

	Doc. Control #			
	Department:		Version:	
	Title:	Product Review Meeting	Date Created:	
	Prepared By:		Date Approved:	
	Approved By:		Date Updated:	

Product Review Meeting

The *Product Review Meeting* is a chance for you, the Brand Owner, to meet with the Contract Manufacturer (Co-Man) on a regular basis to discuss everything pertaining to your product being run at their facility. It is an opportunity for you to meet with all the people at the Co-Man that have a hand in the manufacture of your product from start to finish and gives you the forum to discuss any changes in product or process since the last *Product Review Meeting*.

Product Review Meetings can occur at whatever frequency you prefer. Typically, it is based on the number of production runs scheduled/completed. We recommend conducting these meetings at least once per year, more frequent if there are numerous lots run. For example, if you run 10 times per year at a Co-Man, you should plan on one *Product Review Meeting* a year. If you run 20 times a year, your *Product Review Meeting* should be semi-annually. If you follow that pattern, running 10 times in a quarter would mean quarterly review meetings, and so forth. The key here is to have these meetings at regular intervals to assess product quality from the last period. If there had been a shift in product quality over that time frame, you want to catch it before too many batches have been produced.

Suggested Attendees

For a Product Review Meeting to be successful, both parties need to be well-represented. Along with you, the Brand Owner, you should include anyone at your company that regularly interfaces with the Co-Man. This could be your Quality Manager, Operations Manager and whomever manages the contract with that Co-Man. On the Co-Man side, they should have representation from the following departments:

Upper Management

Quality

R&D

Production

Sourcing

Sales

While not an exhaustive list, having these key departments at the *Product Review Meeting* will ensure any questions you might have can be answered by at least one of their representatives. If the Co-Man cannot provide representatives from each of these departments (sometimes the size of the Co-Man will dictate how many of these departments are independently represented) then you will need to ensure they can get all your questions answered even if they have to follow-up after the meeting.

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Suggested Product Review Meeting Agenda

This agenda covers all the major areas of production of your product. You can add or subtract from this agenda as you see fit. The main point to stress here is you have these meetings on a regular basis.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Recap of the Previous Period's Production

In this step you would request the Co-Man to pull retention samples of every lot of your product run from the past period, then arrange them, side by side, chronologically on the table from left to right. In this way you can observe any product drift that has occurred over that period and can discuss with Quality/Production/Management what happened and what corrective actions are required to bring the product back to target. This is the most important step in the Product Review Meeting as it allows you to have a direct conversation with the Co-Man regarding product quality. If you do not have these meetings, then any concern you have with product quality will occur well after the product has been out on store shelves.

Every manufacturing process, if run long enough, will begin to drift to its easiest operating parameters. This happens usually without the Co-Man even knowing it is happening. For instance, if you have a baked product that is being baked on a continuous band oven, the exhaust vents on these ovens tend to build up product dust over time, reducing the overall heating efficiency of the oven. When this happens the temperature setpoint for the oven might not accurately represent the true temperature in the oven, and your product over time will start to look less and less baked. Only by setting these samples side-by-side will you be able to notice this gradual change.

3. Discussion on any Changes to the Product or Process

In this step you can work with the Co-Man to make any official changes to the product formula, ingredient or finished production specifications, or process specifications. It is also a change to review the Batch Records from each of the previous periods runs to see if any changes of note were made. This important step of review the Batch Records should be a part of every Product Review Meeting, as it might be the first time you have seen the Batch Records from your production runs (although we strongly suggest you get a copy of each completed Batch Record as soon as the product run has been completed)

4. Review of Manufacturing/Supply Agreement and Quality Agreement

This section is typically what the Co-Man wants to focus on, which is why we have left it towards the end of the meeting. In this section you will discuss orders vs. plan, inventory of ingredients, packaging materials and finished goods, and pricing. Here you can negotiate updated terms, discuss future production plans and get a better sense of the shape of the business for the Co-Man. Make sure you ask questions regarding the state of their business, as this is vital information for you to factor into future plans with the Co-Man.

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The second part of this section is a review of the Quality Agreement. If you have put in place a Quality Agreement with the Co-Man, you should have plenty to discuss in terms of how well they have followed the different parts of the Agreement. Specifically, notifying you of any changes, requesting approval for these changes, and keeping you apprised of any audits, government notices and the like. Spend some time here to ensure the Agreement you have in place is being followed and, if not, what needs to happen to get to a point of 100% compliance.

5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

The end of the meeting should be a recap of the major items discussed as well as a To Do list for those items that require follow-up. It is also a good time to set the timing for the next *Product Review Meeting*.

The *Product Review Meeting* is a valuable tool to ensure good lines of communication are always in place with your Co-Man, and also will give you the opportunity to see what has been happening with your product, make any changes necessary, and set the stage for the next round of production. It is a tool we strongly suggest you use, as it might be the only way you can assure contact with the Co-Man outside of calls with issues.

The following page is a template for the Product Review Meeting you can download and tailor to your needs.

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PRODUCT REVIEW MEETING

Date:

For Production Occurring Between _____ and _____, _____

Members Present (name and title):

Brand Owner

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Contract Manufacturer

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

1. Welcome and Introductions

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	Title:	Product Review Meeting	Date Created:	
	Prepared By:		Date Approved:	
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2. Recap of the Previous Period’s Production

Notes:

	Doc. Control #			
	Department:		Version:	
	Title:	Product Review Meeting	Date Created:	
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3. Discussion on any Changes to the Product or Process

Notes:

	Doc. Control #			
	Department:		Version:	
	Title:	Product Review Meeting	Date Created:	
	Prepared By:		Date Approved:	
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4. Review of Manufacturing/Supply Agreement and Quality Agreement

Notes:

	Doc. Control #			
	Department:		Version:	
	Title:	Product Review Meeting	Date Created:	
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5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

Notes: