

# UNLOCKING GROWTH

## The Outsourcing Decision for Small Manufacturers

### CM Partner Interview Questions Checklist

Use this simple list to prepare for interviews with potential Contract Manufacturers (CMs). It's designed to get you thinking about the key questions to ask based on our **Unlocking Growth Series - Part 2**.

QUESTION	YES	NO	QUESTION	YES	NO
<b>1. Defining Partnership Goals</b>			<b>3. Assessing Support Capabilities</b>		
Can you easily visit their facility in person to discuss your needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they manage purchasing and inventory responsibilities for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do they build a genuine, peer-to-peer relationship?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can their engineering team address a range of technical challenges? (quality, mechanical, electrical, testing, industrial)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do they include logistics, engineer, NPI support, etc., in their offerings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they financially stable with owned facilities and the latest machines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Evaluating Production Fit</b>			Do they train staff to the latest certifications and stay current with trends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the CM have the capacity to meet your production volume?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they offer testing, conformal coating, box builds, and NPI support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are their labor practices efficient and trained to your standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>4. Avoiding Common Pitfalls</b>		
Can they minimize rework with improved yields and quality control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the CM have financial stability to avoid sudden closures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What certifications do they hold? (e.g., ISO 9001:2015)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they offer multi-location redundancy for risk management? (e.g., similar gear sets in Florida/New England)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do they train to IPC-A-610 (circuit board assembly) and IPC-A-620 (wire assembly)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does their culture align with yours for easy collaboration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Can they provide customer references to confirm their reliability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How do you handle part procurement, inventory, and supplier negotiations?

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What is your approach to staying ahead of technology trends? (latest machines, staff training)

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Can you share examples of shaving months off NPI/development cycles?

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How do you support process improvements to lower costs? What are your facility ownership details and financial stability indicators?

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