

# *Measuring the True Value of Custom Capability*

Discover how the intricacies of custom offerings can impact profits, relationships and the future of your business.

“The reward for custom is great — you get a one-of-a-kind solution, higher margins and repeat business. It’s very much a win-win for all involved.”

— Mark St. Peter, Greater China import executive and marketing manager



## INNOVATE AND LEVEL UP WITH MADE-TO-ORDER PRODUCTION

Specially made products provide a level of customer service that goes beyond offering a good price or a great deal. “Custom capability is valuable because it offers clients something unique they cannot get from traditional suppliers with a set product line,” says Mark St. Peter, a Greater China import executive and marketing manager.

Explore strategies and lessons to help boost your business’s reputation as a resource for priceless quality and create a loyal following.

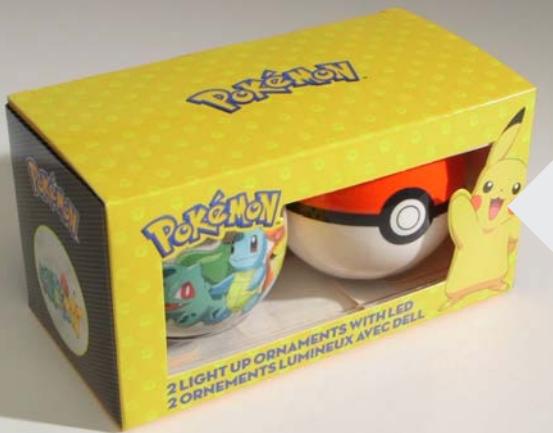
“Customization generally translates to higher margins, repeat orders and a better, stronger, long-term relationship between the distributor and their end-client.”



*Become a one-stop shop for all of your client's personalized needs, like this customizable, multifunction backpack created by Greater China.*

# 1

## EMBRACE THE PACE OF THE CUSTOM PROCESS



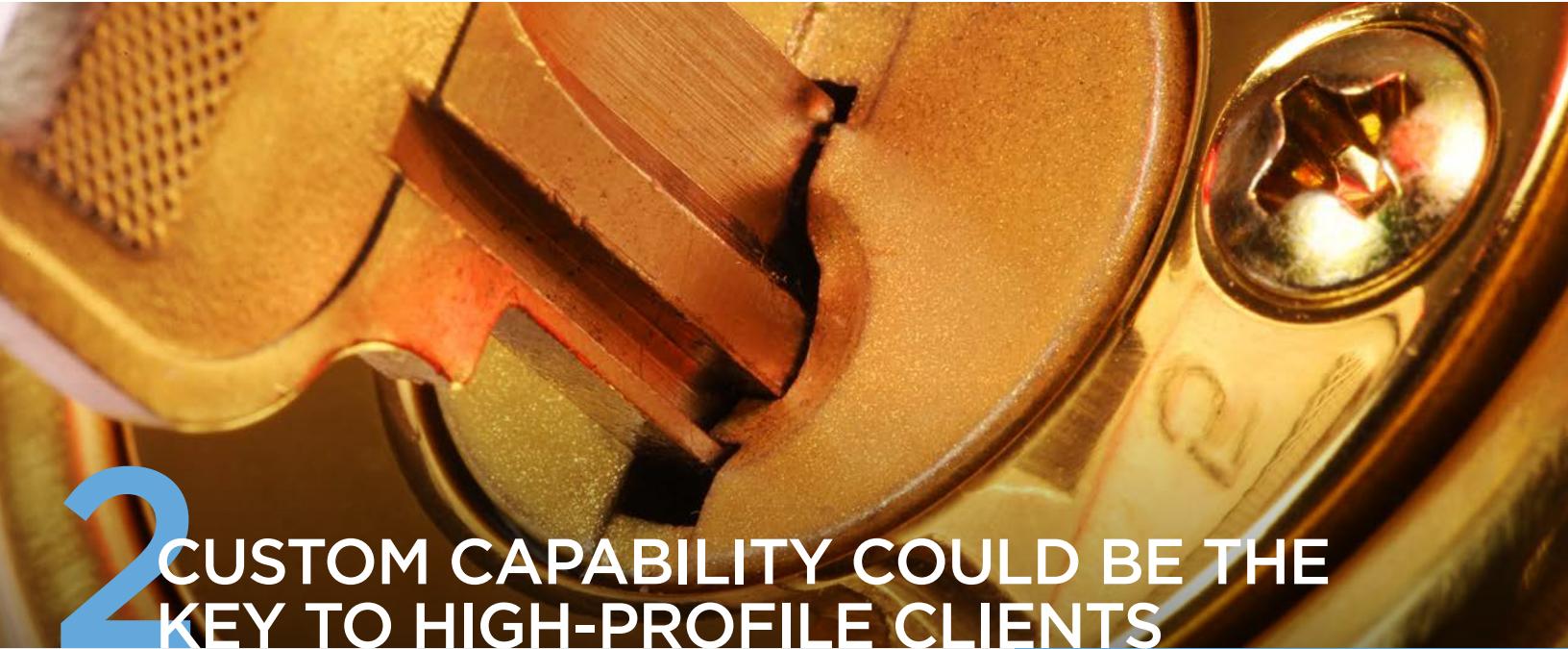
*Help clients buy in to the custom process by creating items they can't find anywhere else, like this novelty ornament produced by Greater China.*



Creating custom items involves a more intensive process than mass-marketed pieces. In this industry, challenge is inevitable, but you can stay ahead of the game by knowing what's in store. It takes an experienced supplier and knowing exactly what aspects of the process will take the most care and planning — for example, if tooling is needed. "Since tooling is often difficult, if not impossible, to change once it's complete, there is often a longer, more comprehensive ideation process at the front of the project to make sure what goes to tooling actually meets the clients expectations for look, function, branding, etc.," says St. Peter.

"A project where custom tooling is involved may require 120 days from PO to when the product is ready to ship."

Understanding the process can ultimately elevate your business by boosting your reputation for delivering quality customer service.



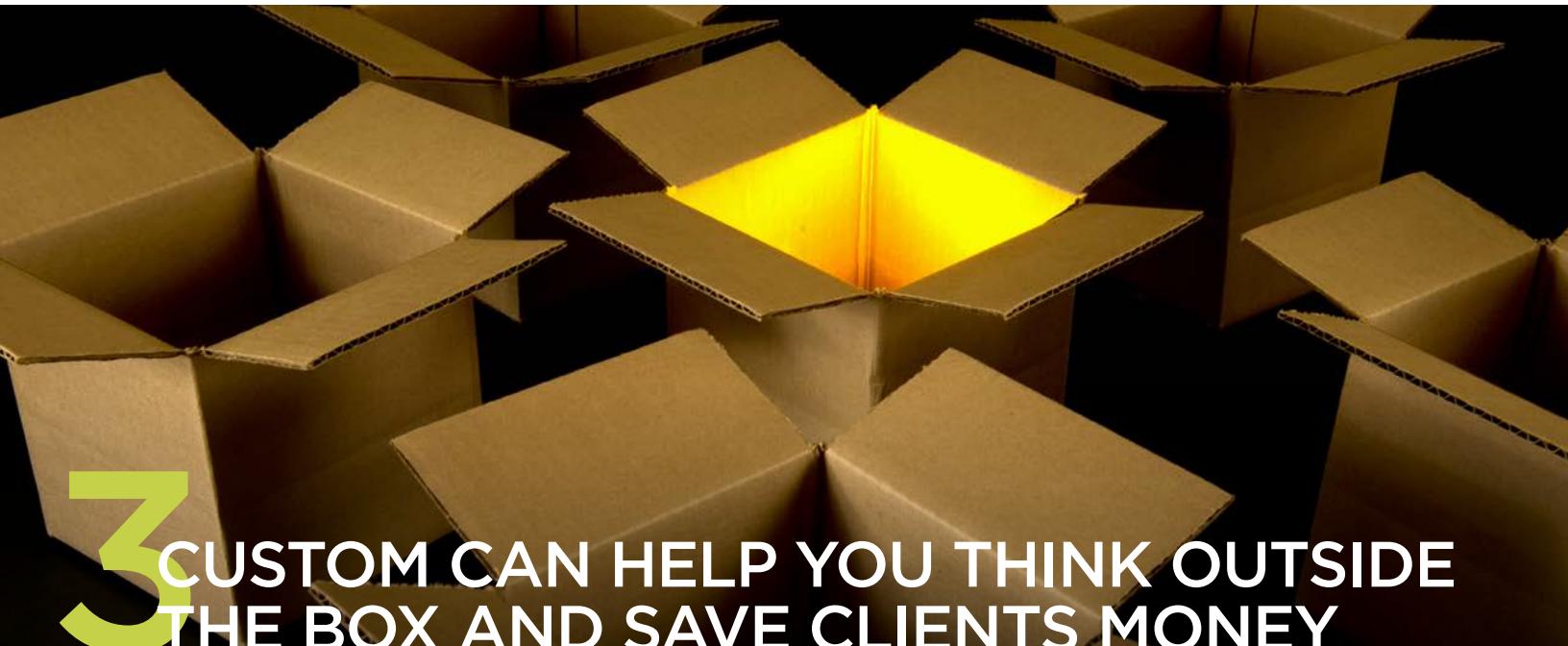
## 2 CUSTOM CAPABILITY COULD BE THE KEY TO HIGH-PROFILE CLIENTS

Want to expand your business to include high-end clients? Take a hint from Greater China, who's worked with Lily Pulitzer, Game Stop, Starbucks and more. "Usually the larger the company, the more decision-makers that are involved, so the challenge is often to balance creativity, ideas and budgetary constraints with timelines and manufacturing capabilities," says St. Peter. "As the ideation and approval process tends to take longer the larger the end-client is, the focus must be to start early with some agreed milestones to keep the project on track and on time."

[ "Plan ahead so you have enough time for the required ideation, sampling, approval, and production/delivery time." ]



*The perfect custom tumbler design features both ceramic and rubber textures and travels everywhere for unforgettable messaging.*



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## CUSTOM CAN HELP YOU THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX AND SAVE CLIENTS MONEY

One of the greatest misconceptions about custom is that it has to be very expensive. Establishing good relationships with trusted vendors can be a cost-saving measure in the long run. Lasting connections create a sense of security that allows your team to do its best creative work, delivering exactly what the client needs and wants. Greater China has worked with many vendors in their 23-plus years in the business. “Vendors work with us to provide timely, cost-effective products,” says St. Peter.



*Talking owl provides a valuable opportunity for customer engagement, delivering important information about the client's product.*

[ “This helps us provide clients with a solution that is both unique and cost-effective with a winning price.” ]

# 4

## IS CUSTOM THE TREND OF THE FUTURE?



*Greater China got creative when it came to representing a well-known brand through a playful keepsake hat with an eye-catching design.*

In an increasingly digital and social media-driven world, ingenuity is vital to keeping customers happy, so made-to-order items are only likely to grow in popularity. Yet because of the demand for personalization, clients will want items faster. “The challenge in our fast-paced industry — where many suppliers have an inventory of commodity product — is getting the client to plan for the time the customization process takes,” says St. Peter. He also emphasizes the need to educate clients on the intricacies of production.

“We tend to live in a ‘gotta have it now’ world. We are often approached for ideas for a given promotion and we try to offer that extra creative element to make our submission more unique and less commodity. I think the custom category will continue to grow as more end-users want to have their own unique branding solution,” says St. Peter.

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