

IT Buyer's Procurement Checklist

Of course, you have your standard boxes to check—cost, service, timeliness—but you see the bigger picture. You consider the entire IT buyer's journey and understand that the better reseller you find, the more value your organization will receive down the road.



If you notice these traits in a potential IT partner, get excited.

- They turn around quotes quickly and minimize lead times.
A no-brainer, but you're in trouble if a VAR can't get you quotes when you need them. It may help to ask up front what their service-level agreement is on turnaround. Also, gauge how deep their relationships are with manufacturers and whether you'll have dedicated customer support.
- They help you meet your diversity requirement.
Maybe you have supplier diversity requirements. If so, vetting whether a potential VAR can meet that need for you may help cut down your vendor list and reduce the number of phone calls you need to make when sourcing solutions. Better yet, you could look for a reselling partner that meets your diversity requirement *and* holds top-level partnerships with leading manufacturers.
- They go out of their way to help you financially.
A financially stable reselling partner will provide flexible financial models to fit your unique needs. For example, you might need subscription-based billing on a capital expenditure or quarterly payments on an upfront, multi-year contract. Whatever your unique financing requirements, you need to understand how well a partner can adapt to your needs.
- They know global shipping.
Shipping hardware globally can saddle organizations with unfamiliar challenges. Even if you're not shipping equipment internationally today, you never know when you may need the capabilities of an experienced global partner down the road. In a perfect world, your partner has the resources to ship in-country. If that's not the case, vet their ability to cut through the red tape of shipping equipment out of the U.S. This may require your partner to have experience managing a global supply chain, including managing customs, clearance and payment of taxes, currency conversion, global procurement consolidation and product classification.
- They help you manage your assets.
Proactive contract and asset management is a full-time job. Companies change the service levels of assets all the time, new equipment gets introduced, contracts need to be co-terminated and legacy assets need to be decommissioned. Who's proactively managing these changes across your multi-vendor landscape? Will you have dedicated contract and asset management resources, or is the responsibility shared amongst other buyers and procurement staff?

These considerations are probably second nature for you, but hopefully they serve as friendly reminders to help turn a good partnership decision into a *great* one.