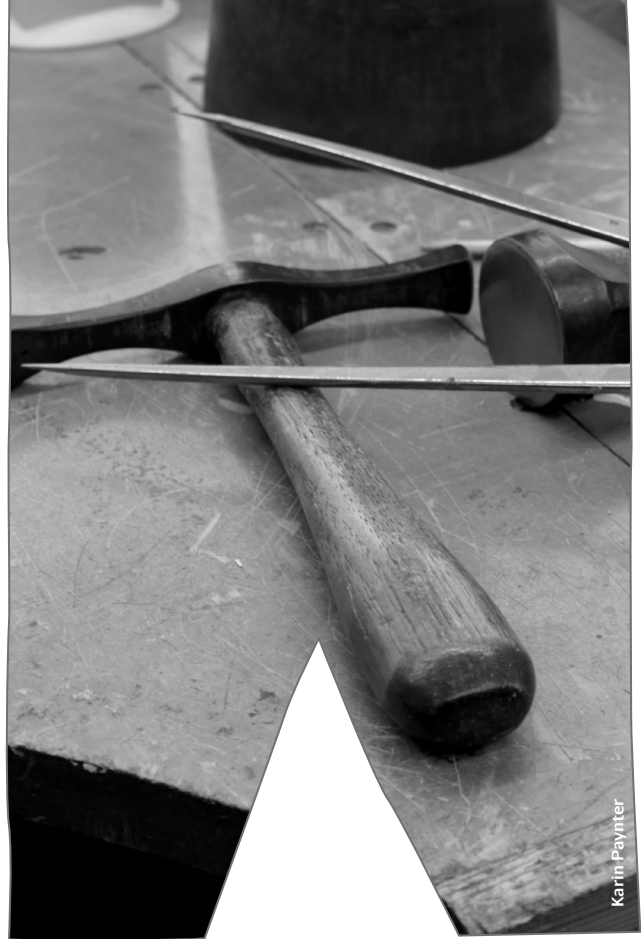


# Fact Sheet 02: approaching a manufacturer



## Manufacturing

When considering outsourcing your work to someone else, first consider the nature of the work you want to produce. If you want to create multiples of a component, for example for a jewellery item you want to sell through many different stores, you may want to consider having a master model made so you can have copies cast. However, if you just want to make a one-off bespoke piece or low batch production items, you may want to consider going to a **bench jeweller** who will be able to undertake the work for you and set stones and engrave the piece. There is no wrong or right answer and indeed you may end up using both. You just have to find the right path for you.

As your business progresses you will build up an address book of manufacturers and bench jewellers that you can call upon to realise your designs.

The list opposite is a broad outline of the sorts of manufacturing processes available to you. Research the method you are planning to use in advance so you understand the process as much as you can before approaching a manufacturer as this will save time for both sides

### Production techniques

- Casting
- Electroforming
- Machining & tooling
- Photo etching
- Stamping & die sinking
- Laser cutting
- Water jet cutting
- Laser marking

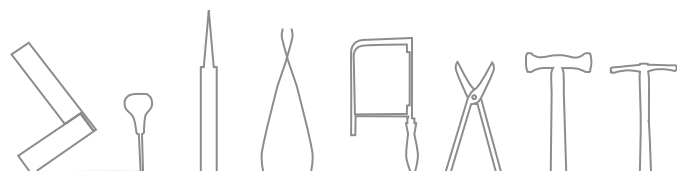
### Traditional workshop production

- Chasing
- Diamond mounting
- Stone setting
- Enamelling
- Repairs & restoration
- Stone carving & lapidary
- Wax model/pattern making
- Engraving/engine turning
- Polishing & finishing
- Spinning

## Finding a manufacturer

It is relatively simple to find a manufacturer for production, just go online to one of the trade databases listed at the end of this fact sheet. You can also try websites such as **www.alibaba.com** to help with worldwide sourcing of manufacturers. The industry trade shows are also great places to find manufacturers and materials suppliers. See the list at the end of this fact sheet.

Finding an experienced workshop bench jeweller isn't quite as straightforward. These tend to be self-employed and don't always advertise. Make yourself active in the industry – it is a small close-knit community and work often is by word of



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mouth and recommendation so attend networking events and any industry seminars. Also, keep an eye out for business cards in the tool shops and findings companies around the main jewellery centres and you can also try contacting one of the industry associations.

## Terms, conditions, contracts and negotiation

It is not usual in our industry to have contracts but nevertheless it is important to agree terms and conditions in advance of ordering, preferably via email rather than verbally. Industry associations such as the BJA ([www.bja.org.uk](http://www.bja.org.uk)) can supply sample design contracts, intellectual property (IP) contracts, non-disclosure agreements (NDA's), guidance on writing terms and conditions and other useful documents. You need to be a member to access this service.

### Order quantity

You may be able to negotiate prices depending on how many of a component or piece you are making. Ask the supplier if they offer any discounts for multiple orders (break points) and also find out if they have minimum order quantities.

### Production costs

Most manufacturers should give you an estimate of the cost based on your drawings, then a final price once samples have been made. Remember to ask whether this price includes materials, VAT, shipping and hallmarking and if you have a maximum budget, make sure this is explicit in your instructions.

### Insurance

Whether a limited company or a sole trader you will need to have some insurance in place. Firstly, you will need *Public Liability* insurance - for example if you walk into a workshop and damage something, you can be sued as, you are representing your business.

You may also need to consider *Products Liability*, in case you supply a product that then damages the wearer. Protecting your stock and tools, within the workshop and out of it. And finally, in a business, the biggest asset is you so you can take out cover to protect you and your family in the event of getting ill. You can also get *Entrustment* cover, which will protect your stock while entrusted to for example, a setter or other outworker.

## Quality and finish

Agree in advance and stipulate on your design the type of finish and level of finish you require. For example, make it clear that you want a perfect mirror finish or whether you want areas sandblasted or gold plated in your design.

## Lead times and delivery dates

Lead times are something that should be taken in to account when planning your production. Most bench jewellers are busy and won't be able to take on and complete your work straight away. Once you know the process, book in the work ahead of time with the jeweller so they know you will be coming as some jewellers may have a lead time of up to 4-6 weeks.

## Reliability and reputation

It is very important that you as a client are as reliable as you expect your manufacturer to be. Prompt payment will help your relationship for future orders. In the beginning when you are starting out, you may not be as lucrative a client so always be professional and keep them informed of any press coverage you get from your work. Remember, both parties are handling precious goods and reputation and trust needs to be garnered on both sides. Make sure the manufacturer you choose is also reliable; they can meet deadlines and make the pieces to the quality you require. There is no easy way to establish this but word of mouth is always a good place to start.

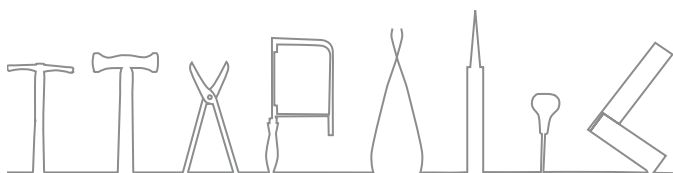
## Sampling

Often ahead of a big order, samples will be produced for you. This is so that you can sign off the product and accept the design, weight, finish etc. In short production runs, you will be expected to pay for this service but in larger runs in the 100's or above, it may be free if you agree to order a certain amount of units. You will also need to agree in advance what the process will be for getting the sample right if it is not to your satisfaction.

## Preparation for approaching a manufacturer

The general rule of thumb is to prepare as much as you can in the way of visual material for approaching a manufacturer. **Accurate technical drawings** or CAD models with dimensions, details on any decorative techniques you are intending to use, dimensions and type of stones, materials, any final weight allowances etc. Manufacturers are used to receiving designs in different formats and will usually scrutinise your proposals and ask questions about areas they may not be clear on.

Don't forget to include your contact details so they know where to ship the final pieces to and how to contact you if they have a question.



## Costing and pricing:

Costing is the term used to describe the process of calculating how much your work costs to create. You should never sell your work for under this amount. To work out your cost price you should take into account your workshop/ business overheads – the cost of running your business, labour costs – what you want to earn, external costs for outsourcing elements of your work, material costs which can be worked out by simply weighing the piece and multiplying this by its cost per gram and other costs such as hallmarking. For more detail about how to calculate this, the Crafts Council has published a very useful chapter on costing in its book *Running a Workshop*.

## Manufacturing FAQ

### Q: What is a sample?

A: A sample is a piece of jewellery or object that is produced as an example of the quality of the production pieces. To proceed with production you normally have to view and approve a sample.

### Q: How do I find a manufacturer?

A: Ask for recommendations, go to industry networking events and seminars, look for business cards in jewellery toolshops and scour trade databases.

*"I have become aware of how much value I can add to my products and of how much time I can save by working with others."*

## Databases of industry specific trade services

The following websites hold information about trade services, equipment suppliers, products and educational courses:

### **benchpeg: [www.benchpeg.com](http://www.benchpeg.com)**

The jewellery industry's leading creative and digital communications network

### **British Jewellers' Association Trade**

#### **Product Search: [www.bja.org.uk](http://www.bja.org.uk)**

A membership organisation that represents the jewellery industry

### **Ganoksin: [www.ganoksin.com](http://www.ganoksin.com)**

An international online resource for the jewellery industry

### **The Goldsmiths' Company Technical Portal:**

#### **[www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk](http://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk)**

A supplier database of trade-to-trade services and suppliers

## Trade Shows

The online catalogues for these shows are rich pickings for suppliers of findings, chains, manufacturing equipment, packaging and stones or you could visit in person. The following are the primary trade shows for our industry:

Baselworld, Switzerland

**[www.baselworld.com](http://www.baselworld.com)**

Inhorgenta, Munich

**[www.inhorgenta.com](http://www.inhorgenta.com)**

International Jewellery London, Earls Court

**[www.jewellerylondon.com](http://www.jewellerylondon.com)**

The Spring Fair, Birmingham

**[www.springfair.com](http://www.springfair.com)**

Vicenza Fair, Italy

**[www.vicenzafiera.it](http://www.vicenzafiera.it)**

## Further information

Running a Workshop - basic business for craftspeople.

Publ Crafts Council 2000. ISBN 1 870145 73 9

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Mark Smith, Director TH March Insurance Ltd

**[www.thmarch.co.uk](http://www.thmarch.co.uk)**

