



Tyndale Customer Spotlight

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UNIFORM RENTAL
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An office manager for a large, Texas-based energy company specializing in shale drilling experienced the unacceptable difficulties of a uniform rental with industrial laundry program. Difficulties that vanished once they switched to Tyndale's managed apparel program.

Companies who have recently switched to Tyndale often tell us about the difficulties they previously experienced using a uniform rental with industrial laundry program. We recently spoke with the office manager of an energy company, who is responsible for the FR clothing program for 14 field offices. She was immersed in the problems typical of a uniform rental/laundry program: lost and damaged products, inaccurate invoices, inconsistent service, and resolving garment-care issues with employees. But this particular office manager, whose background included roles in safety compliance, observed an even bigger problem: safety was being compromised. Happily, these concerns are now a thing of the past since switching to a Tyndale-managed apparel program to provide the employees' FR clothing.

The problems began not long after the energy company started using the uniform rental with industrial laundry program in 2011, not knowing where to turn following OSHA's mandate "that FRC, which includes both flame-resistant and flame-retardant treated clothing, is necessary in certain applications associated with oil and gas well drilling, servicing, and production-related operations to protect employees from flash fire hazards." The uniform rental program provided the company's field personnel with sets of clothing – coveralls, jeans, shirts, and they purchased outerwear as needed.

As time progressed using the uniform rental program, problems began to escalate. The office manager explained, "The main issue was the cost of lost products, and you didn't really even understand it until you saw it." Uniforms didn't get back to employees, or uniforms would come back from laundry in worse condition than before they were sent. The number of lost products was alarming, unexpected, and very costly. "We had 80 employees in one office, and they turned all of their stuff in, and the numbers aren't matching." The office manager explained that it was her job to sort it all out. "We're looking at thousands of dollars of lost products that [the rental company was] expecting us to pay for. You don't realize how much lost product you're going to have. You just don't." she added.

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A significant amount of the office manager's workday was consumed watching other aspects of the uniform rental program as well. "I spent a necessary amount of time having to go through all the invoices to make sure that contractually it was still correct." Pricing discrepancies were particularly significant following the annual pricing meeting. Poor communication from the uniform rental company's contract manager resulted in inaccurate billing, and it would take months to get the pricing adjusted to the agreed-upon amount. The office manager recalled, "We'd have our meetings in January. February would roll around, and I'd have three sets of invoices come through that were perfectly great. And I'd have another seven, eight, or nine



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all come in with the wrong numbers. So then, we'd have to go back and say, 'Well, you're going to have to credit us for this.' And so that became a big hassle, and we did it quite often." **So often that an estimated 60% of her workday was spent "having to babysit" the uniform rental program.** At one point, she was looking at 14-15 invoices a week to make sure the pricing was correct. "From an administrative standpoint, this was a huge burden on us," she stated.

Inconsistent service was another problem with the uniform rental with industrial laundry program. The office manager explained, "For the service, it all depended on the driver – how good was the driver, and what kind of relationship the driver had with our admin team that was in that field office." The admin teams often sent photos of items that weren't being repaired and items that weren't washed properly. She also noticed that employees were not taking care of the clothing since they didn't own it. There was no accountability, and it became unclear if employees or the industrial laundry program caused the damages.

The office manager's previous roles as a safety technician and safety coordinator gave her a clear understanding of the importance of uncompromised flame resistant (FR) clothing to keep workers safe on the job. Flammable contaminants, such as oilfield stains, can cause FRC to ignite, putting workers at risk of severe burn injuries. Additionally, torn FRC may not fully protect workers. She recalls attending meetings in a room filled with field service personnel and seeing many in the room wearing clothing with tears and stains, rendering them non-compliant with safety standards. "I could sit in the back of the room and look across and see, 'Oh, he needs a new shirt.'" Although the company was paying a substantial amount of money to have clothing laundered and repaired, the office manager knew it wasn't being washed properly, and items requiring repairs were being ignored. She knew it was time to seek another solution for their FR clothing program, stating, "That's not acceptable. We weren't in compliance."

ENTER: Tyndale

When the energy company began to look for a new FR clothing program, they narrowed their search to programs already being used within other areas of the organization. "We knew we had to use a tried-and-true program that was already in place. And we talked to procurement and got their recommendation, and Tyndale's name kept coming up. I got great reviews from those using the program. And they really highlighted how wonderful it was to work with Tyndale and how easy it was. And that was a big selling point for us," the office manager recalled.

Switching to a Tyndale-managed apparel program was "easy breezy" for the office manager. She stated, "I don't get complaints from the field... every field office transition has been smooth." She appreciates the consistently excellent service offered by her dedicated account team at

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Tyndale. Gone are the headaches of incorrect billing, laundry issues, and lost products. “Now that we've moved into the new program, we're not having those issues. We don't have to deal with laundry. And everything is so clean and easy. It's the complete opposite of what I was doing,” she shared. **Since switching to Tyndale, she now estimates that the total time she spends managing the FR clothing program is closer to 5% of her workday**, primarily due to internal requirements to have individuals in the various field offices sign off on invoices. “It has relieved us tremendously, going from the old program to this new program,” she added.

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

A critical difference between Tyndale's managed apparel program and the uniform rental with industrial laundry program the energy company left behind is that employees now own their FR clothing. This fact alone is a game-changer since it eliminates the administrative burden of tracking the clothing, the expense of lost products, and the hassle of laundry and repair issues. “They take care of their stuff now,” the office manager explained. Initially, employees were skeptical about having to launder their work clothes, but this became a non-issue as they quickly realized the many benefits of the new program. She added, “I haven't heard one complaint. Everybody has been great. They are not complaining about doing their own laundry, anything of that nature. It's just worked out quite smoothly.”

The energy company's employees appreciate the power of choice with Tyndale's direct-purchase program. The office manager noted, “They like to choose. They like to wear something different. They don't want to wear that ugly tan shirt every day all year long for ten years in a row. They might even get to wear a blue one. They might even get to wear a black one.” Employees now have a choice regarding clothing styles too. They can wear clothing that is comfortable, resulting in their satisfaction with the program. Comfortable clothing can also positively affect compliance; if employees are uncomfortable in their clothing, garments can potentially be worn improperly (rolling up sleeves, taking off protective layers, etc.), possibly resulting in a safety incident. The office manager added, “They're in a very dangerous job, and if they're not having to worry about what they're wearing and anything else, that's great. As long as they are protected, and we're in compliance.”

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

The office manager doesn't mince words when talking about the pitfalls of a uniform rental with industrial laundry program. “My advice for anybody that was going to go from a rental program or under a contract, no matter who it is: know the contract, know the fine print, and know what day that notice has to be in for termination.” She recalled an instance when such a contract was allowed to automatically renew for another five years by an office the company acquired. “We couldn't get out of it. We tried. We went to legal; we did everything we could and had to live with that for the next five years. And the pricing of it was almost a triple amount for each piece



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that we were renting. And that was a very big lesson learned."

The office manager's final piece of advice? **"The key is: rentals don't work."** Luckily for her, those days are over, and she'll be handing off the FR program to a co-worker who will manage it upon her upcoming retirement. She's confident it will be an easy transition, sharing, "It's the overall aspect from accountability, from accessibility, from ease, that kind of thing. This is the way to go... a program like this when a company is buying uniforms. It makes it manageable, and it's just a pleasant experience."

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A HANDS-OFF UNIFORM PROGRAM?**



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