

HOW TO EVALUATE SUPPLIERS FOR SATELLITE PROGRAMS: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Use these questions to uncover not only a supplier's technical capabilities, but also their ability to support your program through every phase of development, integration, and launch.

EXPERIENCE AND SPACEFLIGHT PEDIGREE

- ☐ What is your company's overall flight pedigree in space?
- ☐ What is the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of your components?
- ☐ Can you provide Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF) data?
- ☐ Have you supported similar missions with flight-proven components? (Spaceflight heritage is a strong indicator of reliability)

QUALIFICATION

- ☐ What types of environmental and functional testing do you perform?
Proof/Burst Tests: These tests evaluate a component's ability to withstand the maximum operational pressure they will face. Proof tests apply pressure above normal operating levels to check for leaks or deformation, while burst tests push the component to failure to determine its maximum pressure limit.
Endurance Tests: Endurance tests simulate long-term use by repeatedly operating the component under normal or extreme conditions. They help assess wear, fatigue, and overall durability over the product's expected lifespan.
Acceptance Tests: Performed on production units before delivery, acceptance tests confirm that each component meets design and quality standards.
- ☐ Do you provide vacuum, thermal cycle, shock, or vibration test data?
- ☐ Can you perform or arrange leakage testing?
- ☐ Do you test in-house or via a third party?
- ☐ Can you provide 100% functional and environmental testing across all units?

DESIGN SUPPORT & ENGINEERING

- ☐ Do you offer support during early design stages through to final integration and testing?
- ☐ How accessible is your engineering support throughout the project lifecycle?
- ☐ Can you modify standard components for application-specific requirements?
- ☐ Do you have a broad portfolio of flight-qualified components that give flexibility for evolving mission needs?

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MATERIALS & COMPATIBILITY

- ☐ Are your components compatible with space-grade fluids and materials?
- ☐ Can you demonstrate expertise in fluid-material interactions?
- ☐ If needed, are you capable of working with exotic or non-standard materials?

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- ☐ Are you certified to AS9100 or other aerospace standards?
- ☐ Do you provide full traceability and documented quality assurance policies with your parts?
- ☐ How do you manage product revalidation?
- ☐ Can you provide evidence of lifecycle tracking and regulatory compliance?

PRODUCTION & SCALABILITY

- ☐ How quickly can you adapt if production volume or timelines change?
- ☐ Can you scale production without sacrificing quality or creating supply chain bottlenecks?

EXPORT & GLOBAL READINESS

- ☐ Are you ITAR/EAR compliant?
- ☐ Can you provide export-ready solutions that align with international mission requirements?