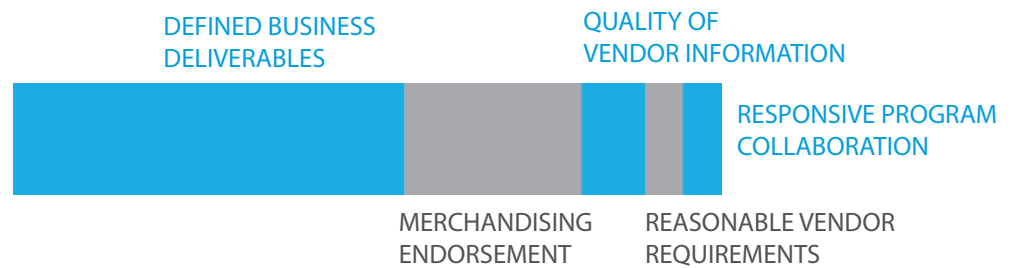




# Vendor Community Development

**USING A  
BEST-PRACTICES  
APPROACH  
TO ENABLEMENT  
MAXIMIZES  
ADOPTION RATES**



Optimizing the performance of your vendor community is key to your revenue growth, customer satisfaction and bottom line.

Initiatives to improve integration and collaboration with vendors are by no means new. Yet many retailers have been reluctant to embrace vendor enablement due to the risks and effort associated with these programs.

Here are 5 best practices to help you maximize success and minimize disruption—for you and your vendor community.

**1. Defined Business Deliverables** – It’s no surprise that programs with defined roadmaps and goals that relate to a business initiative run smoother than those without. Translating the “what you are asking” into “why you are asking it” ensures your community understands how the initiative will impact their relationship with you.

Your trading partner community development plan should address three components: which vendors to target, fulfillment models, and the data and information to be shared. Use these three dimensions to define your current and desired trading partner environment to establish goals and priorities for the program.

**2. Merchandising Endorsement** – Vendors have close relationships with their buyer contacts in the merchandising group, who all report to the head of merchandising. Since the buyer is the first person a vendor will call with questions, their buy-in will have a tremendous impact on the adoption rate. If buyers are not on board, adoption can be delayed or blocked entirely.

**3. Quality of Vendor Information** – Equip your community development team with the best tools by providing current and complete business contact information. Necessary information includes: contact name, phone, email, address, buyer, annual spend and annual purchase order volume.

**4. Reasonable Vendor Requirements** – Put yourself in your vendors’ shoes. Even if they are doing EDI with other retailers, implementing a new PO, ASN or label specification requires significant effort. Adopt a non-exclusive approach that finds the path of least resistance for your vendors. As long as you can get the data you need, vendors should be free to choose the solution that works best for them.

**5. Responsive Program Collaboration** – Establish open communication channels and collaboration among team members as well as your vendor community to ensure the program progresses efficiently. Also, respond to all vendor questions in a timely manner to help keep the components moving.

SPS Commerce has helped hundreds of retailers improve sales and profits using these best practices for vendor community development. Contact us at 1-866-245-8100 to learn more.