

Mechanical Watch OEM Supplier Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate any mechanical watch OEM manufacturer before requesting samples or signing a production agreement.

What this checklist covers

This document summarizes the 10 key criteria buyers should review when selecting a mechanical watch OEM manufacturer in China, including experience, certifications, MOQ, lead time, quality control, materials, and communication standards [1][2]. It is designed for watch brands, retailers, and private label buyers who want a practical screening tool before moving into sampling or production [1][2].

10-point checklist

1. Proven manufacturing experience

- Confirm the factory has substantial experience in watch manufacturing, ideally 10-15+ years with real export history [2].
- Ask for examples of completed projects in automatic, skeleton, dress, diver, or complication watch categories [2].
- Check whether the supplier can show a portfolio, design library, or production references relevant to your target market [2].

2. ISO and export-related certifications

- Ask whether the manufacturer operates under an ISO-certified quality management system [2].
- Verify whether the supplier can support export requirements and relevant compliance documentation for your destination market [2].

- Avoid factories that provide vague claims but no documentation or audit evidence [2].

3. Mechanical watch specialization

- Confirm the supplier focuses on mechanical and automatic watches rather than general low-end fashion or quartz-only production [2].
- Ask which movement platforms they regularly support, such as Miyota, Seiko NH35/NH38, ETA, or in-house modified options [2].
- Check whether they can handle your target category, such as skeleton, tourbillon, open-heart, dress, or diver models [2].

4. OEM and ODM capability

- Confirm whether the factory supports both OEM and ODM workflows [2].
- For OEM, check whether they can work from CAD files, technical drawings, sketches, or reference watches [2].
- For ODM, ask whether they can develop technical blueprints based on your brand positioning and price target [2].

5. In-house capability and process control

- Ask which production steps are handled in-house and which are outsourced [2].
- Review whether the supplier can coordinate blueprint refinement, component sourcing, sampling, production setup, and final testing [2].
- Strong process control usually reduces delays, miscommunication, and quality inconsistency [2].

6. MOQ and scalability

- Confirm the minimum order quantity for your specific watch type and movement [2].
- Zelx Watch's planning materials position MOQ from 50 pieces per reference for OEM and private label orders, with variation depending on complexity [2].
- Ask whether the factory can support both pilot runs and larger repeat orders if your launch performs well [2].

7. Lead time transparency

- Request a clear timeline for sample development, approval, production, packaging, and shipping [2].
- Zelx Watch's planning materials indicate sample prototypes in about 3-4 weeks and mass production in about 10-14 weeks after approval, depending on complication level and sourcing requirements [2].
- A reliable partner should provide milestones rather than vague delivery promises [2].

8. Materials and customization depth

- Confirm available case materials, crystal options, surface finishes, dial customization, caseback options, and packaging scope [2].
- Zelx Watch's scope includes case, dial, movement, strap or bracelet, crown, caseback, and branded packaging customization [2].
- Ask whether the supplier can match your positioning with options such as 316L stainless steel, titanium, sapphire crystal, or branded presentation packaging [2].

9. Quality control system

- Ask for a breakdown of incoming inspection, in-process inspection, and final inspection procedures [2].
- Zelx Watch's materials describe a three-stage QC approach covering component verification, in-process checks, and final testing before shipment [2].
- Confirm the factory performs relevant tests such as timekeeping checks, water resistance verification, and final visual inspection [2].

10. IP protection and communication

- Ask whether the supplier signs NDAs and how design files and brand assets are handled [2].
- Confirm communication channels, response speed, and who manages your project from quotation through delivery [2].

- Reliable communication is essential when reviewing drawings, revising samples, and approving production details [2].

Quick supplier scorecard

Use the table below to compare shortlisted suppliers.

Criterion	Supplier A	Supplier B	Supplier C
10+ years in watch manufacturing			
ISO / export documentation available			
Mechanical watch specialization			
OEM capability			
ODM capability			
Low MOQ available			
Clear lead times			
Full customization scope			
Multi-stage QC			
NDA / responsive communication			

Before requesting a quotation

Prepare the following information before contacting a manufacturer:

- Watch category: automatic, skeleton, dress, diver, or complication model [2].
- Target quantity and launch timing [2].
- Reference images, sketches, or CAD files if available [2].
- Target retail positioning and preferred movement tier [2].
- Packaging expectations and branding requirements [2].

Recommended next step

After scoring potential suppliers, request a quote from the strongest candidates and compare their MOQ, sample timeline, movement options, QC clarity, and communication quality side by side [1][2].