

Rubber ducky, you were the one to help revive stateside manufacturing

[Business](#), [Manufacturing](#)



Whether you think that having a “ Made in the USA” label will enhance sales, you are seeking to help keep jobs local or you are wary of becoming dependent on a foreign economy, manufacturing your product in America may be a key business goal for you.

But, what are some of the best practices to follow if you are seeking to have products manufactured in the USA -- or even bring back products once manufactured overseas to an American counterpart?

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I talked to Craig Wolfe, the CEO of and , who, as the top custom rubber duck manufacturer in the world, said that he personally felt a moral obligation to bring it back to where it began -- in the U. S. -- but, also needed to justify the business case for doing so.

Realizing that using local manufacturing would shorten delivery times and give them a competitive advantage in lead times were key facets of the decision. He also felt that he could have more control of their end product and could leverage the Made in America Label.

Here are some of Craig’s suggestions as you get started with American manufacturing.

1. Make good use of Internet searches.

Wolfe recounts doing ongoing internet searches using every search term they could think of in terms of finding factories that met their specs, which

included rotational, injection and blow molding. These sweeping searches helped find a large number of potential factory partners.

At the same time, they also found manufacturer directories online that listed the capabilities of all different kinds of factories in the U. S. As Wolfe said, “It’s amazing what you can do with just the internet these days. It literally made the difference in bringing a whole industry back home.”

2. Use your network to get smart.

The internet searches were a great starting point -- but not an endpoint. Wolfe and his team made use of their current suppliers and fellow manufacturers in the industry to get their advice and feedback.

Wolfe recounts, “ We asked everyone we worked with for suggestions. And out of the blue, one of our clients actually recommended the factory we eventually settled on, making them back in the USA in New York! Amazingly enough, this factory also made the original Sesame Street Ernie rubber duckies! Now, we got the ball rolling.”

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3. Leverage your vendors.

As their focus changed -- they wanted to not just make regular rubber ducks in America but also the safest rubber ducks in the world for babies to teethe on that were PVC free and used medical and food grade materials -- they needed to regroup.

Wolfe says that once they found the right factory who understood the molding process, they would need to make the ducks, they then picked their brains for the best suppliers of materials that would fit their requirements.

As the factory was already working with the right material suppliers, they had the connections of who Celebriducks could approach. Wolfe notes, “ We ended up working with one of the top billion-dollar material companies who already had done all the FDA testing on the safest materials in the world for what we needed that would meet our extreme requirements. Partnering up with them and our new factory allowed us to make it all happen and move forward.”

4. Always be marketing.

What if you build something and nobody comes? Wolfe says that manufacturing has to go in-hand with marketing. In his case, they knew everyone from mommy bloggers to mass retailers would be interested if they knew Celebriduck’s products existed. Wolfe and his team began an effort to reach out to every potential target and are now getting on board with initial testing with some of the largest retailers in the world. This approach has worked in lieu of traditional advertising.

Additionally, Wolfe advises, “ We realized that it would be too overwhelming and time consuming to deal with the major retailers on our own. Thus, we had them give us a list of their distributors and picked one to handle all that for us!”

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Made in the USA is a noble cause and a potential revenue booster, but isn't for the faint of heart. However, with the steps above, you can help be part of the movement to revive manufacturing stateside.