

LABORATORY PRODUCT BRIEF

Results from 2013 Lab Buyer Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Laboratories cannot function without the necessary supplies. Qorpak's 2013 lab buyer survey sheds light on how buyers of laboratory supplies operate and how certain suppliers perform. The intent of the research is to provide context for discussions on building the most efficient and effective sourcing model for laboratory supplies. The research suggests that, for many buyers and sellers, there is opportunity for improvement.

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SURVEY APPROACH

In May 2013, Qorpak contacted over 5,000 people who buy laboratory supplies. The survey was sent electronically and conducted via SurveyMonkey.

The questionnaire addressed four major topics:

- Categories purchased
- Supplier selection criteria
- Supplier evaluation
- Impact of macro events

RESPONDENTS

We received 407 responses from a wide variety of industries.

Industry	% Respondents
Chemical	17%
Industrial	9%
University & education	7%
Biotech & life science	7%
Water & wastewater	6%
Environmental	6%
Testing & research	6%
Food & beverage	5%
Pharmaceuticals	5%
Petrochemical & fuels	5%
Healthcare	4%
Government	4%
Agricultural	3%
Other	14%
Total	100%

Many well-known and well-respected laboratories were among the respondents. Specialty and emerging laboratories were also included.

FINDINGS

We will review findings in four areas.

Categories purchased

Respondents bought a wide array of categories. Laboratory packaging and instruments were the most broadly purchased by survey respondents.

Industry	% Respondents
Laboratory glassware and plasticware	83%
Laboratory instruments, utensils, or benchtop equipment	77%
Safety products	69%
Chemical solutions, reagents, or media	67%
Chromatography, microbiology, and other testing supplies	42%

Supplier selection criteria for laboratory glassware and plasticware

The survey went deeper into the purchasing dynamics of laboratory glassware and plasticware.

First, we examined the most important criteria buyers look for in their supplier. Respondents were asked to rate each element on a 1-10 scale. Results highlight the importance of reliability (both in terms of product quality and delivery) and affordable pricing in addition to the specific performance criteria needed for the containers.

Element	% Respondents rating 9 or 10
Product quality	73%
Attractive pricing	71%
Specific product needs	68%
Reliable delivery	67%
Convenience of ordering	63%
Quick delivery	55%
Expertise of sales representative and customer service	45%
Breadth of offering	36%
Relationship with sales representative and customer service	36%
Credit and payment terms	35%

Second, we examined how narrowly buyers built their supply chain. The results indicate that, while 61% of respondents did all or the majority of their business with one supplier, almost 90% of buyers worked with multiple suppliers. Only 12% of respondents were exclusive to only one supplier.

Sourcing Approach	% Respondents
Buy from only one supplier	12%
Buy majority from one supplier, with other suppliers included as needed	49%
Buy from two main suppliers, with a roughly equal split	5%
Buy from an array of suppliers	34%

Both of these analyses indicate there is room for high-quality suppliers to make headway in the market.

Supplier evaluation for laboratory glassware and plasticware

Respondents were asked about their primary supplier of laboratory packaging. The answers are presented here according to the Net Promoter methodology. The heart of the methodology is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is based on the answer to one key question, [How likely are you to recommend \[company X\] to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0 to 10?](#) The scores are separated into three categories:

- **Promoters** (score 9 or 10): Customers are advocates; they will passionately refer colleagues and help build that supplier’s business.
- **Passives** (score 7 or 8): Customers are satisfied but are not vocal advocates; they are vulnerable to being pulled away by competitors.
- **Detractors** (score 0-6): Customers are unhappy or not completely satisfied; they will spread negative word-of-mouth about that supplier.

To calculate the Net Promoter Score, simply take the percentage of Promoters from the respondent pool and subtract the percentage of Detractors.

This approach is appealing because, unlike other “satisfaction” metrics, Net Promoter has been quantitatively linked to better bottom-line results. Said another way, there is a positive correlation between higher NPS and better company financial performance. Across many industries, companies with higher NPS have more loyal customers who buy more, stay longer, become advocates, and provide feedback and ideas that propel the organization even further.

Respondent scores are shown below only for suppliers with more than 20 observations.



Supplier	% Promoters	% Detractors	Net Promoter Score
Qorpak	68%	6%	62%
Dealer A	54%	8%	46%
Dealer B	34%	25%	9%
All Other	47%	24%	24%
Overall Sample	50%	19%	31%

You can learn more about Net Promoter by visiting NetPromoter.com or by reading Berlin Packaging's (our parent company) white paper called [Winning with Customers: Establishing a Customer Focused Organization](#).

Impact of macro events

Finally, we addressed two additional questions.

With all of the foreign imports of glassware and laboratory supplies, are you concerned about the quality and the ability of the products to meet USP, FDA, or other current US requirements?

Of those respondents with an opinion, 66% said that they were concerned.

Are you experiencing any funding cutbacks or business slow down as a result of government sequestration?

Only 18% of respondents said they were seeing an impact.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPERATIVES

Qorpak's survey of over 400 buyers of laboratory supplies showed there is opportunity to improve the supply chain.

The imperatives are for sellers to:

- Invest in improving reliability (both in terms of product quality and delivery accuracy) and affordable pricing.
- Keep pressing for new business. Buyers generally consider more than one supplier, so there is room to win new business with better performance.
- Thoughtfully evaluate how well you are serving your customers. Consider a deeper analysis that calculates your Net Promoter Score and uncovers key drivers of your score. Enact changes to improve your service levels.

And for buyers to:

- Evaluate how happy you are with your supply partners. The performance of the average supplier is not overly strong in our survey, so you should seek to locate and work with the handful of suppliers that thrill you. You may wish to ask your suppliers how they measure and perform on customer satisfaction and customer thrill.
- Get documentation from your suppliers to alleviate concerns about foreign sourcing. Non-U.S. sources may have a cost advantage for you, and there are ways to minimize and eliminate the risks when done properly.

ABOUT QORPAK, A DIVISION OF BERLIN PACKAGING

Qorpak, a division of [Berlin Packaging](#), is a leading worldwide supplier of laboratory containers and supplies. For more than 30 years, Qorpak has served laboratory, research, and testing professionals through its own expert sales and service team as well as through an international network of distributors. In addition to thousands of types of containers and closures in plastic, glass, and metal, Qorpak sells commonly used chemicals, supplies, and benchtop equipment. Qorpak is a one-stop shop, with a majority of these products in-stock and ready to ship. Qorpak is a Hybrid Packaging Supplier in the laboratory marketplace, as Qorpak brings together the best elements of manufacturing, distribution, and value-added service providers. In addition to containers, Qorpak provides kitting, packaging design, financing, consulting, warehousing, and logistics services. The company can be reached at 1.800.922.7558, [Qorpak.com](#), and on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).