

TOP TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A CONTRACT SEWING MANUFACTURER

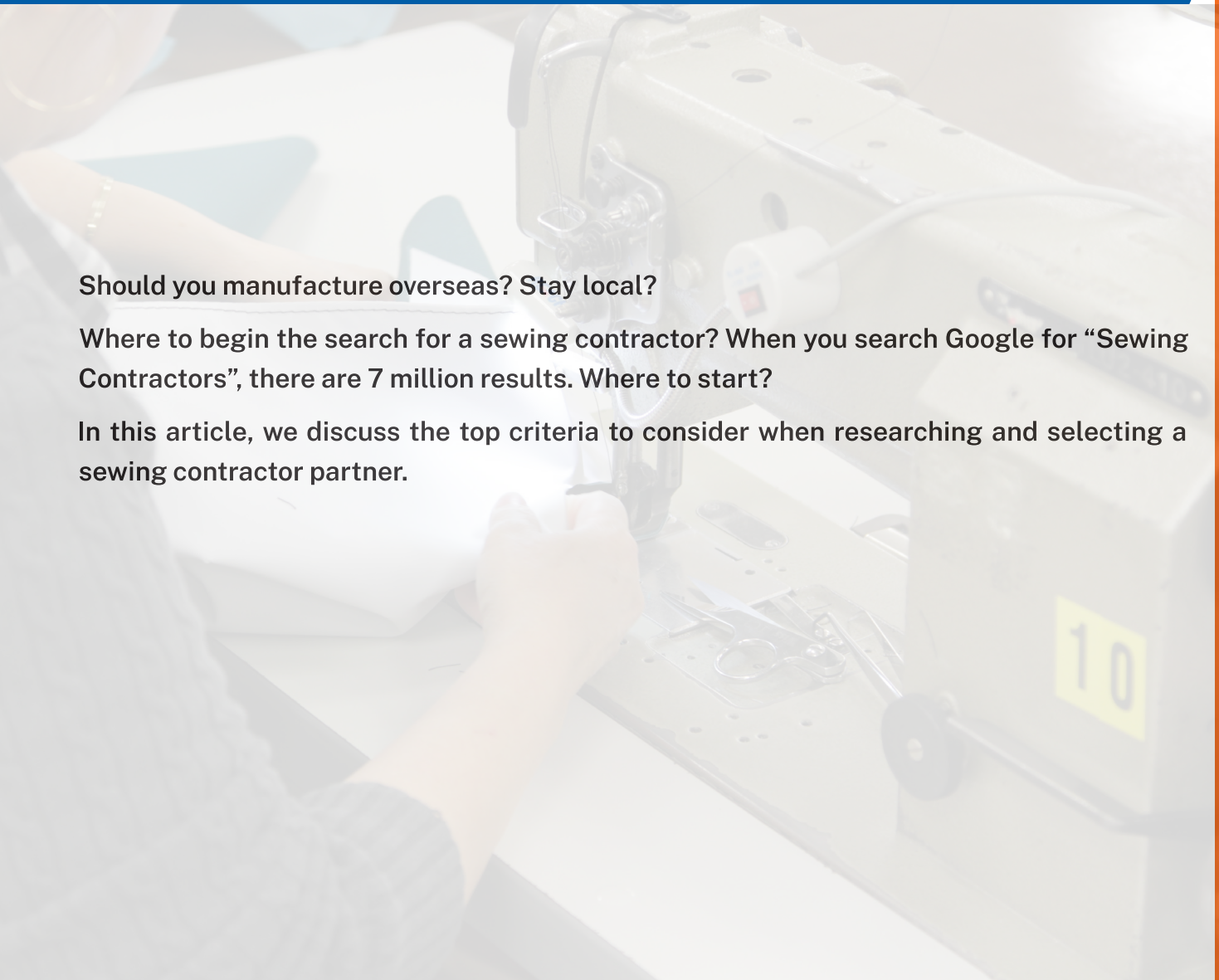
Do you have an established product that is ready to move to a higher production level or do you have an idea for a new product that requires technical sewing?

A sewing contractor can help increase your product volume and help your company grow.

Should you manufacture overseas? Stay local?

Where to begin the search for a sewing contractor? When you search Google for “Sewing Contractors”, there are 7 million results. Where to start?

In this article, we discuss the top criteria to consider when researching and selecting a sewing contractor partner.



Where to Start

First, write a summary of your product and processes. Make notes of where you are currently in the manufacturing process. The more detailed the list, the better you will be prepared when meeting with potential manufacturing partners. Do you need help with prototyping and engineering? Patterns? Do you need help sourcing fabric? Do you need specific services or assistance from start to shipping? Write it all down.

**To help start your summary,
make notes of your current status
in each of the areas below:**



PROJECT CHECKLIST:

1. Design
2. Engineering
3. Material Selection
4. Fabric Cutting
5. Sewing
6. Assembly
7. Fulfillment/Shipping/Warehousing



Design

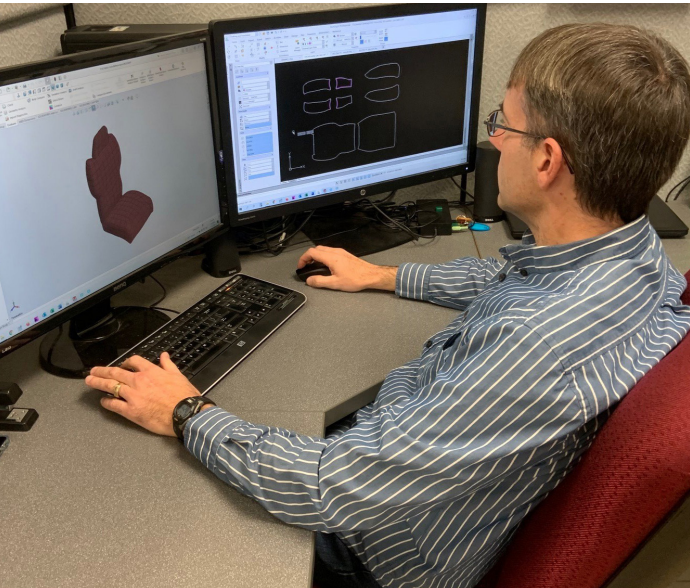
How much design and engineering support do you need? Even if you have completed drawings, a discussion with the manufacturer's design and engineering team is a good idea because they specialize in product improvement. They can assist with finding suppliers, selecting materials, and tweaking designs for a better final product.

If you have in-house engineers, they should be able to work closely with the manufacturer's engineering team. Rely on their experience. When necessary, their engineers can revise existing drawings. In addition to helping optimize the design of your product, engineers can create your tooling and equipment programs necessary for production.




Engineering

Does the sewing contractor employ in house engineers? Do they utilize AutoCAD and SolidWorks? Are they ISO 9000-Compliant? What control systems are in place? You want to be sure that processes are in place to guarantee your product will be exactly replicated each time you order.



4	
3	#3 SPUR GRONNETS
2	2" LOOP AND HOOK VELCRO (BLACK)
1	130Z VINYL LAMINATE (BLUE)
ITEM	DESCRIPTION
LJ DESIGN & MANUFACTURING 3205 NORTH 124TH STREET BROOKFIELD, WI 53005 (262) 777-2280	
DATE: 10/17/17	
DESCRIPTION: SIDE B LOWER CURTAIN #5	
MARKING	

Material Selection



Does the manufacturer have experience working with your product material? There are many textiles on the market and your contractor should have the technology, sewing machines and expertise working with your fabric to guarantee the highest quality product. Ask to see samples of cutting and stitching. Your supplier will be able to assist with sourcing and finding the best price for your material. Common fabrics for experienced sewing contractors are listed below.



- Reinforced Coated Vinyl
- Reinforced Laminated Vinyl
- Expanded Vinyl
- PVC Coated Polyester
- Urethane Coated Nylon
- Silicone Coated Fiberglass
- Leather
- Silica Aluminized Kevlar
- Nomex
- Knit Fabrics
- Nylons
- Hypalon
- Cotton (all weights and finishes)
- Open Cell Foam
- Closed Cell Foam
- Cross Linked foam
- Memory Foam



Fabric Cutting

Does the sewing contractor utilize the latest technology? Fabric cutting and sewing have advanced and current technology delivers precise cutting with little waste. The manufacturer should offer many types of automated fabric cutting. There are a few methods to cut fabric in an industrial sewing facility.

CNC Fabric Cutting or digital fabric cutting is the most efficient way to maximize material use, maintain precision shape cutting consistency, and minimize turnaround time. All of which save your company time and money.

Fabric die cutting allows for virtually any shape to be cut with consistency and accuracy. Most textile products can be die cut in stacks, vastly decreasing the time it takes to finish your project.

Hot-Knife & Cold-Knife Cutting offers semi-automatic solutions for cutting webbing, binding material, straps, hook-and-loop (such as VELCRO®), and more, while preventing fraying of the ends.

Once the fabric is cut and ready to be sewn, does the manufacturer utilize the most current sewing machines?



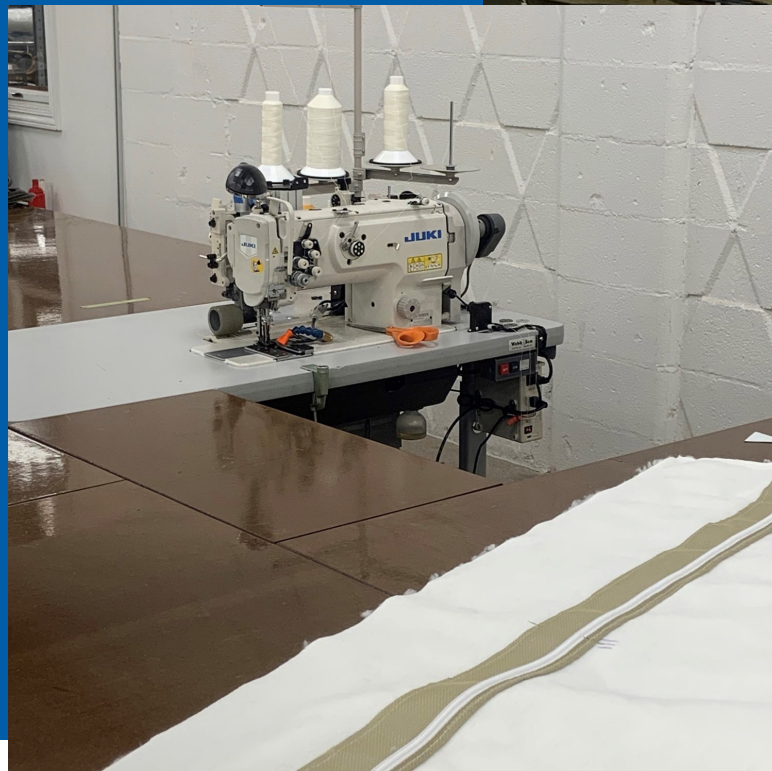


Sewing

Like every other product used in manufacturing, sewing machines have evolved with new technology. When meeting with a potential sewing partner, ask to see their equipment list. You want to be sure that their machines will deliver a high quality, repeatable product every time you place an order.

Typical machines are:

- Computerized Pattern Sewing (Large & Small Format)
- Single-Needle Lock-Stitch
- Double-Needle Lock Stitch
- Serge Stitching
- Cover-stitching
- Automatic Grommeting
- Hydraulic Clicking





Final Product Assembly

If the sewing manufacturer offers assembly services, that is a win for you. Having a skilled mechanical staff who can complete the build of your product using all necessary components; sewn or not saves you time and money. Depending on volume levels, manufacturers may purchase needed equipment to fulfill your orders and even create dedicated work cells within their facility to manufacture your product.



Fulfillment-Shipping-Warehousing

Another win for you is to work with a sewing manufacturer who offers order fulfillment, shipping, and warehousing of your product. Your product will be shipped to you or directly to your customer. Warehousing and fulfillment services are a bonus that saves time, needed space within your facility and quality control is guaranteed.

If you take the time to consider all the areas discussed, you will be well on your way to finding the best sewing manufacturer for your product.

A few more considerations to discuss with potential sewing contractors:

Skilled Employees - Ask about the experience of the manufacturing team - Even with all the technology available, a skilled team is the most important criteria to consider. Ask about employee tenure and retention. Are employees trained on newest technologies?

Quantity Requirement – Be upfront with your quantity forecasts. A perfect partner will work well within your quantity requirements. If you choose a larger sewing contractor and do not have enough volume, you may find your level of service is below expectation. If you choose a contractor that is too small, you may exceed their capacity and may wait on your orders. Defining expectations upfront is key to a successful partnership.

In conclusion, selecting a contract sewing partner can be easier if you follow the criteria discussed. Preparing a business summary of your product will save you and potential sewing partners time and will lead to a beneficial partnership.

LJ Design & Manufacturing specializes in contract sewing, cutting, and our manufacturing capabilities deliver quality craftsmanship, competitive pricing, and superior customer satisfaction. We are a one stop source for textile projects.



LJ Design & Manufacturing

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