IT Delivery Assurance

Projects · Portfolios · Partners

INDEPENDENT DELIVERY ASSURANCE · SERVICE BRIEF

Vendor Performance & Contract Assurance

When a critical delivery partner is still active but no longer feels fully controllable, an independent view on whether the relationship is still performing, aligned, and safe to rely on — before drift becomes loss or dispute.

> ***Before challenge becomes dispute, get a position you can stand behind.***

Executive scan

The problem

A partner relationship that is still active, governed, and contractually structured — but where performance, accountability, and what is actually enforceable have started to drift apart.

When to use

When KPIs stay green and confidence does not. When escalation has increased and leverage has not. Before renegotiation, reset, or an exit decision.

Decision supported

Maintain, reshape, renegotiate, or prepare for exit. A defensible commercial and delivery position — not just a description.

What you receive

A **Vendor Risk Posture Signal**, a 30-day control restoration plan, and four supporting analyses — see page 4.

Timeframe

1 to 4 weeks. Calibrated to whether the decision is a focused issue, an embedded multi-tower partner, or a board-level reset.

Who commissions

CIO, CTO, or CDO · COO or program sponsor · CFO or commercial lead · board or audit committee.

Partner relationships rarely fail as a single event. They drift — through unresolved causality, eroding leverage, contracts that no longer match delivery reality, and spend that continues without a clear link to value. By the time the drift becomes visible as missed outcomes, formal dispute, or escalation to the board, the option to realign the relationship safely has usually narrowed.

The failure we address — a partner relationship that has drifted out of alignment

Most partner relationships do not fail because the vendor is visibly failing. They fail because performance, accountability, obligation, and executive expectation have quietly stopped lining up — and the structure to surface that gap has weakened along with the relationship.

What we prevent

Commercial Drift

When the engagement being delivered is no longer the engagement described. KPIs stay green while service quality degrades. Contract terms remain static while delivery reality has materially changed. Rights exist on paper but cannot be exercised without collateral damage. Spend continues; the link to delivery value becomes harder to defend. ***This service exists to surface that drift before it crystallizes into avoidable loss, formal dispute, or sunk-cost paralysis.***

Sound familiar?

These are sentences executives say to us in the first ten minutes of a briefing. Any one of them — present across two or more reporting cycles — is reason to commission an independent view. Three or more is rarely a coincidence.

"KPIs are green. Delivery is not."
Service reports remain stable while the people doing the work no longer trust the numbers.

"Vendor and team blame each other."
Causality has stopped being a shared fact. Each side has a coherent story; none of them is the whole story.

"I am not sure what is contractually owed anymore."
Change orders, side agreements, and informal precedent have quietly replaced the original terms.

"We escalate. The relationship sours. Nothing improves."
Pressure rises. Control does not. Leverage has eroded faster than the engagement has.

"We have spent a lot. I cannot defend what we got."
Burn continues. Demonstrable delivery value has become harder to point to.

"Exit feels too disruptive. Continuing feels too expensive."
The relationship has become too embedded to challenge cleanly — and that, by itself, is a control problem.

Why this is hard to see from the inside

Partner drift does not appear as failure. It appears as a relationship that is still active, still meeting, still under contract — while control, leverage, and confidence are quietly deteriorating.

01
Reporting tracks the contract, not the work
KPIs measure what the contract specified. They no longer measure what the business now actually needs.

02
The original deal has drifted
Change orders, concessions, and informal precedent have rewritten the engagement without being renegotiated.

03
Side agreements rewrite the terms
Goodwill arrangements solve short-term problems and become the operating reality — without contractual anchoring.

04
Rights exist but cannot be used
Protections are intact on paper. Exercising them now would carry collateral damage no one will absorb.

05
Preservation overrides challenge
Internal teams protect the engagement to avoid disruption. Challenge gets softened. Drift continues.

What we test — four questions, led by evidence

We do not assess whether the contract is being followed. We answer four questions that determine whether the engagement is still safe to rely on — and whether that position holds in negotiation, renegotiation, or board-level review.

1. **Is the partner still delivering what was actually agreed?**
   Are expectations, roles, and enforceable responsibilities still aligned between contract, governance, and day-to-day delivery?

2. **Where does responsibility truly sit?**
   Which delays and quality issues are vendor-caused, client-caused, or structurally shared — and how does that pattern change under stress?

3. **Is the spend still converting to value?**
   Is current and forecast spend still producing defensible delivery value, or has the relationship crossed into continuation spend with declining marginal benefit?

4. **Can we still exercise leverage if we had to?**
   Which contractual and commercial levers can realistically be used now — without collateral damage the business is not willing to absorb?

Each question is supported by sub-tests across the five dimensions of Delivery Alignment: obligation clarity, performance credibility, dependency causality, usable leverage, burn-to-value.

Three methods, every engagement

Evidence-led, system-framed, and built to produce a position that holds in any forum.

We pressure-test the engagement, not the partner

Findings frame the operating model, the contract, and the control environment — never individuals. That makes the review safe enough to commission while the relationship is still live.

We rebuild the real obligation and value picture

From the contract, change orders, service reports, escalation history, and spend profile we reconstruct what is actually being delivered, what is enforceable, and what the engagement is really costing.

We talk to the people who know

Confidential, structured interviews with delivery leads, sponsors, commercial leads, and vendor counterparts — to surface where causality, leverage, and goodwill have actually moved.

Scope — scaled to the decision you are facing

The constant: a position you can stand behind, in time to act. The variable: how much of the engagement needs to be inside the review.

Focused

1 to 2 weeks · single issue, single engagement

A targeted review on a contested KPI set, a disputed delay, or a stalled reset conversation — where a fast, defensible position is needed now.

Integrated

2 to 3 weeks · multi-tower or embedded partner

A cross-engagement review where a partner is embedded across several initiatives and dependencies interact with broader delivery.

Strategic

3 to 4 weeks · renegotiation, reset, or exit

An executive-level intervention ahead of a major renegotiation, structural reset, or an exit decision that has to hold under board, audit, or regulator scrutiny.

What you walk away with

Every output answers one question — in language you can defend at the next gate: *is the relationship safe to rely on — and on what terms?*

The decision-ready position

Vendor Risk Posture Signal

A clear, board-ready position on the relationship — with the evidence to support it. Expressed across six positions:

Maintain · **Maintain with Conditions** · **Reshape** · **Renegotiate** · **Reset** · **Prepare for Exit**

30-Day Control Restoration Plan
5 to 10 immediate moves to restore control, stop value leakage, and stabilize the relationship — with named owners and timing.

Delivery Alignment View
Where performance, obligation, and accountability are still aligned — and where they have materially drifted.

Responsibility & Cause Map
A clear view of vendor-caused, client-caused, and shared dependencies — so challenge, reset, or internal correction can be aimed accurately.

Negotiation-Ready Evidence Pack
A curated set of artifacts, timelines, and analytical positions ready to take into negotiation, SteerCo, or — if necessary — formal dispute, without further rework.

If the situation is bigger than one partner — this is one of five Delivery Assurance services. Health, recovery, governance, or portfolio concerns connect, but this brief stands alone. Ask, and we will tell you the right place to start.
itdeliveryassurance.com/services

Who commissions this review

CIO, CTO, or CDO
"The partner is critical. I am no longer sure we have the leverage to make sure we get what we are paying for."

COO or Program Sponsor
"KPIs are green. Delivery is not. I need an independent read on which one is telling the truth."

CFO or Commercial Lead
"Before we renegotiate, I want a defensible commercial position — not just a description of what has gone wrong."

Board or Audit Committee
"If this relationship becomes a dispute, I need to know we tested it independently — and acted on what we found."

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