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Strong Vendor Partnerships: The Backbone of Community Association Success

By Dr. Angela Stone, CMCA, AMS | Director of Education & Development

In community associations, vendors may often work behind the scenes, but their impact is front and center. From landscaping and roofing to general maintenance and repairs, vendors influence everything from curb appeal to safety and long-term asset preservation. For boards, ensuring the right vendors are in place isn't just helpful, it's essential.

At Ghertner & Company, vendor management is one of the most critical services provided to the communities we manage. Our role goes far beyond simply recommending a contractor. We bridge the gap between vendors and associations, helping to identify, evaluate, and monitor qualified professionals who can meet the specific needs of a property while also protecting the association from unnecessary risk.

Most of the vendors we work with come to us as referrals from our team of experienced managers, which gives us access to a broad, proven network of professionals. But regardless of how a vendor is introduced, every one of them must complete a standardized vendor packet and provide proof of general liability and workers' compensation insurance before performing any work. This process is in place for one clear reason: to ensure the association is protected from liability.

It's not uncommon for a board to have "a guy" they trust for a certain job, but if that person lacks proper insurance coverage, even a simple repair could expose the association to litigation. We've seen how easily good intentions can create bad outcomes when proper vetting is skipped. Our job is to prevent that.

In addition to initial onboarding, we monitor vendor compliance over time, verifying insurance coverage annually and tracking performance to ensure work is completed at the standard our clients expect. If a vendor fails to meet expectations or puts an association at risk, we do not continue the relationship.

The vendor relationships that matter most are the ones built on professionalism, reliability, and trust. These relationships help build strong relationships between Ghertner & Company and the associations we serve. Strong vendor partnerships often take years to develop, but they pay off in long-term consistency, responsive service, and fewer headaches for everyone involved.

Our team maintains a dynamic list of vendors across key service categories. These vendors have earned their reputations - not by favoritism, but by consistently delivering high-quality results. Still, we're flexible. If a board has a preferred vendor they'd like to work with, we ensure the necessary protections and documentation are in place before work begins.

Ultimately, vendor relationships are not just about contracts; they're about collaboration. Communities thrive when boards, managers, and vendors are aligned and working together.