

How to Select the Best Bone Graft Product Supplier for Your Distributorship

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Orthopedics distributors have no shortage of options when it comes to selecting bone graft products to sell. Many distributorships work with multiple suppliers in order to offer a variety of products to their surgeons. When vetting a potential new bone graft supplier, there are many factors to consider. Whether you are looking for a single product to add to your offerings or a new full-line bone graft supplier, this guide discusses five key factors to consider when choosing the best supplier partner for your distributorship.

1. Expertise in Bone Graft Product Technology

It goes without saying that your bone graft supplier should be an expert on their products and the bone graft market. They need to know their science inside and out, be able to articulate it to you clearly, and provide answers to detailed questions coming from you, your surgeons, or the hospital. They should know the biological mechanism of how their graft works and supports healing, and be familiar with other technologies in the bone graft market.

When considering a new bone graft supplier, find out who their top scientist is, and ask whether that person is willing and available to speak to your surgeons if a need arises. You may find with larger corporations that it can be a challenge to get face-to-face time with someone who truly knows the science.

Comparatively, with smaller companies, you are likely to have more direct access to a technical expert. Make sure the company you choose knows their science story well and is available to help you promote it to your customers.

Consider also that companies that specialize in a certain product area are likely to have more expertise than a “one-stop-shop.” For example, companies that focus exclusively on hardware will have a team of experts - including engineering, marketing, and sales - focused specifically on hardware. The same applies to companies that specialize in bone graft product technology. Specialized, niche companies are more likely to be on the forefront of innovations in their field, which mean you have access to some of the most advanced technologies available.

Additionally, a company that develops and manufactures their own products, versus private-labeling or using a contract manufacturer, is more likely to have this expertise in-house. This leads us to our next point of consideration - vertical integration.

2. Vertical Integration

“Vertical integration” is a fancy way of saying that a company performs certain operations in-house. Many bone graft product suppliers outsource their manufacturing to a third party, meaning they are reliant on another company to make the products that you need. Vertically integrated companies will not only develop their own products, but they will also manufacture, warehouse, and ship the products. Because they have full control over their processes, vertically integrated companies tend to be more reliable when it comes to inventory management. They aren’t impacted by competing scheduling priorities or manufacturing delays of a third-party contractor, which can lead to costly product backorders. Additionally, fewer middlemen means you’re likely to get a better value when it comes to transfer pricing and commissions.

Vertical integration is also important when it comes to quality. Companies that self-manufacture have complete control over their manufacturing and quality procedures. Because they own and maintain their processes, they are experts of every step involved.

Besides manufacturing, other in-house capabilities that may benefit your distributorship include:

- **Contract support** - Does the supplier have someone available to lead and manage the hospital approval process?
- **Product training** - Is the supplier willing and able to provide high-quality training to your reps and surgeons?
- **Marketing support** - Does the supplier have an in-house marketing team that can create support materials you may need to grow your business and gain hospital approval?
- **Technical expertise** - Did the supplier develop their own technologies? Do they have in-house expertise on every aspect of the product and the market?

The more in-house capabilities a company has, the smoother your experience is likely to be. With a highly vertically integrated supplier, you are working with one cohesive team that is dedicated to your success.

3. Customer Service

In such a competitive industry, the importance of solid customer service can not be overstated. When you are working hard to provide your surgeons with excellent service, you want to align yourself with suppliers who have the same mindset. The last thing you want to worry about is whether your surgeon's favorite bone graft product is available for their case tomorrow, or whether you will have a response to their product-related question when you see them.

During your search for a new bone graft product supplier, consider all of your interactions with potential vendors. Responsiveness is key. Do they return your calls in a timely manner? Are they attentive to the unique challenges your business faces? Are they willing to provide testimonials or referrals from their current customers? Look for a supplier with a track record of success. You can also ask around your network to learn what other distributors' experiences have been.

With customer service, the size of the company can be a big factor. Larger corporations will likely have established customer service programs that operate like a "well-oiled machine," but may have more stringent processes for their distributors to follow. Smaller companies are known for being easier to work with and having less "red tape" than their larger competitors. With a smaller company, you will likely develop a personal relationship with your key contacts. Having an established relationship can mean they will be more flexible and willing to work with you to meet your unique needs.

4. Company History

In a dynamic field like osteobiologics, new companies are frequently created. While these companies may be offering new technologies, working with less established companies could result in a risky partnership. Look for companies that have been around for at least five years and have users who can attest to the long-term results (2+ years) of the company's bone graft products.

This doesn't mean that you should never consider working with a startup that offers exciting new technology. Just make sure to ask the right questions up front, and keep asking until you feel confident that they are a good partner for your business.

5. Company Culture

As you've likely experienced, company culture varies widely among bone graft product suppliers. Some may be known for their scientific expertise, others may be more business-savvy, and still others may be personable and flexible. Think about your interactions with potential supplier partners. Are they trustworthy, approachable, and knowledgeable? What is the sense you get when talking to them? Think about the type of people you want to interact with - you may be working with these people for years to come! Asking about company culture and the goals of their business can ensure that your visions are aligned.

Prioritize What Matters Most to Your Business

With so much to consider, it's important to remember that there are many great bone graft products and companies out there. Think about what matters most to your business, and work with the companies that best align with your needs and goals. Ultimately, a successful partnership is one that meets the unique needs of your customers and your business. If you find a supplier committed to your success who provides products that your surgeons love, you will ensure a prosperous partnership for years to come.

For over ten years, **Biogenix** has built a reputation of providing excellent customer service to our distributors and developing **next-generation bone graft technologies** that surgeons love. Our focus on advanced synthetic bone graft products allows us to incorporate innovative material properties that can improve patient outcomes. To learn more about our product line-up or to inquire about becoming a distributor partner, we invite you to **contact us today**.