

# PPE PURCHASING 101

8 WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE THE WAY YOUR  
COMPANY ORDERS WORKWEAR & PPE



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A U S T R A L I A

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# INTRODUCTION

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Purchasing workwear and PPE is a mundane admin task but it's one you must carry out.

You must provide your staff with PPE – it is both your legal and ethical responsibility to do so. Every company has a budget for it, yet most budgets blow out. Staff responsible for it are told to spend less time on it every week, yet they actually need *more* time to complete it effectively. It's a pretty dreary topic, so far, isn't it?

The good news is you can implement some simple systems and policies in your company to reduce the 'mundaneness' of this important task. This paper will discuss 8 key ideas that you can easily implement to improve how your company orders workwear & PPE.

If you have any questions about any of them, please get in touch with Badger Australia's Product Specialists on 1300 305 275 or by emailing [sales@badgeraustralia.com.au](mailto:sales@badgeraustralia.com.au).

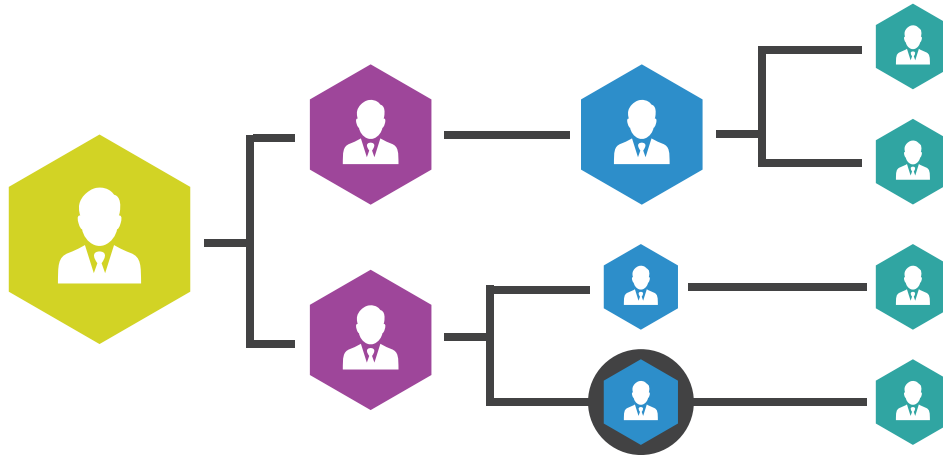
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4. Standardise the range you offer
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# 1. WHO SHOULD BE IN CHARGE?

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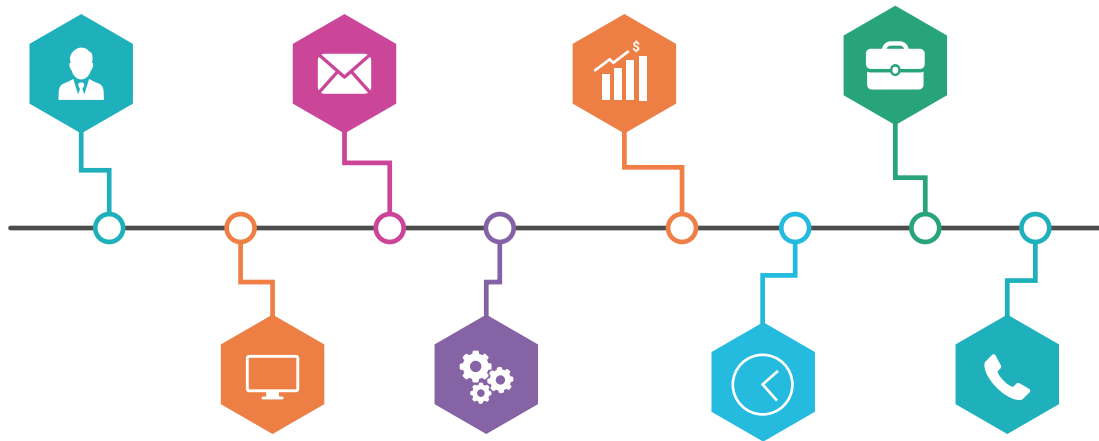
Establishing which personnel at your company place orders is the first (and one of the most important) steps in improving how your company procures workwear and PPE. Often the task is given to one or two administration employees or someone from middle management. These are often the most effective roles to give the job to as they have the authority and responsibility to maintain control over the ordering but generally have enough time to effectively carry out the task. While upper management may want to handle the procurement to keep a handle on costs, they should delegate the task because they probably won't have enough time to complete the task properly and efficiently. Delegation can sometimes be difficult but learning to do it doing it effectively is the secret to your success as a manager.

If you want to do a few small things right, do them yourself. If you want to do great things and make a big impact, learn to delegate.

John C. Maxwell

## 2. MAP OUT YOUR CURRENT PROCESS

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One of the failings of most of us is once we develop a process of completing a task and we practice it often it becomes a habit. The danger of this is we can complete the task, day after day, without really thinking about how effective or efficient the process is. This is a common occurrence when it comes to admin jobs in a business such as ordering workwear and PPE. The way you order for your company may be a 'tradition'. It's very common to hear customers (somewhat guiltily) mutter 'it's probably a bit of a dumb way to do it, but it's just how it's always been done'.

To ensure 'the way it's always been done' at your company is efficient and doesn't include unnecessary steps, sketch up a flow chart that visually displays the steps you take every day to order workwear and PPE. In the example on the right, Jenny completes up to 17 steps to simply buy a polo shirt and pair of shorts for Jamie!

By drawing this process out in the form of a flow chart Jenny will be able to easily and quickly identify unnecessary steps and find ways to cut them out to streamline and shorten the process.

- 1. Jamie verbally tells Jenny he needs some new gear
- 2. Jenny sets herself a reminder to raise a PO
- 3. Jenny raises a PO within their company's account system for the order
- 4. Jenny gives Jamie the company's uniform order form
- 5. Jamie comes back to her saying he wants short cut shorts because they look better, can she get them? **X STANDARDISE RANGE (SEE POINT #4)**
- 6. Jenny emails to ask their supplier if they have short cut shorts
- 7. Jenny asks management if Jamie is allowed to wear short cut shorts, and then tells Jamie he can, just write the product code manually on the order form
- 8. Jamie is unsure that an XS will fit, so gets Jenny to confirm the chest size on the suppliers website
- 9. Jamie hands back the order form
- 10. Jenny puts it in a folder to accumulate a few orders together so she doesn't need to place a bunch of small orders **X PARTNER WITH A SUPPLIER WITH NO MOQ**
- 11. Once Jenny has multiple orders, she faxes or emails them through
- 12. Jenny calls the supplier to ensure they received the order
- 13. Jenny calls the supplier 10 days later, as she hasn't seen the order **X DON'T EMBROIDER FOR FASTER TURN AROUNDS (SEE POINT #6)**
- 14. Jenny receives the order and has to check her orders folder to see which garments are for which employee
- 15. She hands out the garments to the respective employees
- 16. Jamie comes back to her office because he received a M polo, not an XS
- 17. Jenny updates her Excel spreadsheet to keep a record of every order for warranty purposes **X USE A TRACE-ABILITY SYSTEM LIKE QUICKFIT (SEE POINT #5)**

# 3. IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM OF TRACEABILITY

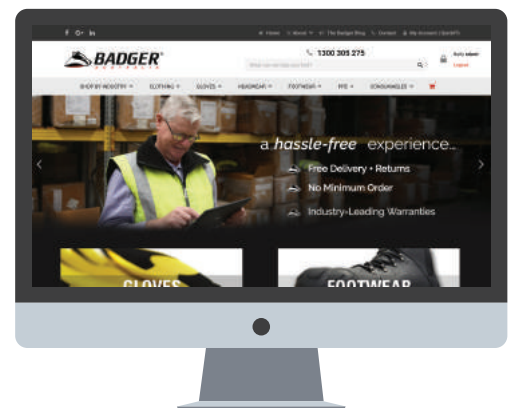
Many workwear and industrial footwear manufacturers in Australia provide warranties on their products, such as a 6 or 12-month guarantee. You pay for this warranty when you purchase the product, however, it is often difficult to make a warranty claim down the track if the product fails. You may not be able to find the original receipt to prove your date of purchase and the supplier may refuse to help as the claim cost may come out of their pocket.

For example, Jimmy may approach you complaining his safety boots have a broken zip after only 5 months of wear. If you can't find a receipt or note stating that you bought boots for Jimmy 5 months ago you may find it hard to convince your supplier that he's telling the truth and hasn't just mistreated his boots.



To overcome this and ensure you can make effective and accurate warranty claims, implement some way to easily trace purchases. Some systems to do this could include:

- Spreadsheets outlining your purchases and which employee they were for
- Ability to add staff names onto purchase orders
- Order on [www.badgeraustralia.com.au](http://www.badgeraustralia.com.au) using the QuickFit Ordering Portal. This allows you to assign products to employee names with the click of a button!



Developing a traceability system will allow you to identify high cost products or employees. By using a tool such as QuickFit you will be able to see if certain employees turn over uniform or PPE faster than others and/or identify products that are inferior in quality and are not lasting.

**TO BOOK A FREE DEMONSTRATION OF QUICKFIT AND SEE HOW IT CAN SAVE YOUR COMPANY TIME, HASSLE & MONEY THROUGH SUPER TRACEABILITY, GET IN TOUCH ON 1300 305 275 OR HEAD TO**

**[WWW.BADGERAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/QUICKFIT-DEMO](http://WWW.BADGERAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/QUICKFIT-DEMO)**

## 4. STANDARDISE THE RANGE YOU OFFER

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While employees may push back against the idea, you should standardise the uniform and PPE range that your company uses to a specific and narrow range. There are three main advantages of doing this; contain costs, maintain your company image and ensure compliance.

While giving employees choice in what workwear they can order may seem the 'nice' thing to do, in order to contain your costs it is better to standardise your offering. Employees often don't think about the impact of their purchasing on the company's bottom line and may order unnecessarily expensive gear. Furthermore, having a narrow range will mean whoever does the ordering will be able to be more efficient and order faster, therefore cutting more cost.

The workwear and PPE your employees wear from nine 'till five is part of your company image. The public sees them around in polos or jumpers with your logo on, so the state of their workwear and the consistency of what your team wears is very important. Standardising the range means your employees will portray a consistent company image that you are proud of.



Credit: Toll

Finally, specifying a range will ensure your team remains compliant with Australian standards. The risk of allowing employees to order whatever style PPE that they like is that they choose non-compliant gear, increasing their risk of injury. Enforcing a uniform policy (i.e. all garments must be Hi Vis yellow with D+N tape) will ensure your staff remain safe and your company reduces Lost Time Incidents (LTIs).

# 5. FOCUS ON VALUE, NOT COST

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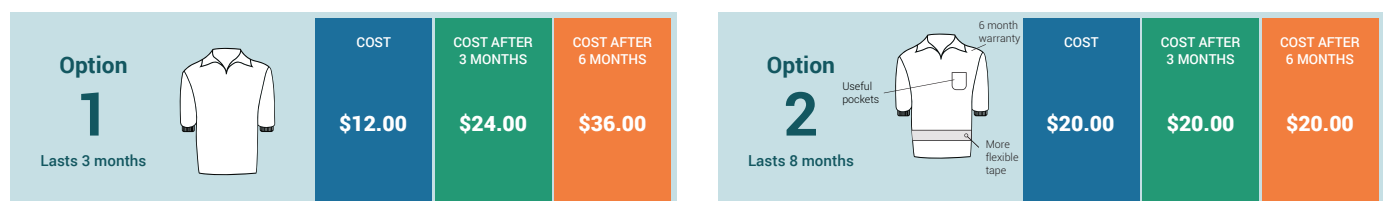
Uniforms and PPE are one of those consumable expenses in a business that is intensely scrutinized by management or the accounts department. You are probably constantly told to lower costs and find cheaper products. However, you should always purchase the product with the best VALUE, not necessarily the best COST.

So, what is the difference between cost and value? The cost of a product is the amount you spend to purchase it. I.e. What is the number on the bottom of the invoice?

The value of a product is the benefit of that product to your company over the long term. I.e. How long will it last? Does it have a warranty? How safe is it? How comfortable it is to wear? How quickly will it arrive?

The value of the workwear and PPE purchases you make for your company is always more important than the cost and while it isn't always easy, you must convince your management or accounts department of that. Remember, a product with higher value is always cheaper in the long run!

## EXAMPLE OF VALUE VS. COST:





## 6. DON'T EMBROIDER FOR FASTER TURN AROUNDS

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Embroidery is the traditional way to brand industrial garments and PPE. However, it is a relatively slow process and can extend lead times for workwear to six weeks (or more!). It isn't uncommon to hear that someone has waited almost three months for a branded jacket or jumper! Modern branding methods such as digital printing, screen printing and sublimating are more effective ways for you to brand your garments as the turn around times are generally much faster. Badger's Signature Branding™ team use these modern methods for this reason. You may also choose to only brand jackets or to not brand your garments at all in order to speed up delivery.



NOTE: While branding your workwear and PPE may slow delivery, many companies still see it as worthwhile as it reduces the number of garments and products 'borrowed' (i.e. stolen) by employees.

## 7. TRY TO CONSOLIDATE YOUR SUPPLIERS

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You should try to minimise the number of different suppliers you use to procure workwear and PPE. While it may be tempting to find the lowest cost option for each product your team needs, ordering 10 products from 10 suppliers takes far longer than ordering 10 from 2. Find a supplier or two that can service you with good value prices and superior service and partner with them. If there is a product you need that they don't stock, tell them! They are likely to appreciate the feedback and look into sourcing and stocking what you require. If you view your supplier as a partner you could also provide constructive feedback on the products they manufacture or stock so they can work to continually improve their offering and range.

Another advantage of having one or two suppliers is being able to more accurately track their performance. You will be able to track the number of backorders you receive, their average turn around times and so on, and will then be able to work with them to improve the service they offer.

## 8. TRACK CONSUMABLES USAGE

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While the 'bigger ticket' products such as jackets, boots and workwear may seem to make up most of your PPE spend, the cost of the small consumable type products can also accumulate very quickly! For example, while cotton picking gloves may only cost \$0.40 each, if you have 100 employees and they each use two pairs per week the cost suddenly ramps up to over \$4k per year!

It is vital you can track and control your company's usage of consumables such as gloves, knives, beanies etc. Some ways of doing this may include:

- Supervisor keeps all consumables locked somewhere and hands them out personally
- Someone takes note of every time an employee gets another pair of gloves or a knife
- If your consumables spend is significant you could consider a vending machine, which is the ultimate solution in tracking, tracing and reporting your company's spend.

**GET IN TOUCH WITH THE BADGER TEAM TO  
DISCUSS HOW A VENDING MACHINE CAN  
CUT YOUR PPE SPEND BY UP TO 60%**



**BADGER AUSTRALIA IS A PARTNER, NOT JUST  
A SUPPLIER.**

**THIS MEANS THE TEAM WILL WORK WITH YOU TO  
DEVELOP A PROCUREMENT STRATEGY  
AND PROCESS FOR WORKWEAR, FOOTWEAR AND  
PPE THAT WILL SAVE YOU TIME, MONEY AND HASSLE.**

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**CONTACT THE TEAM FOR A FREE PPE CONSULTATION AND QUOTE**

 **1300 305 275**

 **SALES@BADGERAUSTRALIA.COM.AU**