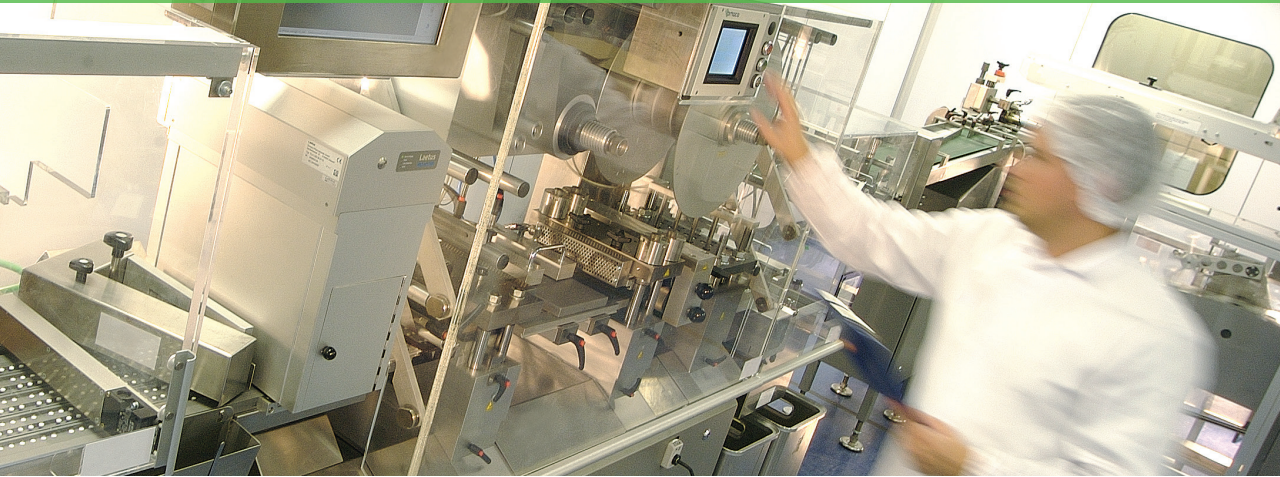


It's All About Trust

Contract Packing for the Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Sectors



Key considerations when selecting the most appropriate outsourcing partner are outlined by David Patterson of Chester Medical Solutions.

It can sometimes be hard to delegate in business – to trust someone to do a job as well as you can. And this is a particular challenge that companies face when seeking to contract out all or part of their packing operations. How can they be sure that the contract packer will look after their product as carefully as if it were their own?

When it comes to selecting a contract packer, the culture of the partner organisation is the most critical factor to consider. Is this the sort of business that will offer the same level of commitment as an in-house operation, who will exercise the same amount of care and judgement in ensuring the project is delivered on time and on budget?

Loyal Customers

Of course, assessing the culture of a business is not the easiest of tasks but there are plenty of clues that can help you. Take a look at the company's customer list. How many of these are long-established relationships? It's a pretty good sign if customers are loyal and keep coming back. See if you can speak to one or two of them – a personal recommendation is the best form of advertising and PR.

Successful contract packers are those that take a long term view of customer relationships, who understand their customers' businesses and how they can complement and support them, whatever the size of the project. Certainly I believe these have been critical factors in Chester Medical's

success in recent years where even in the current tough economic climate we have managed to increase our business by 25% in the last 12 months.

Investment and Knowledge

At the same time, a commitment to quality and service has to be supported by the right facilities. In fast-moving markets, ongoing investment in the latest plant and equipment is vital; speed and efficiency are paramount.

Specialist knowledge of your market is also important, particularly for Medical Device and Pharma where packaging requirements can be governed by many rules and regulations which may differ from country to country. A good indication of capabilities here is to check that a contract packer holds the relevant accreditations and licences for the sector.

The Right Mindset

However, it is easy to purchase good equipment, and most companies are able to implement the necessary procedures to achieve accreditations and licences. But if anything goes wrong, it is still your name on the packaging. In choosing your contract partner, therefore, you also need to select a company with the right mindset, who cares as much as if it were their name on the pack – because that is the level of service that makes the difference.

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