

FROM FIRST IDEA TO FIRST DENIM ORDER

Startup Denim Brand Development Guide

A practical step-by-step guide for emerging denim and apparel brands exploring a first custom collection, small trial production and private-label details.

Who this guide is for

Founders working with reference photos, sketches, existing garments or early tech packs who need help making fabric, fit, wash, branded-trim and production decisions before committing to a first order.

What this guide will help you do

- Prepare a workable product brief, even if your tech pack is not yet complete.
- Understand why a 30–50 piece trial run can still face fabric and trim minimums.
- Separate the sampling decision from the final bulk-production quotation.
- Know which approvals are needed before production, and what to discuss for repeat orders.

Important: This guide explains a development process, not a binding quote or acceptance of any order. Final MOQ, specifications, prices, availability, sampling scope and lead times require project-specific confirmation.

THE DEVELOPMENT PATH

01 Brief	02 Fabric & trims	03 Sample	04 Approval	05 Bulk & repeat
What you want to make	What is technically and commercially workable	What the first physical sample proves	What must be agreed before production	What is checked and what can be reordered

01 Start with a practical first-product brief

You can begin with a reference photo, sketch, physical sample or tech pack. The first message does not need every detail, but it should identify what you know and what remains open.

- Product: jeans, shorts, skirt, jacket or another denim garment; reference images or physical sample.
- Wearer and fit: intended silhouette, target sizes, measurement references and non-negotiable design details.
- Quantity: total units per style, sizes, proposed colours/washes, trial order vs repeat plan.
- Branding: custom buttons, rivets, zip pullers, leather patches, woven labels, hangtags and packaging.
- Destination and timing: delivery country and any launch deadline, clearly marked as a target.

02 Low MOQ does not mean every component has a low MOQ

TANTYDENIM can review custom development projects starting around 30 pieces per style, with mixed sizes where workable. This is a starting review point, not a universal production guarantee. Feasibility depends on fabric stock, colour splits, wash, construction, trims and partner-factory conditions.

Buyer question	Practical answer
Can I make 10–15 fully custom units?	Not a standard fully custom production commitment. An existing style with limited branding or trim substitutions may be explored if stock and processes permit.
Can I make 30–50 pieces?	Often worth assessing as a trial project. Confirm fabric, sizes, each colour and the specific production process before accepting the order.
Can I reorder at the same MOQ?	Not automatically. Fabric stock, wash batches, colour minimums, branded trims and factory scheduling can change repeat-order conditions.

03 Fabric confirmation comes before a reliable bulk price

A reference image does not establish the cost of the fabric or the amount needed to cut each garment. Two visually similar denims may differ materially in:

- Usable width: affects marker efficiency, garment consumption and cutting waste.
- Weight, composition and stretch: affect fit, handfeel, processing and sourcing options.
- Shrinkage and wash response: influence cutting allowances and finished measurements.
- Stock, price and supplier MOQ: determine whether a short production run is commercially workable.

Our pricing boundary: we cannot provide a reliable bulk-production unit quote until fabric specifications, availability, usable width and sourcing cost have been checked, together with consumption, wash and construction. We do not present a photo-based number as a confirmed price.

04 Custom trims and your brand identity

For many first collections, own-brand details are essential. The garment MOQ and the trim supplier MOQ are separate questions.

Component	What to confirm before ordering
Buttons, rivets, metal hardware	Logo artwork, dimensions, finish/plating, attachment method, whether new tooling or moulds are needed and supplier minimums.
Leather/PU patches, woven labels	Artwork files, text, colour, size, material, placement, approval sample and component minimums.
Zippers, hangtags, packaging	Existing vs custom options, size/colour/finish, print approval, minimums and surplus handling.

If custom tooling is required, confirm mould/tooling charges and ownership terms separately. If trims must be bought in quantities exceeding the garment run, agree in writing what happens to unused branded parts and whether they may be held for future orders.

05 Sampling is a separate decision from bulk production

A physical sample tests a specific combination of fabric, fit, wash, construction and branded details. Before sampling, clarify which dimensions and placements are specified, which are estimates and which need development decisions.

- Agree the sample scope, cost, shipment terms and what counts as an additional revision before payment.
- Use a measurement table or agreed reference sample for fit feedback; describe changes precisely.
- Review fabric, wash shade, fading, distressing, handfeel and shrinkage on the actual result.
- Approve logo positions, button/rivet appearance, patches, labels and packaging samples.

A confirmed sample-development price, when available for that project, does not imply that the bulk unit price has been confirmed.

06 Sign off before bulk cutting

Before a production order is released, both sides should be aligned on the latest approved physical sample, measurement specifications and tolerances, fabric, wash standard, trims, branding, size/colour breakdown, packaging, production terms and delivery arrangements.

Changes after approval may require new checks, price revisions or further sampling. Put major decisions in writing; do not rely only on reference photographs or verbal impressions.

07 Production, quality checks and repeat orders

TANTYDENIM works as a Guangzhou-based denim development and production coordination partner, working with suitable production partners. We do not represent ourselves as owning the production factories.

During production, the agreed requirements provide the reference for process checks, measurement and workmanship review, wash comparison and pre-shipment confirmation. Inspection scope and acceptance standards should be established for the specific order.

For reorders, check the original fabric and trims are still available, whether the colour/wash can be repeated, whether measurements or branding changed, and what quantity the supplier can support. Confirm the next-order MOQ and lead time rather than assuming the first-order terms repeat unchanged.

FIRST DENIM PROJECT CHECKLIST

Complete what you know. Mark unknown items as “to confirm”; this is a preparation tool, not an order commitment.

ITEM	YOUR PROJECT
Brand / contact	_____
Product / style	_____
Reference photos / physical sample	☐ Photos ☐ Sketch ☐ Existing garment ☐ Tech pack
Target first order	_____ pcs per style Colour(s): _____ Size range: _____
Fabric	☐ Confirmed ☐ Candidate ☐ Unknown
Fabric details	Composition: _____ Weight: _____ Usable width: _____
Wash / finish	_____
Brand details	☐ Buttons ☐ Rivets ☐ Labels ☐ Patches ☐ Packaging
Fit / measurements	☐ Ready ☐ Partly ready ☐ Need development
Delivery destination	Country / city: _____
Open decisions	_____

Next step: Send your first style brief and references through tantydenim.com/request-a-quote/. We will review what is confirmed, what requires sourcing or technical checks, and which stage is practical to take next.

This guide is informational. No client designs, confidential tech packs or named customer projects are reproduced.