

8 SIMPLE TIPS

to get the most from card processors.

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK BEFORE YOU MAKE A DECISION.

- Get recommendations from other businesses in your area.
- Chart the services provided and compare processors with each other.
- Ask about their processing flow to know in advance how your payments will be handled.
- Research the company's background and ask for a current list of references.

2. READ THE ENTIRE AGREEMENT BEFORE SIGNING.

- Make sure you understand all terms and conditions, including when and how you get paid, start and end dates of service, and any conditions of automatic renewal.
- Understand all of your obligations as a merchant.
- If you don't understand something, ask.

3. MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND MERCHANT FEES.

- There should be a clear and concise list of fees.
- Understand the merchant discount rate, how it is calculated, and what conditions impact the rate (e.g. card-not-present transactions and card type).
- Determine the total cost of monthly merchant service fees.

4. UNDERSTAND ALL POINT-OF-SALE TERMINAL FEES AND CONDITIONS.

- Determine the lease, rental or purchase conditions of your point-of-sale terminal and processing equipment.
- If you are leasing, know the total lease period and total lease cost.

5. MAKE SURE YOUR MERCHANT SERVICE PROVIDER WILL SUPPORT YOU IN DISPUTES.

- Find out how the acquirer handles cardholder disputes and chargebacks, including how to avoid chargebacks.
- Learn what types of support are provided when resolving chargebacks.

6. KNOW YOUR OPTIONS FOR SWITCHING MERCHANT SERVICE PROVIDERS.

- Ask about early termination conditions and fees, and make sure they are clearly explained in the agreement.
- Understand all opt-out terms. If you continue to process card transactions after fees are increased, there may be an assumption that you agree to the terms because you did not “opt out.”

7. KNOW WHO TO CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR ISSUES.

- Find out the name, address, phone number and role of each service provider supporting the agreement.
- Understand the support provided by the merchant service provider if you have questions or problems, including if your POS terminal fails.
- Find out customer service response times, including their service response time track record and what support is provided on weekends and after hours.

8. MAKE SURE YOUR MONTHLY FEES MATCH WHAT YOU AGREED TO.

- Compare your monthly merchant statement to your merchant agreement. Make sure charges match the fee schedule you agreed to initially.
- Make sure your billing statements provide enough detail for you to understand the fees.
- Remember to retain all notices of fee changes throughout the term of your merchant service provider relationship.

For more tips and tools to grow your small business, visit www.masteryourcardUSA.org.