

| Small Buyer's Guide to Sourcing from China

Step-by-step ordering process for small brands, shops, and online sellers

Many small buyers hesitate to source from China because they worry about language, payment, and quality.

This guide explains exactly how our process works, step by step, so you know what to expect before you place an order.

| 1. Who this guide is for

This process is designed for:

- Amazon / Shopify / Etsy sellers
- Gift shop and concept store owners
- Small wholesalers and distributors
- Designers testing new products in small batches

Typical first projects are **USD 3,000–30,000** in goods value. Smaller pilot orders are possible with fixed service fees.

| 2. Quick overview: from idea to delivered goods

Most projects follow these stages:

1. Share your product requirements
2. Receive sourcing report & quotations
3. (Optional) Samples and adjustments
4. Confirm order, pay service fee & goods
5. Production, inspection & problem-solving
6. Shipping, customs documents & delivery
7. After-sales support and reorders

For simple repeat orders, some steps are skipped or combined.

| 3. Step 1 – Share your product requirements

You can start in two ways:

| Path A – You only have an idea or reference products

Send us:

- Product photos or reference links (Amazon, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.)
- Target use case and quality level
- Rough order quantity (per SKU or per color/size)
- Target price range if you have one
- Destination country and preferred shipping method (air / sea / express)

| Path B – You already found products on 1688 / Alibaba

Send us:

- 1688 or Alibaba product links
- Desired quantities per link / SKU
- Any customization needs (logo, packaging, color, size)

What you get at this stage

- We will clarify key details via email or WhatsApp (specs, timeline, budget).
 - Once requirements are clear, we move to sourcing and quotation.
-

| 4. Step 2 – Sourcing report & quotations

We search our factory network and, when relevant, 1688 suppliers that fit your requirements.

You will receive:

- A **quotation sheet** comparing 2–5 supplier options per main item
- Information for each option:
 - Photos and basic specs
 - MOQ and price breaks
 - Lead time estimates
 - Notes on pros / cons (quality, flexibility, experience)

For 1688-based projects, we also:

- Check supplier ratings, years in business and main products
- Confirm real prices, not just headline prices on the page

You can then:

- Select preferred options

- Ask for changes (material, finish, packaging, logo position, etc.)
 - Decide whether to go directly to bulk order or to make samples first
-

| 5. Step 3 – Samples & small test orders (optional but recommended)

For new products or new factories we typically recommend a sample round.

You can choose:

- **Plain samples** – to check quality and sizing
- **Customized samples** – with logo, custom color, or packaging

What happens:

- We arrange sample production with selected suppliers
- We **collect samples from multiple factories** in our Yiwu office
- We check and photograph everything side by side
- We ship them to you in **one parcel** to save international freight

You give feedback:

- Approve, reject, or request changes
 - Confirm which version will be used for bulk production
-

| 6. Step 4 – Confirm order, service fee & payment

Once products are confirmed (via samples or directly from quotation):

| 6.1 Final order confirmation

We send you:

- Final **Order Confirmation Sheet** including:
 - Product list and specs
 - Quantities per SKU
 - Unit prices and total goods value
 - Estimated production lead time
 - Incoterms (usually EXW or FOB China port)
- Our **service fee** for this project:
 - Normally **5–10% of goods value**, depending on complexity and workload
 - For very small or sample-only projects, a fixed service fee applies

| 6.2 Transparent 1688 orders

For 1688 orders, we always:

- Share screenshots or links showing **original 1688 prices**
- List our service fee **separately** from the goods cost
- Provide an estimate of **domestic + international** freight

| 6.3 Payment methods

You pay us:

- Goods value + service fee + estimated international shipping
- Via **PayPal, Wise, or bank transfer** (USD / EUR / other major currencies)

After payment is received:

- We pay factories or 1688 suppliers in RMB
 - We launch production and confirm timelines with each supplier
-

| 7. Step 5 – Production, follow-up & quality inspection

During production we act as your local team in China.

What we do:

- Confirm production schedule and start dates
- Follow up with suppliers weekly (or more often when needed)
- Request and share pre-production or first-article photos/videos

Before shipment, we:

- Perform on-site or office-based **quality checks**
 - Appearance (finish, color, plating, surface)
 - Function (closures, moving parts, fit)
 - Packaging and labeling
 - Random quantity checks
- Share **photo & video inspection reports**
- Flag any issues and agree on solutions with you (rework, discount, remanufacturing in serious cases)

You sign off on the inspection before we move to shipping.

| 8. Step 6 – Shipping, documents & delivery

Once goods pass inspection:

- We **consolidate goods** from different factories into one shipment
- We repack and reinforce cartons if needed
- We provide several shipping options:
 - Express (DHL/UPS/FedEx, etc.)
 - Air freight + local delivery
 - Sea freight / rail freight for larger volumes

We prepare or coordinate:

- Commercial invoice (factory prices + service fee + freight)
- Packing list
- Export customs documents
- Any extra certificates if agreed (e.g. COO, simple test reports)

You receive:

- Tracking numbers or forwarder contact details
 - Estimated arrival dates and basic customs guidance if needed
-

| 9. Step 7 – After-sales support & reorders

Our work does not end when goods leave China.

After you receive the shipment:

- You confirm receipt and basic condition
- If there are any issues (damages, quality deviations), you share:
 - Photos / videos
 - Quantities affected
- We help:
 - Talk to suppliers
 - Negotiate compensation, remake or discounts for future orders

For reorders and new batches:

- We only need updated quantities and any new SKUs
 - Pricing is updated based on latest costs and quantities
 - The process is much faster because specs and suppliers are already fixed
-

| 10. What you need to prepare as a small buyer

To make the process smooth and efficient, it helps if you:

1. **Know your market & price point**

- Retail price range
- Target landed cost (including freight and duty)

2. **Have a basic idea of quantities**

- For example: 100–300 pcs per SKU for tests, 500–1,000 pcs for mature products

3. **Decide your priorities**

- Lowest price vs. better quality
- Faster lead time vs. more customization

4. **Communicate clearly and quickly**

- Reply to spec questions in batches
- Confirm decisions (samples, colors, packaging) in writing

The clearer your brief, the faster we can help you launch products with less risk.

| 11. Ready to start?

If you are ready to explore sourcing from China with a small team that speaks both buyer and supplier language, simply:

- Email your ideas or 1688 links to : sourcing@sanlanwork.com
- Or message us on WhatsApp at **+86 15669579831**

We will review your project and send initial feedback and next steps **within 24 hours on business days**.