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Top 10 Traits of Successful e-Manufacturers

An analysis of successful e-manufacturers on Alibaba.com reveals what they have in common [🔗](#)

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With the enormous shifts in online business, e-manufacturers have become a force. What are e-manufacturers? They are the manufacturers who are just a few clicks away. Their digital capabilities span from online to offline. The best of them respond to buyers' questions promptly; communicate, do business, and build trust with buyers and partners using a suite of digital tools; wield flexible manufacturing capabilities to help realize buyers' product visions; and have a digitized supply chain strong enough to help buyers defy logistical uncertainties.

Why are e-manufactures becoming ever more important?

These suppliers represent a new generation of manufacturing powerhouses that can give buyers, including brands, retailers, wholesalers, and other manufacturers, an edge in today's ever-more-competitive, fast-paced economy.

What do successful e-manufacturers have in common?

Perhaps there is no better source for this insight than Alibaba.com, the world's premier online business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce marketplace. Analysis of some of the platform's top-selling e-manufacturers as well as input from supply chain and B2B e-commerce experts, reveals that these companies share a number of key attributes. Understanding the 10 traits that set these businesses apart can help manufacturers improve their own capabilities. For buyers, the insights can help them make better decisions when choosing supply partners.

1. Innovation

Successful e-manufacturers, including sellers on Alibaba.com, share a dedication to innovation. Often, these companies have won global design and technology competitions and secured patents. They also invest extensively in research and development (R&D) and employ R&D teams.

2. **Manufacturing capabilities**

“Successful e-manufacturers have product lines that showcase their manufacturing capabilities and reflect purchasing trends,” says Allen Qin, industry operations senior expert, Alibaba.com.

A company’s annual output volume is an important benchmark that conveys experience and reliability, as is experience with big brands. Increasingly, e-manufacturers use machine automation to improve production efficiency and ensure quality control (QC). In fact, 80 percent of manufacturers see automation, or “smart manufacturing,” as key to future success.

3. **Flexibility and customization**

Many successful e-manufacturers offer flexible minimum order values (MOQ), as well as the ability to customize products or materials. Mass customization is the new wave of manufacturing, in which manufacturers customize products to meet customer expectations for personalization and choice. Profitable mass customization is made possible by technology, including Internet 4.0, 3D scanning and modeling, automation, and software advancements, according to McKinsey & Co.

4. **Global presence**

Successful suppliers often have trade capacity in many parts of the world, giving them a unique global perspective. They are certified in different regions and countries and offer local service teams and warehouses so items are ready to ship fast.

Shirley Yan, lead of home/furniture category at Alibaba.com, says local services will grow to become even more important. “Because of supply chain challenges, more and more suppliers are starting to build local storage capacity for speedy delivery of goods to serve all types of buyers both in the U.S. and in Europe. This trend will accelerate in 2022 because of the pandemic,” she says.

5. On-time delivery

The delivery time of inventory can make or break a business. Successful suppliers offer assurance that goods will arrive on time, provide real-time order tracking, and compensate you if an order is late. Alibaba.com makes it easy to find suppliers that offer this assurance with its on-time delivery service guarantee. Products covered by the on-time delivery guarantee are clearly marked with a “delivery by” date.

6. Payment and order protection

Another trait for leading e-manufacturers on Alibaba.com is that they are covered by Alibaba.com Trade Assurance. Should there be an issue with product quality or if an order doesn't ship by the agreed-upon ship date, buyers will receive a refund if they are buying from an Alibaba.com Trade Assurance supplier and paying through Alibaba.com.

7. Sustainability

Business buyers want to know if factories and supply chains are green enough. And their customers want this information, too.

Guy Courtin, vice president industry and advanced technology, Tecsys, says sustainability encompasses many variables, “including labor practices, raw material practices, manufacturing practices, and returns practices.”

Businesses are increasingly considering a product's return path, (e.g., what happens to an item when a business or end user is done with it), says John Sexton Abrams, CEO of Venzee Technologies and host of the podcast “Rethinking Supply Chain.”

“Think of it not as a chain anymore, but as a connected network,” he says.

Noticing the call of both end consumers and business owners, Alibaba.com launched a new green certificate program that provides better access to the 12,000 factories and 960,000 products which have been certified by regional or global eco-friendly associations or governments.

8. Verification

Leading e-manufacturers on Alibaba.com are also Verified Suppliers. To qualify as an Alibaba.com Verified Supplier, the company's profile, production capabilities, products, and process controls must have been inspected, assessed, and verified by independent third-party institutions such as SGS, Intertek, or TUV Rheinland, etc.

9. Clear communication and storytelling

Effective communication is a critical component of B2B trade, made more challenging in a global market, and all online. Stephanie Scheller, small business expert and founder of GrowthDisrupt, says it is important that product descriptions are accurate and easy-to-read, in whatever language you are using.

“A supplier needs to be very serious when making claims about their products on a B2B platform,” says Qin, “using videos and livestreams to faithfully show its factory and tell a full story about themselves from every angle possible.” Yan says successful Alibaba.com suppliers tell a holistic story across touchpoints, using tools such as Alibaba.com True View, a dedicated feed where sellers can share short videos, and VR showrooms to showcase the synergy between manufacturing capabilities, supply chain capabilities, and online operation abilities.

Successful e-manufacturers are also more likely to participate in invite-only, virtual tradeshow, and Elite Partner Events, a monthly Alibaba.com program that celebrates high-quality, global e-manufacturers.

10. Responsiveness

Successful e-manufacturers do not leave buyers wondering where their goods are. Alibaba.com measures a manufacturer's response rate, including how promptly they typically respond to an inquiry. Top performing suppliers typically respond within three hours. It may not sound impressive but considering global B2B businesses are often conducted between with time differences, it is evident that these suppliers are making every effort to be responsive.