

## Private Brand, Supplier & Product Requirements - Quality Assurance Reference Guide

This document serves as a reference guide to inform and assist Suppliers with Bluestem Brands Private Brand process and requirements. The supplier is always responsible to read and understand all sections of the Bluestem Brands, Inc., Supplier Manual, including the Private Brand QA Requirements.

### Pre-Purchase / Pre-Production Requirements:

- Product Standards, received, reviewed and understood by Supplier.
- Product Testing Protocol received reviewed and understood by Supplier.
- Packaging Protocol received, reviewed and understood by Supplier.
- Factory Quality Audits and Social Accountability Audits (conducted by an approved Bluestem Brands third party auditor) have been completed and accepted by Bluestem Brands QA.
- Supplier to supply Product Cost Breakdown to Bluestem Brands QA.
- Pre-production sample(s) provided by Supplier for Bluestem Brands QA evaluation (quality, meets standards and specifications).
  - Bluestem Brands QA evaluation completed for Pre-production sample(s), concerns or issues to be addressed by Supplier, if applicable.
- Supplier samples submitted for product & packaging testing.
  - Supplier provided test reports may be used if:
    - The test report accurately represents the product, w/o any changes to the materials, construction, design, or location of manufacture.
    - Testing has taken place within one year of the Bluestem's ship date.
    - The test report aligns with Bluestem Brands protocol.
    - Testing was completed by a globally recognized third party testing lab (BV, MTS, ITS, SGS, UL, STR).
      - Valid use of a supplier provided test report is always contingent on BSB discretion.
  - Preliminary, in-factory testing is strongly recommended. This has shown to greatly reduce the number of protocol failures, delays in the private branding process and dropped products.
- Supplier product & packaging testing to be received and approved by Bluestem Brands QA.

### Production Requirements:

- Bluestem Brands QA or approved third party auditor (on behalf of Bluestem Brands) to schedule Product Inspection(s) at Supplier Factory.
  - Supplier to resolve any Factory Product Inspection issues, if applicable.
  - Supplier to schedule re-inspection; to verify resolution of issues identified in the initial product inspection, if initial inspection received a failing score.

### Post Shipment (ongoing):

- Suppliers are responsible for monitoring their product's customer reviews on-line; investigating 1 and 2 Star reviews and escalating issues with corresponding corrective actions to the applicable QA Product Manager. Supplier must notify and gain approval from Bluestem Brands QA Product Manager prior to making any changes to product or packaging.