

## White Paper: Metal Forming Partner Checklist

### What should you look for in a metal forming partner?

It is clear that the current economic environment has only heightened every manufacturer's search for the optimal solution to the classic buy versus make conundrum. Offshore competition, volatile raw material pricing, and model proliferation have complicated those daily choices. It is also abundantly clear that much needed capacity reductions are taking place, but at what cost to the financial stability of the supply base? With that in mind, what should you be looking for in a metal stamping partner?

Here are some critical checklist questions to consider when selecting the optimal metal forming partner.

**Does the potential metal forming supplier have the correct presses and other equipment available to serve me?**

Press tonnage, bed sizes, and feed requirements are fundamental to determining in the early stages of choice if a supplier is right for you.

**Do you require additional, value added processes? And, does the potential supplier have competency in those areas?**

These days, stamping parts isn't enough. Does your supplier weld, leak test, assemble, machine, and/or finish as necessary; or, do they have economical access to these value chains?

**Does the supplier have experience in managing both domestic and offshore tooling sources, or can their owned tooling mitigate your tooling costs?**

Piece price is only one part of the equation. Determining how tooling can be economically procured, and how it will be maintained, is also essential to the decision.

**Is the metal stamping supplier financially sound?**

A financially sound supplier should be willing to share information on their financial condition. A supplier who serves multiple markets is likely to be more insulated from cyclical and seasonality.

**Is the workforce culture conducive to continuous improvement efforts?**

Continuous improvement efforts require workforce involvement, and evidence of lean manufacturing processes and training such as: Lean Six Sigma, Kaizen, and 5S. Look for evidence of the supplier's commitment to continuous improvement.

**Is the supplier geographically located where I need them to be?**

Beyond the benefits of freight considerations, as a customer you often need parts in a number of your facilities. Multiple location suppliers can greatly benefit your supply chain.

**Will the supplier work to improve my total cost of manufacturability?**

A great supplier should be anxious to collaborate on tear down evaluations and VAVE.

**Does the supplier have quality and communication systems in place to support your production?**

A supplier who is committed to staying ahead of the curve will be TS certified, and provide EDI access to their customers.

**Is program management a core competency?**

To insure success with tool transfers or stamping disaggregations, a supplier must show a commitment to program management as a core competency, and must have a capable and dedicated staff of process engineers,

**Is ownership and senior management engaged with the customers?**

Having access and commitment from ownership and senior staff can be critical when execution is essential.

It is not easy, but finding a stable, multi-dimensional supplier that is right for you, can create tremendous value for your mission of creating additional value in the supply chain. Be sure to ask for examples, and tour facilities. Doing such will help determine how they approach their manufacturing process, and whether their results exemplify every day pride in their work.

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