



Choosing a New Supplier

What do you look for when choosing a new supplier? Do you have a checklist, or a set of points to ask? There are obvious questions regarding minimum order, delivery costs, payment terms and discounts. But there are other considerations that are easy to overlook, yet could cost you more time and money in the long run.

Do they offer electronic invoicing?

In the Newsagent Survey that ALNA and XchangeIT sent out, lack of electronic ordering was the highest 'pain point' listed by survey respondents. The average store has 20 suppliers and spends 2.4 hours a week receiving stock into the POS. This is a vital question to ask a supplier when purchasing many different products, or the products change with each order. Electronic invoicing not only speeds up the receipt of stock, it provides accuracy to barcodes and pricing.

What is their process for ordering?

Find out if the supplier offers an online website for ordering or are orders placed over the phone, via email or with a rep during business hours. Then determine if this is practical for your business. If you have a large number of suppliers, ensure the ordering process is as efficient as possible. If ordering is online, check that the supplier website is user-friendly, with detailed product descriptions and quality images.



When is my order confirmed?

Ascertain if an order is confirmed immediately or if there is a wait to find out if items are in stock. Where orders are not confirmed immediately, consider the implications, including additional admin and how back orders are managed. If ordering seasonal product, check delivery times to ensure stock is received prior to the peak season.

A good supplier should help you to run your business both profitably and efficiently

What is their process for returns?

Find out their process for returning damaged stock upon delivery to your store as well as items returned by your customers. Assess if the supplier policy for returns is a fair and easy process.

Other questions to ask.....

- Do they offer help with your display?
- Do they provide graphics for FB/Instagram?
- Do they supply point of sale material?
- Do they offer a post sales follow up?
- Do they accept standing orders?
- Do they provide RRP?
- Do their products have barcodes?
- What are their delivery terms?
- Can they provide customer references?
- What sets them apart from other suppliers?