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**HAMILTON BRADSHAW**  
Investing in people with passion

## How do I make launching my toy idea child's play?

**Ask  
James**



James Caan

*Dear James*

I WANT to make a prototype of a toy that I have designed. What should I be looking for in a company if I want to make it abroad? How do I know it can be trusted, and what should I do once it is made?

*Name withheld*

RESEARCH potential manufacturers, and make sure you visit them so you can get a better idea of how they work. You should always try to get a competitive rate, so speak to as many companies as you can.

You mention wanting to make it abroad but have you considered staying in Britain? The UK manufacturing industry has been resurgent of late and I would always try to give business to a British factory where possible, especially as you can stay close to the process and check the quality. If however, you are going to produce them abroad, make sure you know all the regulations – for example, health and safety laws.

At this stage, I wouldn't advise a large number of prototypes. All you need before you can start approaching toy-sellers is a sample. Try independent and larger stores but don't be disheartened if the product is not immediately picked up.

Consider setting up a website where your product can be previewed. This helps you establish a brand, which improves your chances

when going into pitches.

Be careful about getting into exclusivity deals. It is understandable to want to see your product on the shelves as soon as possible, but narrowing your option to just one seller may not be the best route.

■ For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to [standard.co.uk/askjames](http://standard.co.uk/askjames). His book, *Start Your Business in 7 Days*, is out now.