

BEFORE YOU SEND A DEPOSIT

20 Red Flags When Vetting a 1688 Supplier

A printable decision sheet for small-business buyers. Mark what you can verify, keep notes beside the supplier record, and stop treating storefront badges as proof.

3+**Pause the deal.**

Three or more verified red flags are enough to stop, request stronger evidence, or replace the candidate. One serious payment or identity contradiction can justify walking away on its own.

01**Screen the page**

Check the license, product range, location, attributes, reviews, and factory imagery.

02**Test the answers**

Ask specific capacity, material, production, payment, and inspection questions.

03**Demand evidence**

Use live video, written specifications, platform records, and third-party inspection.

How to use it: A checked box means you observed the warning sign, not that you completed a task. Add context to your sourcing notes and judge patterns, not badges or sales counters in isolation.

Start with contradictions.

A convincing storefront can still contain records that do not agree with the sales pitch.

COMPANY IDENTITY

**01. TrustPass is presented as proof of trust.**

诚信通 membership and identity checks do not prove product quality, factory ownership, financial health, or order performance.

VERIFY

Read the underlying records; do not approve on the badge alone.

**02. The company name conflicts with the “factory” claim.**

Names containing 贸易, 商贸, 供应链, or 商行 usually signal trading or distribution activity.

VERIFY

Compare the legal name, declared business type, and license scope.

**03. The store name does not match the business license.**

A mismatch between the storefront and licensed entity weakens accountability and needs a written explanation.

VERIFY

Save the license and cross-check the legal entity on China's official registry.

**04. The license says “sales,” but the seller claims manufacturing.**

If the 经营范围 business scope has no manufacturing activity, the factory story lacks documentary support.

VERIFY

Look for manufacturing terms tied to the product category.

**05. A new company claims a long operating history.**

A recent registration date, low registered capital, and a “ten years of exports” story are incompatible without evidence.

ASK

Request predecessor-company or team-history documentation.

LISTING HONESTY

**06. “Cross-border” appears in the title, but not the attributes.**

The marketing title says 跨境, while 是否跨境出口专供货源 is marked 否 (“no”).

VERIFY

Trust the formal product attributes over title keywords.

**07. The registered city and production city do not match.**

A logistics-hub address paired with production elsewhere may indicate a middleman rather than the factory.

ASK

Where is this item made, and who owns that facility?

Make the seller prove the story.

Strong candidates respond with specific evidence. Weak candidates substitute polish, volume, or reassurance.

STOREFRONT EVIDENCE



08. The catalog looks like a department store.

A “factory” selling unrelated categories - phone cases, pet food, and wigs - is more likely a sourcing intermediary.

VERIFY

Compare the listing with 主营产品, the company's main products.



09. Factory photos look generic or reused.

Stock-like images, inconsistent equipment, or the same facility shown by multiple sellers undermine the claim.

VERIFY

Reverse-image-search key photos, then request live video.



10. Huge sales counters appear beside zero reviews.

Wholesale sales numbers are not the same as verified satisfaction. A large counter with no buyer detail is weak proof.

VERIFY

Look for recent, product-specific transactions and feedback.



11. Quotes cluster suspiciously close together.

Many storefronts quoting within a narrow band may belong to the same supply network rather than independent factories.

TEST

Compare addresses, photos, specifications, and response patterns.

COMMUNICATION & PAYMENT



12. They say “yes” to every request.

Capable suppliers clarify materials, tolerances, packaging, and test methods because mistakes cost them money.

TEST

Ask a technical question and see whether they ask one back.



13. They push payment outside the platform.

Pressure to use an unprotected transfer, crypto, or another off-platform route removes dispute and transaction safeguards.

STOP

Keep the first transaction and payment record on-platform.



14. They rush the conversation onto personal WeChat.

Moving immediately can fragment the paper trail before identity, specifications, and price are documented.

PROTECT

Keep key claims, terms, and files in the 1688 record.

Inspect the process, not the promise.

A polished sample matters only when the production line can reproduce it under written quality controls.

PRODUCTION & QUALITY



15. They refuse a live production walkthrough.

Recorded clips can be staged, borrowed, or outdated. Repeated excuses about a live call are evidence, too.

ASK

Show this item's line, raw materials, warehouse, and license wall live.



16. There is no verifiable physical address.

A mobile number and chat account are not a factory footprint or a location an inspector can visit.

VERIFY

Match the profile, license, map record, and inspection address.



17. The sample is suspiciously perfect.

A hand-finished "golden sample" may not reflect the repeatability of normal production.

PROTECT

Approve written specs and bind production QC to the sample.



18. They discourage third-party inspection.

"Save time and skip inspection" transfers risk to the buyer and protects only the supplier.

STOP

For meaningful orders, keep inspection rights in writing.



19. They will not share a license or audit report.

Refusal or delay blocks independent verification of the entity, facility, audit date, and audited product line.

ASK

Request current documents and check the underlying report.



20. Production answers become vague under follow-up.

"We are the factory" means little without a line, monthly capacity, lead time, equipment, and named production contact.

TEST

Ask for numbers, names, dates, and live proof.

Record the decision before money moves.

The point is not to collect green checks. It is to make unresolved risk visible while you can still choose another supplier.

Count only what you verified.

0-1: continue due diligence. 2: pause and resolve the gaps. 3+: replace the candidate or escalate to independent verification.

RED FLAGS

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20

Keep before deposit

- License and legal-entity check
- Approved product specification
- Price, lead time, payment, and inspection terms

Decision rule

- Continue only when key claims have evidence.
- Resolve contradictions in writing.
- For meaningful orders, use independent inspection.

Supplier record

Supplier / store

Product

Quoted value

Open questions

Decision / date

Go beyond the first screen.

The 1688 Playbook adds factory-vs-trader tests, a live video-call script, supplier messages, comparison worksheets, and the order controls that follow this checklist.

China Playbooks

Educational checklist only. Supplier information and platform rules can change. Independently verify counterparties, contracts, payment protection, product compliance, and inspection needs before ordering.