

5 Must Haves When Choosing an EMS Partner

For most technology providers, the choice of the proper EMS provider is the single most important, non-design related decision they will make in ensuring the successful introduction of a new product. The design can be innovative, unique, and cost-effective; however, if the supply partner is unable to provide the necessary cost, delivery, and quality, the result is frequently the same: the product will fail to deliver the expected sales results for your company.

While many factors are important, our experience has shown us that there are 5 “must haves” for any EMS provider to fulfill its role as a trusted, value-added Partner for firms commercializing new technology products.

1. **Demonstrable Financial Strength** – While this point may seem obvious, many companies find themselves in relationships with EMS providers who are chronically undercapitalized or lacking in the financial sophistication to manage their businesses well. An undercapitalized partner cannot make necessary investments in manufacturing technology, internal processes, people, and working capital to meet the needs of a customer. The buyer must insure that the chosen Partner possesses the financial resources necessary to support their growth.
2. **Stable, Evolving Business Processes** – The primary function of an EMS Partner is to serve as the supply chain manager for the customer. If the EMS provider lacks the skills, information technology, or business processes to fulfill this role, the results can be devastating to the customer. A true Partner has well defined, measureable business processes that ensure the well functioning supply chain for the customer. In short, these processes must insure that the customer has the right product, at the right place, when needed and priced appropriately to meet the customers market needs.
3. **A Culture of Quality** – These days it seems like every manufacturer has a quality program of some sort. Frequently however, if you dig deeper, you find that many are just hollow, “go-through-the-motions” checklists designed to satisfy some outside audit requirement. If you

really want to examine an EMS Partner's quality, take a look into the culture of the place. Is the facility clean and neat? Are metrics posted in centralized locations? Does the company have and follow a first article process? Are the line employees aware of the Company's position on quality? And lastly, if you speak with a customer that has experienced a quality problem (they are inevitable in every business), how did the EMS provider respond?

4. **Flexibility** – Let's face it. We live in an imperfect world. If everything happened according to schedule, as planned, companies would need management and customers wouldn't need value-added service. Whether it is dealing with last minute ECOs, late supplier shipments, urgent requests for prototypes, or sudden increases in volume as a product takes off. Your EMS provider's people, systems, and policies should reflect the customer-centric flexibility that your business demands.

5. **A Sense of Urgency** – We now live in a world where all competition is to some extent, time-based. Information technology, the internet, globalization, and other trends have shortened expectations regarding time and cost and increased expectations of performance. Speed-to-market is as critical as ever as the shelf life of innovation is reduced by increasing global competition. An EMS provider must have and maintain a strong sense of urgency in helping their customers compete in the global market. It is no longer sufficient to work hard and smart. True EMS Partners must work fast.

When choosing an EMS Partner, we encourage you to plan and complete your diligence to test for these "must have" characteristics. Should you choose a supplier solely on the basis of price and find that they are chronically deficient in these areas, we believe your results will be poor.

We invite you to learn more about our business at Prime. Prime Technological Services has a 20+ year history of providing unmatched responsiveness, speed, and flexibility in helping customers achieve their goals in commercializing technology. Visit us at www.prime-ems.com/measureup to learn more.