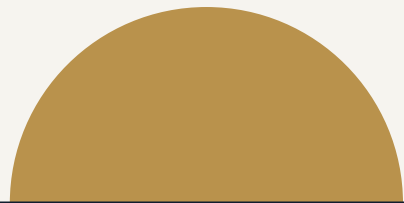


FREE GUIDE · SOLVANA PARTNERS

The 7 Most Expensive Mistakes When Buying from Asia

A field guide for companies sourcing from Asia without local presence.



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Why this guide

Buying from Asia can transform your margins — or quietly erode them. The difference is rarely the product itself; it is how you verify, negotiate and control the operation from a distance. Below are the seven mistakes we see cost companies the most, and a practical way to avoid each one.

According to QIMA's 2024 report, 41% of factories audited in China failed quality or compliance checks. Most of those failures are preventable with the right process before you pay.

The seven mistakes

1 Choosing a supplier on price alone

The cost: The supplier that wins on price often cuts corners on materials and quality control, leading to defects, returns and lost customers.

How to avoid it: Evaluate total landed cost and reliability, not the unit price in isolation. The cheapest quote is rarely the cheapest order.

2 Skipping supplier verification

The cost: Behind an online listing there may be a trading company posing as a factory, a shell company, or a maker without the capacity or certifications you need.

How to avoid it: Verify legal, operational and documentary signals before committing — ideally with someone physically checking on the ground.

3 Unsafe payment terms

The cost: Paying 100% up front, or to an unverified account, leaves you with no leverage if something goes wrong.

How to avoid it: Use milestone-based terms (deposit, balance against a passed inspection) and always confirm bank details through a second channel.

4 No quality inspection before shipment

The cost: Defects discovered at destination — after production, shipping and payment — are the most expensive kind.

How to avoid it: Run at least one pre-shipment or in-line inspection, and release the final payment only after it passes.

5 Vague specifications and informal agreements

The cost: Emails instead of contracts lead to disputes over materials, tolerances, timelines and ownership of molds or designs.

How to avoid it: Put a written spec sheet and a proper contract/PO in place, covering quality, penalties, IP and lead times.

6 Underestimating logistics, Incoterms and hidden costs

The cost: Surprise charges — customs, duties, EXW handling — can quietly erase the margin you thought you had.

How to avoid it: Agree clear Incoterms and budget the full landed cost before you commit to an order.

7 Managing everything remotely, with no local presence

The cost: Distance means slow issue resolution, no real negotiating leverage, and cultural gaps that compound over time.

How to avoid it: Have a trusted, buyer-side presence in Asia to verify, negotiate and resolve problems in real time.

Your office in Asia.

Solvana Partners verifies suppliers, sources alternatives, negotiates and manages your purchasing on the ground in Asia — on a fixed fee, never supplier commissions. We work only for the buyer.

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