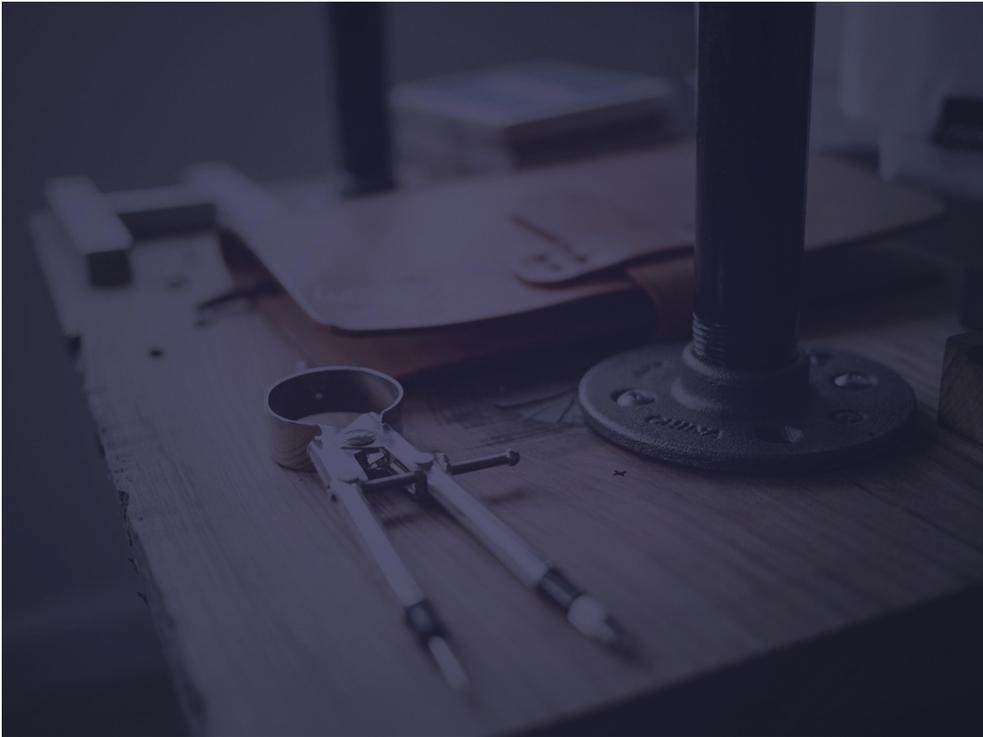


## Identifying the best manufacturer with Sqetch

by Wouter de Roy van Zuidewijn



[Sqetch](#) puts you in contact with thousands of manufacturers and suppliers in and around Europe but how you find and secure the best supplier and how do you get the best out of them for your brand? It is important to establish and set a few vital values when choosing your manufacturer, and producing final pieces of apparel.

We had the opportunity to meet and talk with many experts to provide information we can bring to you. With this article, we want to really help you find a manufacturer that fits your needs and your brand. Below we will give some tips, tricks and worksheets to choosing the person factory.

### Identify Your Criteria

When establishing that initial connection with a supplier through Sqetch, there are 5 things to remember when you identify your criteria and what your brand needs from a supplier.

#### 1. Size

Whether you're a small company or want a small amount of garments, you need to be in

teamed with a factory, where you know you will be important to the factory manager. If a big client comes, you need assurance that you will be catered to although your order may be much lighter.

## 2. Value for Money

Price and value for money are not the same. Value for money means you will get what you need without breaking your pockets. It also means that paying a bit more will get you exactly what you need with no mistakes and no mishaps.

## 3. Reliability and Quality

A key component of finding that right factory is to make sure the factory will be good enough to do the job. This 2 criterion can only, unfortunately, be done with trial and error. However, as a brand, you can still do this in a smart way by asking questions and doing research on the manufacturer.

## 4. Services

How does this manufacturer work? Will they leave you in a waiting room? Do you get a manager allocated to your brand or project? If you choose to go with a certain manufacturer, make sure there is someone on site who can tell you what is happening with your designs. To avoid mishaps that cannot be fixed later on, having a reliable person to contact is essential.

## 5. Speed to Market

How time critical is this project and can the factory provide final pieces in your chosen time frame? Can you get a factory far away or would you want something closer to home to be in touch with what is happening with your designers and creations? Speed to market can dictate how competitors work alongside you in the industry. In a very trend driven industry, getting your designs out a bit quicker can make or break your brand or line for that season.

**With all this in mind, you need to ask yourself a few essential questions.**

Where are they located? Can you get there easily? Can they make what you want? You may need to dig a bit deeper to get the fine details about what they have, what materials and machinery or equipment do they have, to do what you need them to do. Factories and manufacturers need to be financially secure, just like your brand. Are they going to go bankrupt in 5 seconds? Can they buy the fabric for you or will you need to provide it?

Below is Sqetch's Manufacturer Worksheet. Use this sheet as you need to decipher which manufacturers are for you. Keep in mind that this is a basic start and should only be used to narrow down the thousands of choices you have. After you use this worksheet to narrow

down, you can then go into a much deeper quality check on the manufacturers you like the most and the factory as well as reach out to past clients.

### Sketch Manufacturer Worksheet

To make this all a bit easier, here is a quick to-do list of what you should keep in mind and what you should do as a brand, in order to get the most from a manufacturer:

1. Go to visit the factory if you can.
2. Make sure you know who is doing the work.
  1. If the factory is being subcontracted or someone outside is assisting, make sure they have the same standards as the factory you chose to work with.
3. Check for compliance.
  1. Make sure that the factories follow the laws and pay people fairly.
4. Make sure you have a single (and direct) point of contact.
  1. This is important to know what is happening with your product and when. It not only makes it easy for you to reach them but for them to reach you.
5. Make sure the factory is financially secure.
  1. Can they do what you want? Do they have the right equipment, fabrics and a good amount of workers that can get it done in time and correctly?

6. Get references, reviews, and referrals from current and past clients.

Ways to check the financial security of a manufacturer:

- Find out how long they have been around and the year or date of establishment.
- Get their client list! What other brand use or have used this manufacturer? Make sure the client list is active clients and not just a brand they worked with once.
- Find out if the manufacturer shares the space with any other manufacturers or brands. Do they own the building? Do they rent?
- Use your references. What do others say about the manufacturer?

An extra step to consider: Call the references and other brands who have used the manufacturer in the past. Find out what they know, and if the manufacturer was good for them.

Even with acceptance of mistakes and errors, make sure that when the big mistakes do happen, there is someone to call to check on it. To avoid big errors, communicate with your factory and designate a procedure for how they work with you. If something is going wrong, let them know but remember to use their expertise and make sure they help you, just as you help them.

And for our final thoughts, we leave you with some important key steps to success in manufacturing. Remembering these can lower mistakes and errors, make for quicker turnaround times and build a lasting relationship with a factory anywhere in the world.

## Final Keys to Success

Understand factory limitation and capabilities.

- Know what they can and cannot do for your brand.
- Do not expect factories to do something, they have no experience in.

Forward Planning and organization.

- Make sure you know everything is in place in a timely fashion.
- Tell the factory what to expect in terms of production, time frames and everything in between.
- Make sure to allocated time for them to return the garments in a timely manner

Provide good specifications and instructions.

- Don't forget those [tech packs](#) and [line sheets](#)!
- Make sure the factory knows exactly what you want with the fabric, cuts, trims and quantities.

Agree on certain things and communicate efficiently.

- Have a plan for what they should do if something happens and organize on both parties, what should be done in case something goes wrong