

Better Buying Partnership Index Report, 2025

Partnership Quality
in Global Supply Chains



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1. Introduction

This report presents findings from the fourth annual 2024 Better Buying Partnership Index (BBPI) ratings cycle. This short, anonymous survey of the quality of buyer-supplier relationships consists of 12 subjective measures and 3 open-ended questions where suppliers can share more in-depth feedback on their buyer's partnership.

The BBPI provides buyers with a unique understanding of the stresses their purchasing practices place on suppliers and a snapshot of the quality of their supplier partnerships across multiple supply chain tiers, including what is working well and where there are opportunities for improvement. To learn more about the BBPI, visit our [Guide to the Better Buying Partnership Index](#) here.

Key Takeways

- 1 In 2024, softgoods achieved its highest BBPI score to date of 52, marking a four-point increase from the previous year in 2023, reflecting notable improvements in buyer-supplier relationships.
- 2 The softgoods' BBPI score improved in ten areas, with the largest increases seen in asking for suppliers' suggestions for product and process innovation (7.4%), stability of buyer's business with suppliers (5.6%), and buyers being a preferred partner (3.9%)
- 3 The correlation analysis of the 12 partnership practices revealed statistically significant relationships, with strengths ranging from 0.055 to 0.731. Based on these results, 11 partnership practices were grouped into three factors and their impact on buyers being a preferred partner was analyzed. These findings provide valuable insights, enabling buyers to identify problem areas and implement proactive measures to foster sustainable partnerships that align more closely with supplier preferences.
- 4 Among nine softgoods subscribers participating in the BBPI survey for two consecutive years, six demonstrated improved scores compared to the previous year. These improvements were driven by increased shares of True Partners and simultaneous decreases in the shares of Collaborators and Detractors.

"Softgoods" is defined in the BBPI 2024 rating cycle as "including apparel, footwear, and household goods."



Recommendations for Buyers

- 1 Buyers should participate in annual ratings cycles year over year to gather insights that benefit both their operations and supplier relationships.
- 2 Buyers should share improved scores with internal and external stakeholders, such as executives, investors, and ratings bodies, to demonstrate year-over-year progress.
- 3 Buyers can use improved scores to help to fulfill corporate sustainability and human rights due diligence reporting requirements by demonstrating progress on purchasing practices.
- 4 Buyers looking to improve their supplier partnerships should focus on improving operational efficiency, and review their current operational processes to identify and eliminate inefficiencies, such as redundancies and bottlenecks, that hinder performance.
- 5 Buyers should establish regular communication touchpoints with suppliers, such as scheduled meetings, progress reviews, and feedback loops. These interactions ensure ongoing dialogue that is transparent, two-way, and aligned with mutual objectives.
- 6 Buyers should involve suppliers in strategic discussions to foster collaboration, align goals, and strengthen partnerships, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable buyer-supplier relationships.

The total number of ratings in the 2024 BBPI ratings cycle was 1,341, a 5.1% decrease over the number of ratings (1,413) in the previous year. Out of a total of 1,341 ratings, 95.9% (n=1,286) rated softgoods buyers, while 4.1% (n=55) rated Consumer Products buyers. The number of Better Buying subscribers has markedly increased from 16 last year to 25 this year (with 15 new subscribers), allowing for a more comprehensive BBPI analysis centered on subscribers. Additionally, 21 out of the 25 subscribers this year belong to the softgoods industry, leading to an approximate 25% increase in ratings for softgoods buyers, from 1,026 last year to 1,286 this year. Due to the heavy representation of softgoods ratings in this year's data, this report covers only softgoods findings.

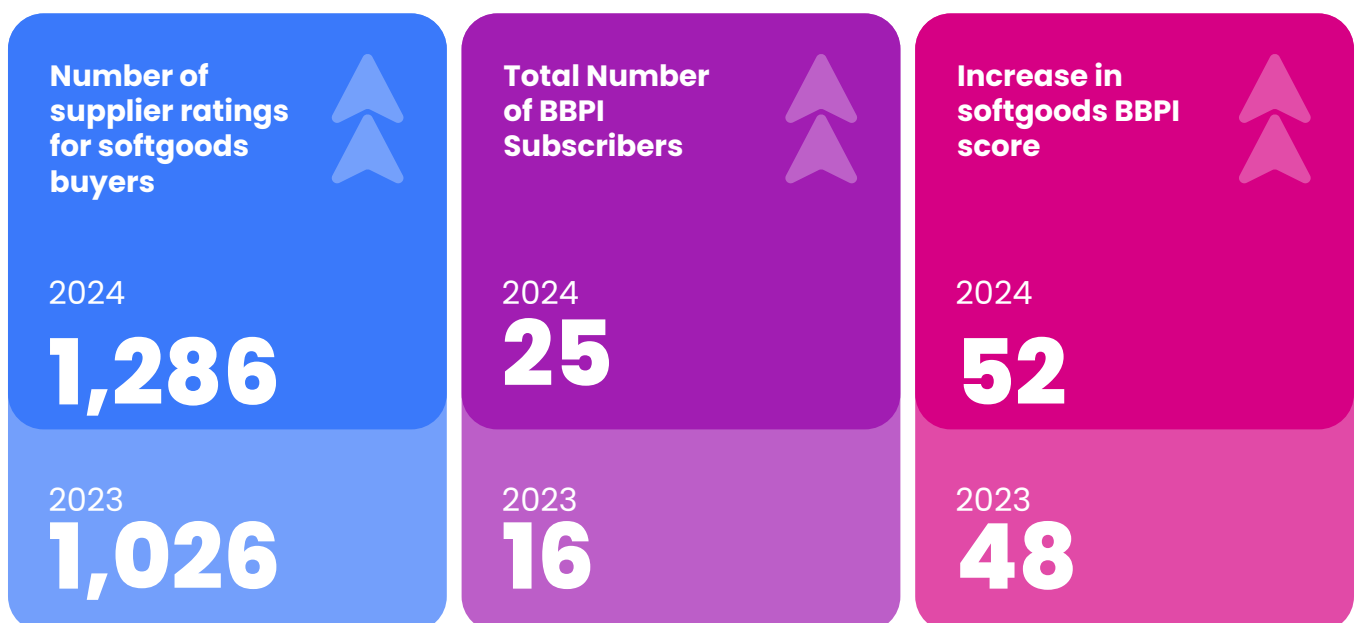


Figure 1. Overview of Participation and Score

Overall Performance

In the 2024 BBPI ratings cycle, the softgoods category of buyers received a score of 52 points. This is a substantial increase of 4 points from 48 points last year and the highest score in the softgoods category since the first BBPI ratings cycle in 2021 (see Figure 3).

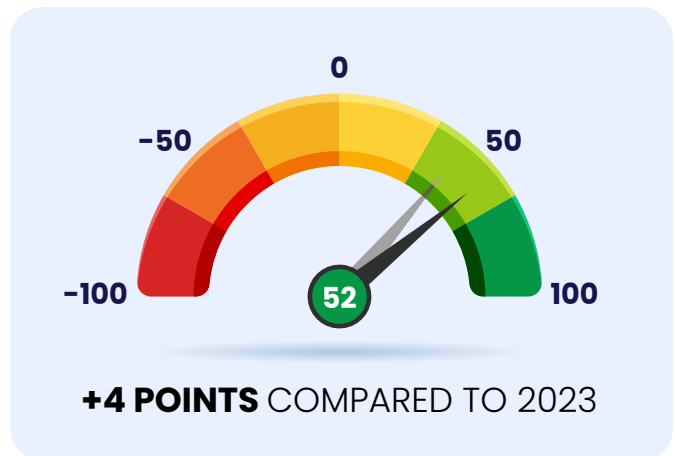


Figure 2. 2024 BBPI Score for Softgoods



Figure 3. Trend in BBPI Score in the Softgoods Category

Note. Changes in aggregate BBPI scores should be interpreted carefully considering that the subscribers participating in the BBPI ratings cycle vary each year.

The BBPI classifies the quality of partnerships between buyers and suppliers into three levels: True Partners, Collaborators, and Detractors. Buyers who are rated as True Partners understand and embody their role in creating mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships with their suppliers. This year in the softgoods category, True Partners accounted for 65% of the percentage share of classified ratings, which is an improvement from the BBPI 2023 where they comprised 63%. For detailed percentage comparisons, please refer to Figure 4.

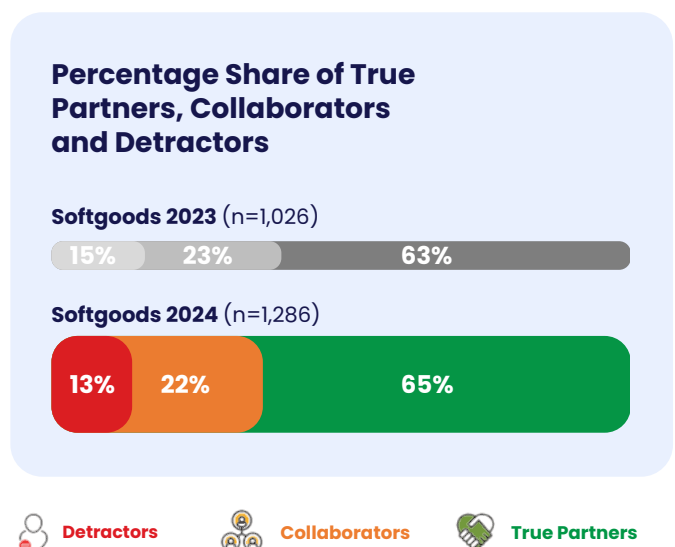


Figure 4. Partnership Categories for Softgoods with 2023 Softgoods Scores in Grey

In the softgoods category, True Partnership performance related to 10 BBPI questions has shown improvement compared to the previous year (see Figure 5). The most substantial

improvement was observed in buyers' efforts to ask for suggestions for product and process innovation, with a 7.4 percentage points increase compared to the previous year.

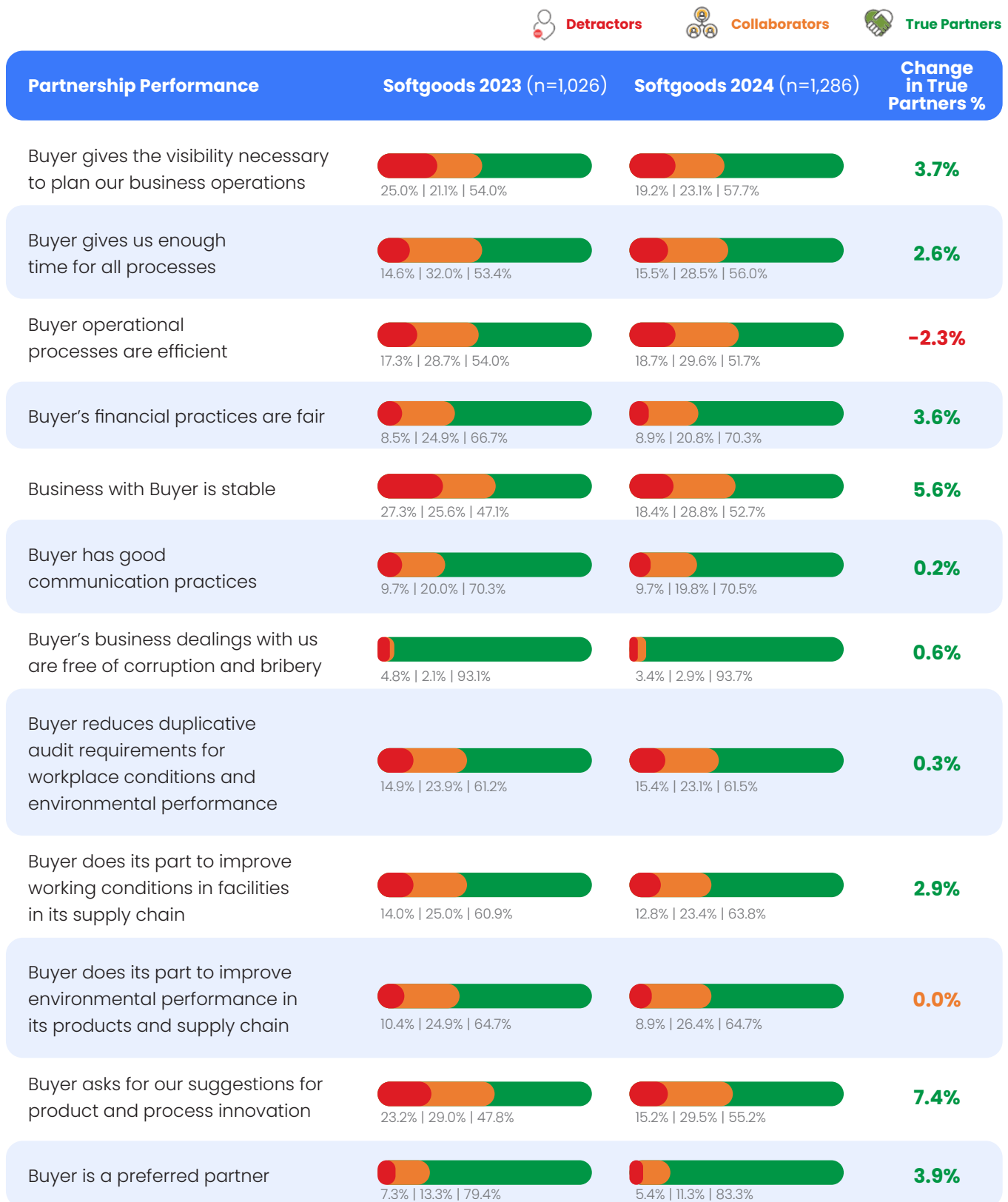


Figure 5. Question-by-Question Partnership Performance of Softgoods Buyers Between Softgoods 2023 and 2024

Participating Suppliers

Suppliers submitted ratings from 56 different countries and regions. Over half of the supplier ratings for softgoods buyers came from the following areas: China (n=382, 29.7% of all ratings); Taiwan (6.8%); United Kingdom (5.6%); Germany (4.8%); Turkey (4.7%).

Most suppliers received orders directly from their buyers (81%), and of those suppliers that answered an optional question about their companies' gross revenue, 12.1% reported less than \$5 million, 19.4% reported revenue between \$5 million and \$24 million, 11.7% reported between \$25 million and \$49 million, 9.5% reported between \$50 million and \$99 million, and the rest had revenues of \$100 million or more (25.1%).

The most common business type for suppliers rating softgoods buyers was OEM/Finished Goods (Whole Package Producers, 48%), followed by OEM/Finished Goods (Final Product Assembly, 22%) and Raw Materials/Ingredients (19%).



2. Key Findings

Performance Improvements of Softgoods Buyers

Visibility and stability of buyers' business with suppliers increased by 4.1 percentage points and 4.6 percentage points, respectively, last year, followed by further increases of 3.7 percentage points and 5.6 percentage points this year. In the current softgoods industry environment, marked by rising consumer demand uncertainty, improvements in these two partnership practices contribute to suppliers' steady and predictable business.

These practices ensure suppliers maintain financial stability and steady cash flow. By reducing financial uncertainty, suppliers can focus on operational efficiency and quality improvement.

Overall, fair financial practices enable suppliers to remain competitive and achieve sustainable growth.

Buyer's operational efficiency was the only practice in this BBPI ratings cycle to decline, dropping by 2.3 percentage

points. This suggests that suppliers are experiencing wastes in resource allocation, redundancies, or bottlenecks, and these issues are not well addressed.

BETTER BUYING INSIGHT
 Fair financial practices involve ethical dealings, including fair pricing, timely payments, and honoring contracts. These practices ensure suppliers maintain financial stability and steady cash flow.

Buyer's fair financial practices increased by 3.6 percentage points. Fair financial practices involve ethical dealings, including fair pricing, timely payments, and honoring contracts.



Figure 6. Performance Improvements in Business Partnership

Correlations and Grouping of Partnership Practices

The 12 key partnership performance areas in the BBPI are interconnected, working together to create a comprehensive framework for assessing and enhancing buyer-supplier relationships. By understanding these interconnections, buyers can identify potential problem areas and take proactive steps to address them, fostering more effective and sustainable partnerships with their suppliers. To explore these interconnections, this

report includes a quantitative analysis of the relationships among the 12 partnership practices.

Table 1 presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis for the 12 partnership practices. All pairwise relationships between the partnership practices were statistically significant, with correlation strengths ranging from as low as 0.055 to as high as 0.731.

TABLE 1 Correlations Between the 12 Partnership Performances

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12
P1	1											
P2	.587**	1										
P3	.590**	.731**	1									
P4	.479**	.510**	.545**	1								
P5	.641**	.604**	.668**	.525**	1							
P6	.549**	.629**	.664**	.562**	.630**	1						
P7	.055*	.079**	.096**	.086**	.102**	.148**	1					
P8	.327**	.380**	.437**	.355**	.370**	.420**	.228**	1				
P9	.438**	.485**	.552**	.460**	.520**	.524**	.119**	.471**	1			
P10	.428**	.459**	.526**	.474**	.493**	.499**	.133**	.436**	.724**	1		
P11	.530**	.423**	.489**	.447**	.466**	.532**	.138**	.329**	.432**	.456**	1	
P12	.457**	.410**	.471**	.567**	.507**	.579**	.137**	.343**	.429**	.385**	.461**	1

Note: Partnership Practice; P1: Providing necessary visibility to plan business operations; P2: Giving enough time for all processes; P3: Buyer’s operational processes efficiency; P4: Using fair financial practices; P5: Stability of buyer’s business with suppliers; P6: Good communication practices; P7: Free of corruption and bribery; P8: Reducing duplicative audits; P9: Striving to improve working conditions; P10: Improving environmental performance in its products and supply chain; P11: Asking suggestions for product and process innovation; P12: Being a preferred partner. Significance levels are * $p < .05$ and ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Providing necessary visibility to plan business operations (P2) and buyer’s operational processes efficiency (P3) showed the strongest correlation ($r = .731, p < .01$). This strong correlation suggests that buyers who allocate sufficient time for processes are also likely to have efficient operational systems, as both reflect organized and well-planned collaboration practices. Similarly, providing necessary visibility to plan business operations (P1) and stability of buyer’s business with suppliers (P5) also showed a strong correlation ($r = .641, p < .01$). This indicates that when buyers provide the necessary visibility for planning, it enhances predictability and trust, contributing to the stability of the business relationship with suppliers.



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Buyers who allocate sufficient time for processes are also likely to have efficient operational systems, as both reflect organized and well-planned collaboration practices.

corruption and bribery is regarded as a baseline expectation in partnerships, with limited direct influence on other performance practices.

As previously noted, the 12 partnership practices are closely interconnected, reflecting their collective role in shaping buyer-supplier relationships. By applying advanced statistical techniques, it is possible to group numerous variables into a smaller number

of factors based on their correlations. Such groupings offer valuable insights, enabling buyers to focus on key areas for improvement and identify effective, efficient ways to enhance their partnerships with suppliers.

In contrast, the weakest correlation was observed between providing necessary visibility to plan business operations (P1) and free of corruption and bribery (P7; $r = .055, p < .05$).



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Visibility and Stability of business are strongly correlated. Predictable business builds trust, and supports more stable buyer-supplier relationships.

Furthermore, free of corruption and bribery (P7) displayed relatively low correlation strengths with other partnership practices. These weak correlations suggest that being free of

A factor analysis¹ was performed based on the correlations among 11 partnership practices, excluding the partnership practice of being a preferred partner (P12). As a result, the 11 partnership practices were grouped into three

categories²: Operational Effectiveness and Collaboration³ (Group 1), Sustainability and Compliance Improvements⁴ (Group 2), and Ethical Business Practices⁵ (Group 3; see Table 2).

1 The extraction method is Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The rotation method is Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization (Direct Oblimin). The number of components (factors) to obtain about 70% of the total variance explained was three. Cumulative variance explained with the three components = 68.663%. KMO and Bartlett Sphericity Test: KMO = .922, Bartlett’s $\chi^2 = 7124.080, df = 55, p < .001$.

2 In general statistical theory, factors should have eigenvalues greater than 1 to be considered meaningful. However, although the eigenvalue of Group 2 was less than 1, the factor was retained due to strong correlations, significant factor loadings, and acceptable internal consistency. These factors represent distinct components that are essential for understanding partnership performance.

3 Factor Loading in the Pattern Matrix: P1 = .911; P2 = .844; P5 = .825; P3 = .788; P6 = .765; P11 = .624; P4 = .616. Eigenvalue = 5.631. Cronbach’s $\alpha = .898$.

4 Factor Loading in the Pattern Matrix: P10 = -.865; P9 = -.864; P8 = -.670. Eigenvalue = .839. Cronbach’s $\alpha = .764$.

5 Factor Loading in the Pattern Matrix: P7 = .975. Eigenvalue = 1.082.

TABLE 2 **Grouping of 11 Partnership Performances**

Group 1 Operational Effectiveness and Collaboration	Group 2 Sustainability and Compliance Improvements	Group 3 Ethical Business Practices
Providing necessary visibility to plan business operations (P1)	Reducing duplicative audits (P8)	Free of corruption and bribery (P7)
Giving enough time for all processes (P2)	Striving to improve working conditions (P9)	
Buyer’s operational processes efficiency (P3)	Improving environmental performance in its product and supply chain (P10)	
Using fair financial practices (P4)		
Stability of buyer’s business with suppliers (P5)		
Good communication practices (P6)		
Asking suggestions for product and process innovation (P11)		

The three groups can be interpreted as follows. First, the partnership practices included under Group 1 emphasize the following aspects: Collaborative partnerships thrive on transparency, shared goals, and mutual benefits. This group highlights the importance of fostering operational alignment, efficient communication, and leveraging supplier insights for innovation. By ensuring financial fairness and business stability, buyers and suppliers can build a resilient, long-term relationship.

The partnership practices included in Group 2 emphasize the following aspects: Focusing on reducing redundancies (e.g., duplicative

audits), improving working conditions, and environmental performance reflects a shared commitment to sustainability and compliance, strengthening trust and long-term alignment.

The partnership practice in Group 3 emphasizes the following aspect: Maintaining ethical standards, such as being free of corruption and bribery, is foundational for building trust and safeguarding the integrity of the partnership, ensuring a transparent and reliable relationship.

Understanding the extent to which each of the three factors (i.e., Group 1, 2, and 3) influences suppliers’ preference for buyers as partners can help implement true partnership practices

more effectively. Accordingly, this report further conducted a regression analysis using the three factors as independent variables and being a preferred partner (P12) as the dependent variable.⁶ The analysis results indicate that Group 1 has the greatest influence on suppliers' preference for buyers as partners, followed by Group 2. When comparing the relative influence, Group 1 was found to have more than eight times the impact of Group 2.



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 By ensuring financial fairness and business stability, buyers and suppliers can build a resilient, long-term relationship.

This outcome is expected, considering that the practices within Group 1 are fundamental elements for improving partnership performance. The influence of Group 3 was found to be negative, but this should not be interpreted as an indication that the associated practice is unimportant. As stated earlier, suppliers view purchasing practices that are free of corruption and bribery as a baseline expectation in partnerships.

Repeat Better Buying Subscribers

Among the softgoods subscribers in the 2024 BBPI ratings cycle, nine have participated for two consecutive years since 2023. Of these repeat

subscribers, six companies showed an increase in their BBPI scores compared to the previous year, while three experienced a decrease (see Figure 7).

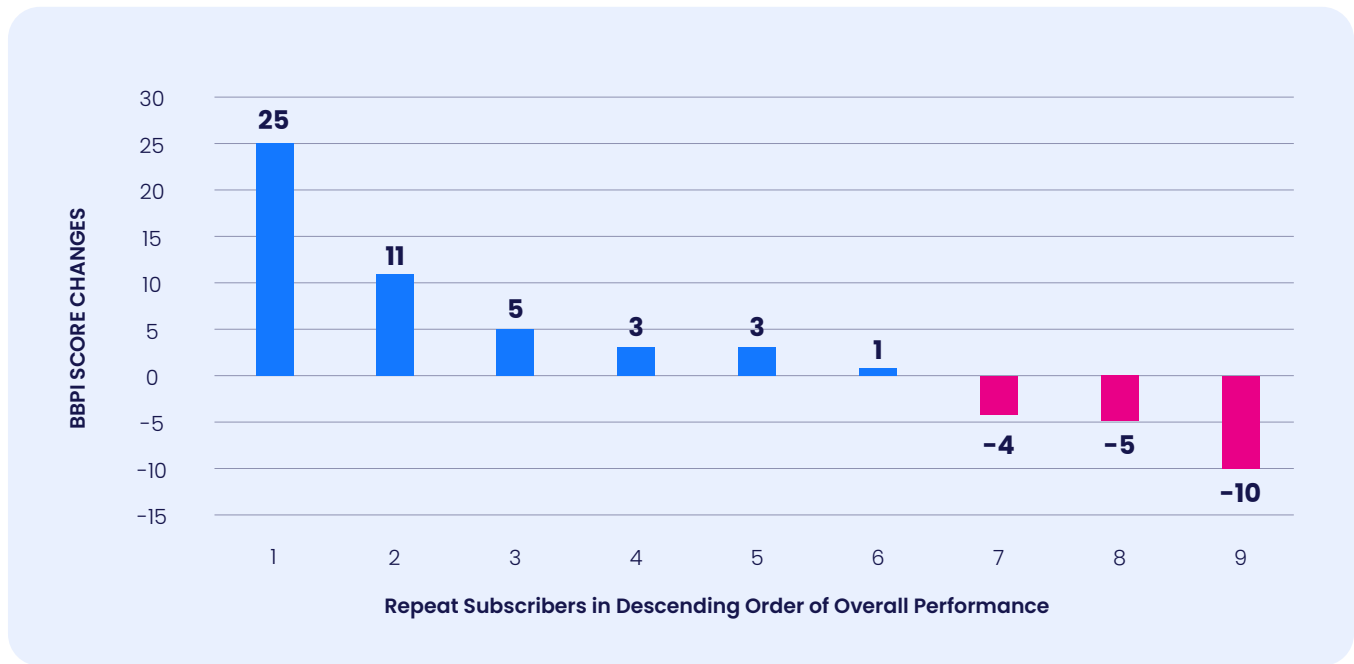


Figure 7. Year-over-Year Increase and Decrease in BBPI Scores of 2-year Repeat Subscribers

Note: Blue bars indicate score increases and red bars indicate decreases year-over-year.

⁶ Model's Adjusted R2 = .387; F = 271.917; df = 3; p < .001. Model's Coefficients: Constant (β_0) = 4.762, p < .001; Factor 1 (β_1) = .324, p < .001; Factor 2 (β_2) = .041, p = .003; Factor 3 (β_3) = -.067, p < .001. Durbin-Watson = 2.005.

One subscriber stood out with a substantial increase in their overall score, rising by 25 points compared to the previous year. This subscriber achieved consistent improvements across 11 of the 12 partnership performance areas, with only one area showing a decline. Notably, the percentage shares of True Partners markedly increased in three partnership areas: Providing necessary visibility to plan business operations, Stability of buyer’s business with supplier, and Asking suggestions for product and process innovation.

Table 3 illustrates the differences in the percentage shares of True Partners, Collaborators, and Detractors for the nine repeat subscribers in 2023 and 2024. Among the six subscribers with increased scores, the rise was driven by a simultaneous decrease in both the percentage shares of Collaborators and Detractors, coupled with an increase in the percentage share of True Partners. Conversely, for the three subscribers with decreased scores, the percentage shares of True Partners shifted to Collaborators.

TABLE 3

Nine Repeat Subscribers’ Partnership Performances Differences Between 2023 and 2024

Repeat Subscribers	BBPI Score Changes	Differences Between BBPI Ratings Cycle 2023 and 2024		
		True Partners	Collaborators	Detractors
No. 1	25	15%	-4%	-11%
No. 2	11	8%	-5%	-3%
No. 3	5	3%	-1%	-2%
No. 4	3	-2%	7%	-5%
No. 5	3	4%	-4%	0%
No. 6	1	3%	-4%	1%
No. 7	-4	-3%	2%	1%
No. 8	-5	-5%	6%	-1%
No. 9	-10	-8%	5%	3%

Themes from Suppliers' Comments

In the annual BBPI survey, suppliers share best practices they have observed buyers implementing. The suppliers' open-ended comments are valuable for knowledge sharing, allowing buyers to glean insights from the best practices of their peers and adapt them to their specific business needs. This collaborative

exchange fosters improvements in various aspects of buyer-supplier relationships. The Wordcloud shown in Figure 9 highlights themes and concepts that suppliers perceived as important and frequently mentioned in relation to their buyers' best practices.

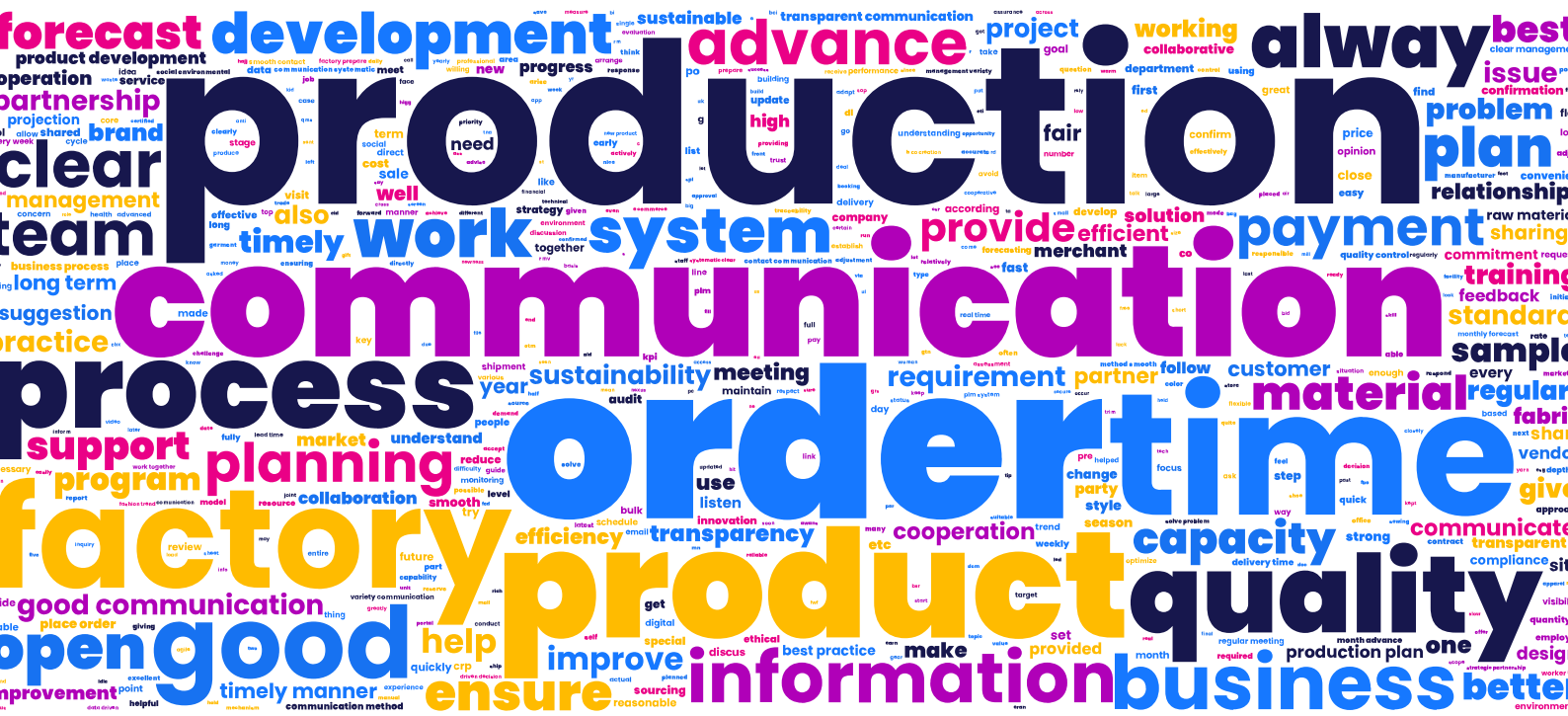


Figure 9. Wordcloud from Suppliers' Open-ended Responses Regarding Buyers' Best Practices
 Note: The larger the font size of a word, the more frequently the word appears in the suppliers' responses.

The Wordcloud highlights the key themes of 'communication,' 'production,' 'factory,' 'time,' 'process,' 'quality,' and 'development,' underscoring their centrality to suppliers' perceptions of best practices. Building on these insights and aligning with Better Buying's Five Principles of Responsible Purchasing, a deeper qualitative analysis of supplier comments was conducted. The results, summarized in Table 4, provide an emerging trend of buyers leveraging innovation and seizing opportunities to enhance the quality of their business relationships for

the long term. Communication, in particular, stood out, with suppliers emphasizing the importance of two-way, transparent, and honest dialogue. Buyers are also increasingly recognizing the value of collaborative and strategic partnership for mutual growth.

TABLE 4

Suppliers' Comments Related to Best Practices

Theme	Number of Mentions	Sample Quotes
Valued Partnership		
Collaborative/ Strategic Partnership	124	<p>“As a strategic partner with [Buyer], they always try to listen to our opinions through various channels - such as regular online meetings with Head of SO or offline meetings with staff from each department. They share current information or plan for the next step. These make us feel that we are the important partner for [Buyer].”</p> <p>“[Buyer] has established long-term and stable strategic partnerships with suppliers to ensure timely supply of raw materials and stable quality. Information sharing and collaborative planning: Share production plans with suppliers to achieve collaborative planning, thereby shortening the supply cycle and improving the response speed of the supply chain.”</p>
Mutual Improvement/ Growth	74	<p>“The [Buyer] has consistently demonstrated best practices in their partnership with us through their clear communication, commitment to sustainability, and collaborative approach. Their transparent feedback process has enabled continuous improvement, while their emphasis on ethical sourcing and sustainability has aligned perfectly with our own values. Additionally, their proactive support in enhancing our operational standards and compliance has fostered a strong and long-lasting relationship built on trust and mutual growth.”</p> <p>“Holding design week and fabric mills week is a good initiative in a way that it provides innovation to MNS and guidance to vendors for the future. Secondly, bonding partnership with vendors is quite good practice as it gives vendors a sense of responsibility as well as ownership of the business.”</p>

Quality/Open Communication

Two-way Communication 137

“Effective two-way communication and discussion and the support of various functional teams to the factory side are the biggest advantages of working with [Buyer], and at the same time, the concept of [Buyer] Roadmap is shared with suppliers to clearly let everyone know the future development direction of [Buyer] so that the factory side can make better planning.”

“Clear Communication: Regular updates and open lines of communication ensure that both parties are aligned on expectations, product availability, and any changes in demand. -Feedback Loops: Regular feedback from [Buyer] regarding sales performance and customer insights allows us to adapt quickly and improve our offerings. -Flexible Agreements: Being open to adjustments in our partnership agreements based on market conditions has fostered a more resilient business relationship.”

Transparency and Honesty 58

“Regular communication: We built transparency and trust by holding regular meetings and workshops to share the progress and challenges of the partnership.”

“Open Dialogue, Forecast, Honest communication, professionalism, among others.”

Visibility/Stability of Business

Timely Forecasting/ Projections 50

“[Buyer] gives business forecast for next 3 yrs. Most of the time projections are close to the actual order awarded. [Buyer] is transparent in paying liabilities for any cancellations at any stage. It helps in building capability & capacity on the technical, social, and environmental front.”

“1) [Buyer] negotiate with our factory in advance for the order quantity of the next year and one year so that the factory can prepare the corresponding production capacity in advance; 2) [Buyer] booked capacity at least 3 months in advance and provide a detailed order plan.”

**Advance Orders/
Flexible Schedule**

47

“In order to alleviate the order production peak in the second half of the year and ensure the production capacity and delivery time, individual continued products will reserve a part of the number of finished or semi-finished products in advance in the idle months of the first half of the year.”

“Confirm the production capacity in advance, adjust the original plan in time according to the information fed back by the factory, and arrange the billing time according to the needs of the factory.”

Capacity Planning

31

“1) Monthly forecast update for the factory to prepare future production plan; 2) Level loading plan for better production arrangement and well capacity utilized.”

“Since we always receive a year of capacity planning from [Buyer], we secured the capacity and capability of the factory in advance and helped a lot in establishing the production plan.”

Production Process

**Efficiency/
Improvement**

98

“[Buyer] utilizes collection KPI data analytics to guide business decisions, including RMV performance and machinery efficiency. By analyzing a wealth of data, RMV can effectively adjust its business strategies, and quality maintain offerings to brand.”

“1) Establish a special proofing workshop to develop and produce styles, which effectively shortens the time for sample development; 2) For the brand, the establishment of a special production workshop sewing group can effectively improve production efficiency and reduce costs.”

“Continuous improvement: Regularly evaluate and optimize business processes to ensure they can adapt to market changes and customer needs. Supplier management: Establish long-term relationships with suppliers to improve the overall efficiency of the supply chain through performance evaluation and feedback mechanisms.”

**Flexibility/
Responsiveness**

34



"Feedback Loops: Regular feedback from [Buyer] regarding sales performance and customer insights allows us to adapt quickly and improve our offerings. Flexible Agreements: Being open to adjustments in our partnership agreements based on market conditions has fostered a more resilient business relationship."

"When planning samples, there is clear process management and node management to ensure the smooth progress of the plan, and then ensure the smooth progress of the production plan, which is conducive to the factory's planning arrangement. 2: Regular production meetings will be held every week to confirm quality, delivery date, plans and other matters. For the adjustment requests or other needs raised by the factory, timely responses will be made."

Quality/Safety

26



"1) [Buyer] has offices in each production country, and if there is an abnormal problem related to the quality of raw materials, in addition to providing TA for refilling, it will also make a win-win decision based on multiple considerations such as quality and delivery time; 2) In the development stage, each local office will also review whether there is a possible mass production problem in advance, and initiate discussions with mass production factories in advance to jointly prevent possible production risks in the future. Source management/timely processing are practices that [Buyer] attaches great importance to."

"The [Buyer] chemical team and glue manufacturers promote the practice of single-sided tape on the production line. After many trial processes, the production parameters were carefully and accurately adjusted, and finally the single-sided tape was introduced without affecting the functionality of the product, and the VOC was reduced"

"Consistent factory visit and sharing advice for the quality improvements."

Fair Financial Practices

**Advanced/
Prompt
Payments**

42

“Pay attention to the payment cycle: [Buyer]’s payment cycle is relatively short, usually weekly, bi-weekly, or 30 days, which is very beneficial for merchants’ cash flow.”

“[Buyer] is transparent in paying liabilities for any cancellations at any stage. It helps in building capability & capacity on the technical, social, and environmental front.”

**Supportive
Financial
Practices**

6

“The front-end price of the new model is discounted to encourage suppliers to continue to develop new products.”

“Financial support during economic crisis”

Shared Sustainability Behaviors

Order Placement 37

“Analysis of the product and the production chain, chosen on the basis of the best sustainability performance, attention to quality control procedures, transparency in traceability, attention to the chemical analysis of the product.”

“Supply Chain Mapping Risk Assessment guide, Supplier Manual, Product Quality Assurance Manual, BSCI/Amfori Chemical Compliance Contract, Restricted Substances List, Responsible Fiber strategy, Code of Conduct.”

“[Buyer] has recently enhanced several best practices, focusing on sustainability, ethical sourcing, and product lifecycle management. Their supply chain undergoes rigorous auditing to ensure compliance with social and environmental standards. Additionally, they source materials certified by the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) and Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and have implemented chemical management protocols to meet global safety standards, further advancing their sustainability goals.”

Ethical/Forward Thinking Buyers 19



"[Buyer] had included us in several worker health awareness programs, which helps teach our workers about improving and maintaining their personal well being. [Buyer] also helps to create a pathway for disabled individuals to apply for work at our facilities."

"Waste recycling plan, Energy efficiency program, disabled worker recruitment and Helow project."

Innovation/Use of Technology

Innovative Practices 24



"[Buyer] provided closely monitoring RMV in research and development to ensure that the products are not only stylish but also meet the functional needed. This includes the use of high-end fabrics and innovative designs to improve durability and comfort."

"[Buyer] encourages innovation and creativity in marketing and distribution strategies. They remain open to feedback and are willing to experiment with new ideas."

"There are incentives for suppliers to innovate, especially in materials and processes"

Use of Technology 14



"Real-time monitoring and adjustment of production plan: Through advanced production planning software, real-time monitoring of production progress, timely adjustment of production plan, to ensure stable operation of production."

"Digital management. With the help of digital tools, [Buyer] connects the entire supply chain, and merchants should actively cooperate with [Buyer]'s digital management requirements. Synchronize the production standards of each style in real time through digital tools for better production scheduling, quality control, and progress tracking. Ensure that the information in the production process can be seamlessly connected with [Buyer]'s system to improve the efficiency of communication and the accuracy of production."

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

The consistent improvements in the softgoods BBPI scores, reaching the highest to date, demonstrate the growing emphasis buyers place on fostering quality partnerships with suppliers.

The decline in operational efficiency scores for softgoods buyers underscores the necessity of addressing resource allocation and process bottlenecks. Without sustained efforts to streamline operations, buyers risk undermining their progress in other partnership areas.

To secure their position as preferred partners among suppliers, it is essential for buyers to adhere to Better Buying’s Five Principles of Responsible Purchasing—Visibility, Stability, Time, Financials, and Shared Responsibility. Achieving these principles will have the greatest impact on suppliers’ businesses and their ability to provide good working conditions and improve their environmental performance.

Suppliers have emphasized transparent, two-way communication as a cornerstone of effective partnerships, highlighting the ongoing importance of strong communication practices by buyers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The continuous improvement in partnership performance underscores the critical role of supplier data in purchasing practices and the value of annual ratings cycles for both buyers and suppliers. Buyers can share improved scores with stakeholders, including executives, investors, and ratings bodies, as evidence of year-over-year progress. These improvements also support compliance with due diligence reporting requirements, highlighting the importance of consistent participation.

Buyers should conduct a comprehensive review of current operational processes and engage in better planning to identify and eliminate redundancies and inefficiencies.

Buyer should adopt structured frameworks that embed the principles of Visibility, Stability, Time, Financials, and Shared Responsibility into daily operations. Mechanisms should also be established to track adherence to these principles, with progress regularly communicated to suppliers to build trust and accountability.

Buyers should establish regular touchpoints, such as scheduled meetings and feedback loops, to ensure continuous and effective two-way communication with suppliers and involve them in strategic discussions to align goals and strengthen relationships.

4. Methodology

This was the fourth annual BBPI ratings cycle that ran from October 1, 2024 through an extended deadline of November 3, 2024. Data were collected from the suppliers of Better Buying's subscribers, Better Buying's supplier database, with six email campaigns for participation sent to suppliers, and suppliers reached through Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (MSI) outreach via The Industry We Want (hosted by Fair Wear, Ethical Trading Initiative, and Cascale).

This short (less than 5 minutes) web-based survey was translated into 14 languages (Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese (simplified), English, French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese). Suppliers were encouraged to submit ratings for each of the buyers they work with and to forward the survey link with to their colleagues so they could submit ratings as well.

This year there were 25 BBPI subscribers, ten of which participated in last year's cycle (9 softgoods companies and 1 consumer products company). Ratings received for Better Buying's subscribers were aggregated to prepare company-specific BBPI reports comparing their results with the relevant benchmark and incorporating demographic and strategic breakouts unique to each subscriber company's requests.

TABLE 5

List of Subscribing Buyers who have Agreed to be Named

SUBSCRIBER	HEADQUARTERS COUNTRY
Agron	United States
ARMEDANGELS	Germany
Birger Christensen	Denmark
Brooks Running	United States
Costco Wholesale	United States
Double D Import Adidas Licensee for Boxing and Martial Arts Equipments	France
Everlane	United States
Fast Retailing	Japan
LT Apparel	United States
Reformation	United States
SHEIN	Singapore
STORMTECH PERFORMANCE APPAREL LTD.	Canada
Under Armour, Inc.	United States

TABLE 6 List of Other Rated Brands and Retailers

adidas AG	Just Brands	River Island
Amazon	Levi Strauss & Co.	Rodd & Gunn
Amer Sports	Lidl	Sainsbury's
American Eagle Outfitters	Index	SanMar
Argos	L.L. Bean, Inc.	Seasalt Limited
Babylon Trims Ltd.	LPP	Suitsupply
C&A	Macpac	Tapestry
Carrefour Global Sourcing	Matalan	Target Corporation
COLOSSEUM ATHLETICS	Max	TESCO
Decathlon SA	Next	THE NORTH FACE
EILEEN FISHER, Inc	Nike, Inc.	Timberland
Fame Apparels Limited	One Up Sweaters Ltd.	Varner
Fanatics Apparel, LLC	Primark	VF Corporation
Gap Inc.	PUMA	Walmart
Hotspring	Ralph Lauren Corporation	Woolworth
Inditex	REISS	Zeeman

Note: Ratings were also received for other buyers, including manufacturers, raw materials, and intermediaries.

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