

# PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

November 2015

**World Paper  
Free Day 2015**

**The pen is  
mightier than the  
laptop**

**Too much screen  
time affecting  
employees psyche**

**Swytch app –  
multiple numbers on  
one phone**

**National PA Survey 2015 results announced**

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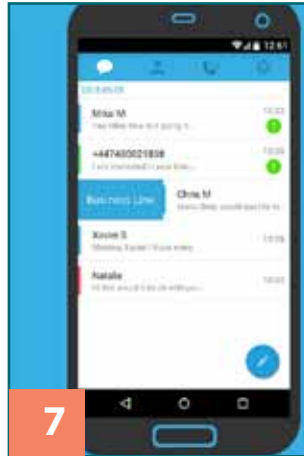
The World's Largest Website for Executive PAs, Secretaries, Administrators & Office Managers

*As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?*

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.







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## PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

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## UK consumers are ready for the end of 'free' current accounts

Data from Smart Money People, a financial review site, shows that customer satisfaction with paid accounts is higher than 'free' accounts. Business bank accounts have the highest level of dissatisfaction across all banking products



- Customers with paid accounts are happier than those with 'free' accounts, 91% compared to an 80% overall rating
- When asked if they feel they have been treated fairly, 98% of paid current account holders said yes. This falls to 88% of "free" current account holders
- 3 of the top 5 ranked current accounts have a monthly fee attached
- Business bank accounts are the poorest reviewed product across Smart Money People, with 25% of all business bank accounts rated either 1 or 2 star

Mike Fotis, Founder of Smart Money People, said, "Thanks to innovative products like the

Santander 123 Account, UK consumers are becoming very skilful in searching for the best products and providers to suit their personal needs.

"While our data shows that consumers are on the whole pretty happy with their current accounts, there is a marked difference when we compare 'free' accounts with paid accounts.

"By signalling the end of 'free' accounts, the CMA has an opportunity to increase market competitiveness and transparency, while also encouraging consumers to think more carefully about the right products and providers for them, rather than viewing all providers as 'the same'."

## Paper? Seriously?

World Paper Free Day 2015 calls for an end to the Global Paper Chase



World Paper Free Day is all about asking people around the world, to think a bit harder about whether they really need to press that print button. Many businesses are still overly reliant on paper – which is why World Paper Free Day looks to remind us of practical ways to de-clutter the workplace

Organisations all over the world are being encouraged to take the 'paperless pledge' and go paper-free for the day, as part of this year's World Paper Free Day on 6 November.

This campaign is about challenging us to take solid steps on the path to using less paper, eliminating the waste and confusion that piles of office paper can create.

According to sustainability charity WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), the average office worker uses up to 45 sheets of paper per day, of which more than half is considered waste.

"It is hard to believe that in 2015, so many

of us are still so reliant on paper," said the President of the organisation behind the push, John Mancini of information professional membership group, AIIM.

"It is slow, inefficient and terrible for the environment. There are much better options available, with more and more technology dedicated to reducing use of paper."

AIIM conducts annual research into the state of the paperless office, and early results from this year's research shows that 31% of business executives admit their office is 'piled high' with paper documents.

Not only does paper create expensive waste, but it also clogs up business processes. By digitising content, enterprises can improve their ability to service customers quickly and effectively, facilitate collaboration, improve access to information for team members, and increase overall productivity.



## The Pen is Mightier than the Laptop



Research carried out by Bidvine.com has produced the surprising discovery that micro enterprise in the UK is being driven by the humble pen and paper rather than cutting edge technology

Although 67% of the UK's micro businesses and sole traders surveyed now use a Smartphone for their business, 63% use pen and paper to manage their diary and almost 1/5 rely on nothing more than their memory to ensure they know where to be from day to day. This is particularly concerning as 20% say they have lost money in the last month due to poor diary keeping or communication.

It appears that the old way is still the most common way when it comes to finding new customers; 86% of sole-traders and small businesses still rely upon word of mouth as an important new business channel. The systems don't change once new customers have been acquired either, almost half still use pen and paper to track their customers.

The same businesses are also favouring more traditional methods when it comes to taking payments. Despite plans to phase

out cheques by 2018, 44% are still accepting cheques while less than one quarter take web payments and a mere 6% accept mobile payments.

The importance of a mobile to communicate with customers is however evident – over 1/3 say their phone is extremely important or vital to their business – only 16% felt they could operate without it. 52% communicate with customers by text and 65% by mobile call, compared to 50% who use a landline.

For Sohrab Jahanbani, founder of Bidvine.com, there is a place for both technology and tradition in small businesses. He comments, "There has been some progress towards the use of technology - despite still using the mighty pen, 78% do use email to communicate with their customers. It is also clear that the mobile phone has become an integral part of even the smallest businesses."

## Multiple numbers on your existing mobile phone



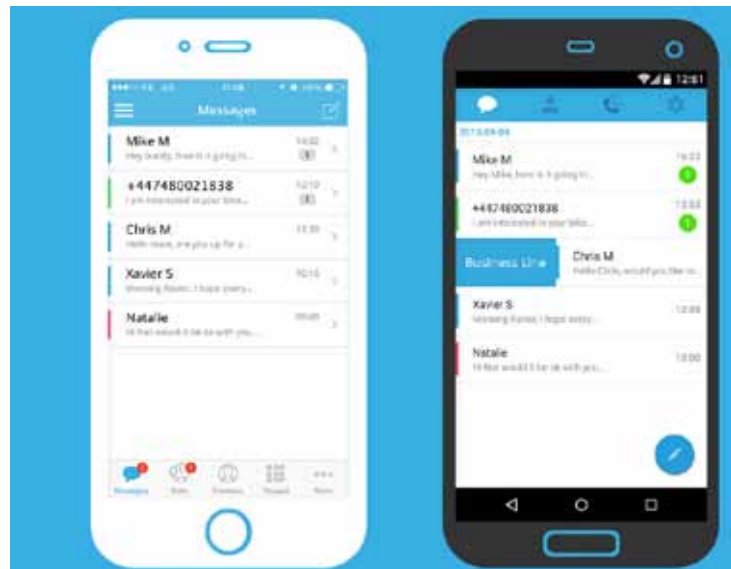
Swytch app allows you to have multiple UK mobile phone numbers on your existing smartphone, without the need for additional SIM cards.

- New app gives you multiple numbers on your existing phone
- An ideal solution for the self-employed and small businesses

With Swytch there is no need to change your phone, SIM card or network operator if you need an additional phone number. The Swytch app allows users to have up to five additional mobile numbers on one mobile device, all of which can be used for both incoming and outgoing calls and text messages.

Swytch is also an ideal solution for people who do not want to use their main mobile phone number for online services, such as dating websites, online marketplaces and recruitment agents.

Swytch users can download the app wherever they are based in the world and can call and text using UK mobile numbers at local rates. With Swytch, UK expats are now able to maintain a UK mobile number while abroad with no roaming charges, and businesses, freelancers and consultants based abroad can better connect with their UK customers.



The app does for mobile numbers what Dropbox has done for files; it detaches the numbers from the SIM card and hosts them in the cloud. This means users can login to their Swytch account from any internet connected device and communicate from any of their Swytch numbers.

The Swytch app is available to download for free from the iOS and Android app

To register your first additional number for free, and for 50p of free credit, visit [www.swytch.com](http://www.swytch.com) or search the app store for Swytch.

## Too much screen time is affecting employees psyche



With the average UK adult now spending more than 20 hours online a week, a break-out space is vital in boosting the psyche of the workforce and driving productivity

With most UK adults spending almost an entire day a week online, business leaders are increasingly creating break-out spaces in a bid to keep staff invigorated and boost collaboration, according to workplace technology expert Condec Software.

The latest figures show that the average adult spends more than 20 hours online a week, making, breakout spaces vital for businesses to help give staff a rest from the glare of their computer screen. These areas can be described simply as a separate space, away from the normal work arena – a place where staff can do anything from eat their lunch, relax, brainstorm, or hold meetings. Giving people a break from the computer screen also has benefits that

some people may overlook, such as helping firms comply with health and safety rules.

Firms may be under the impression that such spaces are a luxury which they cannot afford. However, Debra Ward, Managing

Director for EMEA at Condec Software, warns that decision makers must consider the benefits and positive impact on the culture of the office before ruling out creating such an area.

Debra comments: "Forward-thinking companies were quick to realise the importance of creating break-out spaces in the office. Organisations are increasingly seeing the huge benefit these spaces can yield. It gives their teams a relaxed area to work together, float ideas, collaborate and connect. It also improves employee engagement by giving a space for staff to discuss the business with one another comfortably, creating better cross-functional relations and partnerships."



# 2.5 million adults can't read a roadmap

**Research from Post Office Money Car Insurance reveals how the traditional road trip has evolved, leaving many drivers unprepared for their journeys**

Gone are the days of arguing over the roadmap– In fact, so many UK adults admit to being reliant on technology to get them from A to B that more than one in ten have never used a road map – of which more than 2.5 million wouldn't know how to. Roadmaps are particularly foreign to younger adults, with over a third of people in their twenties having never used one and of which one in ten are unsure of how to use one.

The demise of the roadmap might go some way to explaining why so many are unable to identify where some of the UK's most well-known landmarks actually are; over eight million adults don't know that Big Ben is located in London, and of those in their twenties nearly eight in ten were unable to identify the counties of certain famous sites like Stonehenge and Leeds Castle.

When it comes to planning a road trip, a new checklist has emerged. The research revealed of those who have been on a long journey,

people are now nearly three times more likely to prioritise sorting their music playlist over checking their car insurance. This is even more prevalent amongst people in their twenties who are almost twice as likely to stock up on food and drinks in preparation for a long car journey, than they are to check the road worthiness of their car.

Top 10 Road Trip Dreads	%
Traffic	57
Breaking down	42
Lane hoggers/people driving in the wrong lane	32
Needing the toilet	28
Vans, lorries, caravans on the road	26
Cost of petrol	25
Getting lost	23
Getting stuck behind slow drivers	22
People who exceed the speed limit	19
Motorways	11

## office\* show announces the results of National PA Survey 2015

Whilst there never could or will be such a thing as an average PA, these results do provide something of a snapshot. The majority of survey respondents, for example, have been working in their current job for an average of 6 years, are highly motivated, and, very evidently, enjoy the responsibility and variety of the important work that they do.

Although the majority of surveyed PAs still support one manager, the number that do so has dropped by almost a third (from 49% to 36%). In 2011, a quarter of PAs supported over 3 managers. That figure has hit 40% for 2015. This shift – of escalating workloads and greater responsibilities – also reaffirms the results of other previous National PA Surveys (2012-2014) that have explored how the PA role has changed (and is still) evolving over time.

One thing that certainly hasn't altered are attitudes to loyalty, illustrating the uniqueness of the PA role in the work place (however many managers they support). When asked who they felt most loyal to, the majority of PAs – 62% (compared to 56% in 2011) – responded with 'My Boss', followed by 'The Company' at 22% and 'My Colleagues' at 16%. The results offer a succinct reminder of how important a strong, close working relationship is to ensuring the professional



success of both individuals – the PA and their respective boss(es).

A 'great boss' also tops the list of the things that most motivate them about their work. Whilst 61% of respondents also stated that they felt 'valued' by their boss (29% said extremely, 32% very).

Of course, if they could change a few things about the PA role it would be to highlight the important contributions and commitment that they collectively make to UK businesses every day. When asked to name what most frustrates them about their work, lack of career opportunities, pay, and lack of recognition are still the three biggest concerns.

## Summary of the 5th annual National PA Survey

### How many managers do you report to?

	2011	2015
One	49%	36%
Two	26%	24%
Three	11%	15%
Four	6%	10%
More	8%	15%

### What are the three things that most motivate you to go to work?

	2011	2015
Great boss	46%	52%
Variety of role	45%	48%
Good working environment	41%	40%
My colleagues	40%	41%
Feeling recognised and respected	36%	36%
Good pay	34%	30%
Responsibility	22%	49%
Convenient	14%	16%
Great career opportunity	9%	8%
Good perks	7%	8%

### What are the three things that most frustrate you about your job?

	2011	2015
Lack of career opportunities	47%	45%
Pay	35%	38%
Lack of recognition	32%	38%
Lack of perks	30%	23%
Isolation from rest of company	25%	24%
My boss	19%	19%
Lack of variety	16%	14%
My colleagues	15%	17%
Good working environment	14%	13%
Lack of responsibility	8%	9%

### Who do you feel most loyal to?

	2011	2015
My boss	56%	62%
The company	24%	22%
My colleagues	20%	16%

### In terms of recognition, how valued do you feel by your work colleagues?

	2011	2015
Extremely	15%	16%
Very	38%	35%
Quite	35%	35%
Not Very	11%	14%

### In terms of recognition, how valued do you feel by your boss?

	2011	2015
Extremely	26%	29%
Very	37%	32%
Quite	26%	26%
Not Very	12%	13%

### What is the best thing that you have been asked to do in the last 12 months?

*The incredible variety of responses to this question just goes to show what a satisfying career being a PA or EA can be – and sometimes not short of a few glamorous perks.*

- Coach and mentor people – great satisfaction in helping others to achieve their goals
- Organised a teambuilding event for the whole department, which was a huge success
- Co-ordinate a schedule of around 70 national training events – headache but very satisfying when completed
- Organise a large leadership team meeting and use some of the skills that I had picked up at last year's office\*. My boss was very impressed with the new technology suggestion and we have used it ever since
- Attend a conference in Dubai to ensure it runs smoothly at key times and sunbathe the rest of the time



# PA Survey 2015

- Organise a royal visit
- To join my boss at high profile external meeting at The Ivy
- Organise an international conference to promote research in lifelong learning
- Create a training day for secretaries to help with their development, confidence, time management, and feel valued
- I consider all aspects of my role to be important and integral to my success and that of my executive. Tasks can range from the mundane (dropping a car off for a service) to the inspired (mentoring others or drafting/ translating documents or organising off-sites). To select a 'best' thing is to detract from the overall objective, which is to be the best at what you do.
- Make fortune cookies for a team event. At the time I thought the idea was ridiculous, however this turned out to be one of the best things I had been asked to do, simply to see the reaction to those that received the fortune cookies with their own individual message of thanks applicable to them only.

## **That's NOT in my job description!**

*For a little light relief, the survey also asked what the most ridiculous thing respondents had been asked to do in the last twelve months. Thankfully, whilst most PAs have a fantastic relationship with their bosses and feel valued and respected, there was always going to be a few exceptional 'exceptions'.*

- Consider having individual fridges in our building to stop colleagues pinching other people's milk and lunch
- Find a lost pen in London! – which was found and returned safely

- Fly spinach to Spain
- One of my principles went on his honeymoon late last year. He called me from abroad and asked if I could go to his home to fetch his new wife's contraception and courier it to him!
- Find a particular type of chicken for my boss, he was asked to pick one up for a dinner he was hosting with his partner. It didn't exist
- Take a 40 minute train journey to buy his lunch from M&S
- Pick my boss' wife and children up from the airport on a Saturday
- Wash chocolate stains from my boss's trousers then hold them under the hand drier in the toilets (whilst the boss is sat in a cubicle) until they are dry enough for her to put back on
- Recruit and train 5 team secretaries who left at the same time

## **The future of the PA role – how do you see the PA role developing over the next five years?**

*This, the final question of the 2015 survey didn't appear in the 2011 version. The views in the sample below reflect the majority of opinion – which for many is a positive outlook for the future of the PA role.*

- I think the PA role in general is growing hugely into a well-respected, valued key member of the executive team in thriving organisations. Long gone are the days of the lowly-respected secretary. PAs are dynamic, vibrant, collaborative, engaging and can really bring organisations together and move forward. I see the role continuing on this trajectory in the future and I think it will



continue to grow from strength to strength. We are our own best ambassadors but we are also supported hugely by some fantastic and inspiring Chief Executives

- I think it will become even more diverse – we need to combine the traditional PA duties with a myriad of other tasks already and our 'jack of all trades' skills will be called upon more
- I think the PA role will evolve into a more proactive role. Days of sitting all day at a desk typing are long gone! Being the face of the organisation where people feel that they can come to you with anything and it be solved or advice given with pleasure is the ultimate PA role within any large organisation. We tend to be able to proactively multi-task and forward think, with years of experience, to enable our

bosses to trust and empower us to just get on with things. Ultimately we are here to make their lives easier, capture everything and juggle all the balls, enabling them to succeed, which will always be the case for a PA role

- PAs are good at multitasking but I feel that gives bosses the impression PAs can deal with anything and they always get overloaded with jobs that aren't in their job description. I would like to hope that PAs will get more recognition for their role and this should be reflected in the salary. It's very hard to find good salaries for PA outside of London
- A lot of big companies do not value the work that PAs do and there will be less and less of us in the future
- I see it becoming a more digital-based role and for more PA services to be delivered

# PA Survey 2015



'virtually' so the PA role would not necessarily be office-based

- The soft skills of the PA role are becoming increasingly important as executives use technology to do a lot of the traditional admin stuff themselves. A good PA will have excellent technical knowledge, but an excellent PA has diplomatic skills, communication skills and strategic thinking skills as well. This will be even more important in the next five years and will add value to the role, the executive and the company
- PA roles are extremely difficult to define! There is such disparity among the community already, the role of a PA reflects the business/person they are working for. I have the luxury of being a lot more involved in my bosses' tasks, mainly from a planning perspective – I suspect others have a lot less, and some a lot more! I would like to see the PA role become more of a strategic role rather than a glorified administrator
- The PA role is becoming less recognised as a single role. Most companies now expect a PA to also do all the accounts and payroll

and also take on additional duties previously carried out by other staff

- Due to budget cuts most people are forced to support themselves unless they are senior execs in the firm. The PA will be taking on more business management responsibilities supporting their boss in running the business and managing the team
- Becoming more versatile such as: organising of events, travel, visas – becoming involved and preparing marketing literature, doing HRM tasks, IT expert, photocopier and VC engineer – she/he will be an all-rounder thrown into one small package (the company get a price of 5 individuals (marketing, IT, HRM, facilities, office manager) into one person – the PA)
- Who knows! I always think a really good PA role can be what you make of it so the possibilities are endless so long as you have the support of a great boss

**For further information, please visit [www.nationalpaday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpaday.co.uk).**



# Virgin Trains launch new 'Hop on Board' ale

Virgin Trains has created a brand new ale christened 'Hop on Board', available to those on east coast routes. To coincide with its launch, Virgin is trialling a brand new glass – the 'Hoptimist' pint glass - that is forever "half full" to celebrate the new beer's arrival.



The glass has been hand blown by craftsmen so that it always appears that it's half full. It will mean that customers travelling on Virgin Trains routes between London King's Cross, Leeds, York, Newcastle and Edinburgh will be able to sit back and enjoy a full-bodied ale as they watch the landscape whisk by.

The ale has been created exclusively for Virgin Trains, who expect to sell more than 55,000 bottles this year. 'Hop on Board' combines traits of both a bitter and a pale ale with the expectation that it will excite both seasoned ale drinkers and the growing number of pale

ale fans.

The name 'Hop on Board' was chosen by Virgin Trains staff and created by York based Rudgate Brewery and Virgin Trains. The partnership celebrates the city of York as the home of both businesses, but shows the commitment of Virgin Trains to work and engage with local businesses across the network.

***'Hop on Board' is available from the Foodbar and trolley service on all east coast services priced at £4.***

## More than 80% of company car drivers admit motorway speeding

Eight out of 10 company car drivers admit to speeding on motorways, but still consider themselves to be law-abiding drivers, research from RAC Business has found.



motorway, with a further 5% admitting to reaching 90mph. According to the RAC research speeding is less of an issue in more residential areas, but still a quarter of drivers admitted to regularly driving at 35mph in a 30mph zone.

Jenny Powley, corporate business sales director at RAC Business, said: "When you drive as part of your working day and are running late for meetings, it can be very tempting to break the

In total, 81% of company car drivers admitted to regularly breaking the 70mph speed limit, compared to 69% of private motorists. But when asked if they consider themselves to be a law-abiding driver 90% said yes.

The research from the RAC's Report on Motoring 2015 suggests some motorists don't consider speeding to be a serious driving offence, especially on motorways. In fact two-thirds of company car drivers believe the law should be changed, with the speed limit increased to 80mph.

Almost half of company car drivers said they regularly hit speeds of 80mph on a

speed limit. It's worth reminding drivers that the risks associated with speeding can far outweigh the time saved. After all, driving at 80mph instead of 70mph will only save you six seconds a mile, or 10 minutes over 100 miles.

"It's also worth considering the impact of speeding on fuel efficiency. According to the Department for Transport, driving at 80mph can use 25% more fuel than driving at 70mph, so this can have a real impact on the business' bottom line."

# Less Fat, Less Sugar and Less Washing Up!

Chef Lisa Roukin has spent years creating gluten-free dishes that use less hydrogenated oil and refined sugar. Now, after a decade of testing and developing healthy recipes, the Le Cordon Bleu chef is sharing her ultimate kitchen essential: the My Relationship with Food silicone baking mat.

The chief benefit of the BPA-free silicone mat is that nothing sticks thus enabling cooks to reduce oil up to a full 100%. Whether the mat is used for roasting vegetables, with only a touch of oil for flavour, or baking homemade fish & chips made with corn flakes instead of traditional wheat-based batter, any added oil is minimal compared to frying. The results are delicious and have the advantage of decreasing the chances of developing type 2 diabetes or heart disease in later life.

Chef Roukin explains further, "The secret is that the mat distributes heat evenly when items are being cooked. This is particularly useful for preparing healthy dishes such as homemade granola, kale chips, or even gluten-free macaroons without the challenging task of scraping off the mats, as nothing sticks. It also eliminates the need for parchment paper or aluminium foil which makes the mat environmentally friendly too. Little oil, little clean-up and a whole lot more time to enjoy what you've cooked (without having to scrub or leaving half of what you've spent time cooking on the tray)!"

**The My Relationship with Food silicone fibreglass baking mat is available for £19.99 plus P&P at [www.myrelationshipwithfood.com](http://www.myrelationshipwithfood.com) and on [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)**





## Dress Your Retail Staff For Success

We live in a customer-driven world, where retail is a hugely successful and influential industry. However, it's well known that the number of retail businesses has declined in the last decade, as smaller, independent retailers battle against booming supermarkets and online convenience.

This is where Portlantis's brand new infographic, ***Dress Your Staff For Success: Six Things Every Retailer Should Know*** comes in. In the midst of an increasingly challenging retail sector, Portlantis is on a mission to spread the word of the importance of branded staff uniform for driving sales in store and building a loyal customer base.

Employers and business owners not supplying their own branded retail workwear are missing out on profitable stepping stones towards business success. Front line staff are a key component of any retail store, and if they don't look the part, how can they deliver the service, brand integrity, and professionalism required to drive sales and build brand loyalty?

With leading industry statistics and facts, the infographic is what every retailer needs to ensure their staff are kitted out to perfection. If you are a business owner, retail marketing expert, employee or professional, you will recognise the importance of tapping into every profitable avenue – especially affordable retail workwear.

### The Benefits of Branded Retail Uniform

- A reputable company image – A simple, but smart staff uniform conveys an impression of professionalism and trustworthiness.
- Customer satisfaction – Recognisable, branded uniform enables customers to find help in store quickly and easily. This positive experience will boost their loyalty to your brand.
- Belonging and equality – Staff workwear helps to foster a sense of belonging and equality among employees. This is crucial to their performance in the workplace.
- The power of colour – In our recent blog we explore how colour impacts brand perception. When designing your branded retail workwear, choosing the right colour is key to boosting sales.
- Improved customer service – Wearing uniform helps employees to get in a working mindset and gives them a responsibility to be an ambassador of your brand. This directly impacts their performance.
- Brand integrity – Branded staff workwear is important for making a good first impression. It denotes professionalism and integrity, which is key to advertising your services to consumers.

## DRESS YOUR STAFF FOR SUCCESS SIX THINGS EVERY RETAILER SHOULD KNOW

ENSURING YOUR FRONT LINE STAFF LOOK THE PART CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE  
TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR RETAIL BUSINESS.

### A REPUTABLE COMPANY I M A G E

**90%**

of people believe what a person is wearing determines how professional and trustworthy they appear.

Make sure your staff are dressed to create a good impression. Simple, smart workwear branded with your logo promotes a trustworthy and professional image in the mind of customers.

### IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

**78%**

of customers say competent employees creates a happy retail experience.

Staff uniform gives employees a responsibility to be an ambassador of your brand. A consistent and professional uniform will help to shape a consistent and professional employee.

### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

**40%**

of customers say an improved interaction with employees is the core motivator for spending more with a company.

Bold, unique and recognisable staff uniform allows customers to identify employees and get help quickly and easily. This will greatly improve their customer experience with your brand.

### BELONGING AND EQUALITY

**72%**

of employees in retail feel more like part of a team while wearing uniform and more confident when performing at work.

Dressing in company colours and wearing similar styles creates a sense of belonging and unity among employees. This improves teamwork and overall performance when dealing with customers.

### THE POWER OF COLOUR

**73%**

of purchasing decisions are made in store, and eye-catching staff uniform that conveys information effectively is crucial to these sales.

The colour of your staff uniform will have a huge impact on how customers perceive and interact with your brand and employees. Utilising the psychology of colours will help to reinforce a desired message.

### B R A N D I N T E G R I T Y

**7 SECONDS**

is all it takes to make a good first impression.

Branded staff workwear instils a sense of trust in customers, and instantly connotes integrity and high quality service.

