



East West

FREE GUIDE

# The Official Playbook for Selecting a Manufacturing Partner



## Congratulations, you have done it!

You had an idea, had it designed, prototyped, made your first smaller volume production and maybe your second. Now you realize that to increase sales, market penetration and competitiveness you're going to need higher volume production. What do you do? How do you 'successfully' bridge the gap from lower volume to higher volume manufacturing?

The following tips should help put your mind at ease.

### 1. Ask for a Referral

Asking for a referral is timeless and proven to work again and again. Simply ask your network who they would recommend for you to speak with about your project. Don't overlook the obvious.

be around the corner, or will around the world work? If it's the latter option, determine where the best place would be to manufacture your product. Who has the capabilities and raw materials to make it?

### 2. Determine the Best Location

Is your project a good fit for onshore or offshore? Can it locate in Virginia or Vietnam? Does the facility need to

### 3. Quote Package

Do you have a comprehensive quote package complete with process control documents? Knowing what processes you need eliminates companies that cannot perform to your specifications, or have more robust technology than you need. One will cost you quality and the other may cost you too much money.

### 4. Volume

You need to be very honest with yourself about your estimated annual usages (EAU) during the selection process. Some partners will be too small (they cannot deliver on time) and some too large (your production run may be delayed by a higher volume, more profitable order). It is a delicate balance and trying to find a partner that provides you leverage is optimal.

**Cover:** Leo Klink,  
East West Vietnam  
Operations Manager  
**Below:** Rubber making  
process in Vietnam





Matt Greenfield,  
East West's Vice  
President of Global  
Operations

## 5. Capabilities or Assembly

If your product is comprised of multiple components, a good electronics manufacturer [EMS] will (a) have plastic injection molding, SMT lines, light metal stamping, tooling, assembly, packaging, and inspection all in-house, or (b) may have better relationships with local subsuppliers than you. Both options will help you simplify your supply chain— you can work with one supplier not seven. While you might pay a slighter higher price for the finished product, you have also mitigated the risk from seven suppliers to one. You can also produce one set of control documents, one PPAP, one control plan, etc., and not have to manage seven subsuppliers.

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## 6. Google

Start the process by researching potential manufacturing partners online. You will find that some will be located in the US, while others may be based in Europe and Asia. All legitimate companies will have a website or other online presence where you can quickly evaluate their capabilities.

## 7. Travel

Once you have narrowed your research down to a few options and you have pricing quotes it is time to book your flight. We always encourage people to go and physically visit your potential partners. Bring your engineer along, and make sure they understand what processes will be required to manufacture your project. If you are traveling internationally, it won't hurt to make sure nothing is lost in translation, literally.

## 8. Ask for Help

Potentially manufacturing 12,000 miles away should cause some initial stress. There are many consultants and domestic manufacturing firms with global operations that have been doing what you are considering doing for 25 years or more. Seek counsel and make wise decisions.