

Working Together

With The Rotational Moulding Industry

A guide for product developers

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WORKING WITH ROTATIONAL MOULDERS

If you have a product you would like manufactured by rotational moulding, there are some simple steps to help you get the most out of the consultation process with your manufacturer. We have included some FAQ's here to help you:

Do I need to use a professional designer?

Not always. Some rotational moulding companies have in house design staff, others have strong partnerships within the professional design industry that you can utilize. Rotational moulding design is a highly specialist area and using a designer who is knowledgeable about the process could save you thousands of dollars in mould design, fabrication and manufacturing.

How far along with my product development should I be before I talk to someone?

You don't need a fully realised design to begin speaking to manufacturers, in fact they can often provide feedback and tips that are specialist to the process to improve your design by eliminating fabrication or simplifying the design. It's always better to speak with moulders early in the process to ensure you don't waste time and money.

Why do quotes vary from moulder to moulder?

ARMA recommends you obtain 3 quotes from moulders during the development process. Remember it shouldn't only be about price and what seems too good to be true, usually is. If there is a substantial difference in pricing, always ask the company what their price includes. You may find one company has factored in a realistic price for warranty service for example and another hasn't included anything. There may be several excellent reasons for variations in different quotes, to help you compare them accurately, ARMA has a guide on working with moulders, which you can download.

Should I ask for a contract to supply?

It's simply amazing how many business deals are still done on a handshake! ARMA recommends ***you only proceed*** when you have a written contract to supply which includes all the details of your project. ARMA members will have their own contract or can access the recommended contract through the association. As a guide, your contract should include the amount of items to be made, how much you have agreed to pay, if the articles will be guaranteed to be fit for purpose, if they include a warranty and who will be responsible for warranty claims. We have included a template to help you get started at the end of this guide.

What if I am buying a load of containers or other products from a manufacturer?

Even if you are buying products out of the stock held by a rotational moulder, you should have a contract that specifically details who will be responsible for honouring any manufacturer's or "voluntary" warranty on the products. This is particularly important for traders located in NSW.

Can I ask for product insurance or take it out myself?

It's an unfortunate reality that in business today, not everyone will survive in the long term. If you have decided to offer an additional warranty (voluntary warranty) to sell your products, you may want to ask your moulder or your insurer about product insurance. This will protect you from claims, should your manufacturer go out of business before any additional warranty period has expired.

What if something goes wrong with the product?

The legal implications of failure will differ depending on where your company is based. In some areas (such as New South Wales) the warranty liability remains with the retailer of the product, not the manufacturer. In other areas this may not be the case but the best way to ensure everyone is clear about what will happen if a product does fail is for the details of this to be included in your contract to supply. ARMA recommends you take independent legal advice before you agree to, or sign, any legal document to be sure you understand the risks.

Regardless of which country or area in which you operate, it is a business owner's responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and comply with, all relevant legislation in relation to the products they sell and the statements they make to get that sale.

Should I ask for a confidentiality agreement to be signed?

Absolutely, if you feel your product details need to remain confidential, you should ask your rotational moulder to sign an agreement before you show them any of the details of the project. If they are uncomfortable with signing the agreement, find another moulder who is willing to do so. There's a [great tool available on the web](#) from IP Australia to generate your own agreement.

Once you've received your quotations, it may still be difficult to understand variances in prices!

John Ruskin (1819-1900) once stated: "It is unwise to pay too much, but it is much worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the things it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot ... it just cannot be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better."

This is true as today as it was a century ago...

When you are ready to talk to a rotational moulder about manufacturing your products it is normal business practice to ask for a quotation. This puts the buyer and seller at opposite ends of the table, with the buyer wanting the best possible product at the lowest possible price and the seller wanting to give the best possible product at a profitable price.

Because the price is the only difference in this equation between buyer and seller, competition is introduced to moulders hoping to be the successful supplier. Many strategies are used and it will be up to the buyer to ascertain if he is getting the right price for the right application. So, the onus is on the buyer to ensure that when comparing quotations among the many would be suppliers, they are comparing the offers according to what they actually need.

Be Prepared Take Control Of The Process Yourself

It is very important that the initial specification on the product or service is developed very carefully. Your request for quotation should consider the following things:

1. What is your product to be used for?
2. What sort of duty will it perform?
3. How long do you want it to last?
4. What is the best type of material for it to be manufactured from?
5. How many do you need, in your initial order and follow up orders?
6. How soon do you need it?
7. What's your estimate, based on industry standards, of the cost?
8. Do you have a budget per item?

With a specification on the product or service prepared, the buyer can then compare all the offers (as presented by rotational moulders) to each other.

If You Need Help Comparing...

When comparing the offers, never show rotational moulders each other's quotations. We have included some information to help you compare differences. Consider the following:

1. Does the rotational moulder show a commitment to industry best practice, professionalism and staying up to date with new ideas and technology which may add value to your product? Ask them if they are members of the Association of Rotational Moulders Australasia Inc and then call us to confirm they are on +61 (0)7 3812 1450 or email info@rotationalmoulding.com.
2. What are the reputations of the various companies that have submitted quotations? Ask for references from current customers if you are unsure.
3. Which are the offers that meet product design specified in shape and form for the product.
4. Will the product meet the performance you require, in terms of design robustness, wall thickness or strength in terms of ribs / radius or engineering? If they have bid on different specifications (eg higher or lower wall thickness) ask them why? Is their explanation in your best interest?
5. Will the product as manufactured by the rotational moulder, meet necessary safety or standards specifications?
6. Is the product easy to implement within your product line or system?
7. What are the additional costs for you to choose a different design in order to better fit it into your line or system?
8. Is the material used in the product an environmentally friendly material? Is it necessary or desirable for it to be? Does it meet any legislative requirements, such as potability?
9. Will the product last the duration that you would expect or have called for in your specification? You will need to be very clear if the product comes with any manufacturer's warranty, not every product does. If the manufacturer has offered a warranty, how will they honour it? Are there strict conditions and what will happen should their own business cease to operate?
10. Are the prices based on the quantity you called for? Does the price include delivery, mould costs etc?
11. What is the time frame that these requirements can be supplied to you? How busy are the rotational moulders who bid? Check their present workload and ensure your contract of supply includes statements or conditions about dates of supply following purchase.
12. Are the prices quoted within the estimate that you thought they should be? If not, is there a reasonable explanation?
14. What are the terms of payment and what is the credit reference information about the company. Even though you will be paying them, credit history can give you a good indication of the company's health.
15. Will the quality of the finish by the rotational moulder enhance my reputation to the end user or to my associates? Sometimes great prices come with poor quality, consider which is most important for your product.
16. Does the rotational moulder use a Quality Assurance system in their manufacturing process? Do they have and use a complaints procedure? Ask for copies.

To source a great selection of quality manufacturers or if you every feel out of your depth during the quotation & development process, don't hesitate to contact us for guidance or assistance.

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