

THE OPERATOR'S FIELD GUIDE

# 27 Questions Every Factory Should Answer Before You Place an Order

The questions I ask before recommending any factory in China or Vietnam. Bring them to your next supplier call or factory visit — and watch how they answer.

*Keep this with you on every supplier conversation.*

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By **Wesley Clayton, FactoryBridge** · 15 years importing & producing apparel and consumer goods across China & Vietnam — medical scrubs, hi-viz, activewear, footwear & PPE.

A good factory will answer these clearly and confidently. A risky one will get vague, defensive, or vary their answers each time you ask. Use these on any factory before you commit a deposit.

## 1 Ownership & Structure

- 1 Who actually owns this factory — and am I speaking with the manufacturer, or a trading company representing it?
- 2 What percentage of your production is subcontracted to other facilities?
- 3 If work is subcontracted, which factories do it, and where are they located?
- 4 How long has the factory operated under its current ownership and management?
- 5 Is your registered business name and address the same as the site where my goods will actually be made?

## 2 Production Capacity

- 6 How many production lines are dedicated to my product category?
- 7 What is your true monthly capacity for my product — and how much of it is already committed?
- 8 What percentage of your capacity is booked over the next two quarters?
- 9 What is your real minimum order quantity for my specifications, and does it change on reorders?
- 10 What happens to my order during your peak season?

## 3 Quality Control

- 11 What is your average defect rate on recent production runs?
- 12 Do you perform incoming, in-line, and final inspection — and can you show me the records?
- 13 Can you show me a recent corrective-action report from a production issue — and how it was resolved? *(Every factory has problems; great ones have systems, not excuses.)*
- 14 What exactly happens when a shipment fails inspection?
- 15 Who is responsible for quality, and are they independent from the production team?

## 4 Compliance & Certifications

- 16 Which certifications do you hold, and can you provide current, verifiable certificate numbers?
- 17 When were you last audited, by whom, and what were the findings?
- 18 Can you provide recent export records to my target market?
- 19 Do you meet the compliance requirements specific to my product and destination country?

## 5 Product Category Experience

- 20 How many brands in my exact product category have you produced for?
- 21 Can you show me samples and references from similar products at my quality and price tier?
- 22 What percentage of your customers place a second order?
- 23 What is the most common reason a customer in my category leaves you?

## 6 Communication & Project Management

- 24 Who will be my dedicated point of contact, and what is their English proficiency?
- 25 How often will I receive production updates, and in what form?
- 26 How do you handle engineering changes or specification revisions mid-production?
- 27 When something goes wrong, what is your process for telling me — and how quickly?

Most factory problems don't start on the production floor. They start when a buyer hears an answer and doesn't realize it's a warning sign.

The questions in this guide help you **start the conversation**. Knowing how to evaluate the answers is what protects your order.

### Need help evaluating a factory?

FactoryBridge helps brands verify suppliers, interpret factory responses, and reduce sourcing risk across China and Vietnam.

Schedule a discovery call → [factorybridge.co](https://factorybridge.co)