

OEM Watch Manufacturer Checklist

Use this practical checklist to evaluate whether a watch factory is a true OEM partner or just a basic supplier.

What is an OEM watch manufacturer?

An OEM watch manufacturer is a factory that produces watches according to a brand's own specifications, rather than selling only ready-made stock models [1][2]. In a professional OEM setup, the brand controls the product direction and intellectual property, while the manufacturer handles engineering support, sourcing, sampling, production, quality control, and delivery [3][4].

10-point evaluation checklist

1. Mechanical watch specialization

- Does the factory focus on mechanical and automatic watches rather than only quartz products? [4]
- Can it support movements such as Miyota, Seiko NH35/NH38, ETA, or equivalent platforms? [4]
- Does it have experience with categories such as skeleton, dress, diver, or complication watches? [4]

2. OEM capability

- Can the manufacturer produce according to your sketches, technical drawings, CAD files, or reference watches? [4]
- Can it support custom case, dial, movement, strap, crown, caseback, and packaging development? [4]
- Does the brand retain control over the final product concept and positioning? [1][3]

3. Engineering and blueprint support

- Does the factory refine concepts into production-ready blueprints? [4]
- Can it explain tolerances, materials, movement fit, and assembly feasibility? [4]
- Does it offer design libraries or configuration references to speed up development? [4]

4. Sample development process

- Can the supplier provide a clear sample workflow from brief to prototype? [4]
- Does it specify sample timelines, revision steps, and approval checkpoints? [4]
- Is the estimated sample lead time realistic and transparent? [4]

5. MOQ flexibility

- What is the minimum order quantity for your project type? [4]
- Is the factory open to pilot runs before larger repeat orders? [5]
- Are MOQ requirements clearly explained based on complication level and sourcing needs? [4]

6. Materials and finishing options

- Does the manufacturer offer premium options such as 316L stainless steel, titanium, sapphire crystal, or branded packaging? [4]
- Can it explain finishing options such as polishing, brushing, PVD coating, or engraving? [4]
- Are component choices aligned with your target retail positioning? [4]

7. Quality control system

- Does the factory explain incoming inspection, in-process inspection, and final inspection procedures? [4]
- Can it confirm testing methods such as timekeeping checks, water resistance verification, and final visual inspection? [4]
- Does it operate under an ISO-certified quality approach? [4]

8. Lead time transparency

- Can the supplier provide a realistic production schedule from brief to delivery? [4]
- Are sample, production, packaging, and shipping stages clearly separated? [4]
- Does the team communicate delays or sourcing risks early? [4]

9. Communication and project handling

- Is communication professional, responsive, and technically informed? [4]
- Is there a clear contact person managing the project? [4]
- Does the manufacturer ask intelligent questions about quantity, target market, budget, and specifications? [4]

10. IP protection and documentation

- Will the factory sign an NDA before detailed development begins? [4]
- Are product files, logos, technical drawings, and packaging details handled with process discipline? [4]
- Are quotation terms, payment stages, and approval responsibilities documented clearly? [4]

Quick supplier scorecard

Criteria	Supplier A	Supplier B	Supplier C
Mechanical watch specialization			
OEM capability			
Blueprint support			
Sample workflow			
Low MOQ flexibility			
Materials and finishing options			
Multi-stage QC			
Lead time clarity			
Project communication			
NDA and documentation discipline			

Before contacting a factory

Prepare the following before requesting a quote:

- Product type: dress watch, diver, skeleton, automatic, or complication watch [4]
- Target quantity and launch timeline [4]
- Reference images, sketches, CAD files, or sample ideas [4]
- Preferred movement tier and target retail positioning [4]
- Packaging requirements and branding expectations [4]

Best use of this checklist

Use this checklist during your first supplier screening round, then compare shortlisted factories side by side before ordering samples [5] [4]. It works best when combined with a structured RFQ process and a prototype approval step [4].

