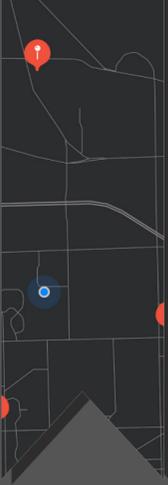


6 Tips for Tackling Low-Volume Sourcing Challenges

Product launches are hectic. Resources get strained, timelines compressed, and minor mistakes will have greater consequences than under typical circumstances. Normal sourcing strategies will be challenged, and alternative methods must be explored to drive product launch success.

This is especially true when your new product is relatively low volume, as you won't have the same leverage over supply capacity that a high-volume player would enjoy. Below are six key strategies that must be explored to help mitigate low-volume sourcing challenges encountered during a product launch.

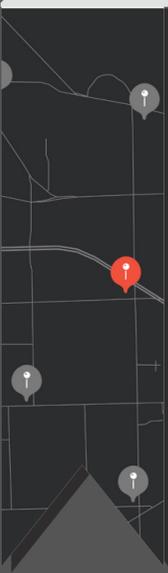
1. Develop Strong Relationships with Local Suppliers



When your program is facing a tight deadline, it's important to have a network of trustworthy, quick-turn local suppliers that'll be flexible and keep you and your build team moving.

By leveraging a local supplier that can take fabrication designs hot off the press and deliver fabricated parts in 24 hours or less will keep your team moving quickly instead of sitting idle waiting for parts to be delivered.

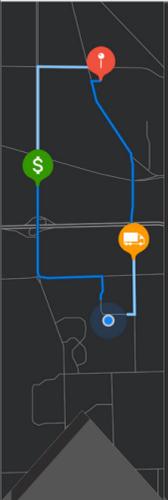
2. Select Off-the-Shelf Parts Instead of Custom



As deadlines approach and more pieces of the puzzle come together, sourcing flexibility becomes paramount.

Inevitably, suppliers shut down for an unexpected reason or have internal problems that prevent them from delivering components as planned. If the component being sourced is custom, then you'll have great difficulty finding an alternative supplier in short order. But, if the necessary part is off-the-shelf you can simply source from an alternative supplier to mitigate any delays that might occur.

3. Setup Flexible Payment Terms with Suppliers Ahead of Time



In a product launch scenario that requires speed of component delivery, separating the act of delivery with payment is critical.

In many cases shipment of parts or components starts when payment is issued. A simple payment can take a few days to finally process to trigger a shipment. By establishing payment terms and a good reputation with your suppliers prior to part delivery, you may separate the act of payment from actual part delivery.

4. Explore Design Changes that Reduce Time to Market



When there's a time crunch to get to market, finding the path of least resistance is key. One area to look closely at is potential design changes that could reduce manufacture or assembly time.

While having characteristics that separate your product from those of competitors is critical to success, there's a level of diminishing returns. It's important to understand which bespoke characteristics are nice to have and which ones are must haves. And with a resource constrained product launch, eliminating some of the nice-to-have characteristics can reduce assembly time.

5. Explore Multiple Sourcing Paths at One Time



2 Days



4 Days



When launching a new product, it's vital to take steps to reduce your supply disruption risk because even a small disruption can have a significant impact.

One easy way to reduce your risk is by sourcing key components from multiple suppliers. This will allow you to lean on one supplier over another in the event of a supply disruption or under performance.

6. Make Plans to Control Your Own Destiny



While having a trusted supply base to help you launch your program is necessary for success, steps should be taken to put your team in the driver seat.

By controlling your own destiny, you can pivot quickly and solve problems to meet your standards, not your suppliers.