



UNITED NATURAL
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The Importance of 3rd Party Certifications and How They Can Help You

One of the best ways for companies in the natural health product industry to highlight the quality of their brands and products in B2B marketplaces like Alibaba is by qualifying for 3rd party certifications. There are many 3rd party certifications for natural health products and dietary supplements covering areas such as sanitary manufacturing process, testing ingredients for identification and purity, organic, non-gmo, etc. Buyers on B2B platforms will be able to understand more about companies and the quality of products through some of the 3rd party certifications listed below.

cGMP (Current Good Manufacturing Practice)

One of the most common 3rd party certifications in the natural health product industry is verification of Current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP). cGMP is integral to the manufacturing of safe, sanitary, well-controlled and documented products. Obtaining cGMP verification from a third-party includes inspection and auditing in accordance with the Federal Register 21 CFR Part 111 and 117. Several organizations currently provide cGMP certifications, such as NSF and UL. This certification is evidence that a company has compliant quality systems in place and is able to handle audits and inspections proficiently. However, cGMP certification verification is not a guarantee of regulatory compliance with the FDA if a subsequent inspection takes place. After completing a cGMP inspection and auditing program, many companies choose to put a "CGMP Certified" logo on product labels.

USP Verified (United States Pharmacopeia)

The USP Dietary Supplement Verification Program is an industry leading quality certification which can help brands build a competitive position by highlighting the manufacturer's commitment to quality. USP Verified tests ingredients listed on the product labels and their declared potency, as well as tests for harmful levels of contaminants like heavy metals (e.g., lead and mercury), microbes, and pesticides. This helps assure customers that they are getting the value and quality they expect from products. USP Verified also tests that a product's ingredients will be released into the body within a specified amount of time for absorption. Lastly, USP Verified also confirms that products have been made according to FDA Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP). After qualifying for the USP Dietary Supplement Verified Program, companies may put a "USP Verified" logo on the product label.

Non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organism)

The Non-GMO Project is a non-profit organization focused on identifying genetically modified organisms within the modern food supply. GMOs can be found in plants, animals, microorganisms or other organisms whose genetic makeup has been modified using genetic engineering or transgenic technology. Founded in 2007, Non-GMO began as an initiative of natural foods retailers in the U.S. and Canada to label products produced in compliance with the Non-GMO Project Standard. This standard aims to allow consumers to identify products that do not contain GMOs at their local food retailers. After Non-GMO certification, companies may put a “Non-GMO” logo on product labels.

USDA Organic

USDA Organic is a certification process for producers of organic food and agricultural products. Businesses that are directly involved in food production can be certified, including seed suppliers, farmers, food processors, retailers and restaurants. USDA certified organic foods are grown and processed according to federal guidelines, such as soil quality, animal raising practices, pest and weed control, and use of additives. Organic producers rely on natural substances and physical, mechanical, or biologically based farming methods to the fullest extent possible. After qualifying for USDA Organic, companies may put a “USDA Organic” logo on product labels.

Other frequently used 3rd party certification in the natural health product industry include:

Certified Vegan

Dairy Free

Gluten Free

Paleo Friendly

Halal

Kosher

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