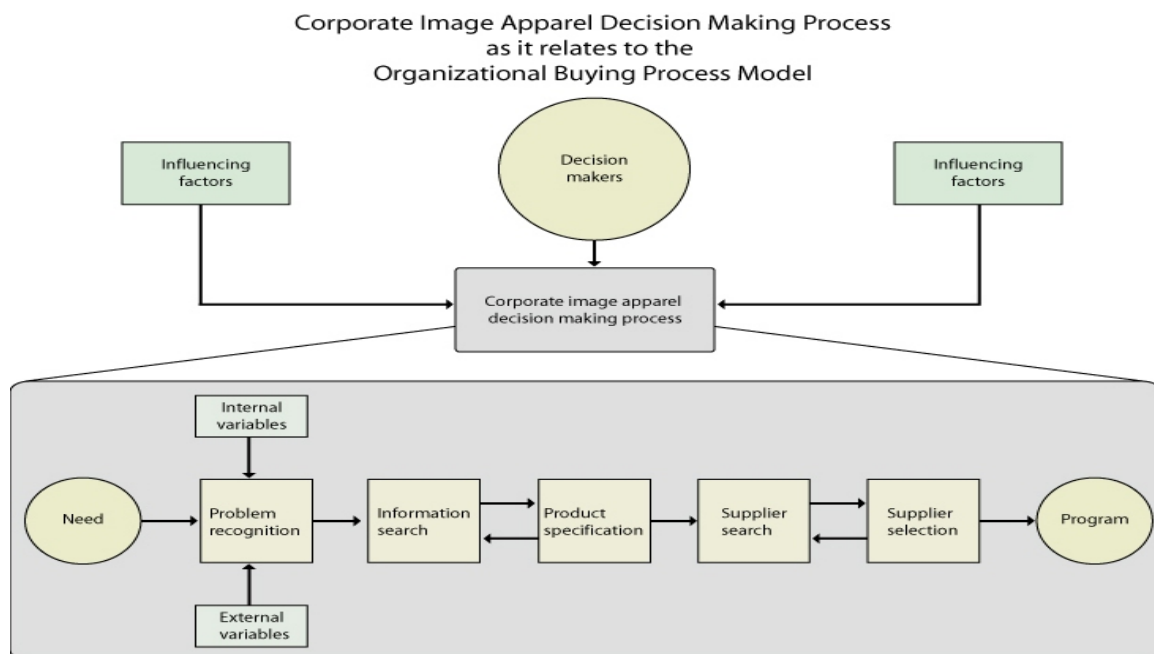
Table 31: Company J – Decision Process Interview Results

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>EXECUTIVE'S COMMENTS</i>
Need Description and Problem Recognition	<u>Origin of Implementation Decision</u> : Corporate (Company J) <u>Intended Benefits</u> : No answer. Designated by Company J. <u>Fulfillment of expectations</u> : No answer. Designated by Company J. <u>Actual Employee Benefits</u> : No answer. Designated by Company J. <u>Actual Company Benefits</u> : No answer. Designated by Company J. <u>Actual Competitive Benefits</u> : No answer. Designated by Company J.
Product Specification	<u>Important Product Attributes</u> : No answer. Product attributed specified by Company J. <u>Fulfillment of Product Attributes</u> : Yes <u>Number of Products Chosen</u> : No answer. <u>Person Responsible for Ordering Apparel from Supplier</u> : Company J representatives <u>Method of Ordering from Supplier</u> : Fax and phone. <u>Subsidization</u> : No answer.
Influencers on the Buying Process	<u>Employment Class of Employees</u> : No answer. <u>Situational Factors</u> : No answer. <u>Employee-related Factors</u> : No answer. <u>Corporate-related Factors</u> : No answer. <u>Price Influence</u> : No answer.
Supplier Search and Selection	<u>Reasons for Supplier Selection</u> : Quality, cost, level of service, product options. <u>Length of Time for Implementation</u> : No answer.

Comparison of Decision Makers for Corporate Image Apparel Purchases

Within and Across Group Results

The results of the case studies were analyzed in relation to each research statement. Each statement relates to one stage of the model illustrated in Figure 9.



Source: DiLuna, K. 2003.

Figure 9: Organizational Buying Process Model related to Image Apparel

RS1 Who are the primary decision makers with regards to leasing, renting, or purchasing image apparel?

Finding 1: Overall, the *primary decision makers* for corporate image apparel purchases are marketing or human resource departments.

Table 32 illustrates the primary decision makers within and across the image apparel groups. Highlighted boxes are used to recognize the primary decision maker within and across groups, if any predominant decision makers exist.

Table 32: Primary Decision Makers Within and Across Groups

Position	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Human Resources	0	2	0	0	2
Marketing	0	0	3	1	4
Purchasing	1	0	0	0	1
Founder/CEO	0	0	0	1	1
No answer/no primary decision maker	2	0	0	0	2
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

The primary decision makers regarding the use of image apparel for employee incentive purchases are human resource managers while the primary decision makers for corporate promotion were marketing managers. There was no clear decision maker for corporate identity purchases or employee dress code policy purchases.

Finding 2: In general, *final decision makers* approving image apparel purchases was a coordinated effort by an upper level executive in the company, along with the decision maker listed above. Final decision makers for image apparel purchased for corporate promotion was the

responsibility of a team of individuals from various departments within the company. Final decision makers for employee incentive purchases were a coordinated effort of an executive and a human resources representative. There was no clear final decision maker regarding corporate identity purchases or employee dress code policy purchases.

RS2 How are these people chosen to be decision makers?

Finding 1: Overall, decision makers were chosen because the role fit within their job responsibilities dealing with employee relations. The majority of companies did not consider other people for the role of decision maker. There was no clear reason for the selection of decision makers within groups for corporate identity purchases, corporate promotion purchases, employee incentive purchases or employee dress code policy purchases.

RS3 How do decision makers gather information regarding the options available for supplying image apparel to employees?

Finding 1: Overall, there was no distinction between the people responsible for conducting the information search regarding supplying image apparel to employees. However, within the corporate identity group, marketing representatives were the primary people responsible for gathering information.

Finding 2: Overall, suppliers were the *primary source of information* for decision makers in gathering information regarding image apparel options. This remains true within groups for companies purchasing image

apparel for an employee dress code, corporate promotion, and corporate identity. However, there was no clear distinction in the source used for employee incentive purchases.

Finding 3: Overall, decision makers considered unstructured (7 of 10) and structured (5 of 10) *use of image apparel* within their company. Table 33 represents the types of policies considered both within and across image apparel groups. The highlighted areas represent the primary policies considered within and across each group, if such a distinction exists.

**Table 33: Types of Policies Considered
Within and Across Groups**

Type of Policy Considered	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Structured	3	1	0	1	5
Unstructured	1	2	3	1	7
Corporate Casual	2	0	1	1	4
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing image apparel for employee incentive and corporate promotion, unstructured use of image apparel was the primary policy considered. Within companies purchasing image apparel for an employee dress code, structured and corporate casual (2 of 3) policies were primarily considered. There was no clear distinction on the

types of policies considered within companies purchasing for corporate identity.

Finding 4: Overall, there was no distinction across the groups regarding the person responsible for gathering information regarding the suppliers of image apparel. Table 34 represents the results of the primary people responsible for the supplier information search both within and across group results, if such distinctions existed.

Table 34: Person Responsible for Supplier Information Search Within and Across Groups

Position	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Human Resources	0	2	0	0	2
Marketing	0	0	1	2	3
Purchasing	0	0	0	0	0
Director, Strategic Projects	1	0	0	0	1
Department Heads	1	0	0	0	1
Founder/CEO	0	0	0	0	0
Team of People	0	0	2	0	2
No answer/no primary decision maker	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

However, within companies purchasing image apparel for employee incentive, human resources managers were primarily responsible while marketing representatives were primarily responsible for

companies purchasing image apparel for corporate identity purposes. Teams of people within each company were responsible for the supplier information source for corporate promotion purchases.

Finding 5: On average, companies researched a total of 4.1 suppliers for fulfilling their image apparel needs. Companies purchasing image apparel for employee dress codes and corporate identity researched an average of four suppliers. Companies purchasing for employee incentive researched an average of 3.5 suppliers while companies purchasing for corporate promotion researched an average of 4.6 suppliers.

Finding 6: Overall, cost (8 of 10), quality (6 of 10), and level of service (5 of 10) were the most influential factors for companies in choosing a specific image apparel supplier. Table 35 represents the results of the primary influencing factors for supplier selection within and across groups, when such a distinction is apparent.

Table 35: Influencing Factors for Supplier Selection Within and Across Groups

Influencing Factors for Supplier Selection	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Cost	2	2	2	2	8
# of Employees Being Outfitted	2	0	0	1	3
Quality	2	2	2	1	7
Level of Service	2	1	1	1	5
Product Attributes	2	0	0	1	3
Other	0	0	2	0	2
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Cost, number of employees being outfitted, quality, level of service, and product attributes (2 of 3) were the most influential factors for companies purchasing image apparel for employee dress codes. Cost and quality were the most influential for employee incentive purchases and cost was the most important for corporate identity and corporate promotion (2 of 3) purposes.

Finding 7: Overall, companies spent over one month searching for suppliers to fulfill their image apparel needs. Table 36 represents the results of the average time companies spent with suppliers in designing an image apparel program.

**Table 36: Average Time Spent with Supplier
Designing Image Apparel Program
Within and Across Groups**

Time Spent Working with Supplier	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
0-2 days	0	0	0	0	0
3-5 days	0	0	0	0	0
6-7 days	0	0	0	1	1
over 1 week	0	1	0	0	1
over 1 month	2	1	2	1	6
No answer	1	0	1	0	2
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

This was also true within companies purchasing image apparel for employee dress codes and corporate promotion however there was no distinction between companies purchasing for employee incentive and corporate identity.

Finding 8: Overall, sales meetings with suppliers (6 of 10), word of mouth (5 of 10) which may include business associations, conversations with suppliers (5 of 10), and supplier catalogs/flyers (5 of 10) were the primary sources of information for learning about suppliers and their services. Table 37 represents the results of the primary methods companies use to gather information regarding suppliers.

Table 37: Methods for Gathering Supplier Information Within and Across Groups

Methods for Gathering Information for Supplier Search	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Internet Research	1	1	1	1	4
Sales Meetings with Suppliers	2	2	2	0	6
Word of Mouth	1	1	2	1	5
Type of Supplier (lease or retail)	2	0	0	0	2
Conversations with Suppliers	3	2	0	0	5
Catalogs/Flyers from Suppliers	1	2	0	2	5
Other	0	1	2	0	3
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing for an employee dress code, conversations with suppliers and type of supplier (2 of 3) were the primary sources of researching suppliers. Sales meetings with suppliers, conversations with suppliers, and catalogs/flyers were the primary sources of supplier information for employee incentive purchases. Within companies purchasing for corporate identity, supplier catalogs/flyers were the primary source of information while word of mouth (2 of 3) was the primary source of information for corporate promotion purchases.

RS4 How is the initial need for image apparel established?

Finding 1: Overall, there is no distinction across companies regarding the people responsible for initiating a need for corporate image apparel purchases.

Finding 2: Overall, however, the reasons for such purchases can be primarily attributed to a desire to increase corporate identity (6 of 10) and increase brand recognition (6 of 10). Table 38 represents the results of the reasons companies initiate corporate image apparel purchases within and across groups.

Table 38: Reasons for Initiating Corporate Image Apparel Purchases Within and Across Groups

Reasons for Initial Need for Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Increase Employee Morale	0	2	2	0	4
Increase Team Spirit	0	2	1	1	4
Value-added Benefit to Employees	1	2	1	0	4
Decrease Clothing Related Competition Among Employees	0	0	0	0	0
Employees Dressing Too Casual	0	0	0	0	0
Competitors Doing It	1	0	1	0	2
Increase Brand Recognition	0	1	3	2	6
Increase Corporate Identity	1	1	2	2	6
Other	3	1	1	2	7
No answer	0	0	0	0	0
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

This was true for companies purchasing image apparel for corporate identity purposes as well as corporate promotion (corporate identity 2 of 3). However, increasing employee morale, increasing team spirit, and offering employees a value added benefit were the primary reasons for initiating the use of image apparel for companies purchasing for employee incentive. There was no distinction between the reasons for initiating corporate image apparel purchases for companies purchasing for an employee dress code.

Comparison of Decision Making Process for Corporate Image Apparel Purchases

Within and Across Group Results

RS5 Why do companies implement image apparel programs?

Finding 1: The *primary intended benefits* companies of implementing an image apparel program across companies was an effort to increase team spirit (6 of 10), increase brand recognition (6 of 10), increase corporate identity (6 of 10), and increase employee morale (5 of 10). Table 39 represents the result of the intended benefits companies were hoping to achieve through the use of image apparel.

**Table 39: Intended Benefits of Image Apparel
Within and Across Groups**

Intended Benefits of Use of Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Increase Employee Morale	0	2	3	0	5
Increase Team Spirit	0	2	3	1	6
Greater Control Over What Employees Wear to Work	0	0	0	0	0
Build Brand Recognition	0	1	3	2	6
Build Corporate Identity	1	1	3	2	7
Increased Productivity	0	1	0	0	1
Provide Consistent Professional Appearance to Customers	1	0	2	1	4
Increase Corporate Identity	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	1	1	4
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

These were the primary drivers for companies purchasing for corporate promotion, however for companies purchasing for employee incentive, the primary reasons were to increase employee morale and team spirit. Companies purchasing for corporate identity implemented image apparel programs to increase corporate identity and increase brand recognition. There was no distinction in reasons for implementing image apparel programs among companies purchasing for employee dress codes.

Finding 2: Overall, the *expectations of companies* were fulfilled when the image apparel programs were implemented.

RS6 How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to internal drivers?

Finding 1: Overall, companies reported that *actual employee benefits* related to the use of image apparel included an increase in team spirit (6 of 10), increase in employee morale (5 of 10), and an increase in feeling of value to the company (5 of 10). Table 40 represents the results of the actual employee benefits of image apparel within and across groups.

Table 40: Actual Employee Benefits of Image Apparel Within and Across Groups

Actual Employee Benefits of Use of Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Increase Employee Morale	0	2	3	0	5
Increase Team Spirit	0	2	3	1	6
Increased Feeling of Value to the Company	0	2	2	1	5
Increased Enthusiasm for the Job	0	2	1	0	3
No Need to Worry About What to Wear to Work	1	1	0	0	2
Felt More Professional	1	0	0	1	2
Saves Money on Buying Work Clothing	1	1	0	1	3
Other	0	0	1	0	1
No answer	2	0	0	1	3
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing for employee incentive, increased employee morale, increased team spirit, increased feeling of value to the company, and increased enthusiasm were all employee benefits of image apparel. Companies purchasing for corporate promotion reported an increase in employee morale, increase in team spirit, and increased feeling of value to the company (2 of 3) as employee benefits. However, there was no distinction in employee benefits for companies purchasing image apparel for employee dress codes or corporate identity.

Finding 2: Overall, companies reported that *actual company benefits* related to the use of image apparel included increased corporate morale (6 of 10), increased brand recognition (6 of 10), increased corporate identity (6 of 10), and providing a consistent image to customers (4 of 10). Table 41 represents the results of the actual company benefits of using image apparel within and across groups.

Table 41: Actual Company Benefits of Use of Image Apparel Within and Across Groups

Actual Company Benefits of Use of Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Increased Productivity	0	1	1	0	2
Increased Corporate Morale	0	2	3	1	6
Builds Brand Recognition	0	2	3	1	6
Builds Corporate Identity	1	2	2	1	6
Provides Consistent Image to Customers	1	0	2	1	4
Controls What Employees Wear to Work	0	0	0	0	0
Saves Money on Buying Work Clothing	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	0	1
No answer	2	0	0	1	3
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing image apparel for employee incentive, company benefits were reported to be increased corporate

morale, increased brand recognition, and increased corporate identity. Companies purchasing image apparel for corporate promotion reported increased corporate morale, increased brand recognition, increased corporate identity (2 of 3), and providing a consistent image to customers (2 of 3) among the company benefits. There was no clear distinction in company benefits for companies purchasing image apparel for employee dress codes or corporate identity.

RS7 How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to external drivers?

Finding 1: Overall, companies reported the *actual competitive benefits* of using image apparel was an increase in brand recognition (6 of 10), increase in corporate identity (6 of 10), and provided a consistent image to customers (4 of 10). Table 42 represents the results of the actual competitive benefits of using image apparel within and across groups.

Table 42: Actual Competitive Benefits of Using Image Apparel Within and Across Groups

Actual Competitive Benefits of Use of Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Increased Brand Recognition	0	2	3	1	6
Increased Corporate Identity	1	2	2	1	6
Provides Consistent Image to Customers	1	0	2	1	4
Other	0	0	1	0	1
No answer	2	0	0	1	3
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Companies purchasing for employee incentive reported increased brand recognition and corporate identity while companies purchasing for corporate promotion reported increased brand recognition, corporate identity (2 of 3), and providing a consistent image to customers (2 of 3). There was no distinction in competitive benefits for companies purchasing for employee dress codes or corporate identity.

RS8 How is the decision making process and final selection influenced by internal and external variables?

Finding 1: Overall, the *employment class* of employees had no influence on the decision making process and final selection.

Finding 2: Overall, there was no distinction among *situational factors* that influenced the decision making process and final selection. Table 43 represents the situational factors that influence a company's use of image apparel within and across the groups.

Table 43: Situational Factors Influencing the Use of Image Apparel Within and Across Groups

Situational Factors Influencing Use of Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Competition	0	0	1	0	1
Employment Incentive	1	2	0	0	3
Employee Morale Low	0	0	0	0	0
Employees Dressing Too Casually	0	0	0	0	0
Need to Increase Corporate Identity	0	0	1	1	2
Other	1	1	3	1	6
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing for employee incentive, having an actual incentive item to provide to employees was the primary situational factor that influenced the decision making process and final selection. Companies purchasing for corporate promotion reported that demand for image apparel from employees (2 of 3) was an “other” situational factor that influenced the decision making process and final selection. There

was no distinction in situational factors that influenced the decision making process and final selection for companies purchasing for employee dress codes or corporate identity.

Finding 3: Overall there was no distinction in *employee-related factors* that influenced the decision making process and final selection across companies. Within companies purchasing image apparel for employee incentive, recognizing employees was the primary employee-related factor that influenced the decision making process and final selection. Fulfilling employee demand for image apparel (2 of 3) was the primary employee-related factor for companies purchasing image apparel for corporate promotion, while there was no distinction among employee related factors for companies purchasing for employee dress codes or corporate identity.

Finding 4: Overall, the *corporate-related factors* that influenced the decision making process and final selection included a consistency in branding and corporate identity that image apparel could provide.

Finding 5: Overall, *price* somewhat influenced (6 of 10) the decision making process and final selection of image apparel. Table 44 represents the results of the influence of price on image apparel purchases and decisions within and across the image apparel groups.

Table 44: Influence of Price on Image Apparel Purchases Within and Across Groups

Influence of Price on Purchasing Image Apparel	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Greatly Influenced	0	0	2	1	3
Somewhat Influenced	2	2	1	1	6
Didn't Influence	0	0	0	0	0
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

This was true for companies purchasing image apparel for employee incentive and employee dress codes (2 of 3). However, price greatly influenced (2 of 3) the decision making process and final selection of image apparel for companies purchasing for corporate promotion. There was no distinct price influence for companies purchasing for corporate identity.

RS9 Why are individual products/suppliers selected within the corporate image apparel market?

Finding 1: Overall, *individual products* are selected for the corporate image apparel market because of price (9 of 10), durability (8 of 10), quality (7 of 10), style (6 of 10), color (6 of 10), ease of care (5 of 10), comfort (5 of 10), and fiber content (5 of 10). Table 45 represents the results of the most important product attributes for image apparel products within and across the image apparel groups.

Table 45: Most Important Product Attributes for Image Apparel Within and Across Groups

Product Attributes	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Price	2	2	3	2	9
Comfort	0	1	2	2	5
Style	1	2	2	1	6
Fit	1	1	1	1	4
Employee Opinions	0	2	1	1	4
Fiber Content	1	0	2	2	5
Ease of Care	1	1	1	2	5
Number of Style Options	0	1	0	1	2
Quality	1	2	2	2	7
Durability	2	2	2	2	8
Color	1	0	3	2	6
Other	1	0	0	0	1
No answer	1	0	0	0	1
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Within companies purchasing for employee incentive, price, style, employee opinions, quality, and durability are the most important product attributes. The most important product attributes for companies purchasing for corporate promotion are price, color, comfort (2 of 3), style (2 of 3), fiber content (2 of 3), and durability (2 of 3). Companies purchasing for employee dress codes report price (2 of 3) and durability (2 of 3) to be the most important product attributes. The most important product attributes for companies purchasing for corporate identity are price, comfort, fiber content, ease of care, quality, durability, and color.

Finding 2: Overall, companies report that products have fulfilled their corporate needs for image apparel.

Finding 3: Overall, *suppliers* are selected based on their quality (8 of 10), cost (7 of 10), and level of service (5 of 10). Table 46 represents the results of the reasons that suppliers are selected within and across the image apparel groups.

**Table 46: Reasons for Supplier Selection
Within and Across Groups**

Reasons for Supplier Selection	Employee Dress Code	Employee Incentive	Corporate Promotion	Corporate Identity	All Groups (Across Total)
Quality	3	2	2	1	8
Cost	3	1	2	1	7
Level of Service	2	1	1	1	5
Product Options	2	1	0	0	3
Other	0	0	2	1	3
No answer	0	0	0	0	0
Total Companies (Within Total)	3	2	3	2	10

Quality was the most important supplier attribute for companies purchasing for employee incentive. Cost (2 of 3) and quality (2 of 3) were the most important supplier attributes for companies purchasing for corporate promotion. Companies purchasing for employee dress codes report suppliers are selected based on be quality, cost, level of service (2 of 3), and product options (2 of 3). There was no distinction in reasons for supplier selection for companies purchasing for corporate identity.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research was to analyze the decision makers and decision making process for corporate image apparel purchases. For this research, a six-page interview questionnaire composed of 10 primary questions was developed by the researcher (Appendix C). Questions were developed using the conceptual framework of the Organizational Buying Process as a model for question development and were delineated based on their relation to the decision maker or decision making process. With regard to the decision makers, this research examined the primary decision makers responsible for leasing and purchasing image apparel at a company. It also examined how these decision makers are chosen for their role, how they gather information regarding options available for supplying image apparel to employees, and how the initial need for image apparel is established at a company.

With regards to the decision making process, this research examined why companies implement image apparel programs and how the need for image apparel is initiated in relation to internal and external drivers. In addition, this research also examined how the decision making process was impacted by internal and external variables, who impacts the decision making process, the

attributes of products and suppliers that allow them to be chosen by a company, as well as how the final selection of image apparel is influenced.

Companies were selected for participation based on their current use of image apparel for an employee dress code policy, employee incentive, or corporate promotion. Representatives from the selected companies were interviewed via phone or e-mail.

Summary of Results

Decision Makers

RS 1 Who are the primary decision makers with regards to leasing, renting, or purchasing image apparel?

Primary Decision Makers

Overall, the primary decision makers for corporate image apparel purchases are marketing or human resource departments.

Final Decision Makers

Overall, final decision makers approving image apparel purchases was a coordinated effort by an upper level executive in the company along with the primary decision maker listed above.

RS 2 How are these people chosen to be decision makers?

Overall, decision makers were chosen because the role fit within their job responsibilities related to employee relations. The majority of companies did not consider other people for the role of decision maker.

RS 3 How do decision makers gather information regarding the options available for supplying image apparel to employees?

Information Search – Person Responsible

Overall, there was no distinction between the people responsible for conducting the information search regarding supplying image apparel to employees.

Information Search – Primary Source of Information

Overall, suppliers were the primary source of information for decision makers in gathering information regarding image apparel options.

Types of Use

Overall, decision makers considered unstructured and structured use of image apparel within their company.

Supplier Search – Person Responsible

Overall, there was no distinction across groups regarding the person responsible for gathering information regarding the suppliers of image apparel.

Supplier Search – Number of Suppliers

On average, companies researched a total of 4.1 suppliers for fulfilling their image apparel needs.

Supplier Search – Influencing Factors

Overall, cost, quality, and level of service with the most influential factors for companies in choosing a specific image apparel supplier.

Supplier Search – Time Spent Designing Program

Overall, companies spent over one month with suppliers in designing an image apparel program to fulfill their needs.

Supplier Search – Methods for Gathering Supplier Information

Overall, sales meetings with suppliers, word of mouth, conversations with suppliers, and supplier catalogs/flyers were the primary sources of information for learning about suppliers and their services.

RS 4 How is the initial need for image apparel established?

Initiator

Overall, there is no distinction across companies regarding the person responsible for initiating a need for corporate image apparel purchases.

Reasons for Initiation

Overall, the reasons for initiating image apparel purchases can be attributed to a desire to increase corporate identity and brand recognition.

Decision Making Process

RS 5 Why do companies implement image apparel programs?

Intended Benefits

Overall, the primary intended benefits of implementing an image apparel program across companies was an effort to increase team spirit, increase brand recognition, increase corporate identity, and increase employee morale.

RS 6 How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to internal drivers?

Actual Employee Benefits

Overall, companies reported that actual employee benefits related to the use of image apparel included an increase in team spirit, increase in employee morale, and an increased feeling of value to the company.

Actual Company Benefits

Overall, companies reported that actual company benefits related to the use of image apparel included increased corporate morale, increased brand recognition, increased corporate identity, and providing a consistent image to customers.

RS 7 How does image apparel fulfill corporate needs in relation to external drivers?

Actual Competitive Benefits

Overall, companies reported the actual competitive benefits of using image apparel were an increase in brand recognition, increase in corporate identity, and it provided a consistent image to customers.

RS 8 How is the decision making process and final selection influenced by internal and external variables?

Employment Class of Employees

Overall, the employment class of employees had no influence on the decision making process and final selection.

Situational Factors

Overall, there was no distinction among situational factors that influenced the decision making process and final selection.

Employee-related Factors

Overall, there was no distinction in employee-related factors that influenced the decision making process and final selection across companies.

Corporate-related Factors

Overall, the corporate-related factors that influenced the decision making process and final selection were a consistency in branding and corporate identity that image apparel could provide.

Price

Overall, price somewhat influenced the decision making process and final selection of image apparel.

RS 9 Why are individual products/suppliers selected within the corporate image apparel market?

Product Attributes

Overall, individual products are selected because of price, durability, quality, style, color, ease of care, comfort, and fiber content.

Supplier Attributes

Overall, suppliers are selected based on their quality, cost, and level of service.

Conclusions

1. The Organizational Buying Process is a sufficient model to facilitate understanding corporate image apparel purchases.
2. Image apparel is being used for a broad range of purposes, both for internal and external corporate benefits including employee dress code, employee incentive, corporate promotion, and corporate identity.
3. Image apparel is being used in a range of industries.
4. Some image apparel markets are quite large because they affect both the employees of a company as well as a company's customers and general public.
5. The image apparel market is difficult to estimate due to the range of groups that it impacts, ranging from employees to customers to the general public.
6. The image apparel market is a growth market.
7. Both suppliers and companies are important contacts for initiating questions regarding corporate image apparel purchases.
8. Leasing is not widely used for corporate image apparel purchases, which can be attributed to the fact that the primary uses of image apparel (i.e. employee incentive, corporate promotion, corporate identity) do not favor leasing.
9. There is a heavy emphasis on the internal value of corporate image apparel and its benefit to employees.

10. Due to the emphasis on employee benefit, marketing and promotion of image apparel is intimately tied to the human resources component of most companies.

Implications

1. Image apparel is a viable and growing market and can greatly affect the overall textile and apparel industry.
2. Tops are the predominant image apparel products being used by companies.
3. Key product attributes are a starting point for future image apparel product development.
4. Overall, image apparel is seen favorably by companies.

Recommendations

Future Research

1. A broader study of the image apparel market could be conducted to make actual market size predictions on specified areas of use (i.e. employee dress code, employee incentive, corporate promotion, corporate identity).
2. Future studies could assess the implications of the current image apparel market and growth of image apparel as it relates to actual fabric yardages and quantities.

3. Future studies could attempt to measure the value and longevity of image apparel merchandise as a means of advertising as compared to traditional methods of advertising such as billboards or print ads.
4. Further research could examine whether “brand recognition” relates more to reinforcing corporate identity among employees as opposed to generating awareness of the brand to the public. This relates to the distinction in the use of image apparel as an internal or external company benefit.
5. Further research could examine whether the expectations for durability are different for corporate image apparel as opposed to the general consumer expectations regarding apparel purchased at retail.
6. Additional research could examine actual employee benefits related to image apparel. This study indicates that image apparel programs are oriented to have a positive effect on employees and it would be interesting to find out whether such programs actually produce these outcomes from an employees’ perspective. Thus, it could look at whether corporate image programs have really accomplished the goals they were intended to meet.

Market Entry

1. Suppliers are highly influential in corporate image apparel decision making processes and final purchases and suppliers can use this influence in entering into new business opportunities.

2. Since there is a heavy emphasis on the internal value of corporate image apparel, textile suppliers of image apparel should market products with a cognizance of the important role that corporate image plays for employee morale and incentives. Recommended marketing efforts by textile suppliers should look for ways to offer companies textile products that their employees would get excited about or value.
3. Companies may benefit from “packaged” corporate image apparel programs because of the criticality of price and time. This could also be a benefit because of the direct relationship between such programs and human resources within a company, which suggests that image apparel purchases are not as intensely managed as it would be if it were under the supervision of a purchasing department. “Full packaged sourcing” could be relevant to product selection and rotation as a means to make the decision process easier.
4. Suppliers should understand how companies approach the textile business and textile related purchasing. The majority of companies purchasing textile products do not have a background in textiles and the more information that a supplier can provide for the customer, the more it will facilitate the decision process.

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APPENDIX A: Image Apparel Customers of Textile Rental and Retail Suppliers

Customers of G&K Services:

1. The Bottled Water Source,
2. OneSource
3. Reiswig
4. Western Digital
5. Halvor Lines
6. Wall Street Deli
7. Focus Dailies (One Day Contact Lenses), CIBA Vision: A Novartis Company
8. Gourmet Award and Tree of Life, Inc.
9. IBM
10. Springfield Pacesetters
11. Harbour Pointe
12. Cargill
13. Firerock
14. Aradiant
15. Elkay Manufacturing
16. Flint Ink
17. Colonial Pipeline
18. Kauffman Tire
19. United Rentals
20. Conagra
21. Jiffy Lube
22. Durham School Services
23. Reliant Energy

Customers of Cintas:

24. Dutch Prime Foods
25. Compaq Center
26. Bistro 300
27. Fieldcrest Builders, Inc.
28. Norwich Inn & Spa
29. Rogers
30. Marriott
31. CrossRoads
32. Southwest Airlines
33. Catering By Design
34. Peak Interiors Inc
35. CMR Nuts
36. A Space Place Self-Storage
37. Di Brizzi Security
38. The Dunes Golf and Tennis Club
39. Riverbend Bar & Grill
40. Four Seasons Trucking
41. Brighton Gardens Assisted Living by Marriott
42. KaBoom!
43. Sahara Pools

- 44. Five Star Parking
- 45. Critter Control
- 46. Verian Technologies
- 47. Pin Mark
- 48. Globe Trotters
- 49. Misfits
- 50. Ashland
- 51. Top Star Express
- 52. Red Oak
- 53. Jade Chemical & Supply
- 54. Decanter Imports
- 55. Cycle City Power Sports
- 56. Allied
- 57. Ruby Reef
- 58. Elite Formula One Team
- 59. Carmel Development Company (CDC)
- 60. Keystone

Customers of ARAMARK

- 61. Frito-Lay
- 62. Dairy Fresh
- 63. McKesson Spices
- 64. Purdue
- 65. Tyson
- 66. ConAgra
- 67. Quick Courier
- 68. Honda
- 69. Kelley Tire

Customers of Lands' End:

- 70. Cingular
- 71. CellularOne
- 72. The Scooter Store
- 73. CISCO
- 74. Proctor and Gamble
- 75. Quaker Oats
- 76. 24 Hour Fitness
- 77. AIADA
- 78. Lenscrafters
- 79. Radio Shack
- 80. Hidden Meadow Ranch
- 81. Sundance
- 82. Swissotel
- 83. Triton Museum of Art
- 84. Aspenleaf Productions
- 85. Greenway Saddlery
- 86. Papillon Helicopter Tours
- 87. Lighthouse Productions
- 88. dimension

89. The Barber Group
90. SAS
91. Riis Borg Construction Company
92. KIVA
93. Cypress Court at Mesa
94. Morton's Steakhouse
95. Leapfrog Services Inc.
96. South Beach Yacht Club
97. The Flower Fields
98. Giarono
99. Kasey Jones
100. Vinyard Frame Designs
101. JST Vintage
102. graffiti
103. Kubisoft
104. Off the Map
105. Southbridge
106. Surrey Place
107. Cinema Designs
108. Manny Hattan's
109. Abacus
110. Pelion
111. Oliver Winery
112. Torreo Coffee Company
113. bZillions
114. Epps Aviation
115. China Mist Tea
116. Four Seasons Landscaping
117. Gainey
118. One World Telecom
119. The College Board
120. Game Show Network
121. Access
122. The Lofts
123. Farm to Market Bread Co.
124. baybank
125. BirdDog Solutions
126. Cabrera Services
127. Grants Pass
128. Ridgewood Flooring Products
129. American Millwork Corp.
130. go there

APPENDIX B: DETAILED CORPORATE DESCRIPTIONS

Angelica Corporation

www.rentalgarments.com

700 Rosedale Ave

St. Louis, MO 63112-1408

T 800-325-8032

Angelica Corporation is a textile rental and laundry services company. They provide products and services to the healthcare hospitality industries in major metropolitan areas. They have two primary divisions which employ a total of 7,000 employees: textile services and retail sales. Textile services have about 26 plants in the U.S. The retail sales division has about 2,000 specialty retail stores and 10 catalog operations in the U.S. In 2002, the Angelica decided to discontinue both its manufacturing and marketing segments. Textile services accounted for 75% of the 2002 revenues and retail sales accounted for 26%. Their total 2001 sales were over \$350 million.

ARAMARK Corporation

1101 Market Street #45

Philadelphia, PA 19107-2934

T 215-238-3000

ARAMARK Corporation is large company with over 200,000 employees whose primary activity is in the service industry. The company has three major segments: food and support services, uniform and career apparel, and educational resources. Within the uniform and career apparel division, the company rents, sells, cleans, maintains, and delivers career apparel to customers. Their total 2001 sales were over \$7.7 billion, with food and support

services accounting for 76%, uniform and career apparel accounting for 18%, and educational resources accounting for 6%. They are the second largest commercial launderer in the United States.

Cintas Corporation

www.cintas.com
6800 Cintas Boulevard
P.O. Box 625737
Cincinnati, OH 45262-5737
T 513-459-1200

Cintas Corporation is the number one commercial launderer in the United States. They provide corporate identity uniform apparel and services. Cintas is comprised of two major segments: rentals and other services. Their rental division designs, manufactures, and rents corporate identity apparel and other apparel. In addition, their "other services" segment designs, manufactures, and sells uniforms and other products and services. Overall, they have 15 manufacturing facilities, employ over 24, 000 people, and have over 4 million people wearing their uniforms daily. Their total 2001 sales were over \$2.3 billion, of which uniform rentals accounted for 75% and other services accounted for 25%.

G & K Services

www.gkservices.com
5995 Opus Parkway
Suite 500
Minnetonka, MN 55343
T 952-912-5500

G&K Services outfit over one million people everyday. They are the third largest uniform rental company in the United States and manufacture, rent, and

sell uniforms for over 130,000 companies. Services are provided for a range of occupations, ranging from manufacturing to hospitality. They had sales of over \$603 million in 2001.

UniFirst Corporation

www.unifirst.com

68 Jonspin Rd.

Wilmington, MA 01887

T 978-658-8888

UniFirst Corporation designs, manufactures, rents, delivers and sells personalized occupational garments, career apparel, image wear apparel, uniforms and protective clothing, industrial wiping products, and floor mats. They also decontaminate and clean garments exposed to radioactive materials. Their customers range from automobile centers to restaurants. Of their total 2001 sales of over \$556 million, garment rentals accounted for 65%, non-garment rentals for 26%, garment decontamination services for 7%, and direct garment sales for 2%. They employ over 7,500 employees.

VF Corporation

www.vfc.com

628 Green Valley Rd., Ste. 500

Greensboro, NC 27408

Phone: 336-547-6000

VF Corporation designs, manufactures, and markets branded jeans wear, intimate apparel, occupational apparel, knitwear, outdoor apparel and equipment, children's playwear and other apparel. They have a number of specific brands and licenses. The company operates throughout the world and employs over 71,000 people. Their total 2001 sales were over \$5.5 billion, of which consumer

apparel accounted for 73%, occupational apparel for 10%, outdoor apparel and equipment for 9% and all other for 8%.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Interview Questions for the Analysis of Decision Makers and Decision Processes for Corporate Image Apparel Purchases

Contact Information

Company _____ Date of Interview _____

Name of Individual Being Interviewed _____

Title _____

Telephone # _____ Fax # _____

E-mail Address _____

Initial Questions

1. Do you have a corporate dress policy?
2. Would you describe this policy as formal (mandatory, structured, written) or informal (voluntary)?
3. What does your company use/purchase image apparel for?

Section 1: Company Information

Age of the Company _____

Industry _____

Name of image apparel policy _____

Image Apparel Supplier _____ Lease or Direct Purchase _____

Date of Implementation of Formal or Informal Image Apparel Policy _____

Total Number of Employees _____ Employees Participating _____

Corporate Divisions Participating _____

Section 2: Policy Decision Maker(s)

1. With regards to the primary decision maker for image apparel at your company,

a. Who is the primary decision maker?

Name _____

Title _____

b. Why was this person chosen to be the decision maker?

c. Were other people considered for the role of decision maker? *Check one.*

____ Yes ____ No

i. If yes, what are their names and positions?

Name (s) _____

Position (s) _____

(*Buying Center*)

2. With regards to the initiator responsible for suggesting offering image apparel to employees at your company,

a. Who initially recommended offering image apparel to your employees?

Name _____

Title _____

b. Why did this initiator recommend offering image apparel to your employees?

Check all that apply.

____ Increase employee morale

____ Increase team spirit

____ Value-added benefit to employees

____ Decrease clothing-related competition among employees

____ Employees dressing too casual

____ Competitors were doing it

____ Increase brand recognition

____ Increase corporate identity

____ Other (specify): _____

c. When did this initiator recommend offering image apparel to your employees?

(*Problem Recognition and General Need*)

3. With regards to the information search that was conducted regarding image apparel and image apparel policies,

a. Who was responsible for researching different types of image apparel policies?

Name(s) _____

Title(s) _____

- b. What sources were used to research implementing an image apparel policy?

Check all that apply.

☐ Other companies ☐ Internet ☐ Magazines
☐ Research studies ☐ Articles ☐ Competitors
☐ Suppliers ☐ Word of Mouth ☐ Other (specify):

- c. What types of image apparel policies did your company consider?

Check all that apply.

☐ Structured (require employees to wear logo apparel)
☐ Unstructured (gave employees the option of wearing logo apparel)
☐ Corporate casual (require employees to wear their own apparel within designated guidelines, i.e. no shorts)
☐ Other (specify):

(Need Description and Establishing Objectives)

4. With regards to the supplier of image apparel for your company,

- a. Who was responsible for researching suppliers of image apparel?

Name _____
Title _____

- b. How much time did the supplier work with the decision maker in designing an image apparel policy for your company?

Check one.

☐ 0-2 days ☐ 3-5 days ☐ 6-7 days
☐ over 1 week ☐ over 1 month

- c. How many suppliers were researched?

Check one.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Other
(specify):

- d. How were these suppliers researched?

Check all that apply.

☐ Internet research ☐ Conversations with suppliers
☐ Sales meeting with suppliers ☐ Catalogs/Flyers from suppliers
☐ Word of Mouth ☐ Other (specify):
☐ Type of supplier (lease or retail)

(Supplier Search and Supplier Selection)

5. With regards to the final decision regarding leasing or purchasing image apparel,

- a. Who made the final decision regarding whether to lease or purchase image apparel?

Name(s) _____
Title(s) _____

- b. What factors influenced this decision?

Check all that apply.

☐ Cost ☐ Level of service
☐ Number of employees being outfitted ☐ Product attributes
☐ Quality ☐ Other (specify):

- c. Who else within the company influenced this decision?

Name(s) _____

Title(s) _____

(Influencers on the Buying Process)

Section 3: Decision Making Process

6. From what internal company level did the decision to implement an image apparel policy come from?

Check one.

☐ Corporate (i.e. President) ☐ Regional
☐ Employees ☐ Individual Departments
☐ Other:

(Problem Recognition, Need Description)

7. With regards to the benefits related to supplying image apparel to your employees,

- a. What benefits were you hoping image apparel would provide, both to the employees and to the company?

Check all that apply.

☐ Increased employee morale
☐ Increased team spirit
☐ Greater control over what employees wear to work
☐ Build brand recognition
☐ Build corporate identity
☐ Increased productivity
☐ Provide consistent professional appearance to customers
☐ Other (specify):

- b. Have these expectations been met? **Check one.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes,

- i. What are the employee benefits?

Check all that apply.

☐ Increased employee morale
☐ Increased team spirit
☐ Increased feeling of value to the company
☐ Increased enthusiasm for the job
☐ No need to worry about what to wear to work
☐ Felt more professional
☐ Saves money on buying work clothing
☐ Other:

- ii. What are the company benefits?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Increased productivity
☐ Increased corporate morale
☐ Builds brand recognition
☐ Builds corporate identity
☐ Provides consistent image to customers
☐ Controls what employees wear to work
☐ Other:

- iii. What are the competitive benefits?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Increased brand recognition
☐ Increased corporate identity
☐ Provides consistent image to customers
☐ Other:

(Need Description)

8. With regards to the factors that influenced the decision to offer image apparel to your employees,

- a. Did the employment class of your employees influence your decision?

Check one.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

- b. What situational factors influenced the decision?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Competition ☐ Employees dressing too casually
☐ Employment incentive ☐ Need to increase corporate identity
☐ Employee morale low

- c. What were the two most important employee-related factors?

- 1 _____
2 _____

- d. What were the two most important corporate-related factors?

- 1 _____
2 _____

- e. How did price influence your decision process?

Check one.

- ☐ Greatly influenced ☐ Somewhat influenced ☐ Didn't influence

(Problem Recognition, Influencers on the Buying Process)

9. With regards to the image apparel products that you supply to your employees,

- a. What product attributes are most important?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Price ☐ Fiber content ☐ Durability
☐ Comfort ☐ Ease of Care ☐ Color

☐ Style ☐ Number of style options ☐ Fit
☐ Employee opinions ☐ Quality ☐ Other
 (specify):

- b. Were you able to find products that fulfilled all or most of the important product attributes that you checked above?

Check one.

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, which attributes were not fulfilled?

- c. How many products were chosen?

Check one.

☐ 1-3

☐ 4-6

☐ 7-9

☐ 10+

- d. Who orders the image apparel?

Check one.

☐ Employee

☐ Manager

☐ Corporate office

☐ Online network with supplier

- e. How are products ordered?

Check all that apply.

☐ Online network with supplier

☐ Fax

☐ Company website

☐ Phone

☐ Other (specify):

- f. Are your products subsidized by your company?

Check one.

☐ Yes, 100%

☐ Yes, partially

☐ No, employees pay for their own image apparel.

(Product Specification)

10. With regards to your image apparel supplier:

- a. Why did you choose your supplier?

Check two.

☐ Quality

☐ Level of service

☐ Cost

☐ Product options

☐ Other (specify):

- b. How long did it take to implement the policy from initial idea to employees wearing the product?

(Supplier Search and Selection)

Additional Questions

11. May I re-contact you with additional questions if necessary?

____ Yes,

 Please contact me via:

____ No

12. Do you have any recommendations for other people that I should speak to about image apparel?

____ Yes,

 Name _____

 Title _____

 Contact Information _____

____ No