

The Total-Cost Comparison

Bottles & Jars Edition — why the cheaper quote is rarely the cheaper bottle

Most brands sourcing overseas compare quotes on one number: unit price. But the invoice is only where the cost story starts. This one-pager shows where the “cheaper” quote quietly becomes the expensive one — and gives you a checklist to audit your own setup in ten minutes.

The scenario

A skincare brand orders **50,000 custom glass jars**. Supplier A quotes **\$0.42/unit**; a structurally engineered spec quotes **\$0.48/unit**. On the invoice, A wins by \$3,000. Here is what the next 90 days actually cost:

Cost line	Supplier A (lowest unit price)	Structured supplier (engineered spec)
Unit price × 50,000	\$21,000	\$24,000
Transit breakage (3.5% vs 0.8%) — replacement units + reshipping	\$2,940	\$670
Filling-line stoppages from neck/cap tolerance variance	\$1,800	\$300
Rework & re-labelling from finish inconsistency between batches	\$1,250	\$0
Extra protective secondary packaging to compensate for fragile structure	\$1,500	\$600
Total landed cost	\$28,490	\$25,570

The verdict: the “cheaper” jar ends up costing about **11% more** — before counting a single lost customer from a cracked jar arriving at their door.

Figures are illustrative, based on typical mid-size brand scenarios we see. Your numbers will differ — that is exactly what the comparison is for.

The five hidden cost drivers

Breakage rate. Anything above ~1% in ecommerce transit means your packaging is subsidizing the carrier's roughest day, not your margin.

Neck & cap tolerance. A ± 0.3 mm variance you never see on a spec sheet becomes jammed cappers and stopped filling lines.

Glass weight vs. freight. Heavier glass feels premium — but every extra 40 g per unit compounds across freight, duties and parcel tiers.

Batch-to-batch finish consistency. Frosting, coating and color shifts between production runs force re-labelling, re-shoots and shelf mismatch.

Multi-vendor coordination. Bottle from one vendor, cap from another, label from a third: every handoff is a tolerance stack-up nobody owns.

Ten-minute self-audit

☐	Do you know your actual transit breakage rate for the last 3 orders (not the supplier's claimed rate)?
☐	Is neck finish tolerance specified in writing — and measured on incoming inspection?
☐	Have you weighed unit glass weight against your parcel carrier's pricing tiers?
☐	Do you have a documented spec for finish/color, with retained golden samples?
☐	Is one party contractually responsible for bottle + closure + label fitting together?
☐	Have you priced your packaging as total landed cost, not invoice price, in the last 12 months?

What good looks like

Transit breakage under **1%** · zero unplanned filling-line stops per run · one direct manufacturing partner owning bottle, closure and decoration · landed cost per delivered-intact unit as your only KPI.

Complimentary Bottle & Label Structure Review

No sales pitch, no obligation. You get a marked-up review of your current spec — where cost, damage or risk can be trimmed — whether or not we ever produce a unit for you.

INNORHINO · Structural packaging, engineered around total landed cost · Reply to the email that brought you here, and it lands directly with our engineering team.