



WAYS TO BUY A BAND UNIFORM

1. SCHOOL BID - This is by far the most popular way.

Why is it good? It presents an unbiased numerical approach to purchasing a uniform by people that do it for your school already.

Why is it bad? 1) Those people procuring the uniforms might know little to nothing about them. 2) Lowest price does not mean, best uniform. 3) It takes control away from the Band Director.

How to make the best of it? Create a presentation atmosphere. Have each company make a presentation on why their uniform and what the features and benefits are. Ask for it in writing.

Also, if working with procurement, before the bid opening, create a system of selection and give percentages to each criteria.

For example:

Pricing: Are they under projected budget? If yes, then each company receives 25 pts. Don't give the most points for being the most under budget. This will come back to haunt you.

Construction: Does it meet your needs? Does it have a lining? Does the stitching look durable? Is there a warranty? Award each company from 1-25 points based on your opinion of the construction.

Design: Is the design pleasing to you and represent your school? Give each company 1-25 pts based on your opinion of the design.

Manufacturer's Representative and Company: Are they local to you? Do they have experience and background. If so, what is it? Why should you trust their experience? Do they seem to be honest and will work with you? This is important, you need to have a good relationship with your rep and know that if there are any issues, that they will help you through them and that they will also make the purchasing process as easy and



smooth as possible. Award each company 1-25 points based on your opinion of the rep and the company.

This system of purchase can be used for any of the ways to purchase a uniform.

2. BUY BOARD

In some states there are “buy boards” that allow you to skip the school bid process. They “vet” the companies and they are bonded. They are also obliged to give you their lowest pricing/bid pricing for using this service.

3. DISTRICT BID

Some school districts put out a bid to all of the companies for general pricing. They vet the companies in advance and will narrow it down to 2 or 3 companies that can work with the schools in that district. The Band Director can then choose which of these companies that he wants to do business with.

4. DIRECT SALE TO THE BAND PARENTS/SCHOOL WITHOUT COMPETITION

This is the most dangerous of the sales. Competition keeps everybody honest. And honest competition where there are no preconceived winners opens everyone’s mind to the process and gets the best for the students.

OTHER THOUGHTS...

5. WE LIKE 1 DRAWING AND WE ARE GOING TO GIVE IT TO ALL THREE:

Sometimes a school falls in love with a particular design after seeing designs from all of the companies involved and they want to see how each company would make that uniform. This is completely fair. Not all of the companies are the same and have manufacturing patterns and processes that are completely different than others. They construct the uniforms differently. Make sure you get specs from your company that you are using the design from and also the design to send to the other companies. If they will not allow you to show their design to other companies, then this should be a HUGE red flag to you that they are cutting out their competition for some reason.



6. SHOULD WE GET SAMPLES FROM ALL OF THE COMPANIES:

Yes, without a doubt. The rep should also present you with a proposal and also a written explanation of “why their uniform.”

7. IT’S WHAT THE DRUM CORPS WEAR.

That is not always a good thing. Drum corps uniforms, though very attractive on the outside. Are made for cost and a very short lifespan. Drum corps change their looks yearly, if not every 3 or so years based on their sponsorship contract. The uniforms are made to only be wash and wear and do not have linings for cost purposes and because of their short lifespan. Ask your rep why an unlined, lined, or fully constructed uniform are the best for you.

8. IT LOOKS LIKE THE ONE I WORE IN HIGH SCHOOL:

This is probably the worst reason to buy a uniform. Technology has changed. Computers, the Internet, cars, vacuums, lawnmowers, TV shows, everything has changed in the past 15-25+ years. Uniforms have changed also. The heavyweight wool materials have changed into lighter and even more durable polys that now are moisture, stain, and odor resistant. Not all companies have these fabrics or even colors available. They might say they do, but do your homework. The average uniform weight since you wore your high school uniform might be as much as 3-4 pounds lighter and the breathability factor are tremendously better. Just because it looks and feels like something familiar, it probably isn’t.