



**John Faulkner**  
Vice President of  
Sales and Marketing  
BMP Medical

# MEDTECH makers

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## The Importance of Collaboration Within Medical Device Manufacturing— A Medtech Makers Q&A

There are many ways to ensure a recipe for success, but communication, transparency, and flexibility must be part of it.

By **Sean Fenske** • Editor-in-Chief

**V**ery few medical devices make it to market these days with one company handling the design, development, manufacture, package, sterilization, sales, and all the other tasks tied to a product. As such, cooperation with partners is critical to ensure a successful launch. It's an achievement, however, certainly easier said than done. It takes commitment and a comprehensive plan.

That plan can't only be developed by the manufacturer of record though. Rather, any supply partners with which the OEM is working must be "all in" on the project as well, bringing the assurance of quality, reliability, and collaboration to the table. OEMs must know they can rely on these manufacturing partners to work at their side on a variety of tasks.

This level of cooperation is exactly what earned BMP Medical recognition for being an exemplary partner for medical device manufacturers. John Faulkner, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at BMP Medical, took time to share the story of why the company earned an award and how the company handles the partnerships it has with a number of customers within the medtech space.

**Sean Fenske: I understand BMP Medical was honored with an award from the Worcester Business Journal. What**

**was this award and why did BMP Medical receive it?**

**John Faulkner:** BMP Medical was selected as a winner for our overall partnerships within the medical device industry. The original nomination was from the Worcester Business Journal, received by MassMEP. MassMEP is a Massachusetts-driven resource for mid-size manufacturers across Massachusetts with the ultimate goal of helping them achieve growth. BMP Medical has worked with MassMEP for eight years and have found them to be a great manufacturing training resource.

We opted to highlight the partnership with a startup company called Rhinostics for this award. Rhinostics is also a Massachusetts-based company. The firm is a spin-out company based on technology licensed from the Wyss Institute and Harvard Medical School. The rapid deployment of the swab, which has an active end that can be automated as it enters the diagnostic workflow, allowed Harvard University to test campus wide to manage COVID-19 outbreaks.

BMP Medical is a third-generation business that works with leading Fortune 500 OEM companies and promising startups on developing and manufacturing innovative custom plastic solutions for some of the most challenging medical and diagnostic products.

**Fenske:** *What was it like attempting to collaborate on a project like this during the pandemic? Were you forced to change your typical protocols and did you gain any best practices from it?*

**Faulkner:** BMP Medical, like most businesses during COVID, faced significant challenges. Collaboration from a distance with incoming new customers was needed. The fact BMP Medical is a Massachusetts-based company was an advantage for some local new incoming projects.

Protecting the workforce was of utmost importance and we had to reconfigure employee workspaces and guidelines throughout the facility to achieve this. A heightened focus to manage risks to ensure business growth and stability during COVID was a priority of top management at BMP Medical. We also had to remodel the plant flow and anticipate fluctuations and our ability to respond rapidly as part of our new and continuous business model.

As a result, we took an additional 25,000 sq. ft. back from the facility we had been previously renting to have space to handle future supply chain fluctuations.

**Fenske:** *What did it mean to BMP to be able to aid in the effort to treat COVID-19?*

**Faulkner:** As a third-generation custom plastic manufacturing business, it has been very rewarding to produce medical device and diagnostics products for OEMs and promising startups that have impacted lives for the past 45 years. We took pride in our readiness to manufacture a COVID-related nasal swab as part of a testing system that tested over 20 million people. We have a humble attitude and recognize we're part of a larger whole within the medical device industry.

**Fenske:** *What does BMP do when working with a customer to enhance the collaboration between the two companies?*

**Faulkner:** We believe in providing transparency from the start in collaborating with a customer when developing a well-thought solution and comprehensive product lifecycle plan. We also have long lasting partnerships with outside resources when needed. We take a six-P cGMP approach to solving incoming project challenges: People (and Partners), Premises, Processes, Products, Procedures, and Proof.

**Fenske:** *What challenges do you face with regard to successful collaboration with a new customer who isn't familiar with BMP Medical and how do you strive to resolve them?*

**Faulkner:** Some new customers coming to BMP Medical require our knowledge with FDA, cGMP, and ISO 13485:2016 certifications and guidelines on manufacturing a finished device and/or component. Medical device design, development, and manufacturing can be an involved process with guidelines that vary greatly depending on the type of device you are devel-

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oping. We do a fair amount of coaching customers to deliver go-to-market success.

**Fenske:** *Do you have considerations medical device manufacturers should keep in mind to ensure a successful collaboration when working with a service partner?*

**Faulkner:** Being nimble in the medical device and diagnostic industry has helped to contribute to our personal continued growth. We strongly feel the fact BMP Medical is a 100% privately held company allows us to pivot quickly to address challenges rapidly.

There are several recommendations I would suggest.

- Be nimble
- Consider a six-P cGMP approach to addressing incoming projects
- Provide transparency in all you do
- Create a business model that anticipates fluctuations, making your business and your customer more resilient to change
- Never stop making continuous improvement a part of your business

**Fenske:** *Do you have any additional comments you'd like to share based on any of the topics we discussed or something you'd like to tell medical device manufacturers?*

**Faulkner:** BMP Medical has recently finished fully integrating an all-in-one manufacturing ERP software at its 80,000 sq. ft. Sterling, Massachusetts-based facility. We also believe in investing in education. Our entire team has just finished a managerial leadership training program at UMass Lowell to refine and develop new skillsets to increase effectiveness. Invest and promote your workforce from within.