

Differences of requirements between Japanese buyers and Western buyers

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	Japanese buyers (Japanese apparel brand)	Western buyers (European & American) (Especially global apparel brand)
Authority of a buyer	<p>Before deciding on a contract, they need to obtain the consent of stakeholders in most cases.</p> <p>Although often seen as slow decision and action, you need to understand that it is necessary among Japanese companies.</p>	<p>They are usually authorized to make own decisions.</p>
Contract attitude	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contract documents are not extensive. They cover outlines. 2. They consider it is not documents only to develop mutual understanding. They are willing to expend some time for cross confirmation to build lasting relationships. 3. They sometimes go with silent acknowledgement, which is possible among Japanese. <p>It is advisable to confirm about anything uncertain to you. If you stay silent, they will consider you understand everything. As for quality requirements, It is advised to have your buyer designate the limit samples to clarify the range of tolerance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They prepare extensive contract documents to cover details such as specs. 2. Contract documents conclude everything to be conveyed. 3. They terminate the contract without hesitation when the outcome of the deal does not appear right.
Quality awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They require the same quality level, regardless of the price range. 2. They do not hesitate to make necessary modifications in production specs if they find it advantageous to improve the quality. 3. Their primary concern is visible quality such as color fastness and appearance retention. 4. They request many things in detail, such 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is sufficient that you achieve the quality that complies with stipulation in contract. 2. They are very conscious about the safety control of hazardous chemical substances. 3. They are very conscious on compliance with labour situation such as child labour.

	<p>as method of folding, attaching hang-tag, final packaging for each product.</p> <p>These minor operations must be precisely conducted accordingly to the request.</p>	
Designation of a third party testing laboratory	Often, the buyers require a test report which is issued by Japanese testing laboratory, such as QTEC.	The buyers nominate testing laboratory, and factories have no choice.
Tests and criteria	<p>Testing procedures are not documented, but are supposed to follow JIS test methods defined with JIS number.</p> <p>Criteria may vary from customer to customer because each customer maintains their own criteria, a very unique point of Japanese customers.</p>	<p>Based on the published test method, such as AATCC, ISO, and EN, they have their own test procedures documented.</p> <p>Criteria are set up in accordance with their test procedures.</p>
Restrictions of Hazardous substances	<p>Practically, only the free formaldehyde must be tested in certain items.</p> <p>For the certain aromatic amines (Azo dye), voluntary standard of Japan Textile federation has just been initiated.</p>	Hazardous substances such as the certain aromatic amines (Azo dye) and heavy metals are regulated by law in many countries.
Pre-shipment product inspection (Third party inspection)	<p>100% inspection by a third party inspection company is required by many buyers.</p> <p>Japanese buyers request that all products are grade "A ". It is not likely they accept non-qualified products mixed in the shipment.</p>	<p>In most cases, sampling inspection is required in accordance with AQL (Acceptable quality level).</p> <p>Western buyers anticipate the rate of product loss.</p>
Needle detection	<p>Needle detection is required for all products.</p> <p>It is often required to detect twice in different directions to make detection complete, because the direction of the object affects the sensitivity of detector.</p>	Needle detection is not always mandatory. Broken needles are not generally recognized as very dangerous object as they are recognized in Japan.

Other characteristics of the Japanese buyers are as follows:

1. The unique requirements in Japanese market other than quality requirements are as follows:
Very small lot, numerous assortments, very short lead time for production and demand for quick response in any operation etc. Please refer to TOYOTA's KANBAN system.
2. Japanese buyers maintain high loyalty to the factories which provide well-made products and wish to establish long lasting relationships with those factories. In addition, they rarely cause trouble in the payment. It may not be easy to understand Japanese buyers at the beginning, but it will be proven that they are good partners to work with you, once you satisfy them.