

VETTING CHECKLIST

How to Vet a Clothing Manufacturer

Work through these before you sign. In order: capability first, then contracts, then documents. Skip a layer and you put your money at risk.

LAYER 1 · Capability validation

Prove they can make your product, at your quality, before you commit to bulk.

- Order a paid sample.** Not a free one. Free samples hide the quality your bulk will get.
- Check the sample against your spec.** Measurements, construction, finishing, fabric handling.
- Judge how they communicate.** Did they ask questions and flag problems before sewing?
- Sample two makers in parallel.** A side-by-side is the clearest read on capability.
- Keep the first commitment small.** A trial order before any full bulk run.
- Buffer your timeline and budget for switching.** Changing producer is normal, not a worst case.
- Tour the factory.** In person, by video, or through someone you trust.
- Confirm in-house vs subcontracted,** and that real capacity matches the volume promised.
- Check two or more references** — independent brands like yours. Ask them:
 - Did quality hold from sample to bulk?
 - Did they hit the deadlines they promised?
 - How did they handle a problem when it came up?
 - Would you order from them again?

LAYER 2 · Contractual safeguards

Once capability is proven, put the terms that protect the deal in writing.

- Sign an NDA before sharing the full tech pack.** A baseline, not a solved problem.
- Name the approved sample as the binding quality standard.** Bulk that doesn't match is non-conforming.
- Agree the defect remedy and the claim window** before production starts.
- Put delivery dates — and the consequence for missing them — in writing.**
- Split payment across milestones.** Avoid paying 100% upfront.
- If overseas terms demand 100% upfront,** only accept if you can absorb the full loss.
- Keep ownership of your patterns, graded specs, and tech files.** Handover on request, no copies kept.
- Require written approval before any subcontracting.**
- Ask for step-by-step production photos,** not just a final inspection right.

LAYER 3 · Documentary verification

Necessary, but never enough on its own. Confirm the business is real and you're paying who you vetted.

- Get a valid tax or VAT ID** for the factory's country.
- Confirm the business license or company registration.**
- Ask only for the certifications your product actually needs.**
- Check the numbers against the public business register**, not just the PDF you were sent.
- Make sure the invoice company is the company you vetted.**
- Confirm the bank account matches the registered company name.**
- Be cautious of personal accounts, or a company in a different country than the one you checked.**

Producing in Italy? Italian Artisan vets every workshop for you — clothing, knitwear, bags, and shoes — and puts a project manager on your production from first sample to delivery. italianartisan.com

This checklist is a practical guide, not legal advice. Vetting reduces risk; it doesn't remove it.

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