

1688.com Counterfeit Risk: 2025 Guide

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When it comes to sourcing products from China, most international businesses know **Alibaba.com**. Fewer realize that its sister platform, **1688.com**, has become a growing target for foreign buyers chasing ultra-low prices and direct access to factories.

1688 is often described as “domestic Alibaba” because it was designed for the Chinese market. That’s precisely why it’s cheaper—and why it comes with unique challenges. Here’s what global brands should know before diving in.

What Is 1688.com?

1688.com is a **B2B e-commerce marketplace** run by the Alibaba Group. Unlike Alibaba.com, which was built for international trade, 1688 connects Chinese wholesalers, factories, and manufacturers with local businesses.

Because suppliers compete in China’s domestic market, prices are highly competitive, often lower than what international buyers see on Alibaba. Many sellers are factory owners rather than intermediaries, meaning **factory-direct pricing** is common.

Why Buyers Are Interested in 1688.com

- **Lower Prices:** Factory-direct rates and intense local competition mean 1688 can undercut Alibaba, especially on bulk orders.
- **Flexibility:** Many suppliers offer **low minimum order quantities**, even allowing test purchases of just a few units. This makes it easier to sample products before scaling up.

- ○ **Direct Manufacturer Access:** Buyers can often negotiate customizations, clearer terms, and better pricing by bypassing middlemen.

The Risks: Counterfeits and Weak Protections

Cheaper doesn't always mean safer. For global buyers, 1688 carries real risks:

- ○ **Counterfeit Detection Challenges:** The platform was built for China's domestic market, where **IP protection strategies** and enforcement mechanisms are weaker than on Alibaba. Counterfeiters exploit this, often copying brands' logos and packaging with alarming accuracy.
- ○ **Complex Interface:** The platform is entirely in Chinese, making navigation and supplier vetting difficult for international users.
- ○ **Limited Payment Options:** Transactions typically run through **Alipay**, which isn't always convenient for foreign companies.

For businesses that value **brand protection**, sourcing blindly from 1688 can expose them to **ecommerce counterfeits, IP infringement, and reputational risk**.

How to Vet Suppliers on 1688

Due diligence is everything. A few red flags and signals to check:

- ○ **Company Longevity:** Look for suppliers in business **3+ years**. Scammers often vanish quickly.
- ○ **Employee Count:** Fewer than 50 staff often signals a trading company rather than a manufacturer.
- ○ **Office & Factory Size:** Established facilities usually mean more reliable operations.
- ○ **"Delivery Guarantee" Badge:** A safeguard showing the supplier deposited funds with the platform to ensure delivery.

These steps don't eliminate risk, but they make **ecommerce brand protection** stronger from the start.

How to Enforce Your IP on 1688

1688 falls under Alibaba Group's **Intellectual Property Protection (IPP) Platform**, where brand owners can file complaints. To act effectively:

1. **Register on IPP** - verify your identity as a rights holder.
1. **Register your IP** - trademarks, patents, copyrights.
1. **File Complaints** - with clear URLs and evidence.
1. **Monitor and Respond** - speed is crucial if sellers counter.

Sounds simple? In practice, it's a minefield of paperwork, translations, and endless back-and-forth with sellers.

📌 **Pro tip: hire Axencis to take care of the chaos for you.**

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