



A contract manufacturer, or co-packer, is a company that manufactures and packages food for other companies to sell. Co-packers can provide food entrepreneurs with a variety of services in addition to manufacturing and packaging products.

What Range of Services Do Co-packers Provide?

Contract manufacturers can offer a wide range of services, depending on their capabilities, capacity and experience. Services may include:

- recipe development or formulation
- scale-up
- production
- packaging
- labeling
- storage
- shipping

How Do Companies Establish Themselves as Co-Packers?

1. **Scrutinize your Facilities** – Before launching your company as a co-manufacturer, particular attention should be paid to the design, flow, space and capacity of your facility. All operations should be reviewed to identify potential bottlenecks, waste, food safety issues or inefficiencies. Many co-packing businesses serve multiple clients at any given time who may have different specifications. Good pre-planning and organization can help you identify problems before they happen.
2. **Regulatory Compliance** – Both the co-packer and client must follow all provincial and federal regulations. Ensure that your facility and client are properly permitted and adhere to appropriate labeling guidelines.
3. **Advertise** – Many food manufacturing associations and provincial governments offer free online advertising and directories for co-packers. In Manitoba, you can have your company listed on the Manitoba Co-Packer Services Finder App at: [Manitoba Co-Packer Services App \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)
4. **Invest in Staff Training and Development** – To be a successful co-packer, you must provide consistency and reliability to your customers. Robust training programs are essential to ensure that staff have the technical knowledge to meet customer demands, meet food safety requirements, and maintain a seamless operation. Providing a high quality, consistent product to your customers will help you build trust and avoid costly mistakes.
5. **Obtain Appropriate Insurance** – Ensure that you are adequately insured to protect you and your business against any unforeseen events or liability. The following resource may be helpful: [Insurance Requirements and Considerations for Food Processors \(gov.mb.ca\)](https://gov.mb.ca)
6. **Legal Counsel** – Talk with a lawyer before entering into a co-manufacturing agreement with clients. Ensure that your interests are protected, and that the roles and responsibilities of both parties are clear before designing or signing any contracts.

Manitoba Agriculture can help you build your future in food. Our business development specialists offer consulting, pathfinding services, training and resources that will help you manage and grow your business.

Get support every step of the way.

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