

Title Tag	Meta Description
Navigating MOQs: Choosing the Right Stick Pack Manufacturer	Minimum order quantities (MOQs) can make or break your supplement launch. Here's how to find a stick pack manufacturer that fits your scale now, and later.
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Navigating MOQs: Choosing the Right Stick Pack Manufacturer

Every supplement brand eventually hits the same wall: MOQs.

Go too big too soon? You burn cash on unproven product.

Too small? Most contract manufacturers have equipment for either large or small runs (not both), so you could outgrow your partner and have to go through a messy transition.



At Steuart Nutrition, we've been on both sides of that wall... working with huge brands shipping millions of units a month, as well as supporting new brands just getting started before the numbers say we should.

In this article, I'll break down what we've learned about navigating that tension, and teach you how to make a smart decision from day one.

The Stakes

To launch smart, you need to choose a partner that helps you build with a clear path to scale. Easier said than done...

Choose the wrong stick pack co packer, and you could get locked into:

- Subpar flavor
- Formulations that clump or separate
- Cheap off-brand packaging
- A partner who can't scale when your product finally takes off

It's complicated to find someone who checks all those boxes. But like my dad used to say when I was growing up: *"Nothing's complicated. You just haven't broken it down yet."*

Why Are MOQs So High?

It's easy to assume high minimums are just greed, but usually, it's math.

Understanding stick pack Minimums

Here's the challenge:

- Whether you're running 20,000 or 100,000 sticks, the overhead is largely the same. Setup, line time, cleaning, quality assurance—small orders skyrocket unit costs because every step has to happen, no matter the run size.
- Print packaging, film, and scrap costs add up quickly. It's not uncommon for manufacturers to burn through 10-15,000 impressions just on setup for a new product. So if you order 10,000 impressions instead of 100,000, you'll end up paying 2-3x more

per unit, and your COGS will be dramatically higher.

- Equipment matters. Small single-lane stick pack machines, often from China, tend to produce lower-quality results. Seals, film tension, and even the way the stick feels in your hand are different. That might feel fine early on, but it's not the foundation you want to scale from.

The Misunderstanding

Most first-time founders assume, "I'll just find someone to make 20,000 sticks and figure it out later." Then, they're shell-shocked to hear how high MOQs can be (most manufacturers start out between 100,000 to 500,000 sticks).

Some get talked into a big order of a flavor they haven't tested, while others might find a shop with a single-lane machine that can handle a low MOQ run.

But since most places don't have small and large volume capabilities, successful brands end up dealing with the headache of vetting new partners RIGHT when they finally get their momentum going.

What to Look for in a Stick Pack Manufacturer

The right partner should:

- Be able to start with a run size that works for your brand, but only if there's a realistic path to scale. So many of our brand partners come to us after outgrowing their manufacturer, and it's a huge headache for them to navigate.
- Have single-lane machines all the way up to commercial 10-lane high-speed lines. They won't just have multi-lane machines, they'll have equipment that can handle real throughput and national demand.
- Believe in your brand's ability to grow. Their goal shouldn't just be to fill their line, they should be invested for the long term.
- Offer clear, scalable pricing without mystery markups as your volume increases.

Real-World Example: Launching an Electrolyte Brand

The *real* work gets done before the first stick gets made. One of the biggest mistakes I see is brands launching with formulas that clump, don't flow well, or don't taste right — and they don't find out until it's too late.

Here's a story about getting it done right...



We recently worked with a founder. They had a promising setup:

- Clear personal brand, and an existing audience to leverage
- Strong differentiation strategy using clean sweeteners and intentional flavor targeting
- Clear COGS and retail shelf pricing targets

To get started, they wanted to start with a 20,000-per-flavor stick pack order. And we took the project, because we believed in their roadmap.

So we started with R&D, developing a formula with solubility and flavor as top priorities.

Allowing them to stay true to their values and tell an authentic brand story was key. That meant avoiding conventional sweeteners, and focusing on natural ingredients that would resonate with their audience.

Then we matched their brand vision with the right packaging. And finally, structured a launch plan with clear visibility into how costs would scale with volume.

Then we put together their first run, reducing risk for the brand early, while still setting them up to grow.

Your Action Plan

Whether you're looking for a [stick pack manufacturer](#) for a [liquid supplement](#) or a [powder supplement](#), this is what I'd recommend:

- Invest in the formula up front. It's your foundation. A product that tastes right will last, and those that don't, won't.
- Choose a partner who can scale with you, not just run your first batch. If you don't, you'll have to start all over once things take off.
- Learn where your true costs live – with particular focus on packaging and labor.
- Ask what kinds of machines your product will run on. For a quick primer, check out our article on the [different types of powder blenders](#).
- Make sure you're not just buying production, but building a partnership, too.

Shopping for Quotes?

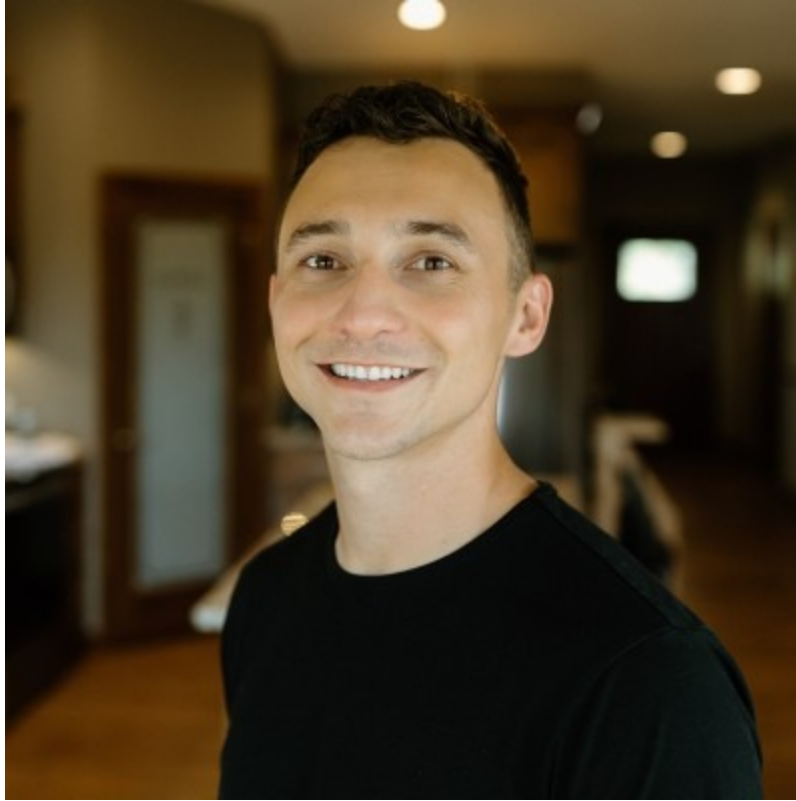
We're Steuart Nutrition, a [stick pack manufacturer](#) that understands how to launch and scale a supplement brand the right way.

Betting on brands is how we operate. As we scaled, we invested in capacity, bought machines early, and built systems long before POs landed – because when we believe in a founder and their product, we think you should prepare for what's next.

When the time is right, [book a discovery call](#).

We'll talk about your product, goals, go-to-market plan, and how we can help.

Ben Steuart — CEO & Owner, Steuart Nutrition



Ben Steuart is the co-founder and CEO of Steuart Nutrition, a contract manufacturing and supplement innovation partner for powder, liquid, and stick-pack supplements. He launched the company in 2019 alongside his wife, Sarah, building on his lifelong roots in the food production industry, where he grew up working in his father's food-manufacturing business in Mabel, Minnesota.

Throughout his career, Ben has developed deep expertise in supplement manufacturing and business operations. At Steuart, he leads with a commitment to **lean operations**, fostering long-term partnerships, and delivering flexible, transparent service—prioritizing the client's vision as much as his own. His leadership guided the business's rapid expansion from a single facility to multiple locations, enabling agile responses to market needs—from producing hand sanitizer during the COVID-19 pandemic to scaling CBD and nutrition supplement lines.

Ben's approach is rooted in strong values—his faith as a born-again Christian deeply informs the company's mission of “glorifying God and establishing a transformational workplace”. This culture of integrity and continuous improvement fosters a trusting, mission-driven environment, distinguishing Steuart as both a capable and conscientious industry leader.