When a Nonconformity Threatens the Certificate

GUIDING QUESTION *What is the most frequent way your hotel fails to deliver what it sold, and is it recorded anywhere that your management system can see, or only in the budget line that pays for it?*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the four parts with the people who own the process. The left-hand text comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what the market says, what actually holds, and your property

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
"Overselling is a commercial decision, so it is outside the quality system."	No. A guest who held a confirmed reservation and did not receive a room has received a service that did not meet its requirements, whichever budget line pays for it. Nonconforming outputs have to be identified and controlled, the action taken recorded and the person who authorised it identified; the revenue policy itself remains a commercial decision.	
"Our satisfaction index is accurate, so our measurement is sound."	Partly. The arithmetic may be right, but the organisation has to determine what it monitors and measures and then analyse and evaluate the results, including the conformity of its services. A measurement whose population structurally excludes the failures is an incomplete determination, and the determination is what the auditor examines.	
"We have built the log, so the nonconformity is closed."	No. The log is a correction to the record-keeping. The standard requires reaction, evaluation of the need to eliminate the cause (including whether similar nonconformities exist or could occur elsewhere), implementation of the action and a review of its effectiveness. For a major, the certification body has to verify correction and corrective action before it treats the finding as closed.	
"The grade is too severe; nobody was harmed and every guest was looked after."	Partly. Grading follows the certification rules: a major is a nonconformity that affects the capability of the system to achieve its intended results, whether or not anyone was harmed. A client may challenge the classification, but with evidence against those criteria, first with the team leader and then, if needed, through the body's appeal or complaint process. The absence of harm is not, on its own, such evidence.	
"We must stop overselling."	No. The standard does not prohibit overselling or prescribe a revenue policy. It requires the resulting failures to be handled as nonconforming outputs: corrected, the guest informed, the action recorded and, where acceptance under concession is used, authorised by a named person with the authority to grant it.	
"If we miss the deadline they will give us more time."	No, not as a right. The time allowed for a major is set by the certification body, and any extension is its decision. At initial certification, actions not verified within six	

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
	months of the last day of stage 2 mean another stage 2; on an issued certificate, a missed deadline can lead to suspension; near expiry, an unverified major prevents renewal.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Record	The register of nonconforming outputs for the last twelve months, set against the operational and accounting traces of the same events: night logs, partner hotel invoices, voucher issuance.		
Document	The determination of what is monitored and measured, and the definition of the population each measurement covers, including the trigger that generates it.		
Seen	The moment of failure handled in real time where possible (an arrival during a fair week) or the system screen on which the event is or is not capable of being recorded.		
Told	What the night team says happens, which at the Lužánky was accurate, complete and entirely absent from the system: a reminder that a well-run process and a systematised process are different things.		
Re-performed	One relocated guest traced from the reservation to every place the event could have left a trace, to establish exactly where the record stops.		
Absence	No nonconforming output record for the most frequent service failure in the hotel, and no survey response from any guest who experienced it.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Classifying a routine service failure as commercial and therefore as outside the system.	If a guest did not receive what was sold, it is a nonconforming output regardless of which budget absorbs it.	
Trusting an index without examining its population.	The arithmetic is almost always right; the sample is where the damage lives.	
Offering the record as the corrective action.	Building the log the auditor asked for is the correction; the corrective action is whatever ensures no other class of failure is sitting outside the system.	
Arguing the grade without evidence.	A classification can be challenged on the criteria, but an argument about severity built only on goodwill is the least productive conversation available, and it consumes the days that the response needs.	
Over-correcting the business.	A property that responds to this finding by abandoning a legitimate revenue policy has read the standard as forbidding something it does not forbid, and will have to explain the revenue to somebody who read it correctly.	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline

In brief

A major nonconformity says that a capability has failed, not that something big went wrong. In a quality system that lost capability is often a category rather than a control: an event so routine, so competently handled and so obviously commercial that nobody ever asked which requirement it falls under. At Brno it was the relocation of oversold guests: well run, fully funded, and invisible to every instrument the hotel used to know whether it was conforming, including a satisfaction survey that structurally could not reach the people it had failed.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 4.11. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.