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# How to Structure a Production Partnership Review And Why Most LSPs Rarely Do It?

The difference between measuring vendor performance and actually managing it.

# Measuring vs. Managing: A Critical Difference

## Measuring Performance

Tracking quality scores after the fact. Backward-looking reports. Reactive by default.

## Managing a Partnership

A structured, recurring conversation that keeps a partnership **calibrated, scalable, and commercially aligned** over time. A strategic checkpoint covering where the relationship is heading and whether both parties are ready to go there together.

# Why It Matters Before We Talk About What It Is

A production partnership review is not primarily about performance tracking. It is about three things performance tracking alone cannot capture.

## Alignment

A vendor's understanding of your quality standards and client profile drifts over time unless actively refreshed.

## Scalability

Knowing whether a vendor can handle a 40% volume increase or support AI-assisted workflows requires a forward-looking conversation.

## Risk Prevention

Many production failures are relationship failures - unclear expectations, unaddressed friction, or a vendor too uncertain to raise a problem early.

📌 Client retention management starts at the vendor layer. When production partners are aligned and commercially stable, the downstream client experience becomes more defensible.

# What a Production Partnership Review Actually Is

A recurring, structured evaluation between an LSP and a key vendor or production partner. Recommended cadence: quarterly or bi-annual, depending on volume and relationship complexity. It is not a project debrief. It is not a complaint session. The structure matters as much as the content.



## Recent Performance

Specific evidence, not averages.



## Operational Efficiency

Where workflows run cleanly and where they don't.



## Communication Patterns

How escalations were handled and whether updates were proactive.



## Commercial Alignment

Rate sustainability and volume expectations.



## Future Capacity

Service development and readiness for what's next.

# Five Sections of a Repeatable Review



## Performance Metrics

Quality scores, delivery rates, and volume trends with specific evidence.



## Operational Efficiency

Where workflows run cleanly and where they create friction.



## Communication & Collaboration

Escalation handling and proactive update patterns.



## Commercial Alignment

Rate sustainability, volume expectations, and margin health.



## Scalability & Future Readiness

Capacity, new service development, and emerging workflow readiness.

# Section 1 & 2: Performance and Operations

## Performance Metrics

Quality scores, on-time delivery, volume trends, and feedback patterns. Specific examples carry more weight than averages. The goal is not a grade. It is a basis for the conversation that follows.

## Operational Efficiency

Where does the workflow run cleanly, and where does it slow down? Turnaround bottlenecks, handoff gaps, and technology adoption all belong here. This section surfaces structural issues that project managers have been absorbing quietly. Are CAT tools, TMS integrations, and MTPE workflows being used as intended?

# Section 3 & 4: Communication and Commercial Alignment

## Communication & Collaboration

Responsiveness during critical phases, how escalations were handled, and whether proactive updates happened. This section gets skipped because it feels soft. It is not. A vendor who consistently flags issues early is **measurably more valuable** than one who resolves issues silently.

## Commercial Alignment

Rate structures, volume expectations, and margin sustainability belong in the review. If rates haven't been revisited since volumes shifted, that misalignment compounds over time. Can the vendor accommodate surge demand or adapt to client-specific pricing? Vendor partnership value is not static.

# Section 5: Scalability and Future Readiness

Where is the vendor in terms of capacity, service development, and readiness for emerging workflows? This includes AI-assisted services, specialized content types, and new language pairs the client base may require.

- **This forward-looking section is what separates a review from a retrospective.**
- **It identifies whether a vendor can grow with you or whether a capability gap is beginning to form.**



# The Qualitative Layer Most Reviews Miss

Data tells you what happened. It does not tell you whether the relationship is healthy.



## **Is the vendor proactive or reactive?**

Do they raise problems or wait to be asked?



## **When something went wrong, how did they respond?**

Problem-solving orientation and early escalation contribute differently to supply chain risk.



## **What is working at the human level?**

Avoiding this conversation doesn't eliminate the dynamic. It just leaves it unmanaged.

# Why Most LSPs Don't Run These Reviews

The barriers are structural. Most operations leaders understand the value in principle. The gap is in execution.

## No Clear Ownership

Vendor relationships are distributed across account managers, PMs, and resource teams. No single person is responsible, so it falls through the cracks.

## Operational Overload

Production teams run on volume. A structured review with an adequate vendor always feels like a lower priority than what's urgent today.

## Avoiding Difficult Conversations

If performance has been uneven, the review requires naming that directly. Teams default to handling issues project by project, allowing underlying problems to persist.

## Reactive by Default

Most vendor communication is triggered by a project, a problem, or a renewal. Proactive structured engagement requires a different operating model most LSPs haven't built.

- ❏ The consequence: vendor partnerships drift. Rates go unreviewed. Capability gaps go unnoticed. Friction accumulates. And when a client retention problem surfaces, the supply chain hasn't been actively managed in months.

5 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

# What Partnership Reviews Taught Us

Waiting for your LSP partner to improve the relationship will end in a slow, silent drift. Being on the receiving end of the workflow places you in a perfect position to be the **active side**.

## Took Ownership of the PR Initiative

Instead of waiting for LSP partners to bring feedback, we became the initiators. Our Business Development team became our Partnership Team.

## Developed a PR Ranking System

Combines workflow complexity, demand, seasonality, and team structure to determine how often each client needs a review.

## Customized Our CRM Environment

Built internal rules on who gets involved and how the PR rolls out. Once performed, it is logged and all related people are briefed.

## Removed PRs from the PM Team

PMs have a special daily relationship with clients. PRs held by a third party (BizDev) surface very different, more candid information.

5 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

### **Created Structured Templates & Reporting**

Parameters prepared in advance, specific stakeholders interviewed internally before each PR. A two-way communication because we provide feedback too.

### **Defined Clear Ownership of Outcomes**

Never walk away without a clear plan of action. Everything promised is distributed and tracked after the meeting.

### **Built a Real-Time Client Portal**

Linked live to our TMS so clients can check their own spending per PM, per team, per responsible person, solving a major visibility gap for large teams.

### **Trained Our Teams to Follow the System**

A system is no good if no one follows it. We trained the team, sealed the process, and tracked performance and outcomes.

# What Consistent Reviews Actually Deliver



## Stronger Long-Term Partnerships

Vendors feel visible and valued rather than interchangeable. Proactiveness increases on both sides.



## Better Pricing Stability

Commercial terms reviewed in context before they become points of contention. Vendors who feel respected deprioritize your work less when capacity is constrained.



## Fewer Production Issues

Operational friction addressed structurally. Problems surface in the review before they surface in a client complaint.



## Faster Scaling

Capability conversations have been happening consistently. When a new client or language requirement arrives, you already know which vendors are ready.





## An Important Note to Close

Once you decide to go the partnership review way, it comes with certain expectations and you as the initiating partner need to be able to deliver what you promised. **This is the one thing that will actually win a long-term partnership.**

Partnership reviews require discipline, organization, and responsibility across the entire company. The review does not need to be elaborate to be effective. It needs to be **recurring, structured, and owned** by someone with the authority to act on what it surfaces.