

bdp Mechanical Components Deutschland GmbH

German quality standard and global sourcing



Newsletter 2023: 7 mistakes you should avoid when sourcing from China



We are ISO 9001:2015 certified, many of our producers are also IATF 16949 certified.

As a company, sourcing goods from China can go like this:

- Chinese suppliers have presented you with perfect samples, so-called "golden samples", but in mass production, the quality of the final product is suddenly significantly lower
- You are offered low-cost production processes, but in the end the total cost surprises you

European Companies often have neither the expertise nor the time to find Chinese producers and manage them accordingly from Europe. So near-sourcing is still doable, but it can get quite tricky when it comes to far-sourcing.

Thus, this article presents seven mistakes you should avoid when sourcing from China.

Mistake No. 1 - Inaccurate product descriptions and specifications

Unfortunately, your requests and design ideas may ultimately differ from the final product. Therefore, you should send suppliers 2D and 3D drawings of the raw and finished parts and the quality assurance agreement (QAA). In addition, if you have a defect catalog and packaging instructions, you should provide these to the supplier. This way, you can get a realistic quote. Ideally, you would also send sample parts to the suppliers to let them know what quality you expect.

Mistake No. 2 - Lack of knowledge about the Chinese total production costs

It is essential that you, as a customer, not only focus on unit prices but also keep an eye on total costs. Total costs include quality, service, and delivery costs. It is also important that the calculation considers key costs such as tooling, mold and fixture costs, batch sizes, as well as sea freight costs, and exchange rate fluctuations. A good step is to get a cost breakdown from the supplier to see all costs at a glance.

Mistake No. 3 - The supplier has little experience in carrying out similar projects

The selection of the suppliers must also be based on their experience in manufacturing similar components to those you need. This experience includes developing similar products in the area of models and manufacturing, as well as process control. Some issues can be easily overlooked in the development and sampling phase, which can become a challenge in volume production, cause delivery delays, or even cause the project to fail.

Mistake No. 4 - Not paying enough attention to the supplier audit

The supplier audit is central to the process steps to avoid unforeseen problems in the course of the cooperation. Without this audit, cooperation between both parties can become very troublesome. During the audit, check the basic information about the suppliers, such as the size, sales, and your

reference products, but also the customers - for example, which foundry process or machining process the supplier uses. You should also find out if there are any plans to outsource specific processes. Please note that the new German supply chain law, which will be valid from 2023, also requires appropriate compliance in China.

Mistake No. 5 - Communication is limited to correspondence only

Several joint video conferences should be held throughout the process, from technical analysis, producer determination, model production, sampling, and pre-production to series production. Depending on the complexity of the project, the frequency of contacts may vary.

The joint video conferences are predominantly about finding clear problem definitions as well as proposed solutions and working through them.

Mistake No. 6 - Communication errors

Language barriers repeatedly lead to communication errors. Communicating with Chinese suppliers takes work. Unfortunately, only a few Chinese engineers speak really good English. Therefore, it isn't easy to give them a concrete idea of a product in English and to implement one's own project on-site.

Mistake No. 7 - The lack of production monitoring

To avoid significant problems in series production, you should hold production monitoring at the supplier's site. Before you ship the components from China to your place, make sure that a final inspection takes place. This inspection should be carried out on-site, preferably with your own personnel, so there are no difficulties when you receive the goods.

If you have any further questions on the subject of "Procurement from China", please do not hesitate to contact us at sales@bdp-mc.com. Our bdp Mechanical Components Team will be happy to advise and support you.



Fang Fang
COO of bdp Mechanical Components/Partner at bdp China

Fang Fang has more than 15 years of experience in German manufacturing companies and management consultancies and has been involved in the operation and management of dozens of Chinese-German projects. In 2013 she became part of the bdp group, responsible for sales and business development of the consulting company. 2018 she became a partner at bdp China. Since 2019, Fang Fang is COO of bdp MC and responsible for purchasing, sales, and project management. Her technical expertise includes corporate strategy and implementation, organizational design and process optimization, procurement and supplier management, sales and service, employee development, and building corporate culture.

About bdp Mechanical Components

Founded in 1982, today's bdp Mechanical Components is headquartered in Berlin and has 14 other offices in Germany, China, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, and Switzerland. bdp Mechanical Components is a specialized provider in the field of international sourcing of castings and forgings for customers who do not have a detailed overview of the most suitable suppliers for their products, especially in Asia (China), Turkey and Eastern Europe. And of course, also for customers who cannot accompany corresponding project start-ups closely on site with the suppliers and monitor the ongoing production.

For more professional advice, please follow us on WeChat: public number bdp-Group-1992, or scan the QR code below to follow us.



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