Vendor Performance Checklist

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1 Go Beyond "Response Time" SLA Measurement

A vendor can "hit response" while the store stays broken. You need SLAs that reflect operational pain: time-to-acknowledge, time-to-arrive, and time-to-restore (and clear priority definitions). Many retailers get burned by confusing response with resolution. Know the level of service you are paying for.

2 Measure What Matters: Mean Time to Restore (MTTR)

If you're not measuring this metric, you're essentially following the vendor's rules. In short, you pay for uptime, not truck rolls. MTTR is the most direct "value" metric.

3 Demand a High First Time Fix (FTF) Rate

Low first time fix rates lead to hidden costs and customer dissatisfaction. Causes may include poor dispatch information, lack of parts, technician errors, or unclear escalation paths. Tracking this metric helps improve accountability and efficiency.

4 Audit the Vendor's Processes

Is your performance tailored to your needs, or shaped by your vendor? Automation, integration, and remote troubleshooting can add value to your service. Unlocking the full potential of your operations starts with taking control—by embracing these advanced solutions, you empower your business to outperform competitors, maximize efficiency, and deliver results that truly reflect your unique goals.

5 Scrutinize Parts and Logistics

How you allocate and distribute maintenance parts matter. Review 30-, 60- and 90-day parts usage to spot trends. Is there part substitution logic built into the service? This matters for FTF. Review how the vendor resupplies techs and how shipping is "built in" to the price.

6 Verify the Quality of Service

Retail is unforgiving—store access, customer-facing behavior, and first-visit competence matter as much as technical ability. If you are expecting and paying for W-2 resources but receiving a 3rd party instead - you are paying too much.

7 Move from "Break/Fix" to Prevention

If the contract is only "break/fix," you'll keep paying for chronic failures. Preventative Maintenance, configuration management, and refresh planning reduce incidents and stabilize operations providing valuable insights to what is routinely NOT reported.

8 Ensure Vendor Security and Compliance

One sloppy vendor process (device handling, remote access, logs) can create PCI exposure and brand risk. With PCI DSS 4.0 now emphasizing continuous compliance, organizations are required to monitor third parties who have access to their environments. This topic should be incorporated into every vendor review discussion.

9 Calculate the True Cost for Service

You can be "green on SLAs" and still overpay via rate card creep, out of scopes, per incident billing, parts markups, unnecessary dispatches, and invoice errors. Clarity on what you are paying for is essential.

10 Demand Reporting Integrity

If you can't trust the data, you can't manage performance—or prove value. If the vendor provides all the data, you are getting a biased view at best. Measure the KPIs that matter most to your business and write them into the contract. They should be reviewed quarterly by business leaders and tied to vendor performance scorecards. Clarity is your friend.