



C&S Product Sourcing

Should I make this product?

The C&S Product Idea Go/No-Go Checklist

A short diagnostic for anyone considering having a physical product made.

C&S Product Sourcing · Melbourne, Australia
csproductsourcing.com.au

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Before you spend anything

Some product ideas fail on arithmetic, not on manufacturing

A founder finds a supplier, gets a quote that looks good, orders the minimum, and somewhere between the invoice and the warehouse discovers that freight cost more than expected, packaging added more than allowed for, the marketplace takes its cut before anything reaches them, and the product that looked like it made \$14 a unit makes \$3.

That outcome doesn't require a factory visit to foresee. It requires an afternoon with a calculator and a willingness to hear a disappointing answer. That's what this checklist is.

The question to ask first

Most people begin with: "Who can manufacture this?"

It's answerable — there is usually someone willing to quote — and answering it can feel like progress while telling you nothing about whether to proceed.

A more useful first question is: "Should this be manufactured at all?"

Some products shouldn't be. Not because the idea is poor, but because the economics, the minimum order, the freight or the competition make it a weak use of money that could go somewhere better.

Not every product idea should become a product. That isn't pessimism. It's the difference between spending thousands to learn something and spending an afternoon.

How to use this

Six categories. Four or five questions each. Score each category 0–5.

What the score measures. Not how good your idea is — how well **evidenced** your answers are.

Score	Meaning
0	Can't answer this at all
1	A guess
2	A reasoned assumption, but nothing outside my own head
3	Some supporting evidence, with real gaps
4	Good evidence for most of it
5	Well supported — I could show someone where this came from

Beside each question there's a confidence box. Tick it only if you could point to where the answer came from.

The total is not the point. It organises your thinking. The two things that matter come at the end: the questions you couldn't confidently answer, and the red flags that apply regardless of your total. A high total with eight unticked boxes is not a good result. It's a well-organised guess.

This is a decision-support tool. It measures the state of your evidence, not the prospects of your product. It cannot tell you whether something will sell.

A. Customer and problem

What you're testing: whether a specific person has a real problem that costs them something.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| A1 | Who exactly buys this? Name a specific type of person or business — not an age bracket | ☐ |
| A2 | What problem does it solve, and what does that problem currently cost them in money, time or frustration? | ☐ |
| A3 | What are they using instead right now? | ☐ |
| A4 | How do you know? Did a potential buyer tell you, or are you inferring it? | ☐ |
| A5 | Would they describe this as a problem, or is it only a problem from where you're standing? | ☐ |

Evidence score

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Worth knowing

"Everyone is my customer" is a common answer to A1 and a difficult one to act on. A product aimed at everyone gives you little guidance on where to sell it, what to charge, or which features matter.

If you can't finish the sentence "this is for people who...", that's worth resolving before anything else.

B. Competition and switching

What you're testing: whether there's a reason to change behaviour.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| B1 | Name three things someone would buy instead of yours | ☐ |
| B2 | What specifically would make someone switch? | ☐ |
| B3 | Could a competitor copy your advantage within one season? | ☐ |
| B4 | What do the one- and two-star reviews of the closest competitor complain about? | ☐ |

Evidence score	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
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Worth knowing

If you can't find competitors, it may be worth checking whether you're looking in the right place, or whether others have tried and withdrawn. An absence of competition is not automatically an opportunity.

B4 is often the most useful question here. Existing complaints are specific, written by actual buyers, and free to read.

C. Price and margin

What you're testing: whether anything survives.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| C1 | What will people realistically pay — not what you'd like to charge? | ☐ |
| C2 | Where will it sell, and what does that channel take? | ☐ |
| C3 | After channel costs, freight, packaging, marketing and returns, what's left to pay the factory? | ☐ |
| C4 | Is that remaining number plausible for how this product is made? | ☐ |

Evidence score	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
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Worth knowing

Your selling price is not your manufacturing budget. A \$60 product does not have \$60, or necessarily \$30, available to make. Between the customer's price and the factory invoice can sit GST where applicable, channel or marketplace costs, freight, packaging, marketing, returns and the margin you're doing this for. Working backwards from the price is slower than working forwards from a quote, and far more likely to be right.

D. Manufacturing complexity

What you're testing: how hard this is to make, and how much can go wrong.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| D1 | How many separate parts and materials does it have? | ☐ |
| D2 | Does it need tooling or a custom mould? | ☐ |
| D3 | Does it have moving parts, electronics or a battery? | ☐ |
| D4 | Does it touch food, skin, or children? | ☐ |

Evidence score

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Worth knowing

Each "yes" above can add cost, lead time, sample rounds and ways a production run may go wrong. Simpler products are generally easier to specify, cheaper to correct, and quicker to get right.

A battery, for example, can affect shipping, certification requirements and which factories will quote.

E. MOQ, inventory and cash

What you're testing: how much money becomes stock, and whether you can lose it.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| E1 | What minimum order quantity is likely for this product? | ☐ |
| E2 | At that MOQ, how much cash turns into inventory? | ☐ |
| E3 | Could you lose that amount without it damaging you? | ☐ |
| E4 | At a realistic sales rate, how many months of stock is that? | ☐ |

Evidence score

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Worth knowing

MOQ can make an otherwise workable product unviable. A product that works at 300 units may be impractical at 3,000 — same product, same margin per unit, ten times the cash committed and considerably longer to sell through. If the likely MOQ for your category is unknown, that single gap can change whether this is a business or a garage full of stock.

F. Packaging, freight, IP and regulatory

What you're testing: costs and obstacles that can surface after ordering.

Sure?

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| F1 | How big is it once packed? Bulky, light products can cost far more to ship than their weight suggests | ☐ |
| F2 | Does packaging need to protect it in transit, and have you priced that? | ☐ |
| F3 | Could someone hold a patent, registered design or trademark relevant to this? | ☐ |
| F4 | Could this need certification, compliance testing or specific labelling to be sold in Australia? | ☐ |
| F5 | Can you test demand before committing to a full order? | ☐ |

Evidence score

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Worth knowing

Freight is commonly charged on whichever is greater: actual weight, or the space the carton occupies. A light product in a large box can be billed as though it were heavy. This is one significant reason a margin that works on a spreadsheet may not work in practice.

On F3 and F4: the point isn't to answer them here. It's to establish whether you've looked. "I haven't checked" is a reasonable answer at this stage. "It'll probably be fine" is not.

Reasons C&S would tell you to stop

Some issues outweigh a strong evidence score. If any of these describe your situation, treat the total as secondary until it's resolved.

1	"Everyone is my customer." No specific buyer has been identified	☐
2	The price came first. A selling price was chosen, and costs are expected to fit underneath it	☐
3	It only works if manufacturing is unusually cheap. The case depends on a unit cost nobody has quoted	☐
4	No reason to switch. There's no clear answer to why someone would stop buying what they buy now	☐
5	The MOQ exceeds what you could afford to lose. Not more than you have — more than you could lose without it hurting	☐
6	Significant tooling or development commitment before meaningful demand evidence.	☐
7	IP unchecked. Nobody has looked at whether a patent, design registration or trademark is in the way	☐
8	Supplier chosen primarily on the lowest quote, without adequate checks on capability, quality, terms and reliability	☐
9	Everything is best case. Every number in the plan assumes things go well	☐

Why these sit outside the score

The evidence score averages across categories, so a serious problem in one area can be offset by strength elsewhere. These nine don't average out. An idea can be well evidenced across the board and still be the wrong thing to do if the MOQ requires \$40,000 and you have \$45,000.

Red flag 9 is the one most often argued with. If the plan works only when the factory quotes at the low end, freight behaves, nothing is damaged and sell-through matches an optimistic estimate, you don't yet have a plan. You have a hope with numbers attached.

Your result

Work through this in order. The total comes last, deliberately.

First — what you couldn't answer

Count your **unticked** confidence boxes: _____ out of 26

Unticked	What this indicates
0–4	Your answers are largely supported. Remaining gaps are narrow
5–10	You hold a position rather than an assessment. The gaps are where money is at risk
11+	This is an idea rather than a proposal. Little here should yet drive a spending decision

Second — red flags

Number ticked on the previous page: _____

Any red flag caps your outcome at “Investigate further”, whatever your total.

Third — the evidence score, as context

Total: _____ / 30

Range	What it says about your evidence
23–30	Your answers are well supported across most categories
15–22	Mixed. Some areas are evidenced; others rest on assumption
0–14	Largely unevidenced at this stage

What this number is not

It is not a probability of success and not a measure of how good the product is. A well-evidenced idea can still fail. A poorly evidenced one can still work. What the score tells you is **how much of your decision currently rests on belief rather than information.**

Your decision

Your three most important unanswered questions:

1

2

3

These three matter more than your total. They're the things that could change the answer entirely, and they're what a reviewer would want to discuss first.

Your outcome

☐

GO TO NEXT STAGE

No red flags, few gaps, and the numbers hold up as far as you can currently see. The next step is proper feasibility work, not a factory search.

☐

INVESTIGATE FURTHER

The most useful outcome for most readers at this stage. Specific things need answering before money is committed. You now know which.

☐

STOP OR RETHINK

In its current form, the case isn't there. That may mean a different product, a different buyer, or a different price. It rarely means the end of the idea — but it does mean not ordering stock yet.

A "stop or rethink" that costs you an afternoon is the cheapest outcome in this document.

What to do next

If your gaps were narrow

You don't need anything further from us. Go and close them. That's a genuine answer, not a polite one — if the list on the previous page was short, buying something won't make it shorter.

If you have real unanswered questions

C&S Product Feasibility Workbook · AUD \$49

Where this checklist scores the state of your evidence, the workbook works the numbers out. It's a document you fill in rather than one you read.

- Work backwards from customer price to a target manufacturing cost
- Three MOQ scenarios side by side, so you can calculate the cash at risk for each
- Competitor comparison, specification starter, supplier question checklist
- Sample review sheet and risk register
- An assumption flag on every field that's a guess — and a count at the end

C&S Product Idea Review · AUD \$249

or \$200 to upgrade if you've bought the workbook — you aren't charged twice

You send your completed workbook plus whatever else you have: links, sketches, photos, competitor examples, existing quotes, supplier correspondence. Within **5 business days** of a sufficiently complete submission, you receive:

- A 3–5 page written review
- A preliminary outcome: Go to Next Stage / Investigate Further / Stop or Rethink
- The strongest part of your commercial case
- The three biggest risks
- The three assumptions most worth validating
- MOQ, inventory, margin and manufacturing concerns based on what you've supplied
- The sourcing questions that need answering next
- What should be known before contacting any factory
- Your recommended next three actions
- **A 30-minute call with Cody**, plus one follow-up email within 7 days

Before you buy either

Why a person rather than a longer document. A worksheet records what you believe. It can't tell you a belief is wrong, flag that an MOQ assumption is off for how a category is actually made, or ask the question you didn't know to ask. That's what this is for.

What it isn't: supplier research, factory quotation, engineering assessment, legal or regulatory advice, certification, or a guarantee of commercial viability.

Submitting sensitive material. Reviews often involve commercially sensitive information — drawings, quotations, supplier correspondence. Your confidential material will not be shared with manufacturers, suppliers or prospective commercial partners to progress your product without your permission.

Submission & Confidentiality Terms: csproductsourcing.com.au/submission-terms

If it's worth progressing, C&S may then quote separately for deeper feasibility, supplier research, samples, packaging, costing or sourcing coordination. We may also conclude it shouldn't proceed — sometimes the most valuable sourcing decision is not to source the product.

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