

How To Have Your First Conversation With A Manufacturer

Your first conversation with a manufacturer is one of the most important steps in finding a production partner and making a good first impression to the factory.

In our quest to find the [perfect partner to execute our vision](#), we've learned a lot about communication strategies: what has been a home run and what we should never do again. In a valiant effort to save you the time and heartache that we experienced, I've gathered some of the lessons that we've learned.

- Set yourself up for success. Make sure that you set a time and date where you're comfortable, calm, and can focus on speaking about your vision clearly. Don't do what I did and be driving while talking. It's already difficult to make coherent sentences when you're nervous and talking about something that is important to you. So find a peaceful place and time where you'll be uninterrupted for the duration of your call.
- Do your research. A quick Googling of your potential partner can lay some foundation for what they're all about. It's much easier to talk to someone on the phone if you know what they look like and a bit of their personality. Are they reserved, enthusiastic, funny? These are all good traits to know about someone before having a blind phone call with them. Your first conversation with a potential manufacturer may be ROUGH. You'll probably trip over your words and [not articulate your vision clearly to the person](#) on the other end of the phone.

After all, most of this has lived only within your head up to this point. But don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to practice. After a few conversations with manufacturers, you'll have nailed down exactly what you want to say and how to say it. You're a brand new entrepreneur, so be kind to yourself. Brush off mistakes and move on to the next thing.

- Ask questions. Having a [go-to list of the same questions](#) that you ask all your potential manufacturers will help you bridge some of the divides and compare pricing models of different potential partners more easily. You're essentially doing your best to eliminate the apple/orange nature of comparing multiple companies. As the conversation moves forward organically, come up with new questions to ask specifically as you move through each call.
- Take Notes. Once you start having a few conversations with potential partners, what you remember from each will start to run together and you won't be able to parse one out from the other. So just like in college, copious note-taking will lead to your success. Once you're done with a call, type them up and save them somewhere you can access easily (we recommend Google Drive for access anywhere).
- Follow Up. Whether you have follow-up questions for your phone call or not, make sure to send a follow-up email thanking them for their time. You might be incredibly busy, but sending that email will start your business on a path of appreciation and you'll be a better

entrepreneur because of it. A follow-up email should include thanks and any requests for additional information like pricing options or timeline.

- Reflect. You'll hang up the phone with each potential partner feeling a little bit different. Don't ignore those feelings. It might sound real hippie to take stock of their "vibe", but it's an important part of how your working relationship with them will be. Include your feelings as part of your notes and make sure they're an important part of your decision-making process.

Does this process seem daunting? Of course! You're trusting someone you've never met before to execute the vision you've been dreaming of for months and maybe even years. So talk to a bunch of people, trip over your words a few (dozen) times. You might feel like you're not making any progress and like you're trying to find a needle in a million haystacks. But I promise you're doing great.

**We can show you how to have that important conversation.
You only have one chance to do it, so do it right the first time.**

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