



Should Your Competitive Dance or Cheer Team Spend the Bucks for Something Special? - Making a Case for High Quality, Custom Performance Costuming

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Your dance or competitive cheer team doesn't get any funding from your school. Your team must fundraise for everything you wear or do - or ask each dancer to pay for their own items. Do you feel like your team is the only team in this predicament? Well, you aren't! Your team is in the majority. In dealing with many competitive dance and cheer teams from around the country, almost all teams are faced with needing to do lots of fundraising in order to have the purchasing power for entering competitions, procuring their music and choreographer, their team warm-ups and their performance apparel. Some receive some sort of school funding, but generally it is not just a "given" - it has been worked for. Very few teams are funded 100% by their schools.

Then how does "Team Cupcake" always seem to be wearing stunning, glitzy, show-stopping costumes while your team wears used costumes or the same costumes from a catalog that everyone else is wearing?

"Team Cupcake" understands that top notch costuming is part of the package - for a top-notch performance team. They know that costumes should not overshadow a performance - but costumes ADD to a performance. Boring or distracting costuming can have a negative effect on a performance.

Besides the obvious - attractive, stylish, well-fitting costumes can look very pleasing, a more important concept is at play. When dancers FEEL good and KNOW they look good in a costume - they don't have to worry about that costume sagging, sliding or bunching. They can concentrate on the music, the choreography, execution, and the attitude that is needed to excel during their performance. When you know you look fantastic, you will always exude a confidence that will enhance any performance. I have been told numerous times that dancers feel great in great costumes and I know they dance better. Think about it. If you think you look "fat" or have to worry about your breasts bouncing too much, or if you worry that your skirt is riding up or that you might trip on your pant legs - you cannot devote 100% of your concentration on your performance. If you LOVE your costume - you will carry yourself better.

OK - What is a stunning costume? This depends on your music, your choreography, the attitude that you want to promote, your team and what your team's peers are wearing. A stunning costume for one routine may be a flop for another.

A stunning costume should "fit" all aspects of your dance performance. There are styles and colors and fabrics that are suitable for a "happy" lyrical performance. Different styles and colors and fabrics are suitable for a dramatic "dark" performance and so on. Refer to the many articles that I have written on this subject, some of which have been published in past issues of "Cheerleading/Dance & Drill Magazine" and are posted on our Articles Page at www.satinstitches.com.

You spend maybe \$100 on warm-ups, \$50 on shoes, \$30 on makeup, more money on other accessories, props and event T-shirts and sweatshirts, camp and competition entry fees. Your team has already invested lots of time, effort and money, so don't skimp on your performance costume! Isn't this costume the most important visual? (Besides your team's awesome performance, of course!) Shouldn't one of the most important expenditures for a competition team be your competition costume? If you want something special and unique to lift your team's spirits during all those competitions, you should be purchasing a great costume to set you apart from your competitors! Satin Stitches' specialty is just that.

How much will a stunning custom performance/competition costume cost? Of course this will vary greatly, depending on many things.

Custom vs. not custom, intricate design vs. simple symmetrical design, lots of trimming vs. plain, ordering many of the same design/color vs. ordering only a few of the same design/color. A well-made catalog costume may start around \$100 - these are NOT custom. They may be talked about as custom, but what they are really selling is CUSTOMIZED costumes - where you can choose fabrics or skirt options, etc. You may still see a duplication of what you picked for your "custom" costume on another team. A well-made CUSTOM costume may start at about \$200. This is for the simple symmetrical design with minimal trimming and ordering an average of about 20 costumes of the same style and color. A true custom design will not be duplicated for any other team.

The biggest difference in the cost with custom vs. non-custom is:

Development time for deciding the design

The labor involved in making a pattern

The labor involved in making a first sample

The labor involved with adjusting the pattern according to how the finished costume will be

The time it takes to create all the additional sizes that are needed

A catalog costume is typically not constructed to last for many seasons

In non-custom (or "stock" catalog) styles, all of this development time is divided up into the number of projected costumes that will be made exactly like this style - and it would be thousands! With custom - all of this design development time is divided up among only 10 or 20 costumes.

But how do you get the money for a stunning costume?

Check with your school - are there any options for funding - partial or full - check thoroughly and follow through.

Fundraising. There are so many creative ways to fundraise. Network with coaches that do lots of fundraising. Find out what has and hasn't worked for them.

Ask if anyone wants to purchase her own costume for "posterity".

Charge a rental fee for wearing the costumes every year.

Talk about establishing a "costume closet" with well-made, long-lasting costumes that can be taken out at a later date and most will think they are "new" ! Think investment.

Satin Stitches has been in business for 27 years helping our dance teams to design stunning performance costumes. We always hope that whatever we dream up will make these dance teams look great and feel great. We are proud that we help our teams become winning teams! Our hearts are in our work.

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